

Evelyn's Archetypes in Reid's *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*

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ABSTRACT

Personality is inherently adaptive, often shifting in response to environmental demands to meet expectations, gain recognition, and ensure survival. This concept is illustrated through the character of Evelyn Hugo, a Hollywood actress whose life is fraught with drama and controversy, in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*. This study adopts a psychoanalytic approach grounded in Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious to examine how archetypes are represented in Evelyn's character. It further investigates the extent to which her past experiences shape the emergence of these archetypes. The analysis draws upon selected dialogues, monologues, and narrative elements that align with the study's objectives. The findings reveal that Evelyn's personality is expressed through four major Jungian archetypes: persona, shadow, animus, and self, all of which are significantly influenced by her psychological trauma and formative life experiences.

Keywords: Archetype, Collective Unconscious, Personality

INTRODUCTION

The complex dynamics between authentic identity and public image serve as a central theme in Taylor Jenkins Reid's *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*. Beyond portraying Hollywood drama, the novel explores the psychological struggles of film industry figures in crafting fabricated personas to meet societal standards while concealing their vulnerabilities. The pressure to maintain a public image often compels individuals—especially public figures—to construct alternative narratives of their lives. In the glamorous realm of Hollywood, where constant scrutiny turns every appearance into a performance, the tension between authenticity and image becomes inseparable, reflecting the hidden realities behind celebrity façades shaped to satisfy public expectations.

Published in 2017, Reid's historical fiction novel gained renewed attention in 2022 and entered the Top 25 Best Seller list in 2023. Translated into over 20 languages, the novel provides a rich framework for exploring sociocultural issues, particularly the psychological and identity-related challenges behind the Hollywood spotlight. Set during the golden age of Hollywood (1950s–1980s), Evelyn Hugo's character echoes real-life celebrities and their entanglement in social controversies of the era (Lotta, 2024). Although she achieves stardom, Evelyn's journey reveals deep internal conflicts, personal sacrifices, and secrets she conceals to maintain her image as a fashion icon and public figure. In her interview with journalist Monique Grant, Evelyn recounts a career shaped by betrayal, arranged marriages, concealed identities, and a carefully constructed persona (Damayanti, 2023).

In 1921, Carl Jung introduced his theory of the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious, and the process of individuation in his seminal work *Psychological Types*. Following this publication, Jung embarked on journeys to various countries where he engaged directly with indigenous and so-called "primitive" communities in order to empirically observe and test his hypotheses on archetypes (Leigh, 2011). While Freud proposed that the basic structure of the human psyche consists of the id, ego, and superego, Jung offered a different perspective by dividing the psyche into three distinct dimensions. The first dimension is consciousness, encompassing the ego and personal memories. The second is the personal unconscious, which contains complexes, and the deepest layer is the collective unconscious, which houses the archetypes (Karakas & Karaaziz, 2024). The concept of persona, central to this narrative, is rooted in Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology. A former student of Freud, Jung developed his own theoretical framework following ideological disagreements (Vibhute & Kumar, 2024). In *Psychological Types* (1921), he introduced the notion of the personal and collective unconscious, encompassing archetypes and the process of individuation (Leigh, 2011). Jung posited that the unconscious comprises both individual and inherited elements, the latter forming the collective unconscious. Archetypes—such as the persona, shadow, anima/animus, and self—are universal symbolic patterns shaping human behavior (Hull, 1975), and they play a pivotal role in understanding Evelyn's character development throughout the novel.

Jung (1959) explained that archetypes are natural forces that drive humans to act unconsciously. They connect instinct and reality, shaping behavior, emotions, and even personality. The persona, according to Jung, is the social mask people wear to interact with others while keeping their true self hidden. It highlights selected traits to adapt to social situations and build connections. Jung compared the persona to ancient theater masks that change to fit different roles. It helps people show different sides of themselves while protecting vulnerable parts behind a symbolic mask. Hopwood (2017) stated that the persona develops from childhood as people adapt to family, teachers, and peers. As a result, socially accepted traits appear, while unwanted traits become part of the shadow.

One of Jung's archetypes similar to Freud's instinct theory is the shadow, which stores the unwanted parts of the self. The persona and shadow work together like two sides of a coin, balancing light and dark traits. The shadow holds emotions and desires that clash with the conscious ego and are often suppressed. Jung (1969) said the shadow represents what people refuse to accept but still affects them directly or indirectly. The shadow comes from primal instincts and is described by Jung as a wild, chaotic force. It appears when negative feedback lowers self-esteem or when an overly strong ego leads to pride and a hunger for power.

Jung believed the human psyche contains both masculine and feminine sides in everyone. The anima is the feminine aspect in men, while the animus is the masculine side in women. The anima shapes how men see women, influenced by mothers, sisters, or partners, and appears as sensitivity and creativity. The animus gives women logical, assertive traits, shaped by fathers, brothers, or male partners. The Self is the core archetype that unites all parts of the mind into a whole, balanced personality. Jung saw the Self as the key to a complete identity, blending the conscious and unconscious mind. The Self emerges when a person accepts every part of themselves without hiding anything, reaching self-realization. Jung stressed that the conscious and unconscious mind must work in tension but harmony to keep inner balance.

