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# **The Smiling Shadow of a Bat: A Literary Jungian Analysis of the Archetypical Relation between Batman and Joker in Scott Snyder's Death of the Family**

Chakioglou, Ahmet

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# The Smiling Shadow of a Bat

A Literary Jungian Analysis of the Archetypal Relation between  
Batman and Joker in Scott Snyder's *Death of the Family*

A Master Thesis

Ahmet Chakioglou

s1382055

Leiden University

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First reader: Dr. E.J. van Leeuwen

Second reader: Dr. S.A. Polak





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## Introduction

“This isn’t what you [Batman] want!

You know it, I [Joker] know it, and now they know it, too!

They’ll always know!

In the end, the real end, the only ones left will be you and me.” (Snyder 290)

“But if we are able to see our own shadow and can bear knowing about it, then a small part of the problem has already been solved.” (Jung, *Archetypes* 20)

Since the late 1930s, Batman has been a ubiquitous presence in the world of comics. In all his incarnations, Batman’s heroic persona is mirrored in that of his perfect nemesis the Joker, who first appeared in the first issue of *Batman*, in April 1940.<sup>1</sup> This thesis analyses the relationship between Batman and the Joker, tracing it generally through different eras of this seminal comic, but focusing specifically on Scott Snyder’s *Death of the Family* (2012-2013). This graphic novel is the culmination of the many Batman versus Joker stories told throughout the preceding seven decades and the characters revisit their old battlegrounds to understand and make sense of their bond.<sup>2</sup> This thesis will analyse their relation as an obligatory bond – the one cannot exist without the other – and will explain how their struggles are an expression of their endless search for their true self. In Jungian terms, the Joker represents aspects of Batman’s shadow: those darker features of his self that he cannot acknowledge or give into if his actions are going to be a force for good in Gotham City. Professor C. George Boeree describes the shadow archetype as “the ‘dark side’ of the ego” (6)

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<sup>1</sup> Over the years, the name of Batman’s nemesis has been styled “the Joker” and just “Joker,” the latter form being used more frequently in recent years, most notably in Todd Phillips’s film *Joker* (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Notable earlier Batman vs. Joker storylines are: “The Joker’s Five Way Revenge” in *Batman* # 251, “The Laughing Fish” in *Detective Comics* #475 and #476, Alan Moore’s and Brian Bolland’s graphic novel *Batman: The Killing Joke* (1988) and Ed Brubaker’s and Doug Mahnke’s single-volume comic book *Batman: The Man Who Laughs* (2005).

and states that individuals store this darker side that they are capable of in this archetype. He goes on to say that the shadow is “amoral – neither good nor bad, just like animals” (6). In layman’s terms, Boeree explains that it is “from our [civilized] human perspective, the animal world looks rather brutal, inhuman, so the shadow becomes something of a garbage can for the parts of ourselves that we can’t quite admit to” (6). In other words, the Jungian shadow contains aspects of human personality that each individual needs to confront, accept and integrate in order to develop psychologically as a human being. This ongoing process of psychological development towards a fully integrated, whole and unique personality is what Carl Jung called individuation. In his book *Private Myths: Dreams and Dreaming* (1997), Jungian analyst Anthony Stevens writes that “[i]ndividuation is the process, simple or complex as the case may be, by which every living organism becomes what it was destined to become from the beginning” (139). Destiny here does not refer to the idea of an unavoidable fate, or goal; instead, individuation refers to “the developmental path that each of us takes during his or her lifetime” (Robertson 7), which is unique for every person.

The analysis of *Death of the Family* in this thesis will show that the Joker is Batman’s *raison d’être*, and vice versa, but that their personal psychological struggles withhold them from moving forward in their individuation process. Batman and Joker are each other’s shadows, so to speak, holding each other in a firm grasp that stops them from achieving recognition of what Jung called “the self,” outlined by Robin Robertson as “this inborn personality that it takes a lifetime to grow into” (109). The process of individuation, as a literary-critical lens, will be explored in more detail in chapter one of this thesis. But before turning to this theoretical framework it is important to briefly introduce the history and medium of Batman as a popular-culture phenomenon.

## Colourful comics and the darkness of Batman

The first comic-book boom began in the late 1930s with the arrival of Superman in the first issue of *Action Comics* in June 1938 (Taylor et al. 8). Publisher Jack Liebowitz ordered a 200,000 copy print for the title created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Liebowitz was cautious, because of the Great Depression that America was experiencing; but the character became a huge hit, selling out his run everywhere. The seventh issue sold over 500,000 copies and later went on to sell more than a million. After the Man of Steel's first appearance, the exponential increase in popularity of comic-book heroes allowed artist Bob Kane to create a new character for National Comics' flagship title *Detective Comics*, in the late 1930s (Taylor et al. 11). Superman had already been established as the real American hero, proudly donning his red and blue tights, clearly evoking the American flag, and Kane suggested a bat-like superhero, very much in the style as Superman, only with wings and a mask. Bill Finger, the uncredited writer and co-creator of Batman, made revisions to the original concept of Kane. He suggested a black and grey colour scheme, with a cowl and a cape and a bat on the chest (Taylor et al. 11).

Within Western culture the bat has long been associated with darkness and evil. Stories about bats can be traced back to Ancient Greek and Roman cultures: "Homer described the souls of the dead as fluttering through the underworld and uttering cries like bats" (Werness 31). Werness explains that "in Christian symbolism, Satan, the enemy of light, and his demons were equipped with bat wings" (32). By the early nineteenth century, "the bat became linked with the irrational and with spiritual darkness" (Werness 32). Unsurprisingly, later nineteenth-century vampire-themed literature, such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), featured bat imagery in the context of anti-Christian corruption of the human mind and body, which further shaped the image of evil that this creature represents. But bats were also attributed positive meaning, as early as the classical age. Their blood and other body parts

were believed to have medicinal qualities, and they were admired for their communal behaviour. Professor Gary F. McCracken explains that in certain circumstances bats were even considered symbols of protection from evil. It is this link with darkness and evil, on the one hand, and with remedy and protection, on the other, that makes the bat such an important symbol within Batman lore. Initially, Batman was created to present a dark contrast to Superman – a shadow, if you will – and was far from a true American hero. He was more a Byronic hero than a superhero.<sup>3</sup> The character was designed with little background: a rich playboy dressing up as a bat to beat up low-life thugs. This all changed when the character was given a narrative on his origin by the inclusion of two pages that elaborately described the purpose of his existence: avenging the brutal death of his parents, who were shot in a poorly lit alley by a lowlife thief.<sup>4</sup> It is exactly that openness for change and constant adaptation that allowed Batman to become such an integral part of modern popular culture, and elevate him to the status of a true American hero.

Originally, Batman was written in the style of the pulps: a compelling, fast-paced, page-turner of a story that entertained the reader with action-packed adventure; this style was evident with Batman showing little remorse over killing criminals. “In his early adventures, he waged a grim war against crime in a netherworld of gloomy castles, fog-bound wharves, and the dimly lit alleys of Gotham City – an urban landscape that seemed perpetually enshrouded in a nightscape” (Taylor et al. 11). With the inclusion of Robin, his younger sidekick, editor Whitney Ellsworth decreed that the character could no longer kill or use a gun. Without altering his origin, but now following Ellsworth’s bold statement, Bruce Wayne, after watching his parents get murdered, vows “by the spirits of my parents to avenge their deaths by spending the rest of my life warring on all criminals” (Kane). This leaves Batman

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Bygrave defines the Byronic hero as “a moody outlaw, nursing some secret guilt, a rebel in a non-political guise” (173), acting out of personal, rather than altruistic motives.

<sup>4</sup> Batman’s origins were presented first in *Detective Comics* #33 (Nov. 1939) and expanded in in *Batman* #47 (July 1948).



with an unattainable goal to hunt down and lock up every criminal in Gotham City. In his never-ending fight against crime, Batman's character started to shift from a ruthless and trigger-happy detective into the sophisticated and troubled hero he is today.

In order to appreciate the body of work that tells the often reinvented adventures of Batman, an understanding of comic book terminology is required. Author of *Understanding Comics*, Scott McCloud, describes that "the artform – the medium – known as comics is a vessel which can hold any number of ideas and images" (6). In other words, aside from the obvious textual aspects that accompany the illustrations in these books, comics tell a story through images. These images need to be viewed as sequential art in order to fully appreciate the story the creators are trying to tell. One of the most important traits of a comic is the use of panels, which can be described as the framed parts within a page. Although there is a natural flow of events in real life, comic panels are snapshots of different moments that only connect through the associations the reader makes. Scott McCloud writes that "comic panels fracture both time and space, offering a jagged, staccato rhythm of unconnected moments. But closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous, unified reality" (67). Comics thus rely heavily on deductive reasoning on the reader's part and all parts of a page need to be taken into consideration. One particular item of vocabulary that is essential in comic book reading is the word *gutter*. A gutter is the space between two panels within the comic page. Normally, this is a blank space that separates the panels, but especially within comics this space is often used by creators to draw metaphorical or symbolic images that can be left to the reader's interpretation. The following chapters will provide some analysis of moments where Snyder utilizes the gutter parts of the pages in *Death of the Family* to construct a symbolic commentary on the narrative presented in the panels.

As Batman's narrative style changed and his popularity grew, in 1940 Batman was given his own comic book, allowing the creators to introduce new villains. The first and most

notorious villain to enter Gotham City was the Joker, who would become Batman's nemesis. Originally, he was introduced as a one-time thug, because his creators worried that recurring villains would make Batman appear inept. Ellsworth overruled the decision and the Joker returned (Eason n.p.). Like Batman, this villain would undergo drastic changes over time. The Joker initially appeared as a remorseless gun-wielding serial killer, but quickly dropped the pistols, much in the same fashion as Batman had done. The Joker was adapted to become more resourceful than other contemporary villains, which made him a greater threat to Batman than the others, and so Batman's nemesis was born.

