



Jung and Mawlana: The Inner Path and the Archetypes of the Soul
Zohre Aliyeva & Amina Aliyeva

Jung and Mawlana: The Inner Path and the Archetypes of the Soul **Jung ve Mevlâna: İçsel Yolculuk ve Ruhun Arketipleri**

"I was dead, I became alive; I was a tear — I became an ocean." – Rumi
"Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes." --Carl Gustav Jung

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers an in-depth comparative analysis of the concepts of Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) and the Masnavi poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–73) regarding the theme of the inner path and the soul's archetypes. Despite the apparent dichotomy, Jungian analytical psychology and the Sufi mystical tradition reveal remarkable similarities in their understanding of human consciousness transformation. Central to both approaches are symbolic images reflecting the soul's movement from fragmentation to wholeness: the archetype of the Self in Jung and the Beloved in Rumi, descent into the unconscious and the state of *fanā'* (ego dissolution), integration of Shadow aspects and interaction with the inner guide (Anima/Animus and the image of Khidr), together with the ascent, focusing on individuation and the spiritual 'dance of love'.

This paper demonstrates that each of these experiences carries a similar symbolic charge, be it the 'descent into darkness', 'soul dance', 'ego dissolution', or the attainment of inner unity. Jung emphasises the necessity of encountering and integrating the Shadow through the Anima and Animus; Rumi poetically expresses the same process through Eastern mystical imagery.

Personality transformation thus appears as a unified, continuous narrative, both mystical and psychological. This comparative analysis not only deepens intercultural understanding but also contributes to a more integral perspective on the relationship between psychology and spirituality. The conclusion asserts that archetypes, love, ego death, and spiritual ascent constitute a single metanarrative of inner evolution relevant to both East and West.

Keywords: Jung, Rumi, analytical psychology, Sufism, archetypes, Self, Shadow, anima, animus, Khidr, *fanā'*, individuation, inner transformation, spirituality, intercultural dialogue

ÖZET

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Bu bildiri, Carl Gustav Jung'un fikirleri ile Celaleddin Rumi'nin Mesnevi şiirleri arasında, içsel yolculuk ve ruhun arketipleri teması üzerinden derinlemesine bir karşılaştırmalı analiz sunmaktadır. Jung'un analitik psikolojisi ile tasavvufi mistik gelenek—kültürel olarak uzak görünen bu iki alan—insan bilincinin dönüşümüne dair şaşırtıcı benzerlikler ortaya koymaktadır. Her iki yaklaşımda da ruhun parçalanmışlıktan bütünlüğe doğru hareketini yansıtan imgeler ön plandadır: Jung'da Benlik arketipi, Rumi'de Sevgili; bilinçdışına iniş ve *fanā'* (benliğin yok oluşu) hali; gölge yönlerin entegrasyonu ve içsel rehberle (anima/animus ve Hızır imgesi) etkileşim; ayrıca yükseliş — bireyleşme ve ruhun “aşk dansı.” Bu bildiri, “karanlığa iniş,” “ruhun dansı,” “benliğin erimesi” ya da “içsel bütünlük” gibi deneyimlerin her birinin benzer sembolik anlamlar taşıdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Jung, gölge ile yüzleşmenin ve onun anima/animus aracılığıyla bütünleştirilmesinin gerekliliğini vurgularken, Rumi aynı süreci doğulu mistik imgelerle şiirsel bir şekilde ifade etmektedir.

Kişiliğin dönüşümü, hem mistik hem de psikolojik olan bir bütünsel anlatı olarak belirir. Bu karşılaştırmalı analiz, yalnızca kültürler arası anlayışı derinleştirmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda psikoloji ile maneviyat arasındaki ilişkinin daha bütüncül bir perspektiften ele alınmasına katkıda bulunur. Sonuç olarak arketipler, aşk, ego ölümü ve ruhsal yükseliş—Doğu'ya da Batı'ya da hitap eden içsel evrimin ortak bir metafriz anlatısını oluşturur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Jung, Mevlânâ, analitik psikoloji, tasavvuf, arketipler, Benlik, Gölge, anima, animus, Hızır, *fanā'*, bireyleşme, içsel dönüşüm, maneviyat, kültürlerarası diyalog