Several prior studies have examined Taylor Jenkins Reid's *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* from various perspectives. The first, by Lotta (2024), titled *Behind the Glitter – Fabricated History and Problems of Stardom*, employs a postmodernist approach to analyze the

novel's mock-autobiographical style and critique the manufactured nature of celebrity culture. Lotta highlights the hyper-realistic parallels between the fictional Evelyn Hugo and real-life figures who inspired her character, as well as the media's role in shaping a flawless public persona. The study also warns against the idolization of public figures whose identities are based on fabricated images. The second study, conducted by Wagner (2023), titled *Exploring Intersectionality in Taylor Jenkins Reid's The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo: Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, and Class in the Life of a Hollywood Icon*, draws on Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality. Wagner explores how overlapping social identities—such as gender, race, class, and sexuality—generate both structural inequalities and privileges in Evelyn's life. The study finds that intersectionality grants Evelyn certain career advantages, but also forces her to compromise key aspects of her identity. Wagner also applies concepts of autobiography to analyze the narrative features and genre conventions used in the novel. Another relevant study is by Damayanti (2023), titled *The Representation of Women's Oppression in Reid's The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, which applies a sociological lens along with Iris Young's theory of oppression. The research identifies five forms of oppression experienced by Evelyn and Monique—namely marginalization, exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (physical, sexual, and psychological). The study finds that workplace settings serve as the primary site of oppression, influenced heavily by the characters' social identities.

The complexity and unpredictability of Evelyn Hugo's character offer a compelling foundation for further personality analysis. A review of the aforementioned studies reveals a research gap: no prior work has specifically examined the novel through a psychological framework. To address this, the present study employs Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology—particularly his theory of the collective unconscious—to interpret Evelyn's archetypal character structure as a Hollywood star entangled in controversies and internalized desires. This research further seeks to trace the influence of Evelyn's past experiences on the development of her archetypes.

METHOD

This section outlines the research methodology employed to analyze the data in accordance with the study's objectives and to address the stated research questions. The study adopts a qualitative literary criticism design with a psychoanalytic orientation, specifically focusing on Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology. This design is selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of Evelyn Hugo's personality representation, tracing how her formative experiences influence the development of archetypal patterns. By adopting this approach, the study not only investigates Evelyn's inner psychology but also situates her character within broader cultural and historical discourses.

The research is primarily grounded in Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, with emphasis on the archetypes of persona, shadow, animus, and self. These four archetypes provide a framework for interpreting the dualities within Evelyn's character, such as the tension between her private and public selves, repression and desire, or fragmentation and wholeness. To enrich this framework, Abrams' expressive theory of literature is also employed, linking Evelyn's characterization to her cultural, historical, and psychological contexts. This combined perspective ensures that Evelyn is analyzed both as a fictional construction and as a representation shaped by societal narratives, particularly those of gender, race, and fame in twentieth-century Hollywood.

The primary data for this study are drawn from Taylor Jenkins Reid's novel *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* (2017, Atria Books, paperback edition, 389 pages). The novel's complex narrative structure and focus on Evelyn's self-narration provide rich material for analysis. Secondary data include scholarly articles, theses, and books that discuss Jungian theory, archetypes, celebrity and persona studies, as well as prior studies on Reid's work. These sources provide theoretical grounding, comparative perspectives, and critical insights that support the interpretation of the primary text.

Data were collected through close reading of the novel, emphasizing narrative elements, dialogues, monologues, reflective passages, and paratextual cues that reveal Evelyn's psychological complexity. Dialogues were analyzed for the ways they convey Evelyn's internal conflict and her strategies of self-presentation; monologues and reflective sections were examined to uncover unconscious drives and suppressed emotions; and narrative descriptions were studied for their role in shaping her public image and highlighting her struggles with identity. Paratextual features, such as chapter framing and transitions, were also considered in reinforcing archetypal meaning. Extracted passages were organized into evidence units, each consisting of a quotation or paraphrase, contextual notes, and an analytical memo. A purposive sampling strategy ensured that only data relevant to the research questions were included. To maintain coherence, the data were reduced and classified according to archetypal categories and themes related to Evelyn's trauma, ensuring consistent presentation throughout the analysis.

The analytical process employed the TEEL strategy (Topic, Explanation, Evidence, Link). First, each evidence unit was categorized under one of Jung's archetypal structures. Second, its psychological meaning was explained. Third, textual evidence was presented to illustrate the archetype. Finally, findings were linked back to Evelyn's overall archetypal development and the research questions. For the first research question, evidence of archetypes was analyzed through a psychoanalytic lens, while for the second, the analysis considered the interplay between Evelyn's past trauma, the novel's plot, and other intrinsic elements. To deepen interpretation, the archetypal findings were contextualized within Hollywood's gender and racial discourses from the 1950s to the 1980s, ensuring that Evelyn's character was understood not only as an individual psyche but also as a socially conditioned construct.

Credibility was enhanced through triangulation across three perspectives: Jungian archetypes, celebrity/persona studies, and feminist/critical race frameworks. Analytical memos were maintained to document interpretive decisions, increasing transparency. Negative-case analysis was employed to test competing archetypal interpretations, while thick description of cultural and historical contexts supported transferability and reader evaluation of the findings.

Because this study relies exclusively on a published text, no human participants were involved, and no direct ethical risks were anticipated. Nevertheless, limitations remain, particularly regarding the interpretive nature of archetypal attribution and the dramatized qualities of Reid's fiction. To mitigate these issues, the study emphasizes analytic rigor, systematic classification, and textual warrant, ensuring that findings are well-grounded and persuasive. Through this methodology, the study systematically examines Evelyn Hugo's archetypal structures and demonstrates how her personal history contributes to their emergence, both as individual psychological symbols and as cultural representations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides a detailed elaboration of the analysis results in order to comprehensively address the first research question. Specifically, it applies Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious as a theoretical framework to examine how the various archetypes manifest within the character of Evelyn in the novel. Through this lens, the study explores the psychological dimensions of Evelyn's persona, shadow, animus, and self, highlighting how these archetypal patterns contribute to the development of her character and reflect broader themes within the narrative.