As America's society changed over time, the characters of Batman and the Joker also changed. Since the inception of the Batman franchise, in 1939, none of the other main characters have changed as much as these two arch enemies. These changes are reflected in their residency of Gotham City, a microcosm of urban American society. Through different eras, their struggle has often reflected the socio-political anxieties of different moments in American history, peaking probably with Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008), which has frequently been understood as reflecting on American anxieties about terrorism in the wake of 9/11 (see Pheasant-Kelly). Although Batman and the Joker are fictitious characters, their creators have drawn many parallels in their stories to the real world of the readers. The shadows they have cast upon each other often symbolize the shadows American society has cast upon itself over time. This thesis will explore more specifically how *Death of the Family* turns inward to explore Batman's anxieties concerning the role of the Joker in his personal, psychological development and the effects of confronting his shadow head on.

## **Batman, the Joker and Jungian Archetypes**

In his work *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959/1990), C.G. Jung describes the collective unconscious as a deeper layer of the human psyche on which the personal unconscious rests. He writes that this deeper layer

does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition, but is inborn. ... I have chosen the term ‘collective’ because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us. (3)

Jung goes on to claim that the contents of the collective unconscious are known as archetypes. There is a correlation between archetypes and recurrent motifs in myths and fairy tales, like the hero, the trickster figure, the mother, and the old-wise man. Andrew M. Butler explains that “developments in structural anthropology ... noted repetitions between different myths” and “certain patterns of hero and narrative began to be recognized within fiction” (99). In the psychology of primitives, the archetypes correspond to Lévy-Bruhl’s concept of “*représentations collectives*” (Segal 637) and in the field of comparative religion they have been defined by Hubert and Mauss as “categories of the imagination” (Shamdasani 311). As an integral part of the human imagination, Butler explains, “archetypes occur throughout fiction but especially in fantasy” (99). Although Batman’s nemesis, the Joker, is often analysed as a trickster archetype, I will argue that the Joker is actually the personification of Batman’s shadow, in specifically Jungian terms. Batman, in relation to his alter ego Bruce Wayne, can also be described as a shadow archetype.

The shadow appears either in projection on suitable persons, or is personified as such in dreams. The shadow coincides with the personal unconscious (which corresponds to

Freud's conception of the unconscious) and personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly. An example can be seen in the Faust-Mephistopheles relationship. Goethe's *Faust* (1808) was based on folklore, which Jung studied in detail. Jung claimed that Faust's shadow was Mephistopheles and wrote that "most of all, it awakened in me the problem of opposites, of good and evil, of mind and matter, of light and darkness" (*Memories* 262). After reading E.T.A. Hoffmann's dark fantasy *The Devil's Elixirs* (1815), Jung writes: "somewhere we have a sinister and frightful brother, our own flesh-and-blood counterpart, who holds and maliciously hoards everything that we would so willingly hide under the table," (*Psychotherapy* 39). Instead of applying the archetype of the trickster to Joker and the archetype of the shadow to Batman and Bruce Wayne, I will argue that the concept of the shadow actually applies to the bond between Batman and the Joker.

A direct demonstration of this bond is seen in the ever-missing endgame of Batman and the Joker's relationship. Whereas many dark fantasy stories follow the classic circular hero's journey: "beginning and ending in the same place" and containing an initiation, revelation and transformation (Lansing Smith vii), Batman's stories revolving around his encounters with the Joker are never brought to a grand finale and thus a resolution to the conflict. The Joker challenges Batman, Batman defeats him and puts him away in Arkham Asylum, an asylum for the mentally unstable in the fictional world of Batman. Batman never kills his nemesis, although often he wishes he could, and wonders if he should. Some graphic novels, such as *The Killing Joke* (1988), have played with the concept of Batman killing the Joker. As the ongoing storyline advanced, however, these hints at murder were quickly retconned, showing a flashback of Batman putting his nemesis behind bars. Murder does not suit Batman, as much as Joker wants him to do it. It is this self-control that makes Batman the hero that he is, while at the same time demonstrating that it is his weakness.

Over the years, many storylines have shown Batman rethinking his decision not to kill the Joker, especially in the instances where this villain terribly injures or kills Batman's allies. Batman loves the chase; he loves to be challenged; and as long as there is a Joker, there is a need for Batman. Bruce Wayne vowed to avenge his parents' murder by fighting crime for the rest of his life as Batman; and as long as the Joker is alive, he can keep this promise. Simultaneously, the Joker wants Batman to fight him. If Batman kills him, the Joker will win. Everything the Joker does is to taunt Batman into killing him. His motives are never truly revealed, and neither is his origin; but these are not needed for the narrative to be driven on, if the Joker is in fact Batman's shadow, and vice versa. Joker exists to challenge Batman to become the worst version of himself. He wants Batman to become the Joker. The Joker wants Batman to kill him to prove to society that everyone can break down, and that true civilisation does not exist.

According to Jung's principle of opposites, every thought suggests its opposite. To understand good, one must have an understanding of the term bad, or evil. Boeree discusses a memory Jung had of a hurt baby robin he tried to help when he was about eleven. Jung recounted: "I was so struck by how light it was that the thought came to me that I could easily crush it in my hand. Mind you, I didn't like the idea, but it was undeniably there" (Boeree 9). I would like to argue that in this case the Joker is a symbol of mankind's propensity to commit crime and Batman personifies mankind. There is a monster lurking inside of everyone and what terrifies the reader is that he fears that the Joker exists in everyone, including Batman. Batman is not confined by law. Therefore, he should be easily manipulated into breaking the law. The Joker simply needs a terrible monster to prove his macabre point. Therefore, he becomes just that, a monster. Batman, however, needs the Joker alive to continue his psychological struggle with the shadow. Batman will not kill the Joker while knowing that the Joker will never give up, and the Joker will not give up his attempt to

challenge Batman, while knowing that Batman will never kill him. They are forever doomed to battle each other, yet hold out hope that one will eventually change. In a way, they complete each other's "shortcomings," and mirror the other's greatest desire.

This thesis is divided into four chapters, of which three will analyse the bond between Batman and Joker, as his shadow. Chapter one will lay down in more detail the Jungian framework briefly introduced above, which lies at the basis of the textual analysis. The key elements of Jungian theory, mainly the archetypes and the process of individuation will form a critical lens through which to explore the Jungian characteristics of the Batman graphic novel *Death of the Family*, a story in which past encounters between Batman and the Joker are revisited through the lens of today's world. The other three chapters will present a close-textual analysis of key scenes, textual elements and panels of the graphic novel. Chapter two will show that Jung's ideas of the shadow can be applied to the character of Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne, but especially to Batman's relationship with the Joker. While focusing on *Death of the Family*, I will also refer to previous Batman works alluded to in the story, as this concept of the shadow is visible in many of their earlier encounters. The third chapter will look into Batman's relationship with the Bat family, and how they can be understood as representations of what Jung termed the anima or animus: "subjective personalities that represent a deeper level of the unconscious than the shadow" (Stein 126). Batman views his family's affection for him different than the Joker does. I will analyse the role of these individuals and their behaviour in relation to both Batman and the Joker. Chapter four will further explore the concepts of individuation and the self, and will show whether or not this goal of complete integration of the aspects of the psyche can be reached by either Batman or the Joker.

Before turning to the analysis, a brief summary of the plot of *Death of the Family* can be useful to fully appreciate the intricate relationship between the characters. The lead up to

this graphic novel plays an important part as well. It is important to know that Batman has not been able to rid his city from crime, even after the Joker has mysteriously disappeared from the asylum. The dynamic of the vigilantes has changed, however, as the family surrounding Batman has become much more important not only to the city, but to Batman and his Bruce Wayne persona as well. One year after his disappearance, the Joker returns to Gotham City. His face was cut off and is now being preserved at the Gotham City Police Department. After retrieving it, the Joker televises a warning of his return and challenges Batman to find him at the ACE chemical plant, the place where the Joker was originally disfigured at the hands of Batman.<sup>5</sup>

While Batman is chasing shadows, the Joker kidnaps Alfred, Bruce Wayne's butler. The clue Batman finds leads him to believe that police commissioner James Gordon is the next target. After saving Gordon, Batman is led to the Gotham Reservoir, the place where he first battled the Joker in his disfigured form. Batman realizes that the Joker is re-enacting his previous crimes in a slightly different form, so that he has more time to talk with Batman instead of facing off immediately. It is during this encounter at the reservoir that the Joker reveals his true intentions. He has reason to believe that Batman has become weak because of his family engagements and intends to reveal their true identities.

When Batman is rescued by his Bat family, he confesses that in a previous fight with the Joker he had found a joker playing card in the cave, their hideout. Still, he believes the Joker never actually went into the cave and still does not know their true identities. The family is sceptical, but Batman goes away to find the Joker, in order to confront him. When he is captured by the Joker's friends, he finds the Joker hosting a dinner in the caves leading to the Batcave. He sees every member of the Bat family with bandages on their heads, implying that their faces have been cut off, similar to the Joker's face.

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<sup>5</sup> See *Detective Comics* #168.

After the battle that ensues, it is revealed that it was all a ruse and that the faces of Batman's family members are all still intact. Batman pursues the Joker to the edge of a cliff in the cave system leading to the Batcave. When Batman claims to know the Joker's true identity, the Joker pushes away, falling down as his face is separated from his head. While returning to the others, Batman finds a notebook which the Joker claimed held the identities of the members of the Bat family. Upon opening it, however, the notebook is empty. In the final pages, it is revealed that Batman did not know the Joker's identity, but bluffed, an action similar to the Joker's. The members of Batman's family, still reeling from Batman's confession, and the psychological scars that the Joker has left, go their own way, hinting that they need time to heal. Batman realizes that the family will never be the same again; the Joker has reached his goal: to remove Batman's weaknesses.