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary scholarship is increasingly turning to the synthesis of diverse cultural and spiritual traditions in the search for the universal foundations of human experience. One promising direction of such an interdisciplinary approach is the comparison of Carl Gustav Jung's analytical psychology with the Eastern mystical tradition, particularly focusing on the poetic legacy of the preeminent Sufi thinker Jalal al-Din Rumi. Both authors explore the theme of the inner journey as a process of transformation and the attainment of wholeness. Despite differences in their cultural, philosophical and linguistic milieux, their concepts reveal a profound symbolic kinship that merits close academic investigation.

Main part

The inner path described in Carl Jung's analytical psychology begins with the archetype of the Self, being the deep centre of the personality that strives for wholeness. Prior to Jung introducing the ancient Greek term *archetype* into the psychological lexicon, it was in common parlance by classical philosophers and medieval theologians. Given that Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, had immersed himself in philosophical treatises since childhood, it is no surprise that his understanding of archetypes is closely related to Plato's concept of 'ideas'.

Let us imagine a book, where its physical properties of shape, cover, thickness, content and title are all various representations. The very 'idea' of a book is closer to what Jung would call an archetype and the same applies to the psyche. Archetypes are universal principles, recurring patterns and the accumulated subjective experience of humanity through which we perceive reality. According to Jung, archetypes dwell in a shared dimension known as the *collective unconscious*. This realm functions as an inner compass that guides the development of personality toward self-realisation and individuation.

Jung wrote: “The Self is the totality, yet hidden, centre toward which the process of individuation moves” (Jung, C. G., Vol. 9, Part 2), emphasising: “A man who has not encountered the Self lives only half a life” (Jung, C. G., 2009, p. 254). The Self is the central archetype that organises the entire psyche. It is greater than the Ego, as it encompasses both the personal and collective unconscious.



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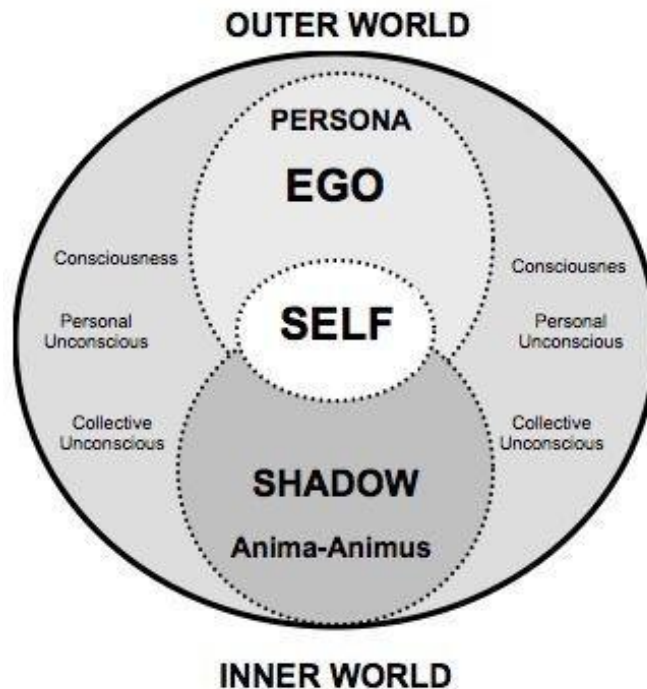
The Self can be understood as:

- The deep core of personality, which determines the potential of a fully-developed person
- An element beyond the conscious personality, as it encompasses the Shadow, Anima/Animus, archetypal images and the full potential of the psyche.

