‘Lilith’

Senior Thesis and Installation

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Part 1: Research

Rather than a set of "instructions" for women to follow in order to attract romantic suitors, in truth, The female archetypes are the foundation that many popular female characters across literature, film and television.The archetypes are primary way many contemporary writers create female characters that audiences (more specifically female) can connect and identify with. These archetypes under a contemporary lense are the basis for some of the most compelling, complex and culturally significant female characters of our time.

Psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung's field of analytical psychology focuses on the role of symbolic experiences in human life. This means while one's life history is of great significance for

understanding one's current circumstances, the circumstances also contain seeds for future growth and development. In other words, a person's current and past circumstances in life inform who they are as a person, they are always evolving and changing according to these factors. Another factor of Jung's approach to psychology is the theory of individuation, along with the culmination of one's life history. Jung also believed that the process of one's developing a personality separate from outside forces and factors and they start to develop thier inner uniqueness, views, wants and needs. The last belief of Jung's analytical psychology is the influence of the collective unconscious. According to Jung the collective unconscious is shared mental concepts and ideas that every human has encoded in thier subconscious. This is why we see common themes throughout myths, religions, and motifs from all different time points in history. This is the basis in which he developed the archetypes. For example, major religions like Christianity, Judiasm, and Islam all have thier own versions of the 'one true god' whoms beliefs are the basis for how life should be lived. The accompanying religious texts of these systems tell similar stories of sacrifice, selflessness, justice and the afterlife. The primary recurring theme between these belief systems however is they all depicted the 'chosen one' archetype. According to tvtropes.org the 'chosen one' archetype is defined as: *'These characters have been chosen by some force and they are now the only ones capable of resolving the plot. The methodology may be imprecise, and bonus points apply if "chosen one" is actually used in the work. The key here is that these characters are held in esteem for their expected potential, occasionally determined by past accomplishments'.* In christianity, the chosen one is Jesus, in Judaism it is Abraham and in Islam it is Mohammad. They are the people chosen by God to carry out special tasks in his name and in turn this makes them distinguishable from the rest. According to Jung's theories then one could deduce that the 'chosen one' archetype exists in the

collective unconscious because these religions originated in different places and at different time periods yet share this central theme.

Archetypes are defined as a very typical example of a certain person or thing and or the original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are based; a model or first form/prototype. Archetypes are significant because they are tools used in art and literature to create characters that reflect common themes in human nature. In other words, the traits of the story's character. Because archetypes reflect human nature, they help create a connection between the characters and audience because the viewers can see parts of themselves in the character. This makes them more emotionally invested in the stories being told. *'When identifying with a character, audiences experience the story vicariously through that character (Cohen, 2001). Like transportation, character identification involves diminished self-awareness and increased engagement with the story'. (Rain and Mar, 2021).*

Characters that showcase the complexities of human nature tend to be more popular rather than ones that lack depth, this is because people gravitate to things that are familiar to them. This is especially important when it comes to women in literature and art because there is already a discrepancy with female representation in the art world. The art world is a male-dominated and controlled industry and so there is little room left to acknowledge and or celebrate women's accomplishments/contributions to the space. *'By role, women accounted for 17% of writers (even with 17% in 2020), 26% of executive producers (up from 21% in 2020), 32% of producers (up from 30% in 2020), 22% of editors (even with 22% in 2020), and 6% of cinematographers (even with 6% in 2020)' (*Womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu)

Historically, women were typically only depicted as subjects in art pieces and were given little to no opportunities to be practicing artists. And if they were lucky enough to become working artists the work was expected to be limited to themes that pertained to domesticity and motherhood or if not it had to be exceptionally good. Women are also more likely than men to be undeveloped characters than their male counterparts on screen. Male characters have been presented in an array of different ways, whereas women have been pigeonholed to supporting characters to the men that are either there just as a romantic interest or a catalyst for the man's character development. Created in 2007, 'The Bechdel Test' is a measure of the representation of women in fiction. The requirements of the test include: *'Whether a work features at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man.'* This test first appeared in American cartoonist Alison Bechdel's *'Dykes to Watch Out For'* comic strip and has been used as a benchmark in the media industry ever since.