## Chapter 1: Jungian Archetypes

Carl Gustav Jung was a psychiatrist who collaborated with Sigmund Freud in the early stages of developing the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. Jung broke ties with Freud over their different viewpoints concerning the nature of the unconscious. Jung went on to explore character types and the formation of personality. He developed a theory of personality concerning two classes of people: extraverts and introverts. He expanded on this by differentiating between thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition as functions of the mind. After his break with Freud, Jung started scientifically exploring dreams and fantasies that he had, even as a child, but which he repressed previously due to his collaboration with Freud. He believed that the experiences that originated in his mind were not limited to him, but were universally shared by people across cultures (M. Fordham n.p.). Where Freud focused on the individual unconscious, Jung developed his theory of the collective unconscious, which contains archetypes, racial memories, primordial images and patterns. Jung based his ideas not only on his psychoanalytical practice, but also on his study of various texts: ancient myths, folklore, religious writings and literature. The Jungian ideas concerning the significance of archetypes in psychology and historical culture were considered applicable in the study of newer texts, as well as in the study of the fictional characters within these texts, as they could embody Jungian archetypal figures (Dawson 270). Jungian literary criticism delves into the way in which the archetypes of the human psyche are represented within works of the literary imagination, and how they reflect the elemental content of human experience, while expressing the archetypes and racial memories contained in the collective unconscious. This literary-critical framework is well suited for an analysis of the relationship between Batman and the Joker. Ahead of analysing the bond between the two characters, several concepts regarding the collective unconscious and archetypes, as developed by Jung throughout his studies, need to be defined.

One of the key Jungian concepts that can offer great insight into character development is the concept of the archetype. According to Jungian literary scholar Susan Rowland, “[a]rchetypes are inherited structuring patterns in the unconscious with potentials for meaning and formation and images” (226). This could be interpreted as an archetype being nothing more than a skeleton for an idea, like the frame for a photo which, without the actual photo, is just an empty framework. As this blank canvas, archetypes can take form in many different ways, either male or female, or as a different entity altogether, usually functioning as containers of the opposites in a human’s mind. Maud Bodkin explains that “[t]hese archetypes [Jung] describes [are] ‘psychic residua of numberless experiences of the same type,’ experiences which have happened not to the individual but to his ancestors, and of which the results are inherited in the structure of the brain, *a priori* determinants of the individual experience” (1). Jungian archetypes, therefore, unconsciously prepare human beings for an instinctive reaction to the presence of others and their actions within their lives.

This primal instinct can be explained through Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious. Jung believed that the human psyche was composed of three components, the first being the ego. According to Jung, the ego represents the conscious mind. It is the part of the psyche that prevents a person from acting on basic urges, but also works to achieve a balance with moral and idealistic standards. The second and third components in Jung’s model of the psyches are the personal and collective unconscious. Where the personal unconscious is mostly built up by repressed or forgotten memories of the individual, the collective unconscious is not realized by the individual and is completely crafted through psychological inheritance; the “content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of archetypes” (Jung, *Archetypes* 42). Jung believed that these archetypes are inherited much the same way instinctive patterns of behaviour are inherited.

Together, the conscious ego and the unconscious, personal and collective, comprise what Jung calls the psyche. Jung writes: “[b]y psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious” (*Collected Works* vol. 6, par. 797). The term illustrates how thoughts and events are processed in a person’s mind, although the term mind is usually only used to refer to the aspects of mental functioning, which are generally only conscious. Jung instead believed that the psyche, much like the body, is a self-regulating system. Regarding the archetypes being part of the collective unconscious, Jung wrote:

[t]he term archetype is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas. In other words, it is a ‘pattern of behaviour’. (*Collected Works* vol. 18, par. 1228)

Although the psyche itself is not one of the archetypes, it is very much affected by them. The Jungian archetype most relevant to the analysis conducted in this thesis is the shadow archetype, and its role within Jung’s larger theory of individuation: the adult process of psychological development aimed at integrating the various aspects of the psyche into a whole. In order to fully comprehend the shadow’s significance in relation to Batman’s narrative, a brief definition of the other three major archetypes within the individuation process is needed. These archetypes are the persona, the anima or animus, and the self. Combined with the shadow, Jung proposed that every individual’s personality contains elements of these four archetypes, and that each archetype represents a stage in the journey towards individuation.

The word “persona” is derived from a Latin word that translates to “mask,” and it represents the different social masks that are worn in different groups and situations. This archetype is the presentation of oneself to others and acts as protection for the ego. The

persona protects the individual from primitive urges, impulses and emotions that are not socially accepted. According to Jung, in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, the anima reflects the feminine aspect in men, while the animus reflects the masculine aspect in women (69-70). Both are representations of the “true” self rather than the image created by the persona. While the gendering of anima and animus has been controversial outside of and within Jungian studies, Stein explains that these archetypes should not be misunderstood as gender stereotypes designed to prescribe specific types of gendered thought and behaviour to men and women in society, but abstract concepts within Jung’s schema of psychological opposites, the aim of which is psychological balance. “In his theory, both men and women are both masculine and feminine” (Stein 134).

The archetype of the self represents the whole psyche, and Jung often imagined it as a circle, with a dot in the centre to represent the ego. The circle brings together the unconscious and conscious of an individual. To achieve a well-developed self, a balance of the feminine and masculine elements is needed as explained according to the anima and animus, followed by the presentation of oneself according to the persona. The process of this spiritual development starts with the shadow archetype (Lawson 161). Jung believed that personal traits that are denied, repressed or ignored are relegated from persona to shadow, or from conscious to unconscious. The shadow makes for the darker side of the psyche and usually holds desires and emotions that are disapproved of by society.

The personification of the shadow archetype occurs in different forms, usually appearing in dreams as a dark figure or beast. This wild desire can explain why antagonists in works of art can become as popular as protagonists, as can be seen in the huge popularity of the character of the Joker. Such figures draw the reader into the shadow-side of the psyche. The principle of opposites that Jung applies, plays a large role in the shadow archetype. For example, a good thought is countered with a bad thought, which makes sense, because in

order to have an understanding of the concept of good, one needs an understanding of the concept of bad. Remember the memory Jung had of the hurt baby robin, discussed in the introduction. Jung was so struck by how light it was, that the thought came to him that he could easily crush it in his hand. Although he did not like this thought he was having, it was there nonetheless.

Looking at fiction, the archetype of the shadow, which is a darker version of ourselves, usually comes in the form of an antagonist. Quite often, the narrative comes to a conclusion after a confrontation with the shadow, where the protagonist battles his figurative demons and at the resolution is shown to have grown psychologically. When the outcome is successful, the hero progresses; when the hero fails, his ego is killed. Author of Jungian fantasy Ursula Le Guin illustrates this point. She writes: “good and learned as [the failed hero] is, he can’t do any good, can’t act, because he has cut himself off at the roots. And the shadow is equally helpless; it can’t get past the shadowy anteroom to the light. Neither of them, without the other can approach the truth” (61). In other words, the hero needs a villain, the protagonist an antagonist, the conscious an unconscious, and finally, the self a shadow.

Writing about golden-age comic-book superheroes, Margaret Atwood writes: “[i]n addition to his disguising “normal” alter ego, the superhero of the 1940s was required to have a powerful enemy or two” (18). On the character of the Joker, Atwood actually claims that he is Batman’s Jungian shadow, “his own interest in dress-ups and jokes turned malicious” (18). She even states that: “A comic-book character leading a split life and engaged in a battle between Good and Evil might well be expected to show Jungian characteristics, and in fact Batman is an almost perfect case study” (18). Atwood did not take this idea further in her essay; I will expand on her idea of the Joker as a manifestation of the shadow archetype in Batman, while also considering Edward C. Whitmont’s more general description:

[t]he shadow is projected in two forms: individually, in the shape of people to whom we ascribe all the evil; and collectively, in its most general form, as the Enemy, the personification of evil. Its mythological representations are the devil, archenemy tempter, fiend or double; or the dark or evil one of a pair of brothers and sisters. (163)

The characteristics that Whitmont describes here fit perfectly when applied to Joker as Batman's shadow and this will be analysed in the next chapter of this thesis.

At this time it is important to look into the process of individuation. As stated previously, the self represents the whole psyche and is thus to be viewed as a circle. Jung describes individuation, in which the self is the final archetypal figure, as an ever-ongoing process through which a person or character develops towards a "healthy, highly functioning personality" (Stein 132). The self is not an end but an aim, "it is a goal always ahead, never quite reached" (Robertson 171). Rowland states that in order for the individuation process to be successful, the ego needs to be continually deconstructed by the archetypal processes of the unconscious (227). Jung explained that the first step in this process is the assimilation of the shadow. As the shadow represents the dark side of the ego, assimilation means that these deficiencies are acknowledged as part of the personality (Stein 122). The second step in the individuation process is the confrontation with the anima or animus, which "allows the ego to enter into and to experience the depths of the psyche" (Stein 128). The confrontation with the anima or animus allows the individual to explore "the ways they actually feel about their own deeper inner selves," to become aware of "an attitude that governs one's relationship to the inner world of the unconscious – imagination, subjective impressions, ideas, moods and emotions" (Stein 130). The "healthy, highly functioning personality," as Stein describe it, "is able to adapt to the demands of life and to manage stable relations with the surrounding social and natural worlds. Internally, there is well managed and steady access to a wellspring of energy and creative inspiration. Outer and inner adaptations are adequate to the demands of

life” (133). Once such balance is achieved, the individual is able to move onto the next step in the individuation process.

The third step is the confrontation with wisdom, which is expressed through the archetype of the self. Jung’s self is not the self as used in everyday speech. Stein explains it as follows:

[w]hen we say that someone is selfish, we mean that they are egotistical or narcissistic. But in a Jungian vocabulary, self has the opposite meaning. To say that someone is self-centered is to say that they are precisely not egotistical and narcissistic, but rather philosophical, having a wide perspective, and not personally reactive or easily thrown off balance. (152)

The end of the individuation process is never reached, because individuation is a coming into greater awareness of the self that constantly evolves with new insight and experience. It is a road that every person travels, according to Jung, and some manage to travel further than others, becoming more individuated than others. But there is no final perfect state of individuation, as personality is always in a state of flux.

