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Literature Review

Exploring the formation of identity is a theme in psychoanalytic theory, and influential figures like Carl Jung and Jacques Lacan have extensively studied and published work on it. While Jung focuses on concepts such as the unconscious and archetypes, Lacan emphasises the role of language and the symbolic order. This essay will examine the works and fundamental ideas of both theorists, analyse how their theories intersect and diverge and evaluate the accessibility and quality of literature in this field. By delving into works like Jung's *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959) and Lacan's *Écrits* (1966) to provide a comprehensive overview of their contributions and the critical discussions surrounding their theories.

Carl Jung contributed to the field of psychology, particularly in his exploration of the collective unconscious and archetypes. In books like *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933) and *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959), Jung delved into the structures of the human mind. He proposed that our unconscious plays a role in shaping our individual identities, drawing from shared ancestral memories and experiences. These universal elements manifest through archetypes which transcend historical boundaries. By studying these archetypes, Jung not only analysed psychological constructs but also sought to understand our shared human experience, shedding light on aspects of identity that are universally relatable. However, it is essential to note that Jung's theories have faced criticism due to a lack of evidence supporting his concepts. Some sceptics argue that his ideas heavily rely on analysis and symbolic interpretations, as exemplified in his work *Psychology and Alchemy* (1944). The challenge lies in validating the existence and influence of archetypes as well as the collective unconscious.

In contrast, Jacques Lacan's theories, presented in books like *Écrits* (1966) and *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1973), shift focus towards understanding how language and symbolic order shape an individual's identity. Lacan heavily draws inspiration from linguistics (Lacan, 1973a), highlighting the influence of language and social structures on the development of one's sense of self. He introduces the concept of the mirror stage, which represents a phase in a child's growth where they begin to perceive themselves as distinct individuals. This stage lays the foundation for the formation of an ego. Lacan delves into the "Imaginary" and "Symbolic" realms to offer a framework for understanding how individuals navigate their identities within linguistic contexts. Critics often point out

that Lacan's theories can be complex and esoteric, as evidenced by his writing style found in *Écrits*. The density and challenging nature of his work can make it less accessible and comprehensible for some readers. Due to this complexity, coupled with its nature, debates have emerged regarding the practical applicability of his ideas within clinical psychology.

When comparing Jung's theories with those of Lacan, we can identify both differences and similarities between them. Both theorists concur that identity is a concept; however, their foundational principles diverge. Jung emphasises psychic elements as essential factors, whereas Lacan places greater emphasis on how social interactions and language shape our understanding of ourselves. This contrast not only highlights the richness inherent in psychoanalytic theories when exploring identity but also underscores the challenges associated with integrating these perspectives into a cohesive understanding. Jung's theories delve deeply into processes and universal themes, offering insights into collective aspects of human identity.

When we compare the writing styles of Jung and Lacan, we can see differences that impact how easy it is to understand and interpret their theories. Jung's writing, found in works like *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933) and *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959), tends to be narrative and descriptive. He often uses mythology, religion and dream analysis to explain his ideas. While this approach can be dense at times, it offers an accessible entry point for readers interested in the symbolic and mythological aspects of psychology.

In contrast, Lacan's style, as seen in texts like *Écrits* (1966) and *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1973), is marked by its complexity and abstract nature. Lacan heavily relies on philosophical structures in his work, which makes it challenging even for well-read individuals. Understanding his language choices and complex sentence structures often requires a solid background in psychoanalytic theory and linguistics. This has sparked debates about how practical or accessible his ideas are within academic and clinical contexts. Furthermore, the accessibility of their content goes beyond their writing styles. Jung's works have gained a readership due to their availability in various translations and their appeal to people from different disciplines. His concepts of archetypes and the collective unconscious have become more familiar and accessible to the public thanks to their incorporation into popular culture. On the other hand, Lacan's works, although influential in academic circles, like critical theory and literary criticism, have not reached mainstream discussions as much. His writings are primarily found within institutions, and their dense style often requires guided study or scholarly commentary. Nevertheless, both works are very accessible through their multitude of English translations and are able to offer a comprehensive amount of content equal to their original versions.