However, for the last 15 years we have seen an array of complex, fully developed female characters: Amy Dunne (*Gone Girl)*, Issa Dee (*Insecure*), Rue Bennet (*Euphoria*),and Bernadine 'Bernie' Harris (*Waiting to Exhale*) are all female characters who showcase the complexities and intersectional issues that are a everyday part of female life. Many of these characters fit one of the main 7 female archetypes: *The Lover, The Maiden, The Mystic, The Huntress, The Queen, The Sage, and The Mother* (womenlovepower.com). Not only according to their intimate relationship dynamics but more importantly to the personal character traits they embody individuals. According to Ayesha K. Faines' research on archetypes (based on Jungian Theory), these are the female archetypes that prevail the most in contemporary society.

A historical example of a female character that embodies one of the archetypes is *Lilith*. She is a female figure that originates in Mesopotamian and Judiac mythology in the book of Isaiah. The basic premise of the story is that Lilith was Adam's first wife in the Garden of Eden, who was made of the same soil as he was; this made them both equal in the eyes of Lilith. However, Adam disagreed and demanded she only lay underneath him during sex. Lilith refused and she was banished from the Garden of Eden. She eventually found refuge in hell alongside Lucifer, the devil, and became a demon preying on men and thier young children. There are multiple iterations of Lilith's story with varying details but the main lesson remains the same. Lilith was a woman who chose to rebel against what was expected of her. She represents repressed sexuality, sensuality, autonomy and dark femininity. Lilith is the quinetesential example of the Femme Fatale/Huntress archetype, nothing is more important to her than her freedom and anyone who jeopardizes that becomes the target for her rage.

The Femme Fatale/Huntress archetype is one of the most popular archetypes seen across artistic mediums. She is seen a lot particularly in films because she makes for a great catalyst for drama and thrills because of her unpredictable and domineering nature. Adrian Lyne and James Dearden's 1987 film '*Fatal Attraction'*, has one on the most compelling femme fatale characters. The film stars Alexandria (Alex) Forrest played by Glenn Close and Daniel (Dan) Gallagher played by Micheal Douglass, Daniel is a married man who leads a successful life and who has a one night encounter with Forrest who then forms an obsession with him. This leads to her taking extreme measures to stay in Gallagher's life despite his attempts to escape her.

Close's character in *'Fatal Attraction'* is a more ferocious example of a femme fatale/huntress but what really makes her compelling is that she is depicted as Gallagher's equal in the film, she is an equally as successful editor at a publishing company to his lawyer. She is beautiful and independent and far from a damsel in distress (also known as the Maiden archetype). This is significant because it shows the true practices of her character, a woman who has 'everything' still longs for an intimate connection and will do anything in her power to get it.

On the contrary to the Femme Fatale/Huntress archetype is, as mentioned before the Maiden archetype. The Maiden archetype is characterized as a woman who is young, naive, who has not stepped into her personal power yet. She also represents wanderlust, courageousness, drive and innocence. This archetype is also popularly known as 'The Virgin': '*The Maiden may not have the wisdom of age. She is fresh, new to experiences and her energy holds a gentle naivety which edges on foolhardy at times. But that's where the secret of her flowering comes from'.* (moonschool.org) This archetype is based on typical traits of girls in their girlhood/early womanhood. This trope is most seen in coming of age movies. These characters are typically going through a transition period in their lives where they feel thier identity is changing. Maiden archetypes are great protagonists because thier vulnerability and self actualization leaves room for different sorts of conflicts that occur throughout the story. Changing relationship dynamics, loss of adolescence and traumatic events are all triggers for changes in a young girl's life. However the Maiden archetype is significant because it leaves a lot of growth for the character to endure.

2019's folk horror film *'Midsommar'* main character Dani Ardor is an excellent example of the Maiden archetype. In this film, Dani is left traumatized after her sister kills herself and their parents in a murder-suicide incident, this leaves Dani extremely vunerable and so she clings to her boyfriend cultural anthropology student Christian Hughes. What Dani does not know is that Hughes planned to break up with her prior to his trip to Sweden to attend the Midsommar festival which he is writing his thesis on. After seeing Dani's emotional and mental state after the incident, he invites her to go on the trip. The experience starts out as a relatively normal trip to experience customs in a different country, but things take a turn when these customs turn extremely violent. Dani is frightened and immediately wants to leave after witnessing an annual ceremony at the festival but is convinced to stay by Hughe's friend and member of the commune Pele. He convinces Dani by telling her that he too lost his parents in a fire and that this is where he found his refuge. Dani is crowned *'May Queen'* the next day after winning a dance competition, meanwhile Christian is lured into a mating ritual with one of the commune women. Dani finds him in the middle of this ritual and eventually chooses to kill him at the end of the festival. Dani Ardor's character in *Midsommar* is captivating because she initially starts the film in an extremely vulnerable place, looking for comfort in a time of distress. Christian, her boyfriend, sees this vulnerability in her and for that reason chooses to stay by her side. However in a perverse way, coming to the festival made Dani face her demons head on, once again facing death. This triggers her emotionally and makes her want to flee but on the contrary, the people of the commune embrace Dani, they cry with her when she cries and they crown her as their queen. She is emotionally validated by these strangers, in ways she was lacking in her relationship. And at the end of the film, they crown her 'May Queen' granting her the power over others and their

lives. This transition is symbolic because this represents Dani leaving her Maiden-hood, she has regained her own personal power in a dark and twisted way.

