

# Itsumi and Sayuri's Individuation Process in Akiyoshi Rikako's The Dark Maidens

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## Itsumi and Sayuri's Individuation Process in Akiyoshi Rikako's *The Dark Maidens*

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**Abstract.** This study aims to analyze Itsumi and Sayuri's individuation process in Akiyoshi Rikako's *The Dark Maidens*. Identify which aspects of individuation are most prominent in each character through Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. The theory explains that the individuation process in the collective unconscious is made up of four archetypes, namely, ego, persona, shadow, and anima or animus. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to deeply analyze and detail the characters' psychological development. The writer uses a psychological approach that examines how the characters experience individuation, a journey of self-discovery to preserve their societal image. The result of this study shows that both Itsumi and Sayuri present a persona to society, masking their true selves and hiding their shadow, the darker aspects of their personalities, within the subconscious. Itsumi's betrayal leads her ego to be overtaken by her shadow, revealing a vengeful and rebellious nature that dismantles her facade. The shadow also consumes Sayuri's ego due to her treacherous tendencies and desire to eliminate Itsumi, causing her persona to collapse. The finding of this study is the shadow's dominance results in both characters exhibiting irrational and destructive behaviors. Additionally, the characters become aware of their animus. Finally, the study concludes that the novel illustrates how individuals can undergo a negative individuation process characterized by the shadow's dominance over the ego.

**Keywords:** *animus, ego, individuation, persona, shadow*

### INTRODUCTION

Individuation is about recognizing one's own identity, understanding one's innermost uniqueness, and being able to distinguish oneself from others. Achieving individuation requires a process and the process results in development. Humans develop in order to achieve individuation, where there is a potential self in their subconscious at birth that can be embodied in their life journey. According to Stein (2019: 4), individuals are born with a self, and it takes a lifetime to bring it to more or less full realization. The self can change and develop either more or less over a lifetime, self-development can be incomplete without self-awareness (Hull, 2017: 93). A person who is aware of the self will develop by increasing what they can do to know more about themselves so as to form a personality over time. This is what makes individuation have its process, which is an

individuation process where there is a change or development in individual humans over time, whether it is formed from the environment or society

Stein (2020: 155) uses the term individuation to talk about psychological development, which he describes as becoming a personality that is unified but also unique. The process of self-development is where individuals integrate various aspects of themselves, achieving a deeper understanding of themselves, including the hidden or unknown side, and achieving balance in their lives. Psychology is a field of knowledge that individuals study, focusing on the mind and behavior (Soares, 2023: 2). This psychological knowledge is where to find out how the personality of humans is not only good and bad. They could be good but have a bad personality that they hide behind their good facade, or maybe vice versa. Therefore, there is the term the process of individuation, a concept evoked by Jung in his psychological analysis. The process of individuation introduced four archetypes, ego, persona, shadow, anima, or animus.

The writer is interested in this topic to be researched, because humans have many layers in their personality. Like a drama in real life, humans are required to play the role of someone who is worthy of being seen in front of society, they wear a mask called persona that they always show to cover the shadow. While the sex also determines the person's gender. Of course, this knowledge has existed for a long time, which has always been a stereotype. This influences the development of an individual's identity, like men must have masculine attitudes, while women must have a feminine attitude. The term anima or animus is what defies those stereotypes. Anima refers to the feminine qualities that exist in men, while animus refers to the masculine attributes that exist in women. These psychological characteristics have been the norm for a long time, so changing other people's views will, of course, be difficult because these thoughts have been imprinted in their memory and knowledge.

In the novel *The Dark Maidens* by Akiyoshi Rikako (2013), there are elements of the individuation process to be found. The story begins with Itsumi, a popular girl in her Academy, all of the students look up to her as a role model. Itsumi has a friend that she has known for a long time, Sayuri, who has always been her assistant. Itsumi is the president, and Sayuri is the vice president of the literature club. Together, they lead the other members in their literature club activities. All, of course, is just a façade and a mask in the eyes of society to cover up the truth that Itsumi actually has a secret relationship with her teacher, Mr Hojo. This relationship is only known to her and Sayuri, so the other members are completely unaware of this. Of course, a secret is bound to be revealed one day. One by one, the members found out about this and betrayed, with each of them informing all the evidence to their father. Feeling betrayed, Itsumi, with the help of Sayuri, takes revenge on her club members where she pretends to commit suicide so that the rest of the members will blame each other, and from there, poison accompanies their chaos. Not just that, without Itsumi's knowledge, Sayuri, who is apparently tired of being her assistant who always follows her around, also secretly betrays her.

