



ACADEMIC ARTICLES

Map of the Soul: An interview with Murray Stein

◆ **ED. ANA CLARA RIBEIRO**

Attorney, writer, and songwriter (Brazil)

DR. MURRAY STEIN

*Training and Supervising Analyst at the International School of Analytical Psychology Zurich
(Switzerland)*

DR. MURRAY STEIN BIOGRAPHY

Murray Stein, PhD, is a Training and Supervising Analyst at the International School of Analytical Psychology Zurich (ISAP-ZURICH). He was president of the International Association for Analytical Psychology (IAAP) from 2001 to 2004 and president of ISAP-ZURICH from 2008 to 2012. He has lectured internationally and is the editor of *Jungian Psychoanalysis* and the author of *Jung's Treatment of Christianity*, *In MidLife*, *Jung's Map of the Soul*, *Minding the Self*, *Outside Inside* and *All Around*, *The Bible as Dream*, and most recently *Men Under Construction*. He lives in Switzerland and has a private practice in Zurich.

INTRODUCTION

The works of BTS are known to encompass many literary, artistic, and philosophic references. The open nature of their music videos and fictional universe (the Bangtan Universe, or "BU") leaves room for their fans (ARMY) to add new meanings and references to the equation, building a rhizomatic, collaborative work, according to Lee (2019).

Even before Big Hit Entertainment (BTS's label and management agency) started selling Dr. Murray Stein's *Jung's Map of the Soul*: An introduction in their online shop in late 2018, many ARMY already

suspected that BTS's works such as "Blood Sweat & Tears," "Fake Love," and "Epiphany" were somewhat influenced by the theories of Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology.

The release of Map of the Soul: Persona, BTS's sixth extended play recording (EP), in May 2019, made the connection evident and drew interest from psychology scholars. In Map of the Soul: Persona, as well as in the following full-length album, Map of the Soul: 7, BTS explored Jung's archetypal concepts of the persona, shadow, and ego through lyrical, musical, and visual content, opening widespread discussions on understanding the "self" and furthering the group's own message of self-acceptance.

Since then, Dr. Stein, the author of the above-mentioned book that inspired BTS and Big Hit, has been an important figure in the facilitation of understanding of Jungian theories for ARMY. Through his books and participation in the podcast Speaking of Jung, ARMY explores new possibilities in regard to BTS's art, the phenomena around BTS's and ARMY's relationship, and the importance of psychoanalysis for self-knowledge and self-growth.

Invited by the Editorial Board of The Rhizomatic Revolution Review [20130613] (R³), Dr. Stein kindly answered questions from our members, as well as questions from ARMY, in response to an R³ call through Twitter.

What follows are literal transcripts of his responses, given in two rounds, on July 11, 2020, and September 16, 2020.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

R³: Have you perceived a surge in interest in psychoanalysis among a new audience these last couple of years due to its incorporation in BTS's music? If so, has this resulted in any interesting interpretations or misinterpretations of Jung's theories, or of your work specifically, and has that impacted how you communicate about psychoanalysis?

MS: I have noticed considerable increased interest in Jungian psychology over social media in recent years. What is especially encouraging is that there have been many indications that interest in Jung's ideas is taking hold among people in the younger generation. I am pleased by this development. The questions asked have been intelligent, and I have the feeling people are genuinely interested in learning more about the insights offered by depth psychology about the world we live in today. Jung died in 1961, 60 years ago next year. He began thinking seriously about psychology 120 years ago in 1900. His many contributions to understanding the working of the human mind are continuing to be deepened and developed further by his students and followers. We are now in the 4th and 5th generations following the founding of analytical psychology, and new applications of its many theories continue to be discovered and developed. For me personally, it has been a challenge to communicate the basic concepts such as persona, ego, shadow, and so forth in a style that is easily accessible to people who have not studied this psychology before.

R³: If you could suggest one BTS song as a starting point for someone interested in Jungian analysis, which song would you choose? And, if you could suggest one book (written by you, or by Carl Jung, or any other) as a starting point for

someone interested in BTS, which book would you choose?

