

## Psyche and Soul

### 1. Psyche

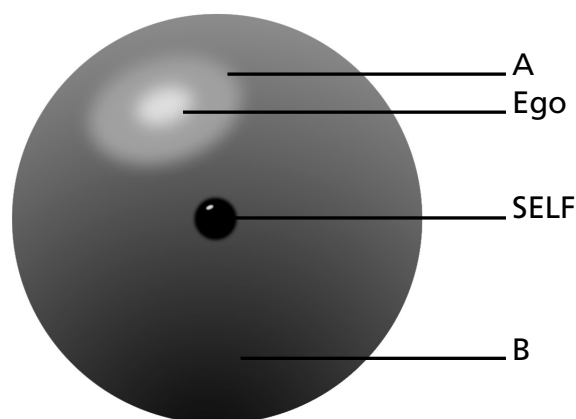
"Psyche" and "soul" are central concepts of analytical psychology. They were not clearly differentiated from each other by either Jung or Jungians. However, the basic concepts of a science should be defined as precisely as possible. Some 40 years ago Willy Obrist had already pointed out that analytical psychology was subject to a theoretical deficiency. The "Foundation for Analytical Psychology" ("*Stiftung für Analytische Psychologie*") was established in 1974 to address this weakness, but unfortunately the initiative petered out.

With other human sciences in mind, I will now follow on from Obrist to define the terms "psyche" and "soul" in more detail.

Let us start with "psyche". A few years after his separation from Freud, Jung discovered, by observations of himself and his clients, that the psyche is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, it is a living system centered in the unconscious. The autonomous and spontaneously active center of the whole psyche he called the *Self*. This affects people according to a broad, innate program that does not fundamentally change, but probably permits some modification.

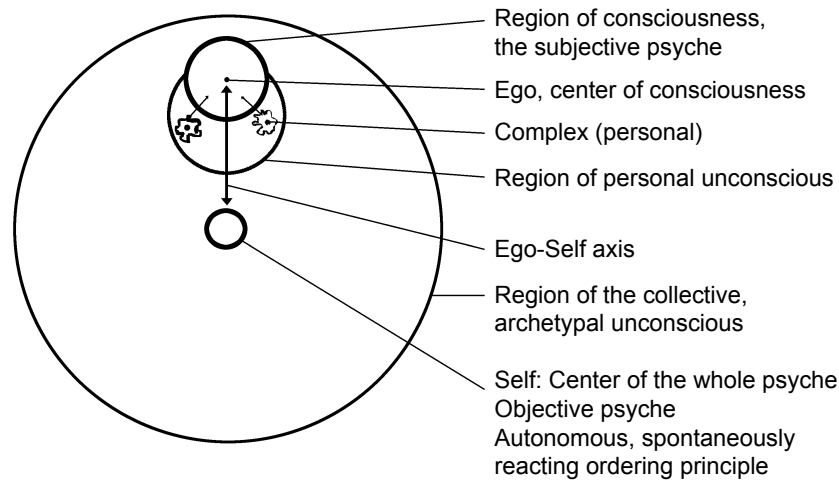
With this new view of the psyche Jung anticipated discoveries which would revolutionize biology half a century later. Today it turns out, as Obrist argued in 1990 in his book on archetypes, that Jung was one of the precursors of the systemic view of life. The ideas of pioneers are usually not fully mature because the new is initially *in statu nascendi*, in the process of emergence. Thus Jung never presented his model of the psyche in graphical form; that was done by Marie-Louise von Franz and Willy Obrist a few years after his death. Von Franz and Obrist knew each other, and met regularly from 1974 onwards in the "Research Council" ("*Forschungsrat*") of the Foundation for Analytical Psychology ("*Stiftung für Analytische Psychologie*"). They both worked on Jung's psyche model without the other's knowledge. Since their models are virtually identical, they are likely to reflect accurately Jung's picture of the psyche.