The Jungian framework explained above, especially the archetypes and the process of individuation, will be applied as a critical tool to analyse the bond between Batman and the Joker as each other’s arch nemeses, while viewing them also as each other’s shadow archetypes in *Death of the Family*. The following chapters of this thesis will present a close-textual analysis of the graphic novel that explores how Jung’s ideas of the shadow can be applied to the character of Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne, as well as Batman’s other, or true, shadow, the Joker. I will also look into the Bat family and Batman’s interaction with them, both individually as well as collectively, as these characters shape and guide him in the process of individuation. This thesis will also look at how these interactions influence the dynamic between Batman and Joker. At the end of *Death of the Family*, Batman realizes

Joker's true purpose, and both characters seem to achieve a feeling of victory over the other. In a sense, this recognition reveals an acceptance of their true self. Jungian's archetypes, including the shadow, the anima, and the self, are very much present in this graphic novel. What has lured readers to the never-ending struggle between Batman and the Joker for many decades is the indestructibly paradoxical link between protagonist and antagonist, which can be explained through the Jungian archetype of the shadow.

In the beginning of the story, the Joker has been missing in action for a long time, causing Batman to be less alert, less like the Batman he was when the Joker was still around. Once the Joker returns to the story, Batman's personality is affected, as he is internally taken back to the time he operated more alone and more in the shadows. He becomes reacquainted with the darkness inside of him. In the words of Jung: "I must have a dark side also if I am to be whole" (Jung, *Psychotherapy* 59).



## Chapter 2: Hiding in the Shadows

Bob Kane's and Bill Finger's idea to design Batman as an anti-hero to contrast the colourful, all-American hero known as Superman, was provocative. It was uncommon at the time for a hero to be dark and gritty, especially in mainstream media. The creators drew upon pulp fiction from the 1930s for inspiration regarding Batman's looks and personality, but have never elaborated much about their choices for Batman's backstory. It is clear, though, that darkness, and the use of shadows, are vital parts of the narrative in Batman's stories. This is also the case within the genres of the Gothic and Film Noir, popular in cinema at the time. Both genres explore the darker aspects of human society and the human psyche and use long shadows, dark interiors, and minimalist lighting to great expressive effect.<sup>6</sup> It could be argued that Kane and Finger made their aesthetic decisions within this more expressionist artistic context of darkness. I would like to propose another possible explanation for the dark contrasts that characterise the Batman comics. In its most straightforward form, it could be argued that Kane and Finger wanted to create a new comic-book character without copying, or even adapting, any of the colourful aesthetics that characterised the popular Superman.

The name Batman does invoke the Gothic tradition and provokes ideas of darkness and terror. Bats only come out at night and have been associated with vampires and disease for ages in Western popular culture. By deliberately embracing the tradition of dark popular culture, Kane and Finger turned Batman into a comic book homage to the gothic tradition as exemplified by Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. As explained in *Batman: The Complete History*: “[t]here has always been a subliminal association between vampires and Batman; this was a hero who was designed to frighten his foes, and Bob Kane admitted that one of his inspirations was Bela Lugosi's performance in the 1931 movie *Dracula*” (144). A parallel

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<sup>6</sup> See for instance the Universal monster films *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Wolfman* (1941), and early film noirs, such as *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* (1932), *Private Detective 62* (1933) and *The Maltese Falcon* (1941).

between the vampiric features of the titular characters can even be drawn by looking at Batman's appearances: like a vampire, he only comes out at night, or hides in the shadows, which indicates that he is nocturnal by nature. Like the bat and the vampire, Batman is deadly silent before attacking his prey. This is also true for one of the most popular pulp-fiction heroes of the 1930s: Walter Gibson's *The Shadow*. It is well-known today that Kane and Finger based their comic-book superhero very closely on Gibson's pulp-fiction character, the Shadow, whose radio stories were introduced with the tagline: "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!" (Allard). This motto foregrounds the dark psychological themes of 1930s detective fiction and inadvertently invokes the Jungian concept of the shadow.

Batman's aesthetic and pop-cultural origins suggest that the superhero himself, as well as his enemies, embody darkness in the comic-book series. While this may seem to complicate traditional comic-book notions of right and wrong, within a Jungian critical framework this parallelism between protagonist and antagonist makes sense. The dark superhero Batman can still have a shadow of his own in the form of an antagonist because this shadow is in fact an unacknowledged aspect of his own psyche, a Gothic double. As explained in the introduction, Batman was quickly introduced to his nemesis, the Joker. Because of their complicated history and the many parallels that have been created between them by various writers over the years – *The Dark Knight Returns*, *The Killing Joke* and *A Death in the Family*<sup>7</sup> – it is fair to state that the Joker functions as Batman's shadow. This does not rule out, however, that the protagonist, Batman, can be understood as a representation of a Jungian shadow of another character in the stories: his alter ego Bruce Wayne. The link between Batman and Bruce Wayne is as clear as the relation between night and day; although it has been heavily debated which one is the "real" self and which the

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<sup>7</sup> Not to be confused with Snyder's *Batman: Death of the Family*, analysed in this thesis.

persona. In this chapter, however, I will explore in more detail the less obvious relational construction that is present: that of the Joker as Batman's shadow.

In *Death of the Family*, Batman seems to become possessed by the Joker's actions, past and present. The most prominent events that shaped both these characters' personalities, and which shaped their dynamic relationship, are revisited and given a second chance. In her essay "The Child and his Shadow," Ursula Le Guin writes about the experience of being possessed by one's shadow: "When the shadow returns to the man in middle life, he has a second chance. But he misses it, too. He confronts his dark self at last, but instead of asserting equality or mastery, he lets it master him" (61). Le Guin's description of this psychological experience dovetails perfectly with the events that take place throughout the graphic novel, when the qualities of Jung's shadow archetype are assigned to the Joker.

The Joker's return is hinted at in earlier comics of the *Batman* run. But it is not until the introductory pages of *Death of the Family* that he makes his grand re-entrance after hiding in the shadows for a year. In the opening dialogue of the graphic novel, Commissioner Gordon says that: "We should have read the bones. He should have too. Most of all him" (Snyder 8). "Him" refers to Batman, indicating that it is peculiar that he does not see any sign of the Joker's return. This suggests that Batman is indeed made weaker because of the larger family that now surrounds him, as the Joker later states: "Save you from the ones you call your allies. Your table. The ones who make you slow. The ones who make you weak. I'm here to take them down, one by one so that you may be reborn as the Bat-man this city deserves!" (Snyder 27). The word "save" can be interpreted in two different ways: either Batman truly believes that his family makes him stronger, and he is a better man for having them around, while the Joker mocks him for it; or Batman is oblivious to the fact that the Joker might be right, and he actually did not see the signs because his attention was divided over the problems his family was facing. In this case the idealistic image that the Joker has of

Batman needs to be reclaimed and it would suggest that it is actually the Joker, and not Batman's family, that challenges him to be the best version of himself. In a twisted sort of way, Batman is forced to choose at the end of this story arc whether or not he trusts his family, or believes the Joker.

In the 1970s, DC comics briefly gave the Joker his own comic-book series. *Death of the Family* can read like a story in which the Joker, rather than Batman, is the protagonist. But while the narrative is more focused on how the Joker challenges Batman, Batman still operates as the protagonist of the work as is character development remains central to the plot. Through the Joker, the reader learns more about Batman, and as Batman is constantly taken back to situations where he used to operate without his Bat family, Batman learns more about himself as well, which is what a Jungian critical framework can properly highlight. The plot is driven by a search for identity – for his self – by the protagonist. It becomes evident that Batman will be a changed man by the end of the graphic novel. Whether or not he comes out broken, he will have reflected on the events that shape him into the man he will become in the next chapter of his life. This reflects Jung's process of individuation, which is the journey to understanding oneself, and one's relation to both the personal inner and social outer worlds of existence. Le Guin writes that the shadow can be regarded as "the guide of the journey to self-knowledge" (65). The Joker, as Batman's shadow, guides the troubled superhero through his journey towards self-knowledge.

When the Joker first makes his appearance in the graphic novel, he expresses to Commissioner Gordon that: "I missed you while I was gone! Almost as much as I missed him!" (Snyder 12). Immediately, the Joker gives away the purpose for his return: to find Batman. Although the word "missed" can be read as taunting, everything the Joker does from here on out indicates that he actually did miss Batman and wants to do everything in his power to help Batman become the best version of himself. As the superhero's shadow, it is his

purpose to rid Batman of all personal distractions. Snyder foregrounds this theme by presenting the Joker hiding in the shadows when he first appears. Although the clown prince is traditionally a very colourful presence in the comics and graphic novels, his attack on the Gotham City Police Department in *Death of the Family* is a very dark scene. After he vanishes, Batman shows up, dressed all in black, standing in the spotlight. From an artistic perspective, the Joker quite literally has been a shadow until this point, drawing Batman towards him by his actions.

The place where they first meet up in person in the graphic novel, or at least to the best of Batman's knowledge, is the chemical plant where they first fought and the Joker was physically transformed. The Joker even calls it the perfect place for it all to start again (Snyder 26). He even hints at his transformation into something else, something previously hidden, by exclaiming: "Where you showed me the skin beneath my skin" (Snyder 26). Although this seems to indicate the Joker's physical transformation into a monster, the next part of the conversation illustrates their relationship as ego and shadow when analysed from within the Jungian framework. The Joker boldly states: "I couldn't stand it anymore. Missing you. ... Looking for you, my shadow. Telling you to come out and play" (Snyder 26). This important quote is graphically mirrored by the reflection of Batman's shadow in the Joker's red hood as seen below, in figure 1.



Figure 1: The Joker confronting his shadow in *Batman: Death of the Family*

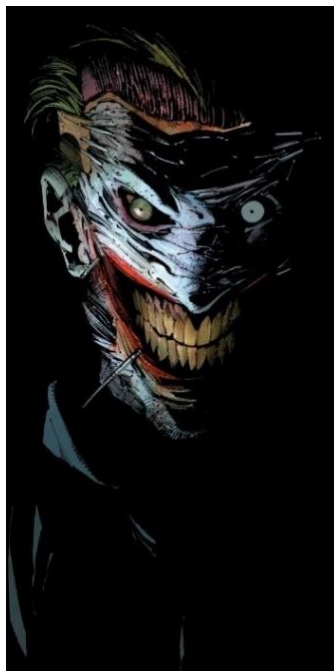
Here Batman is thematically and visually presented as the Joker's shadow. In Le Guin's terms, he has allowed himself to be mastered by his shadow, becoming his shadow's shadow. Although this is the opposite ego-shadow relation I claimed to explore at the outset of this chapter, and problematizes the idea of Batman's individuation journey, it is important to also look at the Batman-Joker relationship from this perspective, because it underscores their mutual function as each other's shadow, and their mutual obligation to confront each other, time and again.