MS: I would suggest the piece titled “ON” as a place to start reflecting on what BTS is all about. As for reading, I would recommend C.G. Jung’s autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, and my book, *Jung’s Map of the Soul*. These would be good starting points for the interested person willing to put some work into the project of learning about Jungian psychology.

R³: **What BTS’s verse or lyric stood out to you as a Jungian analyst?**

MS: There were many. I would pick out “Boy with Luv” and “ON” as special. But it is hard to choose. “Black Swan” was extraordinary, and also “Dionysus.” All the songs have a psychological message.

R³: You have participated on Laura London’s podcast *Speaking of Jung* many times. **Do you believe podcasts and other types of content are important in sharing knowledge and clarifying beliefs about Jungian psychology to the general public?**

MS: Yes, of course, this is a challenge and a great opportunity. In the world as it is organized today, media like these are the path for many people to discover new directions for living and learning. The podcasts introduce ideas and perspectives to many people at a basic level and offer resources for further learning. For many listeners they are the beginning of a lifelong journey of self discovery.

R³: You’ve written separate books about each archetype addressed in BTS’s album *Map of the Soul: 7*, but also a book in which you address all of them in the sense of the album. **What’s the main difference between your latest book, *Map of the Soul: 7 – Persona, Shadow & Ego in the World of BTS*, and the previous ones?**

MS: *Map of the Soul: 7* summarizes the contents of the previous books. It is more focused on the lyrics of the most recent album by BTS than the other books are, and it is a kind of tribute to what BTS has done in this album. For readers who want more information after studying *Map of the Soul: 7*, I recommend they read the previous books: *Map of the Soul: Persona*, *Map of the Soul: Shadow* and *Map of the Soul: Ego*. All of them are oriented around the songs of BTS as well but contain more detailed explanations of these concepts.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ART, ARTIST, AND FAN

R³: In *Map of the Soul – Persona: Our Many Faces*, you state, “I confess to being enchanted by the way that BTS has used various books like *Demian*, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, and *Into the Magic Shop* to weave complex tales full of symbolism.” You also mention that you suspect that “BTS communicates with their fans on many levels, some of them quite non-rational,” and that “symbols are always more than rational, and they engage our attention in ways that we can’t explain.” Like BTS, many artists build their work around symbols. **Can symbols help ignite things in the collective unconscious? And do you think the usage of these symbols are a part of why BTS’s music speaks to audiences from different cultures and parts of the world?**

MS: Symbols speak to the soul directly and arouse strong emotions, as well as thoughts. I can listen to music in another language and not understand a single word of the work and still be deeply affected emotionally by the sounds and the images created by them in my mind. BTS is expert in the use of symbols in their performances. The audience is caught up in the imagery, by the movements of the BTS members, and by the sounds that fill the air around them. Understanding the lyrics comes later, after the initial impact of the music and performance

have subsided somewhat. Then the meaning of the lyrics begins to be grasped. This step toward discovery of meaning is equally important to the earlier effect that the music has on the psyche. When emotional experience is combined with meaning, the music takes on another dimension of significance. In that way it can lead to change in attitude and behavior.

R³: Some aspects of Jung's theories are, or can be perceived as, spiritual or religious. BTS has also used religious symbols in music videos such as "Blood Sweat & Tears" and "ON (Official MV)." **How do you see the usage of such religious references in BTS's works in relation to psychoanalytic theories?**

MS: Traditional religious and spiritual symbols gain impact from such a musical presentation. The music makes the symbols live in the soul and gives them added effect. Religious symbols point beyond themselves to the Unknown, the Divine, the Eternal and Infinite. In psychological terms, they take the ego out of itself and link it to the greater Self.

R³: Many ARMYs explore concepts of tarot, numerology, and astrology to explore BTS's lyrics and Bangtan Universe contents, and create their own meanings and personal interpretations. Do you have any thoughts about these tools? **What do you think about tarot cards? How are they linked to Jungian archetypes?**

MS: The tarot cards represent a symbol system. If you can read the cards as symbols and not as literal signs, they can help to understand the psychology of a situation. The symbols on the tarot cards are archetypal and pertain to general human situations. A good card reader can offer a picture of what is going on behind the scenes in the material world.