We first consider the model by ML von Franz (it is found in the book "Man and His Symbols", Special Issue, Walter-Verlag 1984<sup>7</sup>, p. 161):

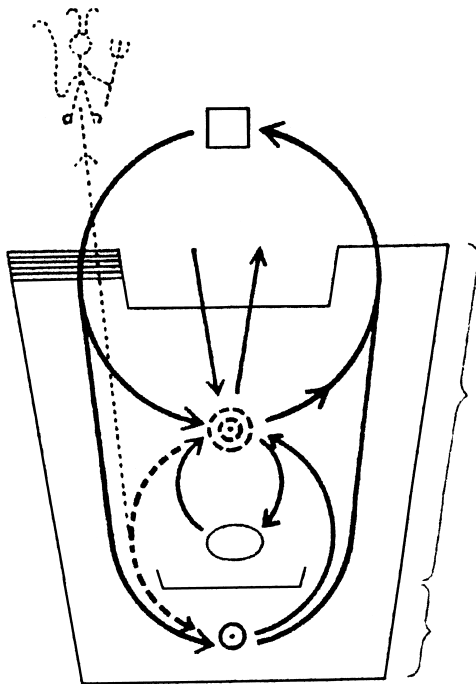


The psyche can be compared with a sphere whose surface has a light area (A) which represents consciousness. The ego is the centre of this area (then something is only in conscious awareness when "I" know it). The Self is simultaneously the core of the sphere and its totality (B); its regulatory processes generate dreams.

And now the model of Obrist (first published in: "The mutation of consciousness - from the archaic to today's understanding of self and world" (*Die Mutation des Bewusstseins - vom archaischen zum heutigen Selbst- und Weltverständnis*", Lang-Verlag, Bern, 1980, p. 223). Obrist showed this model in lectures at the C. G. Jung Institute in 1975.



Another model by Obrist shows the *information flow* in the psyche (ibid., p. 233):



The two brackets on the right indicate the size of the unconscious and the conscious area of the psyche with their centers, the Self and the ego. The larger, upper circle governs the unconscious on-going relationship between the external world and the Self; this is largely determined by an innate, phylogenetically acquired program.

The six lines at top left represent the sense organs with which external reality is perceived; these connect with both the Self *and* the ego.

An example: With our nose we experience certain scents consciously *and* unconsciously, but others, such as sexual attractants (pheromones) only unconsciously. These are already registered in minimal quantities, and their perception is forwarded to the brain, where the decision is taken: "I (the Self!) like - or hate! - how that person smells!" This "someone" only slowly becomes aware of this decision because the nerves that sense the sexual attractants and forward this information cannot, as neurological evidence has confirmed, be connected to

consciousness. He or she is, as they say, "slow on the uptake". It takes more or less time, depending on how well ego and Self are linked, until the unconsciously taken decision in the brain is realized by ego consciousness. Other scents, however, are relayed to both the Self *and* the ego; in these cases the "uptake" takes a little less long.

The two arrows indicate *extrasensory* perceptions and reactions. Sensitive people are somewhat aware of these sometimes.

The small inner circle regulates the *bodily household*.

More highly developed animals learn in the course of their lifetime. This learning is integrated in their being - sometimes even in the genetic material! In the human psyche consciousness comes more into play. This is increasingly important with age. In infants it is only nascent. In the course of development the ego disengages from the unconscious and builds its own domain; it is now "big and strong" ... Sometimes it overestimates its own power and uncouples from the Self, so that ego and Self drift apart from one another. This creates the psychological tensions, and thus the neurotic and psychosomatic diseases, that are now rampant. We live in overstretched times; ego and Self, man and nature, are dissociating.

Our schema also explains the phenomenon of *projection*:

There is a devil in the diagram. It does not live outside, it is *projected outward*. In reality it is an internal image, an archetype that here, much as a vision, dream or waking fantasy would, flows from the Self to the ego. Because it is not a product of the ego, it is naively taken to be a concrete reality that exists outside, and independently of, us.

Depth psychology provides evidence that this is not the case. It has introduced the expression "projection" into the vernacular. Previously we could not see through what happens in projection. We called projections "imagination" or "illusions". If someone held fast to a claim, even though it was obvious that he was mistaken, he was thought to be a fantasist or a fanatic, or to be possessed by a "spirit" that had to be expelled (exorcised). At other times projections were tacitly accepted, especially when they bore the stamp of authority. Then, for example, in the intoxication of a collective projection, the Jews were demonized, the "*Führer*" glorified, and so on. Wars are always based on collective projections through which the opponents are demonized. They are nightmares, in which reason is incapable of action. We only wake up when everything has been destroyed.