Persona Archetype in Evelyn's Character

Jung's theory of persona refers to the social mask that an individual presents to the public, meticulously constructed to create an extraordinary impression that facilitates the achievement of desired social goals and expectations. In the context of the novel, Evelyn embodies a public persona as a renowned Hollywood actress and fashion icon with a remarkably illustrious career, yet her private life is characterized by romantic scandals. Evelyn evidently succeeds in maintaining this persona over a considerable duration. Decades later, her name remains iconic and continues to be a prominent subject in public discourse, especially across celebrity news portals and fashion magazine articles, as exemplified by the excerpt below.

"By 1955, she had made her way to Hollywood, gone blond, and been rechristened Evelyn Hugo. Almost overnight, Hugo became a member of Hollywood elite." (Reid, 2017)

This passage distinctly represents Jung's concept of persona as embodied by Evelyn. According to Jungian archetypal theory, the persona functions as a social façade adopted by individuals to conform to environmental demands. The phrase "she had made her way to Hollywood" illustrates Evelyn's deliberate efforts to forge a career as an actress by altering both her physical appearance and personal identity. Related to this identity transformation, the phrase "been rechristened Evelyn Hugo" alludes to the alteration of Evelyn's surname from 'Herera' to 'Hugo', a strategic modification intended to render her name more familiar to the American public and more memorable to the Hollywood audience. This change further reflects Evelyn's willingness to embrace her newly constructed persona, which was cultivated and managed by the agency representing her. Although the development of a persona is often misconstrued as burdensome or as compromising one's authentic desires, an optimally developed persona is essential for individuals to adapt effectively to their environments and fulfill their psychological functions.

The expression "gone blond" refers to Evelyn's physical transformation aimed at emulating the 1950s Hollywood beauty stereotype that idealized the "blond" girl, associated with glamorous appearance, fair skin, and sexual attractiveness. In this context, Evelyn's strategy to dye her hair blond was intended to obscure her immigrant features and Cuban ethnic heritage. By embodying the image of a blond woman, Evelyn sought access to Hollywood's exclusive social strata. The concluding sentence of the excerpt clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of Evelyn's fabricated persona strategy, aligning with Jung's assertion that the persona serves as a survival mechanism and a conduit through which individuals acquire power over others.

“A style icon of the ‘50s, turned sexpot in the ‘60s and ‘70s, and Oscar winner in the ‘80s, Hugo made a name for herself with her voluptuous figure, her daring film roles, and her tumultuous love life.” (Reid, 2017)

The quotation above is one of Hollywood media's portrayals of Evelyn. The media presented Evelyn as a public figure with various personas that represented important phases in her career while highlighting her personal life as a celebrity. The phrase “a style icon of the '50s” describes Evelyn's success at the beginning of her career. The term “icon” reflects how she became a representative of the fashion industry and an influencer of her time. During this period, Evelyn built a strong persona as a Hollywood star through her charming physical appearance, glamorous image, and striking outfits that always attracted public attention. As part of the entertainment industry, she was required to look perfect in order to gain media attention and maintain her popularity. This is in line with the concept of persona in Jung's theory, which emphasizes that persona functions as a social mask to meet public demands and create a good impression. Evelyn, as a newcomer actress, took advantage of this momentum as a strategy to create an image that was attractive and desirable to the public.

Furthermore, the quote also contains the phrase “turned sexpot in the '60s and '70s,” which marks a change in Evelyn's persona as another strategy in her career development. This change continues with the phrase “her daring film roles,” which shows that after her success as a fashion icon, Evelyn began to take on controversial roles as a leading actress with a sensual and explicit image. The label “sexpot” attached to her reflects the patriarchal view of society that places Evelyn as a sex symbol and an object of bodily exploitation. This transformation of persona is not merely a form of self-expression, but also a strategy to maintain relevance in the film industry, which demands actresses with seductive and sensual appearances. Evelyn used her physical attractiveness—her “exciting body”—as her main asset to meet market expectations. Theoretically, Evelyn's move was in line with Jung's view that a persona can change to suit the social context and situations faced by an individual.

The final stage of Evelyn's image as remembered by the media is captured in the phrase “Oscar winner in the '80s,” which marks the peak of her career when she achieved the highest recognition in the film industry through an Oscar award. This persona affirms Evelyn as an actress who is not only rich and sensual, but also talented and professional. However, throughout her career, Evelyn also used manipulation strategies regarding her personal life to maintain media attention. The phrase “her tumultuous love life” refers to Evelyn's controversial love life with seven marriages. She used public attention to celebrity gossip as part of constructing a persona that was attractive to the media and supported her image in the films she starred in. Thus, Evelyn's success in winning an Oscar also illustrates her determination to control the narrative of her life in the public eye. This is closely related to Jung's theory, which asserts that individuals can use their persona to perform at their best while leaving a positive impression on society.

Shadow Archetype in Evelyn's Character

Jung posits that within an individual's psyche, archetypes manifest as dualistic elements, akin to two sides of the same coin. The shadow archetype directly opposes the persona, which represents the socially acceptable, positive façade. Consequently, the shadow embodies the darker aspects of the self, rooted in primal instincts. It encompasses repressed emotions, morally questionable behaviors, desires conflicting with societal norms, and the authentic identity that fails to meet external expectations.