R³: Although the concepts of anima and animus were never explicitly mentioned in BTS's lyrics,

some of their visual works (such as the "Highlight Reels" short movies and the music video for "Boy With Luv" featuring Halsey) had female characters that some people interpret as the members' animas, as you suggested in your analysis of "Boy With Luv." There are also interpretations of the female figure representing ARMY (such as the girl in the music video for "Make It Right," or the woman handing Agust D the keys to defeat the mad king in the music video for "Daechwita"), because even though BTS's fans are of all genders, a significant part of ARMY consists of women. **Considering that the anima is an archetype of feminine psychological features, can the anima represent a collective entity or does it necessarily have to be represented by one sole figure (like universal anima archetypes such as Eve and the Virgin Mary)?**

MS: The anima can be suggested and evoked in many ways, not all of them anthropomorphic. Wherever Love is evoked — it can be through human figures, or animal forms, or abstract shapes and sounds — anima is present. Anima is the Eros principle, as Animus is the Logos principle. BTS concerts are anima experiences because they create a sense of a loving community. You don't need female figures on stage to evoke the anima. The BTS members do it among themselves and between themselves and the audience.

R³: In *Map of the Soul – Persona: Our Many Faces*, you note, "There's a lot of introspection and self-evaluation and looking behind their [BTS's] mask. They're making a confession on stage even while they're entertaining us. That's what makes it so interesting. They are presenting us with a very exciting persona, yet there is something else in the background that they're also singing about." **Do you believe that such openness about having a persona while also addressing other aspects of themselves (shadow, ego) plays a role in how an artist or any public figure connects with their audience?**

MS: This type of confessional openness draws the audience close and creates an intimate space between performer and listener. They are communicating on a personal level. The listeners can identify with the confessional performer because they know these feelings themselves. The confession creates a bond. The listeners can feel the grandiose performer, who is a celebrity, is a human being just like themselves. The listener gains in self esteem by this identification. It can pull a listener out of a depression or an inferiority complex. Music can heal a person in this way. They don't feel so alone, so different from others, so isolated.

R³: In the introduction of *Jung's Red Book for Our Times: Searching for Soul Under Postmodern Conditions - Volume 1*, you note that Jung's period "in Western cultural history is designated as 'modern,' while ours is 'postmodern.'" While postmodernity can be very pessimistic, it is also true that, since it implies an acknowledgement that the current models are insufficient to solve conflicts (either individual or sociopolitical conflicts), and that binary oppositions usually hide a lot of important questions and answers, it can be an interesting starting point. In "Strange," BTS members Suga (under the alias of Agust D) and RM sing that polarization is "the ugliest flower in the world." **In Jungian psychology, how important is it to break with assumptions such as the existence of polarization (e.g., "the good and the bad")? Would you say that acknowledging these assumptions and confronting them with the archetypes of persona, shadow, and ego is an important step for self-growth?**

MS: Social polarization is based on projection of the shadow. In order to overcome such polarization, the individual must reflect on the shadow within, not without, and must integrate it into the sense of identity. Then the projection will cease and the individual will be able to relate to the other as a whole person. This is an essential

step in the maturation of the personality. It means integration of the denied shadow aspects of the self and a further step to wholeness. This is advocated in a number of the BTS songs. They provide an impetus to help the collective gain in maturity and to diffuse the polarizations that inflict our world so dreadfully today.

R³: **Losing passion for something that you love, like BTS sings about in "Black Swan," can be dramatic. What do you think should be done to get back up?**

MS: My suggestion is to listen to your inner voice and follow your dreams. It would be great if you had someone to speak with about your feelings and dreams, not necessarily a therapist but a good and trusted friend would be fine, too. Having close relationships to another human being is very important for getting back the feeling of love and life.