Le Guin argues that the "monster is an integral part of the man and cannot be denied" (61); therefore, "man's mistake is not following his shadow," his hidden monstrous self, as "neither of them, without the other, can approach the truth" (61). In *Death of the Family*, it is evident that Batman has lost some of his ability to find and face the Joker, as he seems to be one step behind his shadow every time. In the above instance, the Red Hood is actually Harley Quinn playing a recording of the Joker's voice. But when Batman first sees the Joker on TV, he understands that the Joker is replaying past scenarios. Batman is led to think that, based on his past experiences, he will know exactly what the Joker's next moves will be. Throughout the graphic novel, he travels back to past situations; not unlike a shadow following its body; not unlike an adult revisiting dark memories from the past in order to gain insight into his being and the development of his personality.

When Batman believes he will come face to face with the Joker for the first time in the graphic novel, a recording of the Joker's voice plays in Harley's helmet. The voice says: "How I still miss you. The real you. The one underneath." This indicates that the Joker is aware of a shadow hiding inside of Batman, possibly hinting at his own realisation that he, the Joker, is that shadow. Joker's actions also challenge Batman to rethink the choices he has made in the past by allowing other people who have played a significant role in his personal life to interfere with his hero-persona. In his twisted way, Joker tries to help shape Batman

into the person he needs to become in order to finally acknowledge and integrate his shadow-side into his personality, which will allow him to move further on his journey towards individuation. As Le Guin states, the shadow is the guide of the journey to self-knowledge, “to the light” (65). Joker, as Batman’s shadow, shapes the protagonist’s ego, a process that Jung referred to as individuation, which has the potential to finally lead Batman out of the darkness in which he has existed since his creation and into the light of self-understanding.

When the Joker finally reveals himself to Batman, he claims to know the superhero’s true identity. This can be interpreted in a literal sense: the Joker has found out that Batman is Bruce Wayne. I would like to argue that it can also be interpreted symbolically, meaning that the Joker finally understands who Batman is in his own narrative; or better yet, who he (Joker) has to be: Batman’s shadow. At the end of this conversation, when the Joker seemingly has Batman cornered, Batman hints at an understanding. While the reader is presented with the monstrous visage of the Joker (figure 2), Batman is shown to say:



*Figure 2: Batman questioning Joker's humanity in  
Batman: Death of the Family*

“Look into his eyes and tell yourself he’s just a man” (Snyder 68). The darkness in the eyes and the total lack of emotion seem to indicate that the Joker is nothing more than a shadowy object and not a living person. “Tell yourself he can’t know the things he says he does. He can’t know your fears” (Snyder 68). Batman, however, believes the opposite of what he tells himself, because he is confronted with the fact that Joker actually does know all the things he claims; and he understands Batman’s fears more than anyone else. While Batman ends his reflections with “He’s just a man...” (Snyder 68), what he actually believes is that the Joker is not a man at all. If anything, what he saw in the Joker’s eyes, is comparable to love or adoration, as would a shadow follow a man without question.

Soon afterwards, the Joker seems to thrive on Batman’s anger. He promises that it will be Batman that is going to kill the Bat family, not Joker. Having finally lured Batman into his trap, Joker takes the lead during their dance, as pictured in figure 3:



Figure 3: Joker leads the dance in  
Batman: Death of the Family

Here the notion of the shadow possessing the ego becomes quite explicit as the two hands interlock. It is almost as if the shadow is ordering its owner to take a rest and let it do the



heavy lifting for now; as if Batman is allowed to give in to his repressed feelings, the ones hiding in the shadow archetype.

As a consequence of this reversal in their relationship – Joker now leading Batman – Batman is forced to evaluate his weaknesses, especially the ones coming from his extended family. As he slowly realizes that Joker might be right, that he has become vulnerable in the past years, Joker tries to force him to give in to these feelings and to murder his family. Murder, of course, is an extension of one of those repressed feelings that are imprisoned in Batman's shadow as he has to keep himself from becoming that which he swore to fight. When Joker brings Batman into his cave, to join the Bat family, he says: “You knew it in your soul, but still you called out to someone, anyone, to pull you up from the darkness. . . . And into the light” (Snyder 127). And then the dance begins. Joker asks Batman why he has never exposed him. Why he has never killed him. This is a question Batman has repeatedly asked himself over the course of many graphic novels, as in Alan Moore's *Batman: The Killing Joke* (1988), in which the Joker shoots and rapes (then-Batgirl) Barbara Gordon, who also happens to be the commissioner's daughter. Joker leaves her paralysed, with the wound from the gunshot so untreatable that she is forced to live in a wheelchair. Still, in the face of such atrocities aimed clearly at provoking Batman, the superhero decides to put Joker behind bars rather than in a coffin, six feet underground.

In Jim Starlin's *Batman: A Death in the Family*, a graphic novel from the same year as *The Killing Joke*, Joker murders the second Robin, Jason Todd. Even after this murder, Batman lets Joker live. Although Batman seems to follow his rule that he would fight crime and be judge and jury, but not executioner (the vow he made to his parents), he has repeatedly made casualties during his fights. The characters who died at Batman's hands were often henchman who did not have a significant role in the storyline; the super villains, like Joker, would be incarcerated in Arkham Asylum, to prove Batman's intent was not to murder. Yet in

the understanding of the violence that Batman is capable of perpetrating on his foes, it seems almost out of character for Batman not to avenge the loss of his trusted sidekick.

One of the most popular Batman quotes that has been incorporated into the many comics, animated series, and even the upcoming film *The Batman*, by Matt Reeves, is “I am vengeance.” This desire would be an all too human character trait that Jung would consider to be part of any person’s shadow-side. For Batman this dark desire is expressed through his never-ending aim to avenge the injustice done to his parents, and the many helpless others like them. When the Joker questions Batman on the question of why he has never killed him, he gives the answer himself by concluding that he wins by living. In this conversation, the Joker explains how he is there to carry out Batman’s orders, and to rescue him from this nightmare, as supposedly instructed by Batman in the notebook Joker found.

Batman and Joker continue their interrogation of each other during their fight in the final pages of the graphic novel. They tease each other about knowing the other’s true identity, but they never actually reveal to each other whether their claims are true. When Batman ultimately confronts the Joker at the edge of a cliff, to tell him who he thinks he is, Joker lets himself fall before Batman can utter the words. In the process, the Joker once again loses the face that was cut off and stitched back on. This loss of identity symbolizes Joker losing his vicious alter ego and reverting back to the shadow he once was.

Batman picks up the notebook only to find it completely empty, which makes him wonder even more how Joker could have possibly known the things he claimed he knew. It is then that Batman remembers his visit to the Joker, when he was still a prisoner at the asylum. It was not Batman, however, who visited Joker, but Bruce Wayne. When Bruce Wayne looked at the back of Joker’s head and spoke to him in Batman’s voice, the Joker turned to look at Batman, but did not see him. He did not see Bruce Wayne either, as this simply did

not register in his mind. Joker cannot see or understand anybody other than Batman, as if his only purpose in life is to shadow Batman and have him completely to himself.

Eventually, Batman shares this memory with his family, to make them understand that Joker does not know their identities, or their whereabouts, but the damage has already been done. When ultimately, after Joker's escape, the world reverts back to normal, the Bat family is so badly damaged by Batman's deceit, they all go their separate ways and the Joker seems to have won by bringing Batman back to his roots; to the time he was stronger when he operated alone and was directly engaged in his pursuit of the Joker. Joker has turned Batman into a darker version of himself, one that recognises his shadow.

In the final frames of the graphic novel (figure 4), Batman has returned to the dark and stares at his computer screen. It becomes apparent that he does not, in fact, know Joker's identity, nor has he ever had a lead. It is almost as if Joker does not exist at all.



*Figure 4: Joker gets the last laugh in Batman: Death of the Family*

On the last page, a fly buzzes around the cave, landing on the screen that has the element symbol for Hahnium on it: Ha. There were always flies around Joker's amputated face every time he was shown. As the fly swoops in, and the panels show it landing on the screen sequentially, and in increasing close-up, the symbol is repeated several times making the reader read "Ha ha ha." The Joker has had the last laugh, again. The final panels symbolize Joker's everlasting presence in Batman's life, just hiding in the shadows, trying to get out.

### Chapter 3: Family of the Bat

Throughout *Death of the Family* Batman and Joker's interconnection is clearly visible. The main story follows the archetypal behaviours of the persona, the shadow, the self, with the Joker occasionally separating himself from Batman to take the form of the trickster. The first act sets up the relationship between Batman and his shadow as described in the previous chapter. The events that subsequently transpire are triggered by a different Jungian archetype that takes the shape of not one, but multiple characters. This archetype is known as the anima and is presented to the reader as the group of friends that Batman has gathered around himself to help him fight crime; this group is also known as the Bat family. In Jungian terms, the confrontation with the shadow, opens the way towards "a deeper level of the unconscious" which is represented by the anima (Stein 126). Stein explains that "like the shadow," the anima is "a personality within the psyche that does not match the self-presentation and self-identity of the persona." In fact, "it is more 'other' than the shadow is" (Stein 126) because "in the case of the shadow, it is a meeting with the disdained and rejected pieces of the total psyche, the inferior or unwanted qualities. In the meeting with the anima/us, it is a contact with levels of the psyche which has the potential to lead into the deepest and highest (at any rate furthest) reaches that the ego can attain" (Stein 140). Stein goes on to explain that "if the image of the shadow instills fear and dread, the image of the anima/us usually brings excitements and stimulates desire for union ... where there is anima/us, we want to go, we want to be part of it, we want to join it, if we are not too timid or afraid of adventure" (142). The Bat family has the potential to shape Batman into the person he actually wants to become, if only Batman is willing to open up and acknowledge their role in his individuation journey. As the representation of Batman's anima, the Bat family influences Batman's journey towards individuation mainly in act two of the graphic novel, when they arrive in Gotham to offer help to the troubled caped crusader.