In terms of understanding, Jung's theories offer insights that can be grasped conceptually by a range of people. Grounded in themes and processes, his exploration of the collective unconscious and

archetypal motifs resonates with our innate human fascination for stories, journeys, and myths. This makes his theories relatable and more accessible to put into context. Alternatively, Lacan's theories are intellectually stimulating but require a higher level of engagement and prior knowledge of psychoanalytic discourse. The abstract nature of concepts such as the “Mirror stage” or the “Symbolic order” can make them challenging for those without training or a specific interest in psychoanalytic theory.

To summarise, both Jung and Lacan provide insights into the understanding of human identity and psyche. However, they differ in their writing styles. How easily their works can be understood reflects the diverse nature of psychoanalytic thought. Jung's narrative approach and exploration of relatable themes make his theories more accessible to a broader range of readers. On the other hand, Lacan's abstract and linguistically complex approach, while intellectually profound, presents challenges in terms of accessibility and comprehensibility, making it more appealing to a specialised academic audience.

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Research Essay

“In what ways do the notions of identity diverge within the frameworks of Jungian and Lacanian Psychoanalysis, and how are these distinctions manifested in a cinematic portrayal?”

The concept of self-identity has forever been an enigma throughout human history. Our understanding of who we are, and how others perceive us, is shaped by a combination of emotions, experiences and relationships. Over the last century, influential thinkers such as Freud, Jung and Lacan have provided deep insights into the workings of human consciousness. Similarly, the evolving field of psychoanalysis has been influenced by the constant changes in our psyche as we strive to understand ourselves better. This investigation aims to explore the nature of human identity by comparing different theories and research from Jungian and Lacanian Psychoanalytical fields. Furthermore, This essay aims to delve into the layers of identity portrayed in the film *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) by Stanley Kubrick through both a Jungian and Lacanian psychological frameworks.

Jung's Theory of Identity Formation

Jung's Theory of Identity Formation is based on the idea of the unconscious and the significance of archetypes (Jung, 1933). According to Jung in his work *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, "The content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of archetypes." (Jung, 1959, p. 43). These archetypes are inherited potentials that shape behaviour and identity, as explained further in *Research into the Phenomenology of the Self* (1951). Jung believes that our identity is not solely a journey but is profoundly influenced by universal inherited elements (Jung, 1951). The archetypes like the "Shadow," "Anima"/"Animus," and "Persona" represent aspects of human experiences (Jung, 1964) and play a vital role in achieving what Jung calls "Individuation" (Jung, 1951) This process involves integrating these elements to form a balanced and complete identity. Understanding this concept is essential to grasp Jung's perspective on identity, which encompasses both collective dimensions. Individuation, an idea in Jung's theory, allows individuals to integrate suppressed and unconscious aspects of their psyche to attain a holistic sense of self.

In his work *Psychological Types*, Jung explains, "Individuation means becoming a single, homogeneous being, and in so far as "individuality" embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's self." (Jung, 1921, p. 448). The concept of individuation involves becoming an authentic individual. According to Jung, individuation encompasses both the realisation of one's self and the acknowledgement and integration of our psyches' diverse and often conflicting aspects (Jung, 1921). Jung believed that neglecting these aspects could result in imbalances. The journey towards identity, as described by Jung, entails a dynamic interplay between our conscious and unconscious selves – a process of self-discovery intertwined with self-creation (Jung, 1951).

One crucial element in the formation of identity, according to Jung, is the "Shadow." In his book *Psychology and Religion* (1953), Jung delves into this concept, stating that "Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is." (Jung, 1953, p. 76). The Shadow represents those parts of ourselves that we tend to deny or ignore – traits and impulses deemed personally undesirable. Recognising and integrating the "Shadow" becomes vital for achieving a well-rounded sense of self.