R³: **When BTS's *Map of the Soul* series comes to an end, from your point of view, regardless of the direction taken by BTS in their musical choice, where should the journey continue for the fans who developed an interest in Jung's works and psychoanalysis? What else should be explored besides the theories and concepts presented in BTS's works?**

MS: The next and most important step is to experience what the concepts are all about. The concepts and theories are abstractions from psychological experience. Jung created his theories out of his own personal experience of the unconscious and from his experience with his patients. People who go through Jungian psychoanalysis do not come out with a lot of theories, but if the analysis is successful they come out with a deep experience of the psyche. The purpose of the theories is to orient a person as they undertake the journey into and through the depths of the soul. I suggest keeping a

dream journal for one thing, and reflecting on the meaning of dreams with someone who has experience in these matters. Also it is good to undertake writing a psychological autobiography and revising it every several years as one gains more insight into how one is living. Catching subtle feelings and intuitions by drawing them or painting them is another way to develop a deeper sense of self. Of course, if it is possible, going into analysis with a trained Jungian psychoanalyst would be a way to continue the journey. Experiencing the soul is the important thing. Reading books on theory can inform one, but they are no substitute for experience.

SYNCHRONICITY AND TIME

R³: In Jung's *Map of the Soul: An Introduction*, synchronicity is defined as "a meaningful coincidence between psychic and physical events." You go on to explain that "Jung introduces the far-reaching idea of including synchronicity – along with space, time, and causality – in a paradigm that can offer a complete account of reality as it is experienced by humans and measured by scientists. . . . This adds the element of meaning to the scientific paradigm, which otherwise proceeds without reference to human consciousness or to the value of meaning." We're not sure if you had the chance to look into BTS's discography other than the *Map of the Soul* series, but many of their songs address, either implicitly or explicitly, the themes of "destiny" and "synchronicity" (songs like "Serendipity," "DNA," "Heartbeat," etc). **Could you explain the roles of synchronicity and destiny in the journey of the map of the soul?**

MS: In a sense, synchronicity is the key to the journey of individuation. Synchronicity opens doors that one did not know existed, and sometimes it closes doors that are better not entered. At any rate, the meaningful coincidences in life define the path one will travel.

R³: In Jung's *Map of the Soul: An introduction*, you say synchronicity was the theory that unveiled Jung as the metaphysician that he denied being. Long before releasing the above-mentioned synchronicity-related songs, or before explicitly addressing Carl Jung's theories, BTS began to touch on metaphysical themes too, in songs such as "Butterfly." **From your experience as a psychoanalyst, is acknowledging a connection of the psyche with the outer world inevitable for anyone, or is it possible to analyse people solely based on their own psyche?**

MS: The psyche is permeable. I titled a book I published a few years ago *Outside, Inside and All Around*. Synchronicity breaks down the barriers between self and world. We are all examples of the history, the culture, the family we grow up in. There is nothing unique in us except our specific experience of the collective background. In analysis one is repeatedly confronted with the question: does this conflict belong to me alone or am I the expression of a conflict that exists in history and culture? You can never decide for certain if a dream is only about the individual or also about the surrounding world of interpersonal relationships and cultural events. Sometimes the inflection goes in the direction of the individual, sometimes it goes in the direction of the collective, of political conflicts in the world, of global health issues like the coronavirus pandemic and even of ancient archetypal forces that are emerging in consciousness. We do our best to gain some distance from all of these figures and forces so that we can discover what meaning they have for our own individual lives, but we are never fully separate from the surrounding world we live in socially, culturally, and historically. Individuation is a unique path through all this collective material inside and outside.