The Anima (male psyche) and the Animus (female psyche) are archetypal images of the contrasexual aspect, as they represent the feminine and masculine psychological forces, respectively. They reflect both the hormonal and psychological elements of the opposite sex, where the Anima is the source of emotional sensitivity and the Animus is the source of logic and rationality (Santosh Verma, 2025). Jung regarded these figures as a ‘workshop’ stage in the individuation process: after encountering the Shadow, the meeting with the Anima or Animus follows, fostering creativity and spiritual maturity. When these archetypes remain unconscious, they are often projected onto others. For instance, ‘love at first sight’ may actually comprise the projection of the Anima/Animus when we perceive the unconscious image of our inner contrasexual counterpart in another person.

Ultimately, the Self represents the goal of psychological development, where all parts of the personality are recognised, acknowledged and integrated into a unified whole.

In Jung’s view, personal development is unconcerned with the expansion of the Ego, but rather the Ego’s service to and interaction with the Self. To hear the inner voice and enter into dialogue with it is to accept the call of the Self and embark on the path where one is no longer a victim of the unconscious, but a conscious co-participant in the Inner World. In this lies the profound meaning of authentic life, according to Jung.



The Inner Journey and the Mystery of Transformation

At different stages of life, the psyche presents the individual with different tasks: in the first half of life, the focus is on the formation of the ego and adaptation to the external world; in the second half, the gaze turns



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introspective, toward the search for personal meaning, the acceptance of limitation and the integration of death as a natural part of life. This transition is particularly significant, for it is during the second half of life that the true potential of individuation unfolds, which is free from the pressures of societal expectations and rooted in an inner calling.

Individuation does not concern a withdrawal from the world, conversely representing a deeper engagement with it through authentic and mature subjectivity. It is a path where suffering acquires meaning, inner conflicts become a source of growth and personal history is woven into a broader mythic context. Although uniquely subjective, this process is always connected with symbolic thinking and the mystery of inner transformation, whereby the individual reaches their apotheosis through effort, awareness and confrontation with the Shadow.

Ultimately, psychological development in Jung's model is not merely a psychological journey, but also spiritual. It is a path of profound transformation, leading to maturity, wholeness, and a sense of belonging to something greater than the individual ego. For this reason, analytical psychology remains relevant as an invitation to an inner journey replete with meaning, symbols and mystery.

The path toward inner unity is impossible without a descent into the unconscious. Jung emphasised: "He who looks outside dreams; he who looks inside awakes" (Jung, C. G., 2009, p. 186), and "You must die to live – not physically, but in the ego" (p. 190).

This striving finds a poetic parallel in Rumi's works: the *Beloved* in the *Masnavi* symbolises how the divine discovers what the soul desires. He writes:

"I sought God and found only love. sought love – and disappeared myself" (Rumi, *Masnavi*, VI:3999), and elsewhere: "He is not He, and you are not you – if love has truly been revealed to you" (Rumi, *Masnavi*, III:4180).

This imagery corresponds to the Sufi concept of *fanā'*, representing the dissolution of the ego in God: "Die before you die – that is the path to immortality" (Rumi, *Masnavi*, II:1359), and further: "In the fire of love, the ego burns – and only then does the soul become pure" (Rumi, *Masnavi*, IV:1832).

In the Sufi mystical tradition, *fanā'* (Arabic: *فناء*) is one of the central concepts, signifying a spiritual 'dissolution' or the disappearance of the ego-self in the Divine Presence. It is a state of ultimate mystical union, whereby the individual *I* ceases to exist as an autonomous centre and becomes fully identified with the Divine Source. In the terminology of Ibn Arabi and other Sufi thinkers, *fanā'* does not denote physical death, but rather the metaphysical erasure of boundaries between the human being and the Absolute (Nasr, S. H., 2007).

In the work of Rumi, the concept of *fanā'* is expressed through poetic and existential language. In the *Masnavi*, he writes:

"Die before you die – that is the path to immortality" (*Masnavi-i Ma'navi*, II:1359).

This teaching implies the renunciation of egoistic attachment to the material and mental 'self' as the precondition for spiritual rebirth. Such a death is not passive resignation, but an act of will and love directed toward God.



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He further affirms: “In the fire of love, the ego burns – and only then does the soul become pure” (*Masnavi*, IV:1832).

This emphasises the transformative power of love and the sacred necessity of inner annihilation to ensure the soul’s purification.

