

Type and Shadow

After his final break with Freud in 1913, Carl Jung entered a curious, disturbing phase that he later called his “psychotic period.”

A man then in his late 30s—25 years younger than Sigmund Freud—Jung had been anointed as Freud’s heir apparent almost from their first meeting more than a decade earlier.

The breakup of their father-son relationship, therefore, must have been difficult for both men, though neither ever publicly acknowledged this fact. Jung made a few efforts to reconnect with Freud, including an indirect offer of assistance when Freud fled his beloved Vienna in the face of Nazi anti-Semitism, all of which Freud refused.

Within a few weeks, Jung had the first of a series of what proved to be prophetic dreams about a Europe at war. Alone on a train (he wrote many years later in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Recollections*), he saw a monstrous flood of bodies flow over Europe. Everywhere, the land was bathed in rivers of blood, and the Alps grew higher and higher to protect peaceful Switzerland.

A voice told him in a second such dream just a few days later: “Look at it well, it is wholly real and it will be so. You cannot doubt it.” Jung’s dark dreams continued, and within a year of the first dream the European powers were in fact embroiled in the first modern war, World War I.

Gradually over the next several years, Jung descended ever deeper into the unconscious. He feared he was going mad, and perhaps he did for awhile, but when he emerged from this phase he began a remarkably rich and fertile period that lasted until his death in 1961.

Although he produced more than a dozen papers during his “psychotic period”—almost all dealing with aspects of the unconscious—Jung’s principal conscious task was understanding what lay behind his differences with Freud. This work led to his theory of psychological types, which he published in 1921. Jung proposed that the seemingly random behavior of people can be explained as manifestations of distinct types.

First, Jung distinguished between the two “attitudes” of *extraversion* and *introversion* (he was the first to use these terms). In Jung’s typology, extraversion is the flow of psychological energy toward the outer world of action and people, while introversion is the flow of energy toward the inner world of images and ideas.

“The introvert’s attitude,” he wrote in *Psychological Types* (p. 330), “is an abstracting one; at bottom, he is always intent on withdrawing libido from the object, as though he had to prevent the object from gaining power over him. The extravert, on the contrary, has a positive relation to the object. He affirms its importance to such an extent that his subjective attitude is constantly related to and oriented by the object. The object can never have enough value for him, and its importance must always be increased.”

At the heart of Jung’s typology are the four “functions,” two of perceiving and two of making decisions (Jung said “judging”).

The two ways of perceiving the world are *sensation*, that is, using the physical senses of hearing, seeing, taste, and so on, and *intuition*, that “sixth sense” way of knowing. Sensates trust what they can experience directly and attend to details, whereas intuitives trust their hunches, their gut feel. Intuitives look for patterns and that which is not literal and real.

The two ways of making decisions (judging) are *thinking*, an objective method that relies on logic and analysis more oriented to things and abstractions, and *feeling*, a subjective approach with its own logic that is more focused on people and values.

Jung proposed that all people use both sensing and intuition to perceive and both thinking and feeling to judge but that one of these four functions is most natural and most highly developed and therefore most dominant. Suppose a person most favors thinking; in Jung's typology, this is a "thinking dominant." But the attitudes of extraversion and introversion also play a deciding role, so that an "extraverted thinking dominant" behaves differently from an "introverted thinking dominant."

The remaining three functions likewise belong to a hierarchy of development, from "auxiliary" to "tertiary" to "inferior." If the dominant function is one of the two judging functions—thinking, in the example given—then the auxiliary is one of the two perceiving functions, either sensation or intuition.

Jung did not describe the tertiary in any detail, but he spent considerable attention in *Psychological Types* on the inferior function. Unlike the dominant and, to a large extent the auxiliary, which function well within our conscious realm and are therefore under our conscious control, the inferior (and presumably the tertiary as well) reside principally in the unconscious, largely outside our conscious control.

As the dominant and auxiliary are the expressions of conscious ego, so the inferior and tertiary are the expressions of unconscious shadow. When we encounter the shadow, either aspects of our own or of another, we are therefore dealing with the inferior function—or, turned around, when we see someone under the spell of the inferior (that is, behaving out of sorts or unnaturally), we can know that the shadow is present.

Jung described eight psychological types, although Isabel Myers and her mother Katharine Briggs extended the typology to 16 types with the development (first begun in 1942) of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the most widely used psychological testing instrument in the world.

Though they have used the MBTI widely in organization development, counseling, and personal development for a quarter-century, practitioners have focused largely on the conscious realm of the dominant and auxiliary functions. There is much more to the psyche than the conscious ego—notably the unconscious shadow, that unwanted part of each of us that we hide, repress, and deny. Our psychological work is to invite the shadow to emerge from the darkness of the unconscious, for wholeness requires the integration of *all* parts of our Self. The largely undeveloped tertiary and (especially) inferior functions of one's personality type are closely connected with the unconscious shadow.

We can view Jung's typology as an interesting theoretical concept of people, behavior, and psychology, or we can explore it, as Jung did, to understand ourselves and others. Jung began work on his theory of types as a way to explain for himself his differences with Freud. From the vantage of his typology, Jung concluded that Freud, like himself, was a thinking dominant, but Freud was an extraverted thinking dominant with sensation as his auxiliary function, whereas he, Jung, was an introverted thinking dominant with intuition as his auxiliary function—a world of difference in the world of psychological types.

Typology is hard-won knowledge, and the MBTI typology often presents it in much too formula-fashion—yet, Jung's typology has much to commend it as we try to understand ourselves and others.