The Maiden and the Huntress are just two examples of female archetypes that shed light on the complexities of the female experience. They both consist of very different characteristics but at the core they both represent two very important stages in life. Because of characters like Dani Ardor and Alex Forrest, we as audiences are shown how these traits can make for unique multi-dimensional female characters.

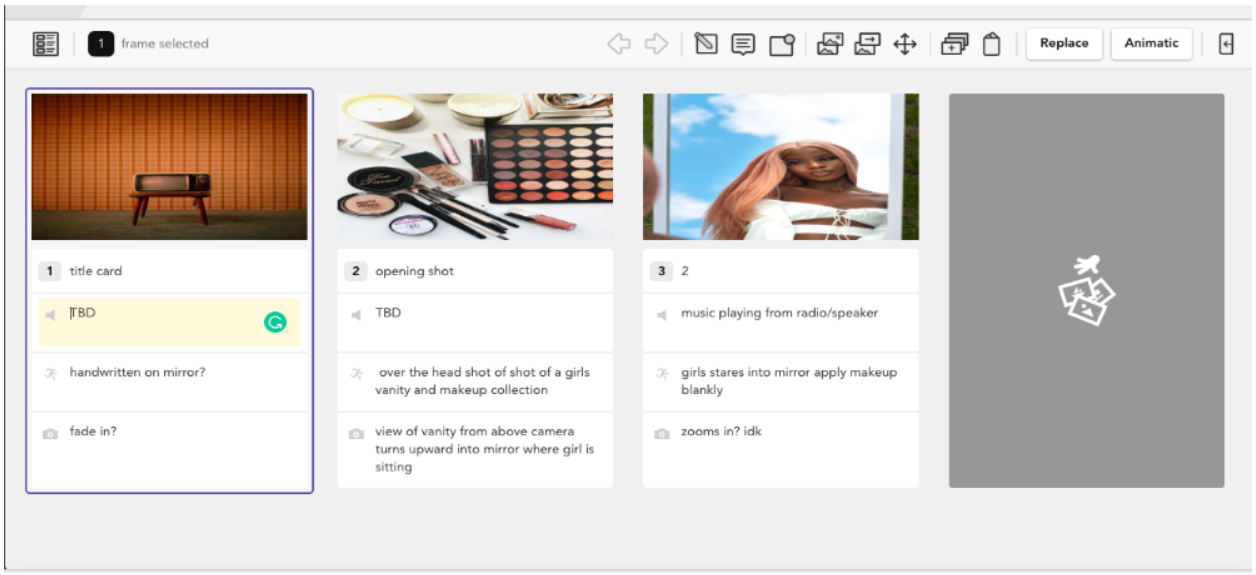
However it is important to state that there has been a lot of discourse surrounding the biases in Carl Jung's theories according to feminist thinkers and scholars. Another aspect of Jung's analytical psychology research is the Anima versus the Animus. The Animus is defined as 'the unconscious masculine aspect in a woman's psyche while the Anima represents the unconscious feminine aspect in a man's psyche. The Anima and Animus represent the true self rather than the self we present to others. Many femininst scholars have criticized Jung's theories calling them 'male centered'. *'Jung is considered outdated, and his compelling philosophy is tinged with a patriarchal bias. 'Femininst Critique of Jung' Goldenberg focuses on Jung's use of archetypes, which are intended to be a part of a liberating mythology, arguably confine women: 'it is true that Jung genuinely values women for her remarkable and all too often overlooked eros. Eros is the Jungian evalent to feminine energy and logos, masculine energy. But it is equally true that he confines her to this sphere. Once she moves into a logos area she is not only at a great disadvantage but is behaving unnaturally as well.'* The idea that when a woman is operating out of a 'masucline energy' it is 'unnatural' for her is a sexist claim and reinforces the patriarchal

idea that women should be the opposite to men only and not their equal.. This has caused feminist sholars to question Jung's theories based on his inherent limited world view of women. Feminine and Masculine are just broad terms to categorize logical and emotional states of being. These 'energies' are fluid, not a static entity, and according to the circumstances of life one may flow in between the two. If this is true of the 'Animus' in women wouldn't the same be true of men who lack the 'Anima' in their psyche? Aren't they also acting unnaturally and at their own demise if they lack feminine energy? Wouldn't the presence of both Anima and Animus create a balanced psyche? There is not a lot of research about Jungian theory from a female's point of view, however, that gives more room for women to recontextualize these cultural narratives.