In the case of Evelyn, a widely admired Hollywood star whose daily life is heavily scrutinized by the media, numerous personal sacrifices are made to uphold a persona that aligns with industry demands and advances her career ambitions. This unconscious condition fosters the development of Evelyn's shadow archetype as the embodiment of suppressed feelings and desires hidden from public view. Throughout her career, Evelyn has been subject to media gossip, particularly regarding her seven controversial marriages. During an interview session with Monique, Evelyn confesses to feelings and desires known only to a close circle of family members.

"Evelyn, who was your great love? You can tell me." Evelyn looks out of the window, breathes in deeply, and then says, "Celia St. James." (Reid, 2017)

The aforementioned excerpt is drawn from the dialogue between Evelyn and Monique, the journalist appointed to write her biography. Monique's question, "Evelyn, who was your great love?" serves as a pivotal moment in unveiling Evelyn's shadow. For much of her career, Evelyn bore the consequences of concealing aspects of herself that could jeopardize her reputation. One of these hidden facets is her true sexual orientation, as revealed in her response naming "Celia St. James." This disclosure confirms Evelyn's bisexuality, indicating her attraction to both men and women. Her romantic relationship with Celia, a fellow actress and colleague, remained a closely guarded secret.

Evelyn's body language, described as "Evelyn looks out of the window, breathes in deeply," signifies the emotional weight and deliberation behind her decision to openly acknowledge her romantic interest. At the time, Hollywood's conservative society deemed bisexuality abnormal and stigmatized, compelling Evelyn to conceal this aspect of her identity. Her understanding of sexual deviance reflects the powerful influence of dominant social dogmas shaping her mindset. This case exemplifies the shadow archetype, consistent with Jung's explanation that the shadow encompasses individual identities misaligned with prevailing societal norms. To preserve her private life, Evelyn maintained a fabricated narrative of heterosexuality throughout her career. Despite evident romantic involvement with Celia, she consciously portrayed herself as exclusively attracted to men to conform to societal expectations of 'normal' womanhood, albeit at odds with her authentic desires. Her multiple controversial marriages—seven in total—served to reinforce her popularity in Hollywood. Evelyn sacrificed both her own happiness and that of Celia, deliberately concealing her sexual orientation from the public. Nevertheless, she consciously chose this path without regret to sustain her position within the Hollywood industry.

To conceal her personal life, Evelyn maintained a false narrative as a heterosexual woman throughout most of her career. Although previous details indicate that Evelyn had a romantic relationship with Celia, she chose to portray herself as a woman who was only interested in men. She did this in order to conform to society's view of a "normal woman," even though it was contrary to her own desires. Evelyn was involved in various controversial romantic relationships with a number of men, even marrying seven times in order to gain popularity in Hollywood. To achieve this goal, Evelyn was willing to sacrifice her own happiness and her relationship with Celia by refusing to reveal it to the public, deliberately keeping her sexual orientation in the shadows. However, in order to secure her position in the film industry, Evelyn consciously chose this path without regret.

Evelyn's statement, *"I don't regret many of the lies I told or the people I hurt"* (Reid, 2017), confirms her choice to hide her sexual orientation. This sentence describes Evelyn's

shadow aspect, the dark and destructive side of her personality that she uses to gain a solid position in society. The phrase “I don't regret many of the lies I told” shows that Evelyn has no regrets about lying about her bisexual orientation by presenting herself as a heterosexual woman who has been married seven times and experienced several divorces. This is because Evelyn considers her relationship with Celia to be a weakness that could potentially damage her public reputation.

Evelyn's shadow aspect is further emphasized by the phrase “or the people I hurt,” which reflects her lack of remorse for hurting Celia's feelings by hiding their relationship. She also shows no guilt towards her ex-husbands for never acknowledging her identity as a queer woman. This attitude shows the extent to which Evelyn is willing to suppress certain aspects of her identity as a survival mechanism. This dark side of Evelyn represents Jung's concept of shadow, which is the fragile and hidden reality of the self, due to pressure from external factors surrounding the individual.

Animus Archetype in Evelyn's Character

Jung posits that every woman harbors a masculine aspect within her psyche, which functions as a counterpart to her femininity. Fundamentally, the animus archetype encompasses the feelings, ideas, images, and motivational drives within a woman that relate to traditionally masculine qualities such as provision, corporate success, dominance, and assertiveness. According to Jung, the animus originates from a woman's accumulated experiences of contact with masculinity, primarily shaped through interactions with men in her environment, which subsequently form an internalized representation.

“I was gorgeous, even at fourteen. Oh, I know the whole world prefers a woman who doesn't know her power, but I'm sick of all that.” (Reid, 2017)

Within the context of Evelyn's character, the animus frequently manifests in her thoughts through expressions of masculine qualities, including rationality, courage, strategic thinking, and authority. The cited passage exemplifies Evelyn's animus as reflected in her social critique and her defiance against patriarchal norms. The statement, “the whole world prefers a woman who doesn't know her power,” encapsulates the cultural backdrop in which Evelyn was raised—an environment that undermined women's capabilities and constrained their potential. This assertion reveals Evelyn's masculine strength, characterized by critical thinking aimed at challenging a society that favors passive, obedient, and underdeveloped women.

Evelyn's interactions with numerous men have contributed to the formation of her animus, which is powerfully conveyed in her declaration, “I'm sick of all that,” this expression embodies her assertiveness and willingness to confront patriarchal expectations by demanding space and status within a male-dominated society. Her confidence is further exemplified by the statement, “I was gorgeous, even at fourteen” illustrating her masculine traits manifested as self-assurance in her own merits, which enabled her to navigate the Hollywood industry with determination and empowered her identity as a woman. Moreover, Evelyn's animus archetype becomes evident when she confronts challenges threatening her career. This is reflected in her rational problem-solving approach and decision-making processes, which are not swayed by sentimental emotions. Jung asserts that a well-developed and appropriately directed animus in a woman serves as a ‘soul mate,’ consistently accompanying her personality and imparting positive masculine attributes. In Evelyn's case, her animus contributes to balancing her

feminine traits by integrating wisdom, bravery, and spiritual conviction, thereby harmoniously complementing her overall personality.