If the shadow symbolizes repressed desires, the anima symbolizes the soul (Jung, *Archetypes* 41). Although the anima is traditionally projected upon female figures, I would argue that where Joker challenges Batman to look into his darker self, the extended family gives Batman an opportunity to examine his repressed “feminine” side. It is important to understand that Jung’s concept of the anima does not refer to stereotypical “feminine” character traits as defined by the hegemonic gender ideology of his time. As Stein explains both anima and animus refer to a person’s spiritual nature (133-4). Jung writes that the anima believes in the “beautiful and the good” (Jung, *Archetypes* 43). He goes on to state that “[t]he relation with the anima is again a test of courage, an ordeal by fire for the spiritual and moral forces of a man” (44). These superior moral forces are visible in the characters of Batman’s butler, Alfred Pennyworth, the three Robins: Dick Grayson, Jason Todd, and Damian Wayne, and finally Batgirl Barbara Gordon. To some extent Commissioner Gordon is also a part of this higher moral force, although his part in the individuation process of Batman is projected through his relation with his daughter Barbara.

There is a reason why the anima does not reveal her true self at the outset of the graphic novel. In act one of *Death of the Family*, during his initial struggle with his shadow, Batman tries to keep his family out of the Joker affair as much as possible, by any means necessary, including lying (Snyder 51). Batman is motivated to do this because of Joker’s violent history with the other members of the family. The second Robin, Jason Todd, was beaten to death by Joker with a crowbar in *A Death in the Family*, before being resurrected a few years later. Joker then went on to shoot the original Batgirl, Barbara Gordon, paralyzing her from the waist down in *The Killing Joke*. Her father, Commissioner Gordon received photos of her rape at the hands of the clown prince. Throughout *Death of the Family*, Batman hints at trying to protect the family, but really, he is giving in to Joker’s wishes to operate alone, revealing that at the outset of the story he is indeed possessed by his shadow. It is

Joker's intention to separate Batman from the others, because he believes that is the best version of Batman's self. Batman also believes he knows Joker best, saying: "Dammit, you're not understanding how he thinks!" (Snyder 79).

The only person from the family that has any contact with Batman in act one is Alfred Pennyworth. Batman's trusted butler plays a very large role in Batman's journey towards individuation, more than any other character within the family. As an aspect of Batman's anima, he generally seems to be the voice of reason, and has been the hero's caretaker ever since Bruce's parents were murdered in the alleyway. After Alfred's abduction by the hands of Joker (Snyder 30), Batman tells original Robin, Dick Grayson, that it is not easy for him either because that man, referring to Alfred, raised him (Snyder 51). Even after Alfred's rescue at the end of the graphic novel, the butler does not let Batman nurse him, as that is not how their relationship works. In the coda, when Joker has seemingly died after his long fall from the cliff in the cave, Bruce cannot stop blaming himself for what happened to his family throughout the events of the graphic novel, to which Alfred replies that "[Joker]'s gone now. It's over" (Snyder 153). Although the rest of the family seem to have fallen apart by the end of the novel, which can be traced back to the struggle that Batman faces regarding his honesty, Alfred never leaves Batman's side, remaining as his only constant guide.

Initially, Batman cannot be true to his anima, repressing her so that the shadow is allowed to play a larger part inside of him. The events leading up to *Death of the Family* have shaped Batman into the man he now is. It is because of the horrible tragedies that happened to Barbara Gordon, as Batgirl, and Jason Todd, as Robin, that he cannot fully let them in, believing that he is actually protecting them by keeping them at a distance. This is clearly visible when the family enters in the second act. Barbara tries to assure Batman that he can trust her, that he should have told her the Joker had returned. Jason also confronts Batman with the personal issues he projects onto the group. Batman, in response, tries to explain why

he did not warn them about Joker's return by saying: "Because I was afraid. Because I believed that you'd let your emotions get the better of you, and by doing so, you'd give him the upper hand" (Snyder 79). Because of these fears Batman has allowed his shadow to possess him, making it impossible for him to open up to the influence of the anima. Batman projects his own fears onto the others, as it is actually not the family who act on irrational emotion, but Batman himself, in the grip of his shadow. While his family tries to support him in the choices he makes and offer to help him, his true fear is that he will give in to these irrational emotions, rather than acting rationally.

Batman leaves the family behind again at the end of the second act, believing he has a lead on the Joker that only he can follow. He finds out later that separating Batman from his family was the Joker's intent all along. Joker confronts Batman with video footage in which he defeats and kidnaps every member of the extended family, while stating that Batman "blew it. If only you'd kept them close. ... But you never do, do you? No, you send them off. You shut them out. You dangle them like bait" (Snyder 116). Here it is revealed that Joker's motive, as the shadow, is not just to separate Batman from the others. He also wants Batman to realize that he wanted this himself. Without the anima, Batman will not be able to find his true path towards individuation and will remain in the grip of his shadow, just like the Joker wants it to be: "And that's the point, Bats," Joker exclaims, "The proclamation I made to you. Be as fast and smart as you want. But as long as they live, and you keep up this farce... You'll always, always lose" (Snyder 116).

Batman is forced to choose between defeating Joker and not knowing where he took his friends, or let himself be captured and undergo the same path. Batman chooses the latter, guided by the anima, and finds himself seated at a table with the members of his family. Their faces are covered in bandages, leading Batman to believe that Joker has cut off their faces as he did to himself at the beginning of the story. When Alfred steps into the room, the butler is

under the influence of a toxin that starts eating his flesh and turning him temporarily insane. All of Joker's provocative actions during this scene have the result of changing Batman's behaviour. Now that he is reunited with his family, he is forced to choose what he wants to become. One of the options that he struggles with is going after Joker to make him pay for all his deeds. This would mean holding onto his earlier identity as the masked avenger. His other option is to adopt the role of guardian and to assess his family's physical and mental condition and save them from Joker's clutches. Ironically, the first words Joker utters when Batman sees his family's apparently disfigured condition, are words of comfort: "Oh, and don't worry, old friend. They're all fine and dandy" (Snyder 128). Of course, Batman does not believe Joker's words, thinking it is again one of his tricks. Batman believes Joker will hurt his family, like he did many times before, but what Batman does not yet understand is that Joker will not hurt Batman or his family, because that would destroy the dynamic relationship they now have, and the power Joker has over Batman, as his shadow.

I already stated that the Joker offers Batman two choices. As he sets the room on fire, Joker is going to attempt to flee. Batman can either catch him or save his family, who have had their faces cut off by the Joker, or so Batman believes. This is where the anima returns, as Batman decides to rescue his current Robin, his son Damian Wayne, and removes the bandages from his face. The shadow and anima archetypes are represented symbolically on page 138 of the graphic novel, in figure 5. The five panels show how Batman takes care of his family, trusts them to look after Alfred, and earns their trust in return, while the gutter of the page shows a fleeing shadow in the form of Joker.





Figure 5: The shadow in the back and the anima in the panels in Batman: Death of the Family

After ensuring his family is okay, the struggle Batman faces internally is whether or not he should still go ahead and kill Joker. Every new action Joker performs makes the protagonist question his past decisions to keep his nemesis alive. In *Death of the Family*, there are several instances where Batman almost decides to break his rule not to kill. During the story's climax, Batman confronts Joker one final time, telling him: "Enough" (142). Joker does not understand and challenges Batman to dance; in other words, to quarrel. Batman, however, warns him that he means "no more any of it." Although from Joker's perspective in the story, he seems to be acting out of admiration, trying to make Batman the best, violent version of himself, Joker settles for getting Batman to break his one rule. As such, Joker wins either way: he can separate Batman from his family, or he can get Batman to kill.

Considering Batman's journey towards individuation, this is a key moment in the graphic novel. Batman has to decide which path he will take: the path of violence, or the path of restraint; the path laid out by his shadow, or the path laid out by his anima. On the process of individuation, with regards to the shadow, Jaffé writes that "a man's ethical attitude is an indispensable precondition of any confrontation with the shadow" (96). Batman has never struggled as much with this ethical dilemma as he has with Joker in the climax of Snyder's graphic novel. It seems at first as if Batman is going to finally give in to his shadow's will. Jaffé explains that "even for the ethical personality ... there are difficult or tragic situations in life when ... conscience sides with the shadow ... and questions the value of conforming to the moral code" (96). In other words, this is where Batman's personality could fall apart. Yet it is here that the Bat family reappears in the form of the anima, to guide Batman's consciousness, and to help him overcome his desire to murder the Joker. Original Robin, Dick Grayson, convinces Bruce that he is able to do the right thing, and tells Batman to go after Joker (Snyder 138).



Figure 6: *The anima prevails in Batman: Death of the Family*

As becomes clear in figure 6 above, after Nightwing tells him to do what he needs to do, Batman takes one last look at his family, realizing that they are in fact going to be fine. He finally knows what to do and goes after Joker to prove he can act on rationale rather than emotion (Snyder 139). In these two pages, Snyder also plays with the concept of Joker and Batman as each other's shadows as he subtly puts them in similar poses in the gutter. Figure 7 below shows a comparison.



Figure 7: *Comparison of shadows in Batman: Death of the Family*

As Batman leaves his family to chase Joker, he moves on to the next step in his journey towards individuation.