Part 2: Creative Process & Reflection

This project in its beginning stages began as a film that explored a young girl's experience on the internet and how that impacts how she views herself and the world around her. It was inspired by my own experiences and relationship with the web and how that can impact the psyche of young woman.

Storyboard progress using boords.com



The storyboard for my initial senior project concept.

However, while that is something I am extremely passionate about, I was not exactly excited about the topic, rather it was something that I just thought about frequently. For me it is important to feel connected to my work in order to do my best, so I decided to rethink my topic. Over winter break is when I officially came up with the concept of ‘Lilith’. A website that showcases a profile for each of the 7 female archetypes.

The process of creating Lilith started with my personal interest in Occult studies. The Occult is a broad term for a category of esoteric supernatural beliefs and practices that do not include scientific and religious disciplines, rather it is the study of otherworldly phenomena. Astrology, tarot cards and magical practices are all in the occult genre. I have had an interest in these studies for years and I knew I wanted my project to represent my interests at this point in my life. What intrigues me the most about Astrology is that it is a tool that encourages self-reflection while also helping us to better understand others. In a similar fashion, I feel the archetypes are a way for us to relate to fictional characters/figures and to ourselves.

Tarot cards use archetypes and elemental associations to help the reader create a narrative for the person receiving it: Queen of Cups (*emotional nature*), King of Pentacles *(possessions and wealth)*. As for the astrological element, that was how I was first introduced to Lilith. In astrological birth charts there is a placement called the *'Black Moon Lilith'*, according to astrologers it is the '*aphogee of the orbit of the moon'* (astrolibrary.org). This placement represents all the things that Lilith's archetype embodies (as mentioned before in the research portion). I named it after Lilith for two reasons: One, I personally love what she represents as an entity, and two, in my own birth chart, Lilith is in my first house (the part of the chart that represents the self) so I naturally resonate with Lilith's story and values . After that part, I began the formal research on archetypes and that led to me Carl Jung's work.

jstor.org

"The Feminine as Archtype"

Jung believed that the Archtypes "shape matter (native) as well as mind (psyche)" Through this humans can create and have been creating images of gods and goddesses Jung's theories fand fascinating by people in the creative fields, are not accepted by scientists and intellectuals without reservations Its if was criticized for its scientific merit, so also its theological merit was questioned. Freudian traction thought it was redundant.

Jung's 12 archtypes (medium. com)
12 literary archtypes

Ruler — Joffery (GoT)
The Creator — Iron man
Sage — yoda
The Innocent — pippin Lord of the rings
Exploner — Indiana Jones
Rebel — Robin Hood
Hero/ main Character - Harry Potter
Magician/wizard - Dumbledore
Jeister - Comedic relief
Everyman for everystory -
The Loner - Raige (X Men)
The Caregiver - Hagrid