In addition, Evelyn's animus archetype also appears when she faces problems that could potentially ruin her career. This animus is reflected in the way she seeks rational solutions and makes decisions without being overly influenced by sentimental emotions. According to Jung, an animus that is well developed and properly directed in a woman will become a "soul mate" who always accompanies her personality and provides positive masculine traits. In this context, Evelyn's animus influences the balance of her feminine character through wisdom, courage, and spiritual confidence, which then complement her personality harmoniously.

The following quote emphasizes Evelyn's animus side: *"You're going to call me... You're not going to talk to anyone else between now and then. Do you hear me?"* (Reid, 2017). This statement shows how Evelyn takes control of the situation in a way that reflects masculine traits, namely assertiveness, authority, and the ability to control others. The direct instructions she gives show the influence of the animus in the form of leadership and dominance. In fact, when Evelyn says, "I'll get a room at... Call me there tomorrow," it illustrates an efficient thinking strategy that prioritizes logic over the emotional feelings she is experiencing. The addition of the phrase "Do you hear me?" further emphasizes Evelyn's masculine side in the form of aggressive communication and determination to ensure her authority is recognized.

The precarious situation Evelyn faces stimulates the animus from the subconscious to surface. Her rational attitude, careful planning, and control over others are manifestations of masculine traits that support Evelyn when she is under pressure. From this description, it is clear that Evelyn has a well-developed animus that is balanced with her feminine traits. Drawing from her life experiences, Evelyn's animus characteristics are rooted in her memories of dominant male figures, such as her father, her former husbands, and men in the film industry who often controlled her role as an actress. This is in line with Jung's concept that a woman's animus is formed from her experiences and interactions with influential men in her life, which then affect her decision-making, behavior, and habits.

In addition, Evelyn's animus is also closely related to other archetypes, namely the persona and shadow. Indirectly, the animus serves to protect and balance Evelyn's weaknesses, as well as provide strength to support the social mask (persona) she wears. Thus, Evelyn's animus plays an important role in helping her survive and even change her fate in a patriarchal society that tends to oppress women.

Self-Archetype in Evelyn's Character

The Self, according to Jung, is the symbol of psychological wholeness, representing the integration of all archetypes within the individual. The self-archetype reflects the totality of the human psyche—comprising desires, beliefs, inner thoughts, and actions—that have been harmoniously synthesized. Jung asserts that when an individual achieves alignment with their true self, they attain a fully developed personality, inner peace, and authenticity. This alignment enables the individual to overcome their shadow and achieve a sense of psychological balance. Throughout the novel, Evelyn undergoes a profound psychological transformation shaped by her evolving career and the social pressures surrounding her. Her life experiences catalyze a growing sense of self-awareness and a desire for personal growth. After enduring both joy and frustration throughout her journey, Evelyn's self-archetype becomes most visible during the final moments of her interview with Monique. In choosing to disclose her true identity and share her life's truths with the public through her forthcoming biography, Evelyn reaches a pivotal psychological turning point. At this stage, she is no longer entangled in the chaos of a

fabricated persona, the internal struggle with her shadow, or the animus that once conflicted with her femininity.

Evelyn is no longer willing to rely on her carefully curated persona as a scandal-ridden Hollywood legend to sustain her public relevance or promote her films. Instead, she strives to present herself to the public as someone who has endured and confronted a range of complex challenges, including coming to terms with aspects of herself she once regarded as flaws. At this point, Evelyn has successfully integrated the various components of her archetypal self into a cohesive whole, resulting in a more authentic and complete personality. The following quotation, taken from Evelyn's statement to Monique, illustrates her release of the persona and shadow, symbolizing her transcendence beyond the stage of denial that once heavily influenced her decisions and behaviors.

"People have so closely followed the most intricate details of the fake story of my life. But it's not... I want them to know the real story. The real me." (Reid, 2017)

Evelyn's confession in this passage clearly reflects her psychological maturity and the attainment of self-awareness, a stage in which she has successfully integrated the disparate parts of her identity and is no longer fearful of societal rejection based on who she truly is. In the opening sentence, Evelyn's self-archetype is revealed through her acknowledgment of past mistakes, specifically, her decision to allow the public to consume a false narrative and to admire the meticulously constructed persona she had maintained for the benefit of the film industry. By using the term "fake story," Evelyn signals a critical realization: the social mask she wore had come to dominate her life so completely that it distanced her from her authentic inner reality. When Evelyn utters the phrase "but it's not...", her self-archetype further emerges, particularly as an expression of deep regret for having inadvertently misled her fans, individuals whose unwavering support significantly contributed to her success. This moment underscores Evelyn's evolving relationship with her inner self, as she begins to reconcile the disconnect between her constructed image and her lived experience. Her next statement, "I want them to know the real story," illustrates a profound yearning to reclaim and reveal her authentic self, a part of her identity that had long remained hidden and unfulfilled. This decision marks a significant psychological milestone in Evelyn's journey: a conscious choice to present her true self to the world. From a Jungian perspective, this moment signifies the integration of her psychological structure—a balancing of the core archetypes that comprise the psyche, including the persona, the shadow, and the animus. The affirmation "the real me," uttered by Evelyn after the passage, serves as a powerful declaration of self-actualization. It represents the culmination of her journey through identity crisis, internal denial, and the healing of past psychological wounds. Through this integration, Evelyn achieves wholeness and emerges as a fully developed individual. The existence of the self archetype within Evelyn is further emphasized by the following quote:

"Better yet, remind them that Evelyn Hugo never existed. She was a person I made up for them. So that they would love me." (Reid, 2017)

This quote marks the peak of Evelyn's honesty about the various layers of falsehood she built in order to gain recognition from society. Through the statement "She was a person I made up for them," Evelyn emphasizes that the figure of Evelyn Hugo, who has been adored all this time, is only a fictional image, a social construct that she formed in response to the demands

of the entertainment industry where she works. This is reinforced by the phrase “So that they would love me,” which reveals that the narratives about her film roles, marriage scandals, and media publications were merely an illusion of perfection that she created in order to gain acceptance and love from others.

This discussion is in line with Jung's concept, which explains that when a person successfully goes through the process of individuation, the archetype of the self will manifest in the form of inner peace. Overall, Evelyn's archetype of the self is manifested through her decision to publish her biography, which becomes a medium to fulfill her desire to be remembered as an honest, fragile, and complex human being. She acknowledges her bisexual orientation, including her romantic relationship with Celia, which she once considered shameful, her strategy for fame through seven contract marriages, and her manipulations that harmed others. In addition, Evelyn also realizes that the sincere love of those closest to her is far more valuable than mere applause from the masses. In the end, Evelyn successfully embraced all sides of herself, including the parts that once conflicted with her ambitions. In Carl Jung's terms, the archetype of the self in Evelyn symbolizes inner peace, a whole identity, and a harmonious personality.

Domestic Abuse Influence on Evelyn's Shadow and Animus Development

Through the narrative arc of this novel, Reid intricately weaves various social issues and historical contexts into the backdrop of Evelyn Hugo's character. Evelyn's life story serves as a vehicle through which Reid illuminates the harsh social realities that women often endure, particularly the persistence of private sphere oppression within patriarchal societies. The novel portrays the systemic imbalance of power that grants men disproportionate authority over women, most notably through the normalization of domestic violence. This issue is clearly articulated in Evelyn's own words:

“I wasn't the only woman being hit back then. A lot of women were negotiating the very same things I was at that moment. There was a social code for these things. The first rule being to shut up about it.” (Reid, 2017)

This excerpt reflects the entrenchment of patriarchal norms that not only permit but also conceal male violence by compelling women to remain silent. The oppression depicted here extends beyond physical abuse, encompassing verbal and emotional violence that inflicts long-term psychological trauma. Women subjected to domestic violence suffer not only physical harm but also experience a fractured sense of identity, enduring fear, insecurity, and emotional scars that persist over time. Within Evelyn's life, this theme of oppression manifests early and continues over an extended period. Raised in a dysfunctional household and a socially unforgiving environment, Evelyn first experiences domestic violence at the hands of her father. Tragically, this cycle of abuse recurs in her adult life when she becomes trapped in an abusive marriage with her second husband, actor Don Adler.

“Motherless, with an abusive father, no friends, and a sexuality in my body that my mind wasn't ready for.” (Reid, 2017)

The quote articulated by Evelyn encapsulates the core trauma rooted in her childhood and delineates the psychological vulnerabilities that shaped her personality during adolescence. It provides critical insight into the emotional wounds that stem from her early life experiences,

thereby constructing the foundation for the psychological complexity that characterizes Evelyn as an adult. The phrase “motherless” signifies the absence of a nurturing maternal figure during Evelyn’s formative years, which in turn contributed to an emotional void due to the lack of affection from one of the primary sources of emotional support. This absence cultivated a profound psychological deficit, resulting in the premature emergence of sexuality in a body that was, as Evelyn expressed, “a sexuality in my body that my mind wasn’t ready for,” this statement underscores the disjunction between Evelyn’s physical maturation and her mental preparedness, a condition exacerbated by the lack of guidance from a mature female role model. The psychological fragility outlined above was further intensified by the presence of a “abusive father,” a figure who should have embodied protection but instead became the primary source of emotional neglect and distress. Evelyn’s vivid recollection—“my father’s stale tequila breath and heavy hands” (Reid, 2017), explicitly evokes the severity of the abuse she endured. The image suggests both the emotional degradation and physical violence inflicted by her alcoholic father, which rendered her domestic space unsafe and infused her upbringing with chronic fear. This formative trauma represents the psychological root of Evelyn’s long-term emotional struggles and shapes her coping mechanisms in adulthood.

When analyzed through the lens of Carl Jung’s theory of the unconscious, Evelyn’s childhood trauma serves as the initial catalyst for the development of her shadow archetype. According to Jung, the shadow archetype emerges from painful and repressed experiences that, when brought into consciousness, are frequently denied or concealed from others. In Evelyn’s case, the absence of a maternal figure denied her a secure space to navigate puberty and sexual development, thereby generating feelings of shame, confusion, and unpreparedness. These internalized conflicts, left unresolved, contributed to Evelyn’s later decision to suppress her sexual orientation in order to maintain control over her public image. Moreover, the emotional scars inflicted by her father materialized as psychological vulnerability, fear, repressed anger, and diminished self-worth—elements embedded within Evelyn’s unconscious. These unresolved feelings ultimately coalesced into her shadow, which manifested in her tendency to reject vulnerability and dismiss her intrinsic value. Evelyn’s response to trauma was to construct a resilient exterior and adopt manipulative strategies as a form of psychological compensation, enabling her to avoid further emotional harm. Her shadow not only comprised the fragile aspects of herself that she sought to conceal but also included the parts of her psyche that she could not yet confront. This repression served as a defense mechanism to navigate the sociocultural expectations of strength while privately bearing the weight of unprocessed trauma.