The writer chose this novel as the object of this research in the hope of analyzing the ego, shadow, persona, anima, or animus work in life, which in this case is depicted in the form of a story in the novel. How the ego of the character in the story wavered between settling for persona or being taken over by shadow in the end, or whether they will have animus traits that are visible in their characteristics. This research aims to analyze the individuation process in Itsumi and Sayuri's characters where for a deeper understanding of how they apply their persona, shadow, and anima or animus as the story progresses,

what dominates at the end of the story, choosing to keep their social mask with the persona or following the will of the negative nature of the shadow while carrying anima or animus traits.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the individuation process, it foresees the emergence of a figure resulting from the combination of both conscious and unconscious aspects of the personality (Jung, 1980: 164). This combination makes the conscious nerves aware of the unconscious that can be carried through emotional instability caused by changes in circumstances. The process of self-discovery is tough and uncertain, and the unfolding of events tests a person's ability to adjust to their circumstances. They are trying to fit in with society and adapt to obtain the identity they have been looking for. Once a person grows and gains more experience, they have understood that displaying their personality has a choice, to be hidden or shown in society, this is to gain what is called interaction experience. In the individuation process, there are four archetypes that identify a person in self-discovery. Jung introduced four main archetypes, namely the ego, the persona, the shadow, and anima or animus that exist in every personality of each individual.

### 1. Ego

An ego is a form, as it were, the center of the field of consciousness, and to this extent, it consists of the personality of which an individual is, in fact, aware and experiences themselves (Stein, 2020: 12). It can be said that the ego is the self that is consciousness or even memory, where the individual is aware of this. The ego is thus related to the self as part to whole (Jung, 1980: 187). It is the center point of consciousness that can direct where the personality is going and can be said to be the identity of an individual human self that functions as a central point that coordinates and organizes an individual's experience. The ego, which is part of the conscious, controls the personality and how the self wants to act and do. Hence, ego and consciousness are intertwined (Hardman, 2021: 3). The ego can be said to have existed since childhood and is increasingly developing when an individual gets older. It is in this ego that a person can have a personality that leads to where a person will become. The process of ego development is also a process of self-discovery, such as who an individual really is that can distinguish themselves from others in society.

### 2. Persona

The persona is like a mask that is shown to society to give the impression that they are accepted in the circle of society. Individuals realize the importance of having a persona as they grow older, where they begin to understand the importance of recognition and acceptance from others to survive in society. According to Giles (2020: 19), an individual may perform more than one persona at any particular time, as it implies that the individual will change or modify their persona entirely over time or at other locations to adapt to changing circumstances. The term persona, which refers to a mask, is derived from how acting happens. A face that a person never shows to society because they cover it with a persona, like an actor's mask (Jung, 1980: 20). The mask covers the true nature of the person they are deliberately hiding. The things that personas cover up are the negative things inside them, the dark side of humanity, which should not be seen on the surface, and the side that is unacceptable and violates the norms of society.

### 3. Shadow

The Shadow is one of the most powerful and dangerous archetypes in human history (Zhu & Han, 2013: 325). It is because the shadow stores the dark side within an individual's body, which is always in the subconscious so that it is never visible and appears on the outside of an individual's personality. The archetype of the dangerous aspect of the unrecognized dark half of the personality (Jung, 1966: 139). The part that consists of thoughts that include an individual's weaknesses, instincts, flaws, or even other negative things that are not accepted or approved in one's values but also unacceptable from society. The negative thoughts can arise when one recognizes what is called lust and an understanding that lacks moral knowledge. This can be caused by two factors, namely, when a person experiences an unfortunate event or is affected by someone else's event. The shadow that resides in the unconscious can emerge towards the ego in the conscious mind when the ego fails to restrain and control it. A weak sense of empathy enables the shadow to transform the ego into egoism. Initially, empathetic minds, which strive to comprehend and empathize with others' perspectives, may eventually become indifferent to others' feelings altogether.