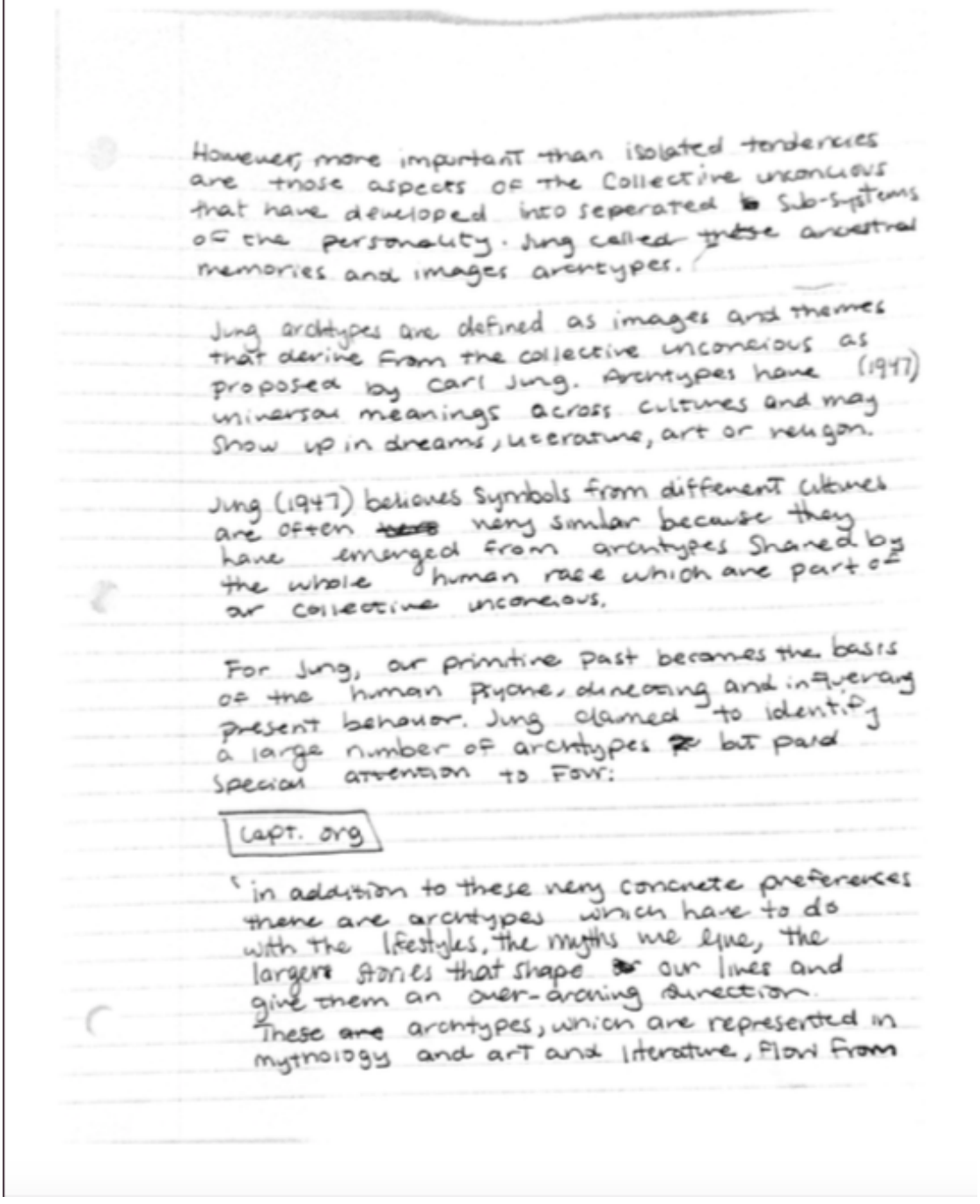
web.s.ebscohost.com

universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconcious does not develop individually but inherited. It consists of preexistent forms, the archtypes, which can only become concious secondarily and which gine definite form to certain psychic contents= Hence, we are more than we [consciously] know

As Jung and Neumann argue, because the human psyche "is the source of all cultural and religous phenomena," It is something revealed very clearly that [origin myth] present unconcious and preconcious processes which describe not the origin of our cosmos, but the origin of mans concious awarness of the world".

Myths are imaginative and symbolic eruptions of humanity's collective unconcious into the concious realm — Not the result of primative philosophical speculation. Myths are true in the psychological sense.

Myths consist of primordial symbols known as archtypes, and their function and effect "is not to inform the mind but to awaken consciousness. An archetype is a pattern of experience, rooted in humanities collective unconcious devoid of specific content until the experience



However, more important than isolated tendencies are those aspects of the Collective unconscious that have developed into seperated Sub-systems of the personality. Jung called these ancestral memories and images archtypes.

Jung archtypes are defined as images and themes that derive from the collective unconcious as proposed by Carl Jung. Archtypes have (1947) universal meanings across cultures and may show up in dreams, literature, art or religon.

Jung (1947) believes Symbols from different cultures are often very similar because they have emerged from archtypes Shared by the whole human race which are part of our collective unconcious.