Depth psychology calls for the *withdrawal of the projection*. This is an existential appeal for ethical maturity and humility. Now, are depth psychologists - not least training analysts! - especially insightful people to whom self-righteous (Pharisaic) arrogance is foreign? Of course not. It is not enough to intellectually understand the process of projection; one must understand this also with the heart and apply it to oneself *existentially* - and there often lies the rub.

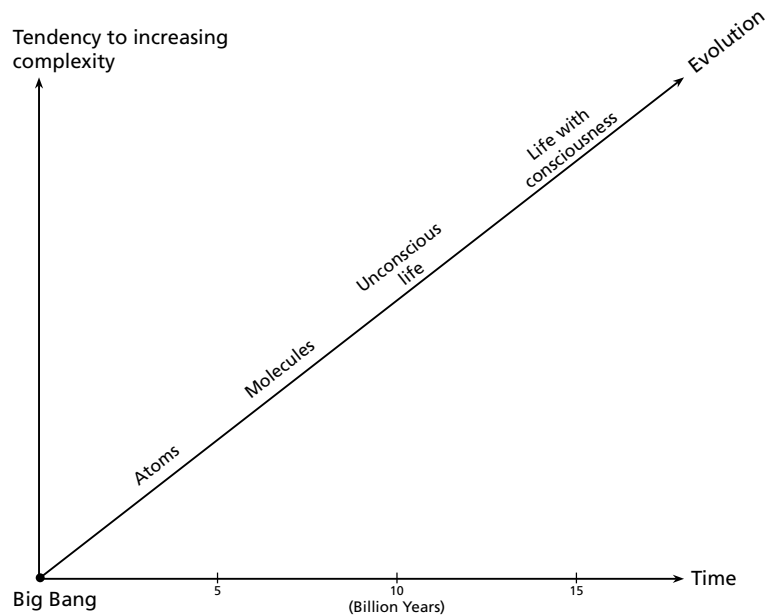
By the way, what depth psychology today can show empirically (scientifically) was realised by sages throughout history. Think of the famous Bible verse against the Pharisees: "Why, then, do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the log in your own eye?" (Matthew 7<sub>3</sub>)! The phenomenon of projection has long been known, but today it can be *explained* scientifically.

The call to modesty and humility is also very old. It is an existential requirement of the spiritual schools of the ancients which rightly still exist today, and is still a part of the program of spiritual maturation.

Another feature of the psyche reveals an aspect of *evolution*:

When giant molecules came together to form a new whole for the first time, *unconscious life* suddenly appeared in the universe. It was spontaneously active, autonomous, self-organizing and reproducing "matter". This sparked what the Basel biologist Adolf Portmann defined as "inwardness", *the unconscious psyche*, which in the course of evolution grew up into the human psyche. This is the product of an inconceivably long biological development. Its basic structure remained the same, despite the enormous increase in complexity: it still accepts inputs and processes them using an innate program through which, as we now know, it is constantly changing. Experiences can be reflected in DNA! Such central data processing was carried out until the appearance of the human unconscious. Then came *conscious* integration which suddenly illuminated *life with awareness*.

### Diagram of overall evolution



The dawn of awareness is a *"Little Bang"*. This happened almost 15 billion years after the *Big Bang* of the universe. With it, life began the process of conscious self-reflection. The mirror image that humans build up in the course of their mental development is continually improved through acquisition of knowledge. This is now happening so rapidly that we no longer know all that we know. The evolution of consciousness is now out of control. The over-specialized sciences do not know what others know. That is why inter- and transdisciplinary dialogue is now a must.