“In the fire of love, the ego burns – and only then does the soul become pure” (Rumi, Jalal al-Din, 2017, IV:1832)

This stresses the transformative power of love as a purifying fire that annihilates the illusion of separation between the human being and the Creator.

In this context, *fanā’* is not merely the suppression of the ego, but a mystical transition into another mode of being, known as *wujūd*, wherein personal will and desires are transcended. Following the stage of *fanā’*, a subsequent phase known as *baqā’* becomes possible, being a state of ‘eternal subsistence’ in God, wherein the individual returns to the world, but is transformed, having been enlightened and inwardly awakened (Schimmel, A., *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 1975).

Thus, *fanā’* is not an end, but the passage toward a higher ontological condition, where the individual soul is no longer estranged from the transcendent reality. This mystical concept resonates with Jung’s idea of individuation, whereby the dismantling of egocentrism and the integration of the Self lead to authentic wholeness. However, in Sufism, this path is understood within a vertical, theocentric perspective, where union with the Divine lies at the heart of spiritual realisation.

Within the transformative process, the archetypes of the Shadow and Anima/Animus play central roles. Jung notes:

“The Shadow is that which you do not want to be, but which you are” (Jung, C. G., *CW 9, Part 2*), and: “The Anima is she who leads a man into the depths of his own soul” (Jung, C. G., *CW 9/I*). The archetype of the spiritual guide or mentor emerges in the figure of Khidr, whom Rumi describes not as an external being, but as an inner voice: “When you are lost, do you not call Khidr? He is always where the green grows” (Rumi, *Masnavi*, I:182), and furthermore: “The guide is not a person, but the light within you” (V:2455).

The ascent toward wholeness is symbolically expressed in Jung’s writings as the culmination of individuation: “Individuation is the process of becoming who you truly are” (Jung, C. G., *CW 9, Part 2*), and: “The soul’s dance begins when the ego yields to the Self” (Jung, C. G., 2009, p. 267).

In the oeuvre of Rumi, this is poetically mirrored in the image of the dervish: “The whirl of the dervish is the turning around love” (*Masnavi*, V:1120), and ultimately: “I became nothing – and, in that nothingness, I became everything” (*Masnavi*, II:1870).

Conclusion

A comparative analysis of the concepts of Carl Gustav Jung and Jalal al-Din Rumi reveals that, despite the historical and cultural distance between analytical psychology and Sufi poetic mysticism, both traditions describe the inner transformation of the human being with remarkable symbolic and structural consonance. The archetype of the Self and the image of the Beloved, the descent into the Shadow and the experience of



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fanā', the figure of Khidr and the voice of the unconscious are not merely parallel motifs, but interconnected links in a shared chain that binds Eastern spiritual practice with the depths of Western psychology.

Jung, through his model of the psyche structured by archetypes, demonstrates that the path to wholeness is impossible without confronting that which is repressed, namely the Shadow; the hidden, which is the Self; and the other, referred to as the Anima/Animus. Rumi, in poetic form, leads the reader through the same inner stages, using the language of love and mystical dissolution. One is left with the impression that both authors, each in their own voice, describe a universal myth of the soul, comprising a journey through the collapse of the ego, spiritual rebirth, and the rediscovery of deep meaning.

Such a comparison is significant, both in theoretical terms and its practical implications. It offers the possibility for constructing an integrated model of human spiritual and psychological evolution, combining elements of psychoanalysis, mysticism, and cultural symbolism. In the context of today's fragmented culture, which is centered on the external and the rational, this inward path is especially relevant. It reminds us of the necessity of subjectively engaging with the unconscious, cultivating intuition, internal conversations, and the seeking for meaning beyond egocentrism.

Thus, this article is not merely a theoretical juxtaposition, but an attempt to propose a more holistic paradigm for understanding the human psyche. It is a paradigm in which science and poetry, reason and mystical insight and East and West are no longer apparently dichotomic opposites, but mutually enriching counterparts that open new horizons for both the researcher and the practitioner, in both academic and personal dimensions, leading to an enlightened state of inner peace.

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