For Jung, our primitive past becomes the basis of the human Psyche, directing and influencing present behavior. Jung claimed to identify a large number of archtypes but paid special attention to Four:

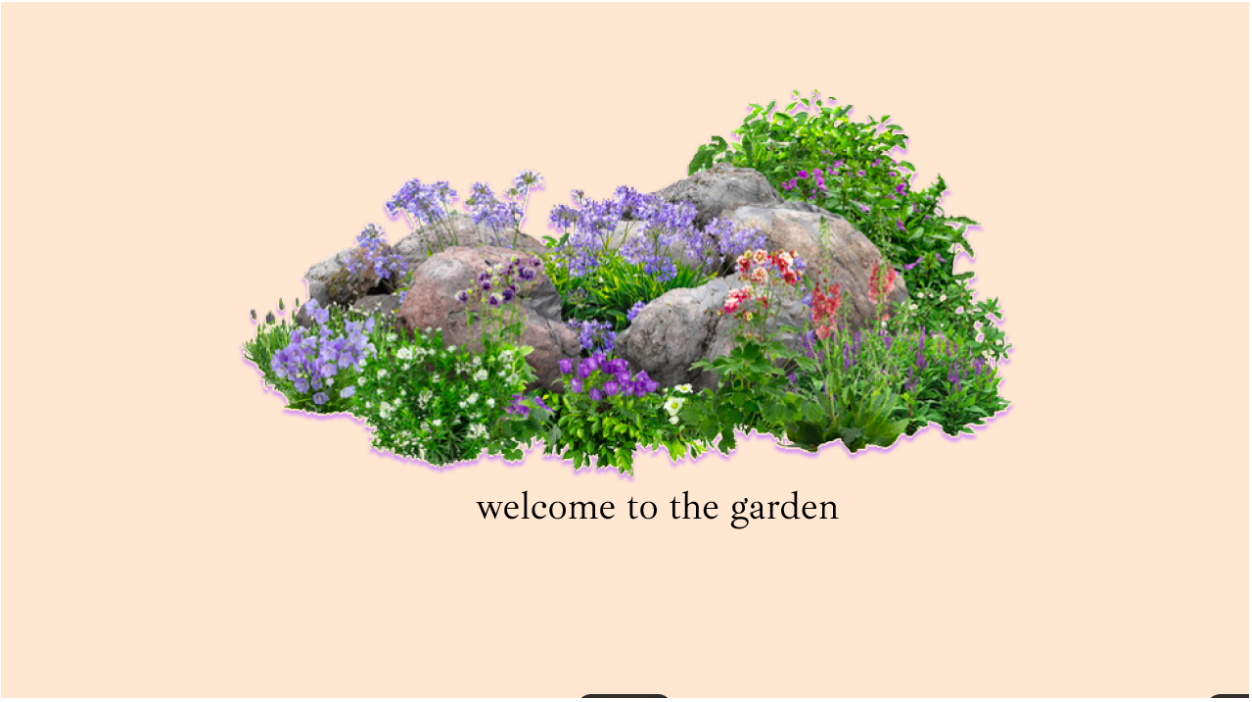
Capt. org

"in addition to these very concrete preferences there are archtypes which have to do with the lifestyles, the myths we live, the largers stories that shape our lives and give them an over-arching direction. These archtypes, which are represented in mythology and art and literature, Flow from

My first collection of notes on analytical psychology and the archetypes.

After learning about the origin story of Lilith, I began to think about how this information would exist in the digital age and how I could turn it into a New Media based project. So then I got the idea to blend the contents of my first project with the latter: *What if these archetypes existed as real women in the digital age that were active on social media?* Was the first question I asked myself. *What would they be like? What would they be thinking?* And that is how 'Lilith' was born. I wanted to take the archaic nature of Jung's work and make it contemporary, fun, educational, insightful and most importantly implement my point of view as a young woman to make it relatable to contemporary audiences.

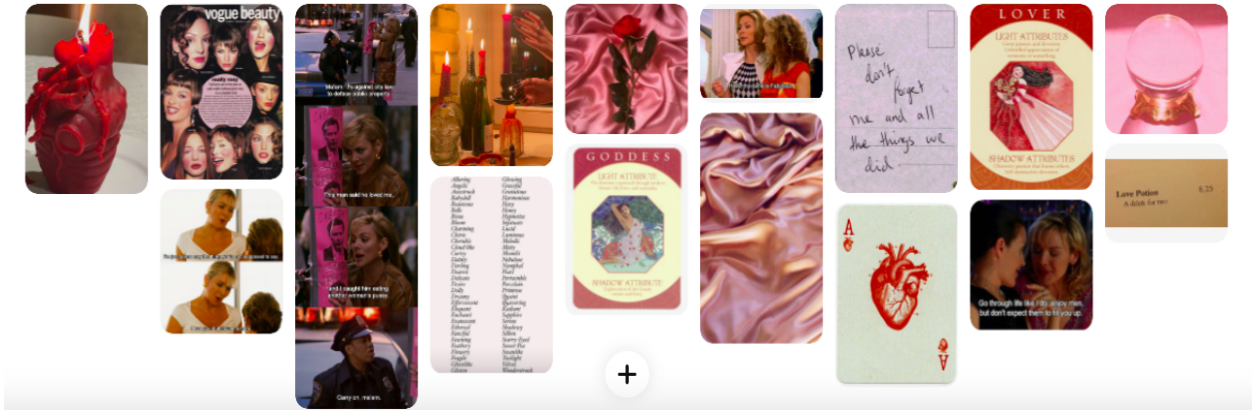
For the aesthetic, I wanted it to be consistent with the overarching theme of the research, and so my first thought was *The Garden of Eden*, Lilith's original home. Blending natural and artificial aesthetics has always been appealing to me and I've always enjoyed the juxtaposition of the two. I thought of the garden being a place where all the archetypes existed together, kind of like a community, sort of how social media connects us with others with similar to us.