For us this includes the acknowledgement of a neurological discovery of great importance: the neurobiology and brain researcher Gino Gschwend discovered the material aspect of the Self manifesting in the central nervous system. He found a vast network of neurons in the brain whose function is overall system integration. Obrist says:

*"Neurobiology has identified the central nervous system substrate in which the centering of the total psyche takes place. The Swiss physiologist Walter R. Hess (Nobel Prize 1949) ... in his old age took up the idea put forward by his English colleague Charles Sherrington (Nobel Prize 1932) that there is a total system integration in the cerebrum. He left the exploration of this system - called the "integrator" for short - to his younger employee Gino Gschwend, a passionate brain researcher. ... Gschwend formulated the functional anatomy, as well as the basic structure, of the integrator, which comprises 70% of brain neurons in humans. ... The integrator is the command centre of an entire hierarchy of unconsciously operating autonomic integration centers. It has a complete overview. It receives (as input) all of the pre-processed sensory information about the external world, as well as information on the status of the musculoskeletal system, the state of the visceral system, and the sleep-wake system. Only the integrator has an overview of all other values too: those that are genetically determined (the species-typical pattern), and memories of the results of previous learning. It also receives instinctual impulses. All of this enables it to come up with a customized pattern of action appropriate to the totality of the current situation."* (*"Die Natur - Quelle von Ethik und Sinn"*, p. 296 f.).

Gschwend's discovery points to a neurological Self. Now this can no longer be dismissed as the mere speculation of a "mystic" (as Jung was often labelled). The integrator is the material, and the Self the psychic, aspect of the same system.

The phylogenetic objective psyche and the conscious mind maturing in the course of cultural evolution and socialization *must work together*. When ego and Self are not networked, the psyche dissociates and becomes sick. The healing of mental illness is *psychotherapy*. Now, mental illnesses are often not only individually, but also socially, determined. Therefore depth psychology should also be active in the public domain. It not only has the task of healing the mentally ill individual, but also to promote the mental health of society, in which it teaches how to connect ego and Self, and man and nature, with each other. In addition to psychotherapy with individuals, it therefore also has a *public* responsibility.

This was once the role of *religion*. Jung once called religions "the psychotherapeutic systems of old." They were actually collectively binding psycho-hygienic institutions that linked ego and Self, that connected people with their inner nature, and thus ensured the mental health of the collective.

It was believed, however, that there were *otherworldly* powers that accompanied people through life. According to current knowledge, there are archetypes and the Self, to guide us through life on a long leash. Just as religious people once collectively submitted to the divine will to get to heaven, so now they submit individually to the program of their Self to live in harmony with themselves and with nature. This is contemporary spirituality. Such people are no longer helped by collective religion, but by sound mental health (according to the criteria of depth psychology), educational psychotherapy, or spirituality. Building up this contemporary framework is just as important as individual psychotherapy.

So much for the word "psyche".

In the next hour we turn to the *relationship* between the ego and the Self. Erich Neumann, the most influential Jungian scholar in Palestine, called this the "ego-Self axis." In cybernetic terminology this could be called the "ego-Self loop" (there is feedback between ego and Self).

Yet another word for the relationship between ego and Self would be "soul".

Find out more after the break.

## 2. Soul

"Soul" is more difficult to define than "psyche".

"Soul" is a religious term that comes from the archaic-mythical world view. Because this disintegrated in the wake of the triumph of modern science, the idea of soul is now confused. It is in a fundamental state of upheaval, that is, a process of death and rebirth.

In my opinion there are two possibilities:

1. If the word is mostly understood in its traditional (archaic mythical) sense, it should be deleted from the vocabulary of depth psychology. If this is not done, the word "soul" is shared between two incompatible world views, and that leads to the confusion that is rampant today.

2. On the other hand, if "soul" is already a largely empty, meaningless term, it can be redefined and undergoes a *metamorphosis*. The soul, believed to be dead, can "rise" in a new form, and we can again speak of it if we make it clear that we are referring to the the *new, modern* understanding of "soul".

I would now like to describe the metamorphosis of the term "soul" in more detail. At the end we can discuss with each other whether the time is ripe for it.

A look back at history helps us to appreciate clearly the change in meaning of the word "soul". In archaic-mythical societies, religions provided for the salvation of the soul. They enjoyed a monopoly of ministry, and saw to it that the soul found its way to heaven. All who abided by the collectively binding religious rules need not fear the Day of Judgement, and were confident that they were bound for heaven, not hell (the entrance into eternal life was delayed by a stay in purgatory, but this could be shortened through church rites).