### 4. Anima or Animus

Awareness of the differences in gender stereotypes between men and women can be very important (Tremmel & Wahl, 2023: 2). Understanding gender and relating it to the attitudes each gender has, relating to or opposing, is one of the things an individual does in this process to find their identity. The existence of anima or animus is an opposition to stereotyped views in society. Jung (1980: 124) stated that opposing stereotypes leads to a transformation in personality that highlights characteristics typically associated with the opposite sex; in men, it brings out feminine traits, and in women, it emphasizes masculine traits. A man is not required to have masculine traits, nor is a woman needed to have feminine characteristics. Freedom to express oneself is what is meant by anima and animus. This means that men can also be characterized by intuition, emotional connection, empathy, and even a gentle attitude, usually reserved only for women. In contrast to the anima, the animus is the masculine part of a woman. This makes women free to express their true selves, where women have traits of being firm, independent, and straightforward, and they can even have leadership attitudes that are usually always given by men.

### METHOD/METODE

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. It is used for deep analysis based on data views and analysis of data obtained on the research object. Qualitative research is a way to explore and understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to a human social problem (Creswell, 2018: 51). Understanding what is being researched is essential for writers because, by understanding, research work has more profound and more specific knowledge. This research used a psychological approach that focuses on the psychological states of a character in a literary work. The psychological approach discusses the unconscious mind that influences human behavior, one of which is individuation (Jung, 1966: 238). A personality is formed and developed through events experienced by a person, what they experience is a process where they search for themselves.

The novel that will be used as the data source is the novel by Akiyoshi Rikako's *The Dark Maidens*, a novel with 220 pages that published in Japan in 2013 by Futabasha

Publishers Ltd. in Tokyo. The instrument in this research is the writer who is also a researcher involved in this research. Thought and dedication in examining the research object to obtain and collect data, the writer will be assisted in using the appropriate methodology to be used in making this research. The writer used reading, and note taking techniques when collecting data in this study. First, the writer read the novel makes a research question that will be the main reference of the research to examine the novel's process of individuation. The next thing is that the writer finds data evidence to analyze the data. In this step, there will be a more in-depth and detailed explanation of the analysis findings that will be found by the writer. Finally, the writer draws conclusions to connect the key points of the analysis results.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The writer realizes and discovers that there is a process of individuation in the main characters, Itsumi and Sayuri, which is shown through how they act and their experiences during the novel. Using Jung's concept of individuation process to analyze Itsumi and Sayuri's character, the writer can see how they outward appearance and behavior serve as a persona mask that meets societal expectations. Then, for the shadow, the writer will examine what kind of true nature is hidden behind their subconscious, the ambition, and the negative side they are trying to hide. Not only that, the writer will also examine whether the two characters have anima or animus, with both actors being female. The writer will explore the development of the occurrence and formation of their animus.

### **1. Persona**

For the sake of fitting into their environment, knowing that there are behaviours that can and cannot be shown in the eyes of society, Itsumi and Sayuri wear masks to protect their reputation and avoid ridicule that will harm them. It is the outward personality that is shaped by societal expectations and norms, which often hides the true self or the individual's authentic personality.

#### **a) Itsumi**

Itsumi is a girl who always performs a perfect life and has a facade that she wants to cover up with her persona. She is a popular girl and everyone wants to be close to her. Especially when she finds a literature club, as many want an invitation to her club. Together with her childhood friend, Sayuri, Itsumi gathers other members.

“Whether or not you were a scholarship student, there was not one person at school who did not know Itsumi Shiraishi. All of the girls in elementary, junior high, and high school admired her remarkable beauty and intelligence and look up to her as a role model, watching every move she made” (Rikako, 2013:22)

In this, the writer concludes that, from the perspective of others, Itsumi shows her perfect image – the perfect girl. She is universally admired for her beauty and intelligence, which represents her persona. Being looked up to as a role model indicates that Itsumi's persona is not just about appearance but also behavior. She likely presents herself in a way that others aspire to emulate, suggesting she consciously or unconsciously conforms to the expectations placed upon her. The fact that all the girls watch every move she makes implies that Itsumi is constantly under scrutiny, which could reinforce the need to maintain her persona. This constant observation can put pressure on her to live up to her perceived image, potentially at the expense of her true self.

Unfortunately, her intelligence is used cunningly because Itsumi always thinks that if she holds someone's biggest secret, then that person will always obey her. Her cunning nature makes it easy for her to find weaknesses in her club members. She covers this trait with her perfect mask.