This integration revolves around acknowledging and embracing our aspects while understanding how they can contribute to our personal growth and self-awareness. According to Jung, the Anima and Animus represent the masculine qualities that exist in the unconscious mind of individuals of the opposite gender (Jung, 1951). These qualities have an influence on relationship dynamics and how we perceive ourselves. Jung explains that "The anima is an archetype that is found in men... [and] an equivalent archetype... in women; for just as the man is compensated by a feminine element, so woman is compensated by a masculine one" (Jung, 1951, p. 14). This concept emphasises how gender fluidity within our psyche impacts the formation of our identity. The interactions between the "Anima" and "Animus" within each individual's psyche play a role in their self-understanding and expression. For Jung, these interactions are vital for attaining a harmonious sense of self.

Lastly, according to Jung's conceptualisation, the "Persona" represents the mask we wear to navigate between our inner world and external social environment (Jung, 1928). "a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and on the other to conceal the true nature of the individual." (Jung, 1928, p. 157). Understanding the formation of identity and its impact on relationships and society is crucial. The concept of the "Persona" represents the compromise between ourselves and societal expectations. According to Jung, developing an identity involves acknowledging and balancing the "Persona" with other aspects of our psyche.

Lacan's Theory of Identity Formation

On the other hand, Jacques Lacan's theory of identity formation differs from Jung's approach by emphasising language and the symbolic order as foundational elements in constructing one's self. In his work *The Language of the Self; The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis* (1956), Lacan proposes that the unconscious mind operates like a language and identity is shaped by an individual's position within the norms and linguistic structures that form a complex web (Lacan, 1956). By focusing on language and the symbolic order, Lacan shifts attention from the psyche to external socio-linguistic frameworks that individuals navigate. This perspective suggests that identity is more about an individual's relationship with "the Other"—a term used by Lacan to describe society's system and expectations (Lacan, 1956). According to theory, forming an identity involves an ongoing process of negotiation between oneself and the symbolic structures within which one exists.

The concept of the "Mirror stage" plays a role in Lacan's theory as it marks the point where infants first identify with their own image, forming their sense of what he refers to as the "I" or the ego. In his paper titled *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* (1949), Lacan explains that this stage occurs when a child sees their reflection in a mirror for the first time, leading to an identification process that is deeply rooted in desire and self-love. He describes this initial stage as "fundamentally libidinal and narcissistic." (Lacan, 1949, p.6). This stage holds significance in Lacan's theory because it represents an infant's initial encounter with language and the symbolic order. When a child recognises their reflection, it goes beyond identifying themselves; it also introduces them to how they are perceived by others—the external world. This moment initiates an individual's journey of defining themselves within society.

Lacan further expands his perspective on identity formation through his concepts of the "Real," "Imaginary," and "Symbolic" realms. In his work *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1973), Lacan elaborates on these three domains; The "Real" refers to what lies outside language and symbolisation while the "Imaginary" encompasses images and illusions, and finally, the "Symbolic" pertains to language and social structures (Lacan, 1973a). Understanding Lacan's perspective on identity requires an exploration of three domains. The "Real" realm represents elements that cannot be expressed symbolically, while the "Imaginary" realm encompasses self-development, such as the mirror stage. Furthermore, the "Symbolic" realm is where our mature identity is shaped through language and social interactions (Lacan, 1973a). According to Lacan, our identity is in a state of construction and deconstruction as these realms interact.

Lacan introduced the concept of "lack" and desire as integral to identity formation. In his seminar *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1960), he discusses how this feeling of "lack" is inherent in being human and drives our desires (Lacan, 1960). This understanding is crucial to comprehending how Lacanian identity

formation occurs. We consistently seek what we believe is missing within ourselves, shaping both our sense of self and our desires. However, this pursuit is never fully satisfied, as the object of our desire is always mediated by language and the symbolic order, leading to a constant state of seeking in our identity formation process (Lacan, 1960).

Lastly, Lacan's emphasis on the significance of the "Name-of-the-Father" highlights how paternal authority and societal norms play a role in structuring our psyche. In his work *Écrits* (1966), Lacan delves into the idea of the "Name of the Father", which symbolises the authority and societal laws that shape desire and identity (Lacan, 1966). This concept highlights how societal structures and norms play a role in shaping one's sense of self. According to Lacan, the "Name of the Father" signifies castration—the acceptance of societal boundaries—necessary for individuals to develop their identities fully within the framework of society (Lacan, 1966). It illustrates the relationship between personal desires and the limitations imposed by social norms.