So far, so good. This *was once* the path of the soul to God. This vision, valid for tens of thousands of years, has now unstoppably and irreversibly crumbled. The institutions responsible for spiritual welfare are being abandoned. They face an implosion. Their decline began in Europe and has become globalized today. In the long run there is no remedy for the world-wide death of religion. All collective religions will be replaced in the future by individual religiosity. The reason for this is the relentless march of evolution of consciousness according to the laws of nature. Obrist has empirically validated this, as mentioned earlier (for time reasons I cannot elaborate on this here).

So much for the established, traditional conception of the soul.

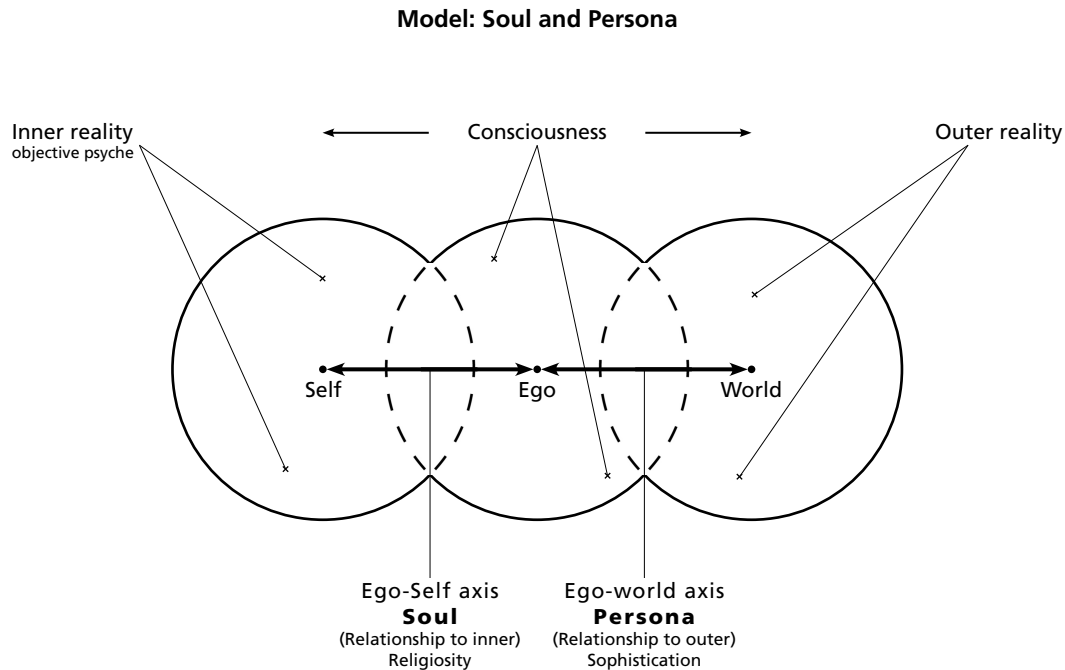
Turning to its reinvention as a scientifically based concept, Jung made a valuable contribution. He once defined "soul" *purely empirically*: he described it as any complex of consciousness that turns inwards (GW 6, § 877f). Annette Müller explains: "With 'soul' Jung described a demarcated functional complex of consciousness, namely that which turns towards inner mental processes, in contrast to the persona which is oriented towards the outer object." (Dictionary of Analytical Psychology; *Wörterbuch der Analytischen Psychologie, Patmos 2003, p. 375*).

With this secular definition Jung disturbed the academic truce which had been based on an agreement that the disciplines of theology and depth psychology should not encroach on each other's territory. Jung did not care about that. Mythology speaking, he was a modern Prometheus who stole from heaven. Until then, soul was exclusively in the domain of theology. Jung stole soul from there and brought it to mortals. He handed over soul to secular science. With his sacrilegious *secularization of the soul* Jung was not destroying it, as Feuerbach, Marx and the materialist atheists had. He just wanted to understand it *scientifically*. However, his assault was viewed as evil by the traditional religious orders! Unfortunately Jung soon abandoned his Promethean ideas. His belief in the eternal life of the soul led him to conclude that, if the soul lives forever, it can not be defined in secular

terms. It is then more than just a "demarcated functional complex of consciousness," more than merely "awareness of the objective psyche".