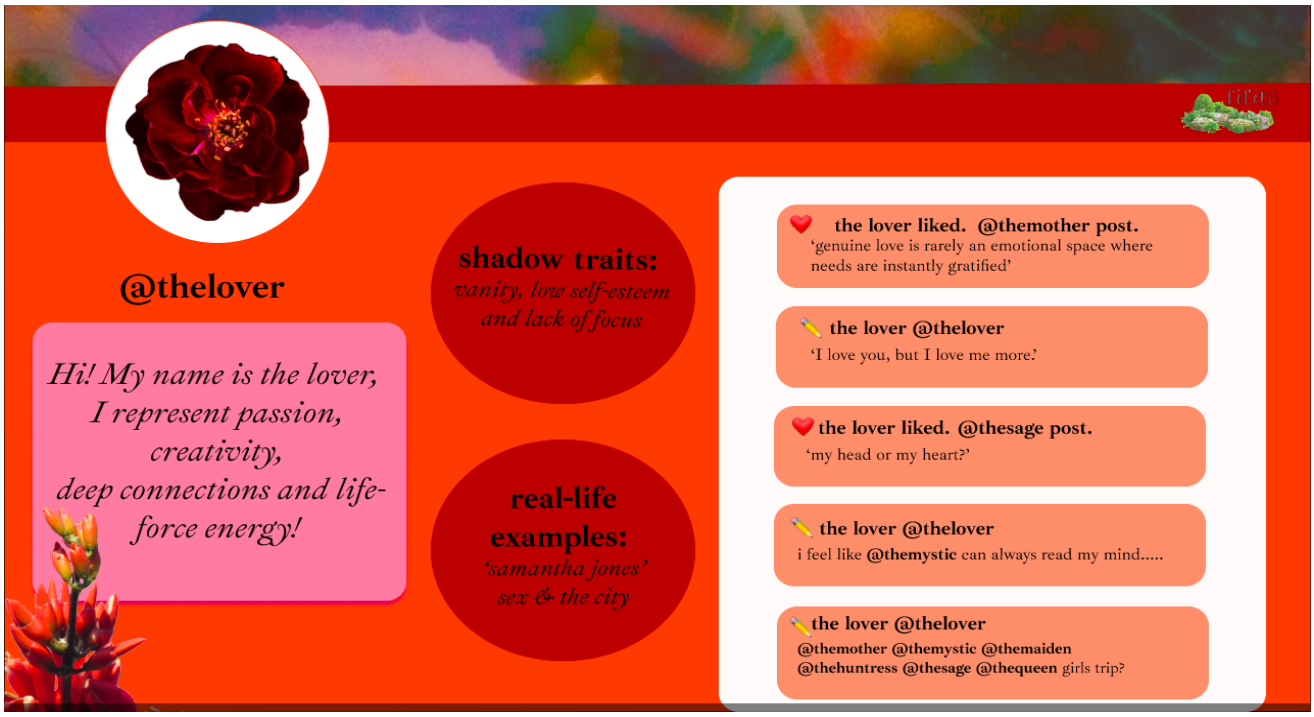


To help me visually, I created pinterest mood boards for each archetype to create a cohesive style for each one . For example, this is the mood board and profile for *'The Lover':*