## Chapter 4: The True Self

Robin Robertson explains that “as we deal with the Shadow, we come to realize that our anger and disgust is really at ourselves” (193). The previous chapters have shown how this is true for Batman in relation to Joker. In his dealings with his anima, Batman’s psychological journey in *Death of the Family* also revealed that “as the blindfold of our own projections falls from our eyes, we find that we possess hopes and desires, abilities and possibilities, not contained within our original self-image” (Robertson 193). As explained in chapter one, the journey towards individuation is not linear but “one continuous process” (Robertson 199) and the archetypes of Shadow, Anima, and Self appear in non-chronological order throughout the graphic novel. As the shadow confronts Batman with his repressed feelings, the anima tries to balance these feelings from within the soul. Throughout his interactions with these archetypes in the shapes of Joker and the Bat family, Batman goes through his journey towards individuation to discover who he is in all of this, to discover his self. Robertson claims that the self is the archetype of wholeness and transcendence (44) and the self would then be found at the hypothetical end of the individuation process. Frieda Fordham argues that the self is in the centre of both the conscious and the unconscious mind (61). For Batman, his confrontations with Joker as his shadow, and the family as his anima, lead him to this “innermost nucleus of the psyche” (Von Franz 196). The self is where conscious and unconscious come together to unite the opposites in the human psyche (F. Fordham 62). Robinson explains that the journey towards the self is about learning how “we can reconcile the person we are with the person we could be .... How can we balance extremes of thought and feeling, spirit and instinct?” (196). This is quite clearly symbolized in the final act of *Death of the Family*, when Batman is forced to watch as his shadow argues with his anima. In this final act, Batman finds himself in the final step of individuation for this specific plot, as he must come to terms with his shadow. He must face his flaws in order to accept his place in the world,

both internally as well as externally. The question that presents itself to the reader is whether or not Batman will transcend his personal struggles with the Joker. Accepting his shadow as the darker part of himself will allow him to overcome his grandest obstacle, but giving into those darker urges by murdering the Joker will mean allowing his shadow to take complete possession of him. Although the climax of his struggle to overcome the shadow is presented at the end of the graphic novel, there are hints early on that Batman is already moving towards discovery of the self. This chapter will discuss the most pivotal moments in the graphic novel that lead up to Batman's, and simultaneously Joker's, discovery of the self.

Early on, Gordon talks about the “omens of terrible things to come ... [and] we should have seen it coming” (Snyder 7). Only a few pages later, Batman appears in the aftermath of the murder spree at the police department, asking Gordon what has transpired, to which Gordon replies that “he told a joke” (Snyder 13). This seems odd at first, as the focus is not the pile of bodies around Gordon, but actually the joke Joker told when he was executing those officers. This observation sets Batman on the path of individuation as he realizes that he must also accept that part of his self, and that part of his shadow. In the final pages this happens when Batman makes a last attempt to uncover Joker's identity and understands it is all part of the joke, when the element for hahnium forms the word “Ha” (Snyder 155). As Batman comes to this conclusion, he is in the same place where all the important events in the story happen; he is in the Batcave. It is there that he accepts Joker as an inherent part of his self.

Batman's cave is presented as a dark and layered foundation underneath the house with a sinister, almost other-worldly construction. This presentation is very similar to the cave Jung dreamed about when he first came up with the concept of the collective unconscious. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung elaborates on a dream he has of a house he finds himself in. As he descends from the second story to the basement, he notices how everything

becomes darker and older (179). This does not only show the progression of time in one's life, but also the realization of the different layers that make up a human being. These layers are split up into consciousness and unconsciousness, where the top part of the building is the former and the bottom part the latter (161). For Batman, his life in the shadows is formed by the unconscious. The darkness that Jung describes, quite literally, is part of the journey of individuation towards the discovery of the self. Jung describes a hidden ring in the floor that, upon opening it, leads him down a narrow stone step "into the depths" (179). As he descends, he enters a cave underneath the house. Before he wakes up, he observes "two human skulls, obviously very old and half disintegrated" (179). At the time, Jung was still working with Freud, but felt that Freud's interpretation of the dream sequence would have been vastly different from his own. Therefore, Jung set out on a journey of his own, to uncover the meaning behind his dreams. He writes that "[i]t was plain to me that the house represented a kind of image of the psyche – that is to say, of my then state of consciousness, with hitherto unconscious additions" (180). According to Jung, the different layers of the building signified past times and past stages of consciousness. He elaborates that his "dream thus constituted a kind of structural diagram of the human psyche ... [and he] recognized them as forms of instinct, that is, as archetypes" (181).

The parallels to Batman's mansion and the cave underneath it are easily drawn with this understanding of consciousness and unconsciousness Jung describes. Jung does not state the identity of the two skulls, but it could be argued that in his personal journey to individuation, Jung accepts Freud as part of his self, possibly even his own shadow archetype. Although Jung would eventually break from Freud to travel his own path, they were very much part of each other's journeys towards individuation. This dynamic directly translates to Batman and Joker in *Death of the Family*, as Batman, even after having letting go of Joker, still finds himself staring at Joker's final laugh.

Joker forces Batman to revisit past encounters and lets him relive 72 years of history over the course of only a few days. When Joker appears on television, he announces his first victim: the son of the first person he ever murdered in Gotham City. It is only after the victim seems unharmed that Batman comes to the realization that things are slightly different this time around. In a series of thoughts, he tells himself that it makes no sense: “Breaking the necks of the officers himself at the station, with his own hands, even though he normally doesn’t do his own dirty work ... None of it is like him” (Snyder 22). This realization is what accelerates Batman in his individuation process. It is different now, and gradually Batman becomes aware that it is not about locking Joker up this time, but facing him in an ultimate confrontation. It is a question of who will have the last laugh, while everything that has happened in the past already hints at Joker’s initial joke at the Gotham City Police Department. As Batman goes over the evidence, he looks at an image of Joker’s cut-out face and here lies the first hint at Batman’s acceptance of his shadow. As he hovers over the image, his shadow falls directly under Joker’s face, as if he were looking into a mirror or at his own literal shadow. There are no bat ears visible on Joker’s face, but they could very well be there, as the image is cut off exactly where they would have been (figure 8).



Figure 8: Joker’s mask or Batman’s shadow? Death of the Family

With Joker missing for over a year, Batman has had time to reflect on a life without his greatest nemesis, even repressing his dark urges of wanting to murder someone, someone as vile as Joker. He even says that “he stayed away so long this time, I imagine I allowed some part of myself to become hopeful we’d seen the last of him” (Snyder 14). This is one of the few instances in Batman history that the titular character refers to having hope, and it could be argued that life without Joker is more hopeful. At the end of the story, Batman will come to understand, however, that it is not Joker’s absence that leads him further on his path towards individuation; it is actually Joker’s presence and Batman’s acceptance of Joker’s role as his shadow that will lead him towards discovery of the self.

Damian, Batman’s son and the latest Robin, is the only character who has not had any encounters with Joker yet. When Alfred mentions the term fear in regards to Joker’s return, Damian laughs it off, claiming that his father bested Joker before and that his days of being a great adversary are well in the past; but Batman cautions not to underestimate Joker. Then, messages from the Bat family come in and Damian realizes that fear is the biggest player in the room, as all of the other members have had traumatic experiences with Joker. As the anima comes together to advise Batman, Joker does his best to separate them from him in an effort to let the shadow out. This is also seen on page 21, when Gordon asks Batman: “What did [Joker] mean, when he said you already had his calling card?” and Batman responds with a casual “I don’t know” (Snyder 21). It is not until the climax, when the family confronts Batman about this, that Batman confesses that he did in fact know what Joker was referring to. Even in the first pages of the story, Batman tries to keep his anima away while trying to understand the shadow, and although this seems counterintuitive in the context of the individuation process, it is actually what helps him grow towards the self.

Gordon also talks about fear and of how he is afraid himself. This makes Batman ponder how they all will need to deal with this emotion. Although such questioning reveals



that Batman is exploring his relation with his shadow, he has not yet accepted this part of himself fully. At this moment, he thinks that he, as well as Gordon, “can’t show it ... Not to the ones you want to protect. Not to anyone. So you pretend like you’re not affected” (Snyder 22). Batman later realizes that giving into those fears and letting his family know how he feels is what will make him stronger and ultimately help him overcome the shadow, in the shape of the Joker.

There are several instances in which Batman is about to capture Joker, but these all turn out to be tricks Joker plays on Batman. Joker is never actually at the crime scene; he either uses prisoners or lackies to do his bidding. Even here, Batman is seen to develop an understanding of that part of himself, the part that understands and accepts his shadow. With every new instance, Batman finds out quicker what Joker’s plan is.

Significantly, while Batman rapidly becomes more aware of the Joker’s role in his life, Joker’s obsession with Batman’s journey towards self-discovery puts him on the exact opposite path. Joker has been known to have an interesting bond with his henchman, mainly his semi-love interest Harley Quinn. Although their relationship has always been somewhat challenging, toxic even, Joker has been known to drop his plans to save her, investing in her as much as he can. In *Death of the Family*, Joker seems to have rid himself completely of all attachments, except for his affection, or obsession, with Batman. Joker instructs Harley to find Batman, but when she refuses, Joker tells Harley that he “pulled [her] from [his] ribcage and stitched [her] back together with beautiful lies” (Snyder 33). After Batman unmaskes her and asks where Joker really is, she says that “he’s gone, Bats ... Maybe you’ll be the next one. Like I always thought you would. Maybe you’ll come back like he used to be, back then ... beautiful” (Snyder 39). In this scene, Snyder subtly hints at Batman accepting Joker as his shadow and Harley already hinting at Joker becoming a part of him as they have, according to Harley, always belonged on this path together. This dovetails with Jung’s theory of the

archetypes, of how the process of individuation can only be completed when anima and shadow are accepted into the conscious and unconscious of the self. Before this, Joker tries to rid himself and Batman of the anima though, by slowly taking out everyone that has shown any affection towards Batman as an anima would. First, Alfred is abducted. Then, Batman finds Gordon poisoned; finally, all of Batman's sidekicks are taken. It appears that Joker is trying to block Batman from fulfilling his goal towards individuation, but by doing so, he forces Batman to evaluate all the decisions he has made so far; decisions in which he kept his anima out so not to give in to his "feminine," or spiritual side; the side of him that cares and shows emotion, and strives for higher moral values.