The following analysis focuses on Evelyn’s horrific experience of repeated domestic violence at the hands of the man closest to her. In her second marriage, Evelyn had to deal with Don Adler—a famous actor—who not only committed physical violence, but also inflicted emotional wounds through his emotional abuse.

“His career wasn’t turning out the way he wanted. And if he wasn’t going to be the most famous person in his family, he surely wasn’t going to allow that person to be me.” (Reid, 2017)

This quote illustrates the dynamics of Evelyn’s relationship with Don, where it is clear that there is an imbalance of power, with Don holding most of it. Jung states that in the framework of traditional masculinity, men are positioned as superior to women. The first sentence in the quote shows Don’s masculine ego being disturbed by jealousy and threatened by Evelyn’s success in the film industry. This is reinforced by the next sentence, which shows

Don's ambition to maintain his popularity, while also hinting at his desire to rival Evelyn's success as a fellow Hollywood star.

The phrase "he surely wasn't going to allow that person to be me" indicates a form of non-physical violence in the form of psychological oppression and gender control carried out by Don. This action is a strategy to maintain his dominance as a man in the household while limiting Evelyn's role within the framework of traditional patriarchal values. Evelyn's statement hints at her awareness of Don's attacks on her self-esteem, which are demonstrated through his attempts to limit her movements so that she cannot achieve full success in her career. In addition to psychological abuse, Evelyn also experiences repeated physical violence from Don.

"I looked right at him and said, 'Absolutely. Positively. Not.' And he smacked me across the face. Sharp, fast, strong." (Reid, 2017)

This quote confirms the physical violence Evelyn experienced when she refused Don's orders. This incident reveals Don's temperamental nature and aggressiveness as a form of masculine domination over Evelyn's assertiveness. The descriptive details Evelyn uses in the phrase "sharp, fast, strong" are also related to Don's masculine character, which tends to make quick decisions without hesitation. This incident also triggers Evelyn's suppressed childhood trauma. This is clearly seen in Evelyn's reaction after being slapped by Don.

"All you can do is remain still and stare straight ahead. So that's what I did. The way I'd done it when my father hit me." (Reid, 2017)

This quote shows the continuity of Evelyn's trauma, which continues to repeat itself through domestic violence. Don's violence not only adds new wounds but also reawakens old wounds she has experienced. Evelyn's reaction in the phrase "remain still and stare straight ahead" shows that her body and soul are accustomed to facing violence in silence because she has no power to prevent it. This is reinforced by the statement "the way I'd done it when my father hit me," which confirms that Evelyn's physical response is influenced by past memories that continue to haunt her mental state, so that the only survival mechanism she uses is to remain silent.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the formation of animus in Evelyn's personality is an accumulation of experiences of domestic violence since childhood with her father to her adult life with her husband. This is in line with Jung's concept of animus, which states that masculinity in women is formed through the representation of the closest male figure who plays an important role in her life: "through the figure of the father he expresses not only conventional opinion but equally what we call 'spirit,' or rather the attitude resulting from them" (Jung, 1959). The emotional wounds experienced by Evelyn unconsciously internalize some of the masculine characteristics that previously hurt her, but at the same time serve as a form of resistance to protect her vulnerable side. As Jung stated, "the animus gives to woman's consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge" (Jung, 1959).

The oppression Evelyn experienced from Don had a profound effect on the development of her animus. From this experience, Evelyn learned to fight for her identity and independence. The masculine traits she adopted manifested themselves in ambition, a desire to dominate, aggressive tendencies, the ability to make quick decisions, a need for control, and an emphasis on strategy. Jung divides the animus in women into two sides, positive and negative, which are highly dependent on previous experiences. In Evelyn's case, the animus she absorbed from Don

leaned more towards a negative pattern as a complex response to protect her past wounds. However, this experience also triggered a psychological transformation that strengthened her inner structure and became a turning point in her personality dynamics. Evelyn utilizes the animus archetype as a tool to regain control over her life, as well as a weapon of defense in order to fight for her career as a woman in a patriarchal and misogynistic society. Evelyn's success in utilizing her masculinity has also been explained in detail in the discussion of the animus archetype in the previous section.

Sexual Objectification and Racism Influence on Evelyn's Persona Development

In addition to experiencing domestic violence, women as a marginalized group are often subjected to multidimensional forms of systemic oppression. Two prevalent forms of systemic subjugation that frequently target women—particularly those striving to establish careers—are sexual objectification and racism. Sexual objectification refers to the practice of perceiving individuals, especially women, primarily as instruments of sexual gratification, with value assessed largely based on physical appearance. In dominant social constructions, this objectification often manifests through the commodification of the female body, wherein female sexuality is exaggerated and exploited to captivate public attention. Concurrently, racism refers to discrimination directed at individuals who possess an ethnic or racial identity that deviates from the dominant cultural standards. Racial systems, which are deeply embedded in many societies, serve as significant barriers to the social recognition and acceptance of ethnic minority women, particularly in professional and public arenas.