R³: Many ARMYs are familiar with the concept of "synchronicity" in regard to their experience with the music of BTS, even if they're not

consciously aware of the word or of what Jung theorized about it. “I found BTS when I needed them the most” or “BTS’s music saved me” are common statements ARMYs make when explaining how they became a fan, followed by stories of how a BTS song with comforting lyrics would be “coincidentally” recommended by a stranger or by the YouTube algorithm right when the person was going through a hard time, and the song would say everything they needed to hear. **Is there any difference in how we engage with synchronistic events once we begin to understand that they’re happening, compared to when we are completely unaware that we are in the midst of a synchronistic event?**

MS: The difference is that we become more sensitive to the synchronicities that are happening around us all the time. Once you get the hang of it, you can see synchronicities popping up in your life on a regular basis. It is not always easy or even possible to discover their deeper meaning, but for people who become sensitive to synchronicities they become a guide and a confirmation that they are on the right path.

R³: In your interview for *Speaking of Jung* in which you spoke about the lyrics of *Map of the Soul: 7*, you mentioned how the awareness of “time” became more evident in the songs of the album (such as “My Time” and “Zero O’Clock”) as they progressed from the track “Interlude: Shadow” until the album ends with “Outro: Ego.” Interestingly enough, the lack of linearity was a prominent feature in the narrative of BTS’s fictional universe in their previous music videos. **For Jungian therapy, how important is it to be aware of the passage of time and of its meaning?**

MS: The awareness of time comes about in the course of ego development. An infant has no sense of time. By the time one is 4 or 5 years old a continuous sense of time takes residence in consciousness. As you develop you become more

sensitive to time passing and to the need to keep track of time in order to function in your world. We live by the clock in modern societies, so it is important to stay aware of time. In analysis we spend time constructing a personal narrative of development — memories of childhood and youth are an important part of the narrative. The meaning of past events, such as early traumas, take on significant meaning for understanding present attitudes and functioning. The sense of time — past, present, future — provides orientation for the ego. Without it people feel lost, as happens sometimes in old age because of dementia. The hours of analysis are carefully observed and recorded, and this reinforces the feeling that time is important, and to use it with consciousness is crucial for making progress in analysis.

SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

R³: In the chapter about the ego in Jung’s *Map of the Soul: An introduction*, you say, “Typically a young person lives with an illusion of much greater self-control and free will than is psychologically true. All the limitations on freedom seem to be imposed from the outside, from society and external regulations. . . .” BTS’s earlier music comes to mind, when, in songs such as “No More Dream,” “N.O,” and “Dope,” they used to sing that society and adults impose their restrictions on the dreams of the youth. **From your perspective of their latest music, how would you see BTS’s development from their previous state of mind?**

MS: I see greater maturity in the new songs, greater recognition of psychological factors. Naively, people blame the restrictions and limitations they feel on society, parents, educational systems, etc. This is not necessarily completely misplaced blame. But it is far from the whole story. Those little psychic devils that we call complexes limit people much more than they realize and I believe more than outer social

factors do. The complexes impose self-limitation and make people run in circles, repeating the same trodden pathways of neurotic behavior over and over again. I see BTS gaining greater awareness of these inner psychological factors, taking more personal responsibility, and gaining greater freedom to move on into new areas of growth.

R³: In the introduction of *Jung's Red Book for Our Times: Searching for Soul Under Postmodern Conditions Volume 1*, you speak about the state of the world in 1913 (when Jung started writing *The Red Book*) and how today's world is similarly troubled, in spite of "great differences between his inherited cultural and social conditions and ours." The music of BTS also addresses many of these problems and how they affect the youth. **From your perspective, is there any particular difference between the current times and Jung's time that can give today's youth more hope for the future? What role does Jungian psychology play in today's world in leading to a more self-aware society, a psychological utopia? Does adaptation of these theories in popular music help in leading to such a society?**

MS: Jung did not have the benefit of his own psychological insights and theories when he was a youth. Today's youth are in a much better position to become conscious of their personal psychological dynamics and also of the critical issues we can identify in the social and political world around us. We have a language that can describe character types, we know about the importance of early development in the individual, and we have methods for developing our range of consciousness and personal freedom beyond what Jung had in his day. For this we can thank him and the others who have followed his leadership. I think youth today should be hopeful that they will be able to build a better world for themselves, provided we survive the one that was so poorly built by the previous generations.