“Seize their secrets, steal their place, hunt them down. To hold someone's secrets is to take hold of their soul.

There is nothing in this world more enjoyable when you seize someone else's secrets, your story is born.” (Rikako, 2013: 119)

The evidence above proves that behind Itsumi's mask lies a shadow trait that she always hides without voicing those thoughts to anyone. The characteristics that the image she shows to others are not the same as her real attitude, which is the attitude of manipulation, looking down on others, and sharpness are perfectly covered with her perfect girl mask. Itsumi hides that attitude because she knows that it will only harm her if it is shown openly. Such actions can lead to an imbalance in the psyche, where the ego becomes inflated with power, potentially leading to negative consequences for both the individual and those around them. The delight in such control suggests an over-identification with the persona and a disregard for the deeper, more authentic self

#### **b) Sayuri**

Sayuri is Itsumi's close friend and is always by her side. She is originally a quiet girl bullied as an elementary school student, and Itsumi eventually helps her. From there, Sayuri realizes that weaknesses must be suppressed. Over time, which may also be influenced by Itsumi's firm personality, she covers up her weaknesses by putting on a mask that plays a reliable girl who always helps Itsumi.

“If Itsumi could be considered "dazzling" or "stunning," then Sayuri was by contrast someone whose worldview was much more refined. With her graceful, unassuming personality, Sayuri smiled by Itsumi's side, but skillfully took over the reins when Itsumi was about to lose control.” (Rikako, 2013: 49)

Sayuri's persona is described as refined, graceful, and unassuming. Sayuri's persona is characterized by self-awareness and clarity of purpose. She knows what she wants and remains true to herself, suggesting a strong integration of her persona with her true self. Sayuri's persona of refinement and control may conceal aspects of her shadow, such as vulnerabilities or suppressed desires, which are not explicitly discussed but are implied in her contrast with Itsumi.

“I was the Phantom who lurked in the shadows, making sure my Christine became a star. I was the Watson who shone the light on Holmes' logic. If Christine or Holmes lost their splendor, then the Phantom and Watson would naturally step up as the lead and continue the story.” (Rikako, 2013:142-144)

In this quotation, this can be interpreted as the persona adapting to support and enhance the images of others (Christine and Holmes), much like how actors support the main characters in a play. This adaptation involves projecting supportive roles that enhance the perceived brilliance and splendor of the main characters. While the quotation emphasizes the supportive roles (Phantom and Watson), the unconscious aspects of personality that are not consciously acknowledged. Sayuri's identification with the Phantom and Watson roles may reflect aspects of the shadow, such as hidden desires for recognition or influence that are expressed through supporting others. In Sayuri's characteristics, it can be seen how different what she wants to show is from what she wants.

## 2. Shadow

Itsumi and Sayuri certainly have their thoughts that they keep hidden. Distorted thoughts contain negative elements that they try to hide in the eyes of society. Shadow also has something in common with secrets, something or anything that is deliberately hidden to believe that no one will know. The concept of a secret is broader than a shadow, it can take any form, whether good or bad intentions. A secret can also mean good news or even bad news that is deliberately hidden. Shadow itself is the dark side of everyone's mind, a negative trait, a trait that is unacceptable in the eyes of society, a trait that can even violate norms.

### a) Itsumi

Itsumi's high ego always makes her want to be the main character, making her look for other members to serve as sidekicks. By holding their biggest secret, Itsumi has everything. Her club members are just tools, so she will always be the centre of attention. Little does she know that what she believes in all this time will become a double-edged sword and backfire on her. That thought takes her by surprise when most of her sidekicks secretly stab her in the back by handing over the evidence of the relationship, she has kept secret to her father. Not only that, but they also dare to stalk and act behind her back. With Sayuri's help, Itsumi plans to revenge.

"You scatter your young lives. This club will be the lovely casket that adds the final touch to your deaths. This is the climax of my story. For such sensitive self-conscious, adolescent girls, this will be quite the sentimental ending. Goodbye, sidekick" (Rikako, 2013:139)

In this quotation, a sense of vengeance clouds Itsumi morality and breaks the mask of her persona. The "climax of my story" can symbolize the culmination of unconscious conflicts or revelations. It represents the unconscious forces that influence behavior and emotions, often surfacing in times of intense psychological or emotional significance. The quotation reflects themes of transformation, psychological depth, and the journey towards individuation—a process of integrating unconscious contents (like the shadow) with conscious awareness. It portrays a critical moment where the characters confront hidden aspects of themselves, potentially leading to profound personal growth and self-discovery.