Within the context of Evelyn's life—a life marked by instability and insecurity from an early age—these forms of oppression have been continuous and pervasive. As a young girl, Evelyn was subjected to sexual harassment by individuals in her immediate environment. As she matured, her experiences of trauma were further compounded by racial prejudice directed at her Latina immigrant identity, which failed to align with Hollywood's rigid and Eurocentric beauty standards. These intersecting oppressions served as critical catalysts in shaping Evelyn's persona archetype. Within the Hollywood film industry, Evelyn deliberately capitalized on her physical allure, projecting sexual appeal in her film roles as a strategic form of social and professional leverage. Simultaneously, in an effort to evade racial rejection and align with the prevailing aesthetic ideals of whiteness, Evelyn undertook various modifications to both her physical appearance and personal identity. These two systems of structural oppression—sexual objectification and racism—were deeply intertwined and significantly influenced the formation and maintenance of Evelyn's public persona. Her adaptive strategies reveal the extent to which marginalized women are often compelled to manipulate their identities as a means of survival and upward mobility within hegemonic institutions.

“He'd convinced himself that his wanting me was my fault. And I believed him. Look what I do to these poor boys, I thought. And yet also, here is my value, my power.” (Reid, 2017)

Evelyn's explanation in the passage clearly illustrates the psychological process through which her younger self endured gaslighting from misogynistic men who projected their own desires onto her and held her accountable for them. This manipulation led Evelyn to internalize a misplaced sense of guilt that did not originate from her own actions. Simultaneously, the phrase “here is my value, my power,” reveals Evelyn's complex understanding of the paradoxical role her body played—not only as a passive object of male desire but also as a potential source of power. As a form of compensation for her trauma, Evelyn reclaimed agency

over her body, utilizing it as a tool to construct a social mask or public persona distinct from her true self. This persona manifested as the image of a sensual actress, whose acting talent, despite the exploitative framing, was eventually recognized by the public.

At the beginning of her career, Evelyn encountered numerous barriers. Her identity as an immigrant positioned her as an ethnic minority, subjecting her to systemic oppression in the form of racial discrimination. Determined to succeed as a film star, Evelyn strategically crafted a persona that aligned with the dominant standards and expectations of the audience.

“You can’t play a romantic lead with Gary DuPont. Because the movie with Gary DuPont needs a nice blond girl.” (Reid, 2017)

This quote exemplifies the rejection Evelyn faced when she attempted to secure a role in an upcoming film. The rejection reflects the deeply embedded racism within the Hollywood industry, as the phrase “needs a nice blond girl” implies that Evelyn’s exclusion was not due to a lack of talent, but rather a result of racialized beauty standards. As a Latina woman, Evelyn did not conform to the image of the white female ideal that Hollywood preferred. Consequently, she felt compelled to conceal her ethnic identity and recreate herself to appear “white-passing” as a form of resistance and strategy to confront the racism she encountered. Rather than allowing this rejection to diminish her drive, Evelyn responded with greater determination to demonstrate her talent regardless of her racial background. From the perspective of Jungian theory, the construction of the persona “Evelyn Hugo” did not arise solely from autonomous desire but rather functioned as a psychological defense mechanism formed in response to recurrent and distressing external oppression. This persona was not merely a social façade but also a protective barrier shaped by accumulated emotional wounds. It represents a psychologically constructed response to trauma, designed to assert control over an environment that was inherently unsafe for Evelyn.

CONCLUSION

By analyzing Evelyn’s personality in *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* through Carl Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious, it can be concluded that four dominant archetypes emerge within her psyche—namely, the persona, the shadow, the animus, and the self. Throughout her career as a Hollywood star, Evelyn was confronted with numerous challenges in pursuit of fame, which led her personality to continuously evolve in response to social expectations. Beneath the surface of her glamorous image, however, she harbored psychological wounds, unresolved identity conflicts, and traumatic experiences. These internal struggles catalyzed the emergence of archetypal structures that functioned as a psychological shield, enabling Evelyn to cope with the threats surrounding her.

The persona archetype is particularly evident in Evelyn’s deliberate concealment of her identity as a Cuban-Latina immigrant. She consciously constructed a new image of herself as a glamorous, blonde woman in order to secure recognition within the film industry. This transformation was not only a strategic maneuver to gain visibility but also a defense mechanism shaped by the racial discrimination and sexual objectification she endured during her adolescence and early career. Her persona thus functioned as both a survival strategy and a reflection of deeply rooted trauma. The second archetype, the shadow, represents the darker, repressed facets of Evelyn’s character, including her manipulative tendencies and the suppression of her sexual orientation. Her engagement in constructing a false identity—such

as presenting herself as heterosexual—reveals the internal conflict between her authentic self and the persona she performed to protect her reputation. The development of Evelyn's shadow is intricately connected to her traumatic upbringing in a dysfunctional family and the broader societal stigma imposed upon queer identities. The animus archetype, which encapsulates traditionally masculine traits within the female psyche, also plays a significant role in Evelyn's character development. This archetype was shaped by her tumultuous relationship with her abusive second husband, Don Adler. In response, Evelyn adopted certain traits associated with negative masculinity, such as emotional detachment, assertiveness, and dominance—traits that served as both protective mechanisms and tools for navigating the male-dominated environment of Hollywood. Despite these internal conflicts, Evelyn eventually demonstrates signs of psychological integration.

By the end of the narrative, Evelyn appears to reach a state of psychological wholeness wherein she embraces all dimensions of her identity, suggesting the emergence of the self-archetype. This archetype represents the culmination of Evelyn's personal growth and the reconciliation of her fragmented self. Her decision to reveal her authentic identity to the public symbolizes her psychological maturity and her transcendence of societal expectations. Through the lens of Jungian psychoanalysis, Evelyn Hugo's character arc reflects a profound psychological transformation, driven by the tension between personal trauma and social performance. Her journey offers valuable insight into the dynamic nature of identity and the struggle for self-actualization in the face of societal constraint.

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