But if one stays with Jung's ingenious idea, and therefore drops the archaic-mythical idea of the eternal life of the soul, it undergoes a *metamorphosis*. It dies, and is resurrected in a new form.

Jung's redefinition of the soul can be graphically represented as follows:



Once soul linked mortal life in the "flesh" with the eternal bliss of the "spirit". But *now* it is the bridge between the subjective and the objective psyche, between young (in evolutionary terms) consciousness and the old, phylogenetically acquired unconscious with its archetypes and self-organizing principle. Soul now links the ego and the Self. It is no longer a concrete being that detaches from the mortal shell after the death of the body and flies into the next world. It is now that area of consciousness that begins the turn towards the inner life and gives it depth and meaning. "Soul" is an *existential* concept. It is no good merely to know every theory about the soul; one must also *live* the relationship between the ego and the Self.

The inner images in dreams, visions, or fantasies that one experiences through introversion, are not regarded today *concretely* as otherworldly powers which exist independently of us, but are understood *symbolically* as pictorial, self-explanatory illustrations of invisible psychic realities. The life of the soul is a living spirituality. The outer otherworld of old has transformed into an inner otherworld. Through becoming aware of one's own psyche the ego first encounters its shadow, then the female or male primordial images of the psyche, the archetypes, and finally the Self. This consciously chosen way to the inside is Jung's *individuation process*.

Someone who maintains contact with the inner world lives a religious life. Someone who maintains contact with the outer world lives a sophisticated life. The two poles of life should complement, not exclude, each other. They must cooperate. Every human being has a nun or a monk in them (the desire for a communal life) as well as a "worldly person" (the life in the persona). The inner and the outer world should permeate one another; meditation must be daily, and daily life must be meditation.

The *persona* is the counterpart to the soul. The objective *external world* exists in addition to the objective *inner world*. To be at home there too, the ego has to turn outwards, function in an extraverted mode, and maintain the *persona*. For extraverts this is not a problem: "*Aussen fix, innen nix!*" This is the danger for the extraverts: Keep up appearances, but inside nothing! Whoever neglects the psyche submits to the pull of the *persona*. Spiritual atrophy is generally associated with a compensating hypertrophy of the *persona*. Behind a perfect *persona*, often is languishing a neglected soul.

Once religion warned: "Set your hearts on *his* kingdom first" (Matthew 6<sub>33</sub>)! Or Mark 8<sub>36</sub>: "Do people gain anything if they win the whole world but lose their soul?" A rich grain farmer (Luke 12<sub>16ff.</sub>), who invested his energy entirely in the external world, died unexpectedly. On the day of reckoning he must acknowledge that all his toil was a waste of time. Now not only has he none of his money, but he must still go to hell anyway because he neglected to care for his soul. "This is how it is with those who pile up riches for themselves but are not rich in God's sight" (Luke 12<sub>21</sub>). The end is "wailing and gnashing of teeth"... The Bible touches a sore spot, but then who believes in hell any more ...?

Previously, introversion was not so neglected as it is now. Religion, which at that time was still alive, kept people looking inward with the "eye of the soul" and listening inside with the "ear of the mind". Apart from the now outdated belief in dogmas, it taught a religious *attitude*: care in dealing with the inner world. This is still important, even indispensable, for human maturation. Unfortunately, along with the demise of the old religious *ideas*, the religious *attitude*, the existential aspect of religion, also disappeared. In other words, with the disintegration of religion the life of the soul decayed. We live in a soulless time, we have forgotten how to look inward. Yet conscious introversion leads to "salvation", to spiritual wholeness and maturity.

No longer must man go to heaven, but into the depths, to himself. With a contemporary, grounded spirituality we might be able to overcome the superficial and squalid aspects of our age and start a new aeon in which the psyche is taken seriously again.

To take the objective psyche seriously was the main concern of Jung too. We Jungians are still required to do so, even if the theory nowadays is somewhat different from what Jung envisaged almost a century ago.

With that I have come to the end of my explanation of the term "soul".

As I said earlier, I would now like to discuss with you the two aforementioned options. Should we remove "soul" from our vocabulary, or fill it with new life? Should we bury it or revive it? What is appropriate for our time?

May I hear your views on this? Who would like to start?