### b) Sayuri

The deep thought that there is a shadow that she always holds behind her facade, Sayuri, who always puts on a mask where she has always been Itsumi's assistant, being the mastermind in all of her plans so that she is always the main character in her life, finally realizes that Itsumi is no longer interesting.

"I did not put in all that work for Itsumi to become like this. But then a thought floated through my mind. Almost as if someone had whispered it to me. I would be a better lead than Itsumi. The play required a new climax. For new star to be born, the old needed to make a spectacular exit. I immediately started planning on what I should do. Then, I had the idea to use Itsumi's little tool of revenge against her." (Rikako, 2013: 143-144)

In this context, it can be seen that Sayuri's persona mask has shattered, and all that remains is her desire to take over Itsumi's role. The old star making a "spectacular exit" suggests the shedding of old personas or identities, possibly influenced by unconscious forces represented by the shadow. The mention of planning to use "Itsumi's little tool of revenge against her" indicates a deliberate and possibly

manipulative strategy. Using Itsumi's tool of revenge could symbolize a deeper, hidden motive or desire that is coming to light, potentially disrupting conscious intentions or expectations. The shadow that has always been in the dark corner of her subconscious is starting to take over. She no longer considers the morality of her actions, and her sense of humanity is no longer there.

### 3. Ego

In this section, Itsumi and Sayuri show their true egos more clearly as the story progresses. Their journey of self-discovery reaches the point where their consciousness understands and realizes the desire they have been looking for. The influence of the environment and the events they experience strengthens their ego, so these teenage girls decide on a path that will affect their lives in the future.

#### a) Itsumi

Itsumi's character has the ego of being a rebel. While carrying out her revenge plan against the other club members, assisted by Sayuri, she staged her suicide to manipulate them into blaming each other, which led to chaos and further betrayal among them. When taken to the hospital, Itsumi bravely escaped to elope with Mr. Hojo.

“After I was treated, I snuck out of the hospital. I left a note behind saying that I ran off to live with Mr. Hojo. My father, who bears the shame of his daughter's elopement, has been secretly searching for me all week. My father is hiding the truth from the students, so the rumors of my death went unchecked and spread like wildfire.” (Rikako, 2013: 138)

In this statement made by Itsumi, the writer realizes that Itsumi's act of rebellion is really risky and that even if others know the truth, perhaps the mask of persona left by Itsumi would also vanish in the eyes of society. The father's shame and secretive search highlight interpersonal dynamics influenced by the ego's decisions and actions. Itsumi's ego is affected by the events she experiences in her academic life, and there is no time for her to think more rationally and be fully aware of her actions. She does not realize that what she does could be done correctly because the shadow too deeply covers her morality – the dark side of humanity – leading her ego down a path far from the right way.

#### b) Sayuri

Sayuri has the ego of being a traitor, which quietly becomes more apparent as the story progresses. Sayuri's inherently quiet nature makes it easy for her to conceal her true feelings. As she witnesses Itsumi transforming into someone different, Sayuri's transformation becomes evident as she develops an ego to replace Itsumi in the spotlight.

“If Itsumi disappeared, as she herself wrote, her family would simply believe that she ran off to elope, and Mr. Hojo would not look for her because he would think that her family took her back. Itsumi left this world in her loveliest state, by my hand.” (Rikako, 2013:144)

The quotation suggests a narrative where Itsumi's disappearance is orchestrated in a manner that allows her to preserve a specific image ("her loveliest state") through the actions of Sayuri ("by my hand"). In this conversation, it's evident that Sayuri is fully aware of her actions. She only seeks to fulfil her fantasy of feeling like the lead in her story. In pursuit of this goal, she doesn't hesitate to betray Itsumi, who remains

oblivious to Sayuri's intentions. While aware of her actions, Sayuri is uncertain whether they are justified or normal. Sayuri's statement that Itsumi left the world "by my hand" hints at a potentially darker or hidden aspect of the Sayuri's psyche. This act could be seen as a manifestation of suppressed emotions or motivations that are now externalized, possibly revealing a complex relationship between Sayuri's conscious ego and their unconscious shadow.