Comparative Analysis of Jung and Lacan's Theories

When exploring the theories of Jung and Lacan, it becomes evident that they offer insights into the formation of identity. However, their approaches differ significantly in their fundamental assumptions about the unconscious mind and the role of societal structures. In his work *Man and His Symbols* (1964), Jung focuses on the unconscious and archetypes, while Lacan in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan; Book XI* (1973) emphasises the symbolic order and language (Lacan, 1973b). Jung's theory suggests that identity is deeply intertwined with innate structures within the human psyche (Jung, 1933). According to him, our sense of self is shaped by a repository of human experiences stored within our unconscious mind (Jung, 1959). On the other hand, Lacan posits that identity primarily emerges as a result of social constructs influenced by language and interaction with societal norms (Lacan, 1966).

Both theories shed light on aspects of self-formation. For Jung, individuation is a process that leads to self-realisation and integration of various psychological elements (Jung, 1921). In contrast, Lacan views the self as a construct within the order (Lacan, 1966). On the other hand, Lacan has a different perspective on the self compared to Jung. Lacan sees the self as fragmented, constantly changing and defined as "the Other" (Lacan, 1966). In contrast, Jung believes that the self is a truth waiting to be discovered. For Lacan, however, it is something that is constructed and negotiated within frameworks.

The role of language and symbols in shaping identity is another area where Jung and Lacan diverge. Jung explores symbols in his work *Man and His Symbols* (1964), focusing on their universal qualities. In contrast, Lacan's analysis of language in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan; Book XX* (1975) emphasises its role in structuring the psyche and mediating desires. According to Jung, symbols serve as a means for accessing our unconsciousness and connecting with our shared human experiences (Jung,

1964). Conversely, Lacan views language as a barrier that separates us from our desires while constructing our reality (Lacan, 1975). This distinction sheds light on how Jung and Lacan perceive the relationship between individuals and the broader human experience. Furthermore, there is a difference in how both theorists view structures and their impact on personal identity formation. Lacan's concept of the "Name of the Father " outlined in his work *Écrits* (1966) underscores the significance of laws and structures when it comes to shaping one's identity. Alternatively, Jung places more emphasis on an individual's personal journey within their own mind (Jung, 1960). Lacan's theory, on the contrary, highlights the impact of societal structures on shaping one's identity and suggests that our position within these structures defines who we are (Lacan, 1966). In contrast, Jung suggests that identity formation is more about how individuals engage with their psychological elements. This distinction underscores each theorist's perspectives regarding the interplay between an individual and society.

Despite these disparities, there are areas where Jung and Lacan's theories converge in their recognition of the intricate nature of identity. Both Jung and Lacan agree that identity is not a fixed concept but a dynamic and evolving process. We can see this idea manifested in Jung's concept of individuation in his book *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959), as well as Lacan's emphasis on how the self continuously transforms within the symbolic order (Lacan, 1973a). This shared viewpoint reflects an understanding that forming an identity is a multifaceted and ongoing process influenced by various internal and external factors. Despite their differing approaches, both theorists acknowledge the complexity and fluidity of identity formation.

Film Analysis: *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)

Stanley Kubrick's film *Eyes Wide Shut* provides a fascinating exploration of the ideas put forth by Jung and Lacan regarding identity. The film's title subtly reveals the widely acknowledged yet often taboo themes of libido and desire. This mirrors the novel that inspired the film by Arthur Schnitzler's Titled: *Traumnovelle* (1926), translated as "Dream Story," which evidently reveals more about the motifs of the film, these being the psyche's enigmatic and concealed elements, particularly the unconscious aspects explored by Carl Jung. The film delves into themes of desire, perception and self-examination, presenting a captivating storyline that allows its audience to juxtapose and comprehend the theories of Jung and Lacan.