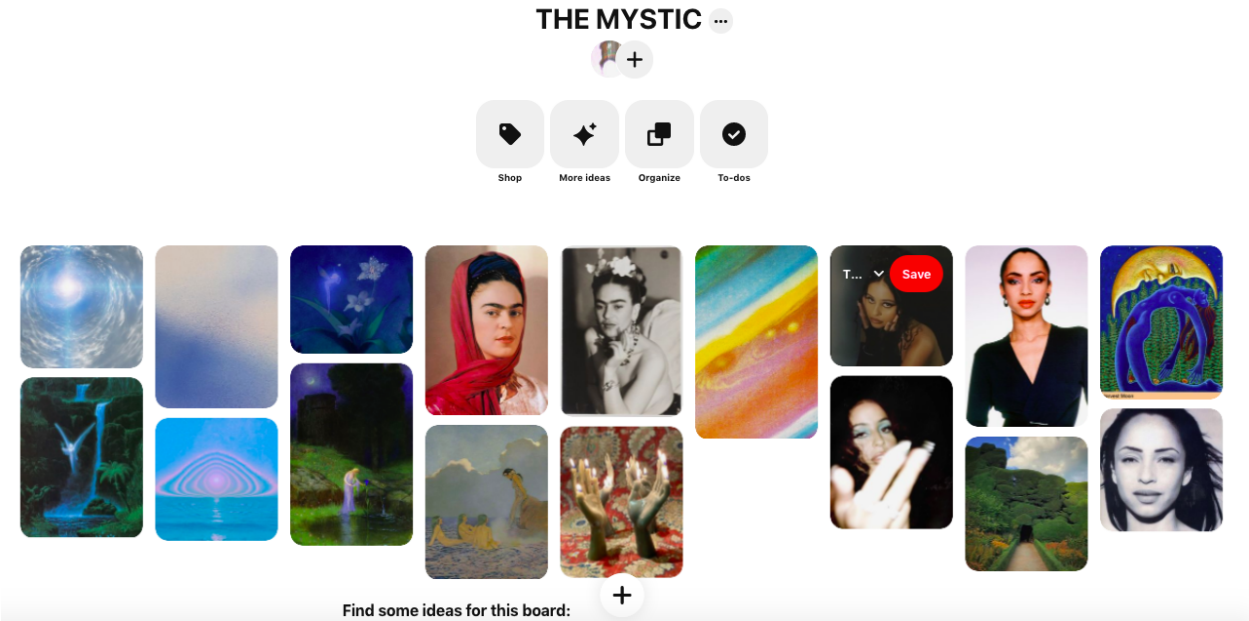
THE LOVER

More ideas Organize To-dos





And *The Mystic:*



These boards also include images of real-life women who embody these archetypes: Samantha Jones *(Sex & The City)* for *The Lover* and Frida Kahlo (artist) *for The Mystic*. This part of the

process was important to me because in today's age, someone's social media profile is a representation of themselves. I wanted to accurately showcase the different qualities of each type through the style and content of their profile. Each page includes a brief bio explaining each archetype's main character traits, thier accompanying shadow (negative) character traits, real-life examples and their social media 'statuses'.

The next aspect of the profiles I focused on was the statuses for each type, this forced me to put myself in the shoes of each one and sort of roleplay as if I was them. *What would they say to each other? Which archetypes would be friends and are the most similar?* Are some of the questions I asked myself when coming up with ideas for the 'tweets' (the profile design is directly inspired by Twitter), in the end I did not want the project to feel too serious so I took a more lighthearted approach and came up with playful interactions between the seven of them. I felt like this approach would be just as enjoyable for the viewers to read, as it was for me to write. Another small detail that I considered when designing the profiles, was to not use pictures of actual people for each profile photo. Some might argue that this takes away from the 'realness' of the profile but this was a deliberate choice on my part because I wanted the viewers to imagine themselves as any one of the archetypes regardless of age, gender, race or any other intersectional identity. Just because these are historically 'female' archetypes, in my eyes they can be anyone who identifies with them!

Overall, I found that the time that I had to think about the direction of my senior project over winter break was extremely valuable to me. I think the pressure of deadlines pushed me to come up with a concept just for the sake of it, when I was not quite ready to commit to an idea yet. I'm

grateful for that grace period because it allowed me to realize what I am passionate about at this point in time. After being at Purchase College for the last four years, I believe one thing to be true about myself as an artist: I make art for myself first, and then I put it out in the world, hoping others will resonate with it and see themselves in my art. Creating has always been a cathartic process for me, in which I try to nurture my projects, spending time thinking about the concept, the execution and delivery. It is very important to me that I take my time because that is when I feel the best about what I produce. And I can confidently say, Lilith is one the most special pieces I have created during my time here and I hope to expand the ideas explored in this project and continue to create things at this momentum. It was not a trouble-free process for me, there was a lot of trials and tribulation during it but nevertheless it taught me lessons that I will take with me as I continue to grow as an artist beyond Purchase College.

The official *'Lilith'* website can be visited at ***enterlilith.cargo.site.***

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