#### 4. Anima or Animus

During the search for identity, especially among teenagers like Itsumi and Sayuri, the stereotype of femininity naturally persists. Whatever Itsumi does inevitably becomes a role model for other juniors or seniors. Sayuri, Itsumi's close friend, faces expectations similar to those of a girl and is in the shadow of Itsumi's influence. It's impossible for either of them to completely avoid these animus traits, especially given the demands placed on teenage girls whose thoughts can be unstable and influenced by events and environments.

##### a) Itsumi

Itsumi's characterization reflects an archetype where the animus dominates, driving her actions and interactions with others in ways that prioritize personal desires and goals over empathetic or relational considerations. This changed when she fell in love with her teacher, Mr. Hojo. Itsumi became calmer, and her sharp attitude gradually softened. Finding emotional grounding, she, who had always been fiercely independent, now seeks to rely on others.

"Itsumi sipped on her Earl Grey tea as she went on happily about her new future with Mr. Hojo, the calm life they would have together, and their simple everyday joys. Her once-hostile eyes had mellowed out, and her harsh mouth had become soft." (Rikako, 2013:143)

The quotation implies this symbolic act suggests a deliberate shift towards a more balanced and integrated self, where animus qualities contribute to her envisioned future with Mr. Hojo. In this statement, Itsumi's transformation reflects her willingness to let go of her animus traits to embrace a new life focused on happiness. Formerly scheming, cunning, and assertive – traits that defied traditional feminine stereotypes – Itsumi now embraces these characteristics not as societal demands but as personal choices.

##### b) Sayuri

The admiration for the other person, who had everything the speaker lacked, and the subsequent decision to become their antithetical partner, may indicate a development or integration of animus qualities. Sayuri became more confident with Itsumi as her friend. Until one day, when Itsumi had found the heart of her life, her friend changed.

"I never thought Itsumi's expressions could be so mundane. I was motified. So, everyone, please be aware that today is page one of Sayuri Sumikawa's story. I want all of you to add intrigue to my narrative. You know, I feel really comfortable being the lead" (Rikako, 2013: 143-144)

In this statement, Sayuri has changed. Her tone changes when she takes Itsumi's place after she gets rid of her friend. At first, she just wanted to be behind the scenes, but she suddenly wanted to feel like the main character, leading the story herself. After seeing how Itsumi had turned soft, she thought it was time for a cast change. Sayuri asserts a desire to be the lead in her own narrative, indicating a sense of agency and control over her story. This assertion aligns with animus traits of assertiveness and active engagement

in shaping one's life and identity. She accepts and embraces her animus as she transforms into a commanding, determined, and independent girl who does dangerous things to please herself.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this study can be concluded as Jung's individuation process, which has been found in the characteristics of Itsumi and Sayuri in the novel *The Dark Maidens* by Akiyoshi Rikako. Jung's individuation process introduced four archetypes, ego, persona, shadow, anima, or animus. In this process, there is situation when one of the individuation process's archetypes can dominate, which is happen with Itsumi and Sayuri.

Itsumi's persistence and stubbornness were initially perfectly covered by her persona mask, which was portrayed by many as a gentle girl, but when she thought that she would finally be able to live happily elope with Mr Hojo, her gentle nature like her persona mask replaced the animus in her. The mask of her persona crumbles slowly as the story progresses. Itsumi, who was initially against it, begins to accept her stereotype. She accepts her shadow to rule over her, directing her ego to be covered and follow the shadow. The archetype that dominates Itsumi is shadow.

Meanwhile, fed up and disliking the existence of happy endings that are boring to her, Sayuri intends to take Itsumi's place. Sayuri dares to step into a plan that could get rid of her friend. The girl who initially only wanted to be behind the scenes suddenly had the will to be on stage. Her ambition made Sayuri acknowledge her animus, along with how her ego followed more towards the shadow and chose to leave her persona mask. The archetype that dominates Sayuri's character is shadow.

In conclusion, as the story progresses, these two characters expose themselves to what is behind their persona masks. Their chaotic process of self-discovery, which does not lead to the positive side, can be self-reflection. Of course, there is such a thing as developing a positive self-discovery process. Still, surely, of all the many individuals in the world, there must be some of them experiencing a negative self-discovery process if what they experience is an unfortunate event that shapes them.

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# Itsumi and Sayuri's Individuation Process in Akiyoshi Rikako's The Dark Maidens

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