Figure 1: Dr. Hartford observes the “Ritual” Sequence (Kubrick, *Eyes Wide Shut*, 1999)

From a perspective, the main character, Dr. Bill Harford (portrayed by Tom Cruise), embarks on a journey akin to individuation. His nocturnal odyssey following his wife's (played by Nicole Kidman) revelation of her fantasies can be interpreted as an encounter with his own hidden shadow. The suppressed and darker aspects of his psyche. Throughout this journey, he encounters archetypal figures and situations that reflect Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. The masked ball scene, with its ambience and dream-like quality, resonates with Jung's notion of archetypes as it embodies primal fears and desires shared by all humanity. The interactions between Dr. Harford and the different characters he interacts with can be viewed as encounters with facets of his anima. The woman who warns him at the party, the prostitute he

meets later on, and even his own wife. They all represent different aspects of the feminine archetype in Jung's theory. Each interaction challenges him, revealing different layers of his own identity.

From a perspective, the film *Eyes Wide Shut* can be understood as a story about the struggle with societal norms and the pursuit of desires in the real world. According to Lacan's theories, Dr. Harford's journey can be interpreted as a quest for a longing to navigate through different realms of perception and meaning. In this context, the masked ball represents an encounter with the unfiltered aspects of desire and identity where conventional rules and expectations are temporarily set aside. The recurring theme of masks and appearances aligns with Lacan's concept of the "mirror stage", symbolising how individuals present themselves to others while concealing their desires. From a perspective, these masks act as a defence mechanism against acknowledging one's own inherent incompleteness or longing for something more profound.

Jungian analysis would focus on the archetypal significance of the characters' experiences, interpreting them as representations of universal aspects found within every human being. Lacan, on the other hand, would interpret these experiences as shaped by language and societal norms. The character's actions are driven by a pursuit of an unattainable desire, which is rooted in the inherent "lack" present in all human beings.



Figure 2: Dr. Hartford observes his mask Sequence (Kubrick, *Eyes Wide Shut*, 1999)

In the scene where Dr. Harford and his wife discuss their experiences and decide to face reality, we can understand this event from both frameworks. According to Jung's theory, it represents a reconciliation and integration of Dr. Harford's experiences with himself, marking a step towards personal growth and individuation. On the other hand, Lacan's framework suggests that it symbolises an acceptance of the limitations imposed by societal norms and an acknowledgement of the insurmountable gap between desire and fulfilment. Therefore, *Eyes Wide Shut* serves as a captivating narrative that allows its audience to delve into and compare Jung's and Lacan's theories on how identity is formed. The film explores aspects such as human desires, fears, and the realisation of truth in a way that profoundly resonates with both theorists' core ideas. Through this lens provided by Kubrick's masterpiece, we gain insights into their perspectives on identity.

This essay has delved into the contrasting perspectives on identity within Jungian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, highlighting their profound impact on our understanding of ourselves. Jung's model emphasises the mind and the process of individuation, suggesting that our sense of self is deeply rooted in our shared human heritage and the integration of various psychological elements. This perspective accentuates the significance of psychological processes in shaping our multifaceted self-concept. On the other hand, Lacan puts emphasis on language, societal norms and the role of desire to illustrate how external forces shape our identity. According to his theory, our perception of ourselves is primarily influenced by our interactions within society and our pursuit of desires, often mediated through cultural structures. These theoretical frameworks not only contribute significantly to academic discussions but also offer practical insights into contemporary psychology and human behaviour. In today's interconnected world, where identity is constantly moulded by internal and external influences, Jung and Lacan's theories provide valuable perspectives for understanding how identity formation works.

A cinematic example that showcases this interplay between desires and external societal influences in shaping identity is seen in *Eyes Wide Shut*. The film weaves together elements from both Lacanian and Jungian theories to depict a complex portrayal of how psychical factors of desire and identity interact. While Jung and Lacan provide perspectives, the film emphasises how both internal psychological dynamics and external social interactions play crucial roles in shaping one's identity. This analysis not only supports the fundamental theories of identity formation but also highlights the ongoing significance of Jung and Lacan's ideas in unravelling the complexities of the human mind.

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