Joker's only goal is to show Batman there is only one person that is really looking out for him, namely Joker himself, and all Batman has to do is give in to his dark urges, his shadow side, in order to have his full power. Joker demonstrates this by inviting several other important villains from Batman lore to join him in challenging Batman, including Mr. Freeze, Clayface, Scarecrow, Penguin, Riddler, and Two-face. Batman defeats all of them in the span of four pages, which shows how insignificant these figures are in comparison to Joker, who has remained undefeated until this point. Although there are many stories within the Batman franchise in which these other villains have played a central part and proven themselves to be strong antagonists, they do not have the symbolic function clearly attributed to the Joker. Once again, Joker proves to Batman how inseparably connected they are, and that they are more than archenemies; they are one and the same, two sides of the same coin, ego and shadow. As Joker tells him: "See you on the flip side, old friend" (Snyder 118).

Joker tells the other villains that they can go away now that Batman is captured, claiming that "this next bit is a private affair" (Snyder 120), hinting at how his relationship with Batman runs deeper than the others. This connection is shown on page 127 of the graphic novel. Batman is taken and blindfolded, after which he imagines a bat, completely stripped of

its flesh and face, similar to how Joker cut off his own face, coming at him from the darkness. Initially, it looks as if the bat represents Batman himself, but Joker assures Batman that he is there with him in the dark, coming. On this page, it appears as if the bat is both Batman and Joker, and for Batman this is an important moment in accepting Joker as his shadow, as Joker claims that Batman “knew it in his soul” (127). Joker is referring to an earlier statement he makes about Batman realizing what his true face really is.

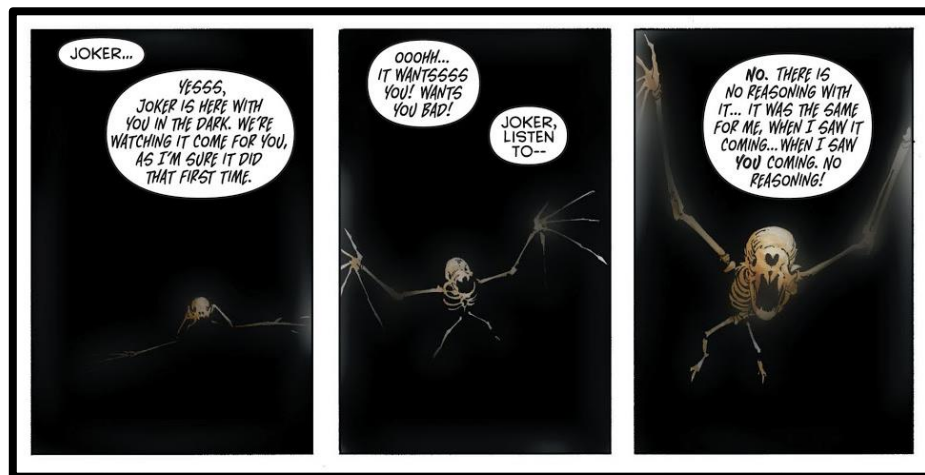


Figure 9: Batman and Joker as one in Batman: Death of the Family

Jung elaborates on his theories of psychological development by reflecting on the dreams he had throughout his life, referring to them as the *prima materia* of his scientific work (*Memories* 4). In his works, he refers to a dream he has about his dead wife. He shares that “she stood at some distance from me, looking at me squarely” (296). In *Death of the Family*, Batman has a similar experience when he dreams of waking up in the aftermath of the events. He is surrounded by his family, who look at him the same way as Jung described his wife. Jung goes on to describe his wife being in her prime, as beautiful as she could be, which is also how the family is presented. They are all dressed perfectly and appear to be in the best mood, smiling throughout the sequence; something that does not happen often in the Batman graphic novels. The family assures Batman that Joker has been captured and all is well, and the whole ordeal feels like a culmination of events that the family has lived through. For his encounter with his wife, Jung concludes the following: “Face to face which such wholeness

one remains speechless, for it can scarcely be comprehended” (296). As was the case for Jung, the objectivity in which Batman experiences his dream is part of a completed process of individuation. Emotions, according to Jung, are important, but they still contain projections. By distancing oneself from these projections, objective cognition can be achieved (297). Similarly, the dream sequence in the graphic novel helps Batman integrate his anima into his psyche, which allows him to differentiate more clearly between the rational and emotional aspects of his being.

The final moment in which Batman truly accepts and integrates his shadow, which moves him forward on the path towards individuation, is when he reflects on one single moment that seems to be the catharsis of this narrative. He confesses to Alfred that he went to visit Joker in Arkham once, just after Batman adopted Dick Grayson as the first Robin. In a flashback, Batman, in his Bruce Wayne persona, stands behind Joker and shows him the card he found in the cave. Batman confesses to Alfred that Joker turned to look at Bruce, but “he didn’t see me at all” (Snyder 152). He goes on to claim that only he truly knows Joker, even better than he wants to admit and that the rest of the family have to believe that it will never come to a point that he blocks out everyone just to remain only with Joker. But as he says this, doubt hovers over his words as he understands that as long as he cannot kill Joker, their struggle will always be only about the two of them, one trying to dominate the other. Batman’s realization and acceptance that Joker is buried deep inside of himself, brings with it the possibility to move beyond this never-ending struggle and to move towards discovery of the self.

## Conclusion

Applying the Jungian framework of individuation, detailed in the first chapter, with its emphasis on connecting with and integrating the shadow and anima archetypes into the psyche, it becomes evident that Batman's interactions with the Joker and his family, combined with his personal reflections on past events, reveal to him a path towards individuation and discovery of the self. Batman progresses towards a state of understanding and balancing the forces of the conscious and unconscious mind.

When Joker reappears in Gotham City, Batman is challenged to relive a time in which he operated alone and in a different more obsessive manner than he does now. Finding, confronting and defeating the Joker almost feels like Batman has discovered a newfound purpose. From a Jungian perspective, I have applied the shadow archetype to Joker and within that perspective Joker's reappearance functions as a catalyst for Batman's journey towards individuation. As his shadow, Joker wants Batman to give in to his darkest urges, which leads Batman initially down a path where he has to distance himself from his friends and family. It is actually this process of encountering and confronting the shadow that leads Batman eventually to the path of individuation, providing him with the right tools to accept Joker as that darker part of himself that is always hiding in the shadows.

Batman's family fights hard to ensure Batman's victory, as they advise him throughout his encounters with Joker. Their emotional connection with Batman functions as the anima, and they remain in his life until he understands and accepts that part himself. Alfred as a mother-like figure, and to some extent Gordon takes this role as well, showing Batman that he can make personal connections with people that will make that side of him stronger. As the other members of the Bat family appear in the course of the story, Batman progresses further on his journey.

By accepting the totality of personality, including his shadow, Batman divests his self of the false wrapping of his earlier persona: the mask he wears both as the caped crusader as well as the persona of Bruce Wayne. When Alfred wakes up in the final pages and asks about the family, Batman knows the family will go its own way, although it will always remain a part of him. It is only when Alfred asks how he, Bruce, is doing, that Batman reflects on what he has learned from his journey towards the self. He accepts the tragedies from his past, as well as the choices he has made in relation to his shadow, Joker. Batman knows that Joker will always remain a part of him, waiting in the shadows to challenge him every time he weakens or forgets why he keeps the fight going. While there is a clear ending to the story, Joker's last laugh indicates that there is still more to come, which runs parallel to the process of individuation; in life there is no resolution.

Analyzing Batman and Joker through a Jungian critical framework has given me insights into the nature of hero-villain relations in comic books in general. Although these stories are usually written as a form of entertainment, albeit to make a political or commercial claim, it is important to see how symbolically layered the contents of a graphic novel can be and how comic-book artists, just like literary writers and filmmakers, can be influenced by classic theories concerning the workings of the human psyche, such as Jung's concepts of the archetypes and the individuation process.

Batman's lore often includes the asylum known as Arkham, which refers to the world of H.P. Lovecraft's fantastic horror stories. This itself is an intertextual reference to the invisible and ungraspable destructive forces lurking behind the mundane veil of everyday American life in Lovecraft's writing. If in Jungian terms the shadow presents that part of the individual psyche that the ego cannot accept of itself, then maybe Arkham Asylum houses those individuals who fail to conform to ethical codes prescribed by the dominant ideology. This non-conformity may be evil indeed, or criminal, but this does not necessarily have to be

so. From a Jungian perspective Arkham Asylum can be said to house those aspects of the psyche embodied in the shadow archetype, on an individual level for Batman, in the guise of the Joker, but also on a more collective level. The analysis of *Death of the Family* above, has shown that Margaret Atwood was right in identifying a Jungian psychological framework to the Batman stories, and pursuing this observation further has constructed a new layer of understanding the superhero-supervillain relationship. DC Comics has a number of heroes in its repertoire and most of these heroes have a villain that has a greater connection to the hero than other villains within its universe. Shazam for instance often fights Black Adam, which is quite literally a darker version of the flamboyant hero. Black Adam is not necessarily evil, but has taken his vengeance to extremes. Even in the Marvel universe, the Avengers fight a villain named Thanos. This character, however, does not consider himself to be a villain, as he wants the same thing as the heroes: to create a better world for everyone. Thanos believes that overpopulation will destroy the universe and he wants to end half of all life. Although the Avengers would never decide to do something so terrible, it is something they worry about. Thanos merely gives in to this extreme.

Understanding the relationship between comic-book heroes and villains in Jungian terms allows for the development of a more complex understanding of characterization, character relations and their symbolic functions. Applying a Jungian critical framework to Batman and Joker has proven that there is more to the story than the images on paper. Images that are drawn in the gutter margins of the page carry a deeper meaning than I originally thought and understanding the archetypes and applying them to these characters expand the experience of reading the story. Over-focusing on the psychological character development does have its drawbacks, however. Joker does not always make sense as Batman's shadow, or vice versa, and reading the comic with the purpose of proving this theory poses challenges

when the actions of these characters do not meet the framework that is set up. This is also true for the family, who do not always work as the anima.

Although this Jungian analysis of *Death of the Family* provides new insights into the dynamic of Batman and Joker, there are still many ideas that are left unexplored. Batman's desire to operate alone and the issues he faces regarding trust could stem from the trauma he endured as a child when he watched his parents get murdered. Analysis of the text that utilizes trauma theory as a critical framework could lead to interesting new insights in Batman's attachment to Joker and vice versa and, without a Jungian literary framework, could open new possibilities and implications in understanding the narrative.



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