

## THE EGO AND THE MEDICINE WHEEL

**Brenda Donahue**

*Историята на възрастния индианец демонстрира как компонентите на Его-съзнанието са взаимозависими и взаимосвързани и как те функционират, за да подкрепят индивидуалното развитие. Поведението и духовността на възрастния мъж очертават движението на неговата жизнена енергия. Тялото му и мечтите му осигуряват съвършеност и толерантност в поведението му. Неговите емоции и душа дават енергия да продължи развитието му, той е чувствителен към образа на най-малката птичка-колибри, който е продукт на човешката колективна памет.*

*Статията представлява метафорично психологизиране на основни понятия като: памет, тяло, поведение, емоция в клиничната практика.*

Jung described the ego, the organ of consciousness, as a complex. A complex is a pattern of experience made up of memories, physical sensations, images, ideas and behaviors held together by an affective theme (C. W. 2, 1910, 1981, 321-322). Jung believed that all human experience is organized into these patterns. Based upon his clinical observations he believed that all complexes, including ego consciousness, have an underlying structure that organizes them into patterns. He called these dynamic structuring forms *archetypes* (C. W. 8, 1947, 1954, 1981, 231).

This article will identify the four archetypal structures that organize the formation of ego consciousness and then discuss their function using an ancient Native American Medicine Wheel. In addition, the bi-polar aspects of each of these archetypes will be discussed. The purpose of the article is to develop a diagnostic template that can be used for assessment within the clinical hour.

### THE ARCHETYPAL STRUCTURES OF EGO CONSCIOUSNESS

In 1919, C. G. Jung discussed the archetypes as unconscious, "regularly recurring modes" of apperception (C.W. 8, 1981, 137-138) that are irrepresentable, bio-psycho-social *invariant forms* that organize human

experience into patterns called complexes. Ego consciousness is the organ of human perception and awareness par excellence and is formed around archetypal structures. This hypothesis has been verified in the research of Daniel Stern (1985) who has identified four “invariant forms” or archetypes that operate unconsciously, organizing patterns of experience into the complex of ego consciousness. These forms are self-affectivity, self-history, self-coherence, and self-agency (76–77).

In this article, Stern’s words: “self-history”, “self-coherence”, “self-affectivity” and “self-agency” have been replaced with the words **memory**, **body**, **affect** and **behavior** in order to link the Stern’s terminology with the words used in an ancient Native American Medicine Wheel.

**Memory** is the sense of continuity of experience. Continuity of experience has three sources: motor memory, physical sensations, and affective experience (Stern, 1985, 90–94).

**Body** is the sense and sensation of being a physical entity that has boundaries. Stern (1985) discusses several experiential factors that establish a sense of being embodied: a sense of being in a place, the cohesive experience of motion, temporal structure, intensity, and (physical) form (82–89).

**Behavior** is an action authored by an individual (Stern, 1985) and can be broken down into three components: a sense of will or intention that precedes an act, sensual data that occurs during the act, and the consequences that follow an act. Volition, the presence of sensual data, and consequences following an action are directly related to human behavior, according to Stern (76–82).

**Affect** is the capacity to recognize a characteristic constellation of emotional experiences. The experience of affect is composed of sensations from particular muscles, especially those connected with the face, the vocal apparatus, and breathing (Stern, 1985, 89–90). Affective experience itself is related to the innate physical constitution, the frequency, intensity, and duration of affective stimulation; the level of containment and the length of time it takes the body to come back to a neutral state. Affect is the glue that holds complexes together.

In an article appearing in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (1981, 306–29), Silvan Tomkins presents a theory of affect that defines it as an *invariant structure* that orders human experience. After studying more than ten thousand photographs of infants’ facial expressions Tomkins discovered nine innate affects: (1) interest-excitement, (2) enjoyment-joy, (3) surprise-startle, (4) fear-terror, (5) distress-anguish, (6) anger-rage, (7) shame-humiliation, (8) disgust and (9) contempt.

Each of the innate affects may combine with other affects intensifying, reducing, modulating, enmeshing, and suppressing some perceptions and experiences and enhancing others. Affects can also inhibit other affects and the ability to fulfill basic needs (Tomkins, 1981, 85 and 322). Gradually, as affects combine they form themselves into *affective themes* that become enmeshed with physical sensations, memories, images and ideas that support certain behaviors and suppress others.