A major change in the way people live is going to be necessary in the near future. We are already feeling the necessity for such changes in this time as we experience the coronavirus pandemic and the effects of global warming. It's going to take conscious leaders to change the course of human history.

RHIZOMES AND CARTOGRAPHY

R³: The name of our journal was inspired by the philosophical concept of the rhizome, which refers to a system that demonstrates an acentric and horizontal (non-hierarchical) structure. In *BTS, Art Revolution*, Professor Lee Jiyoung describes BTS's art as "rhizomatic" and BTS's and ARMY's relationship as a "rhizomatic revolution." Because of BTS's artistry and how they inspire a non-hierarchical way to experience their art, many fans often connect with several different topics, with the desire to understand and/or give new meanings to BTS's songs, and are introduced to new things, such as your work. **Do you believe this form of community building is important? And how do you see BTS as helping in it?**

MS: Such communities as you describe are only possible when the individuals in them take full responsibility for themselves. Hierarchical social systems are necessary when this is not the case because then people have to be directed from above, by a king or a master class. To the extent that BTS can facilitate the consciousness of all the individual members in their ARMY, they can assist in building non-hierarchical communities. They can inspire their fans to develop their consciousness and to become responsible for their choices and direction in life.

R³: In *BTS, Art Revolution*, Professor Lee Jiyoung states, "It is the role of a map to show the correlation between important points that are related to our way of life or actions and to show us what to avoid in our paths." She goes on to

quote Deleuze and Guattari: “The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions. . . . A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back to the same” in order to explain the multiple ways in which one can be introduced to BTS’s body of work. **Would you say that the same applies to the “map” of the soul? Can anything inspire a journey to self-knowledge, or is the starting point the same for everybody?**

MS: As I have observed in the course of my work as a Jungian psychoanalyst, the entry points are extremely numerous and diverse. Some people come into the practice of individuation through watching a movie or having a numinous dream, others through a teacher or a parent or a book or a chance encounter with a stranger. There are many starting points. Whatever it may be, the experience of finding the entry point will be clearly remembered. It is a major turning point in life and never to be forgotten.

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

R³: You’ve published four books on BTS’s *Map of the Soul* album series: *Map of the Soul : Persona: Our Many Faces*, *Map of the Soul - Shadow: Our Hidden Self*, *Map of the Soul - Ego: I Am*, and *Map of the Soul 7: Persona, Shadow & Ego in the World of BTS*. **How do you hope that these books will inspire new generations to learn more about psychoanalysis, either for academic or clinical purposes or for personal enlightenment? What do you think the younger generation who are growing up with the messages of the *Map of the Soul* series and Carl Jung’s theories will be able to do with this knowledge within their personal lives? How will these concepts help or influence them?**

MS: I see these books as entries into deeper study and exploration. My real hope is that they lead readers to go on in their reading and find ways

to experience for themselves what I am writing about in these books. The knowledge is practical in the sense that it can lead to real change in attitude and behavior if one takes it seriously. But these books are just a beginning, a springboard or launching pad for the journey to soul.

R³: *The Rhizomatic Revolution Review* [20130613] was founded in the belief that the artistry of BTS and their impact, as well as ARMY’s, have valuable contributions to the world, and must be acknowledged by the academic community. **What do you think of this academic interest in BTS, and of enterprises like our journal?**

MS: There will be an impact if the young people demand of their academic programs a significant inclusion of depth psychological courses and lectures. Universities and colleges respond to student demand. Journals like yours can show how such courses might be inaugurated and structured at an advanced academic level.

R³: Your perspectives have been requested a lot since BTS was found to be inspired by your work. **Is there any question you haven’t been asked so far that you think is important? And how would you answer it?**

MS: I have relied on questions coming my way, and I have not been disappointed. From my position it is hard to anticipate what the questions of young people today might be. There are so many important open issues to consider today, and the young are more aware of them than I. I try to respond as best I can based on my experience as a Jungian psychoanalyst and an individual who has taken the work of individuation seriously.

R³: To conclude, **how has BTS’s discography and their incorporation of Jungian theories impacted your life, either personally or professional, and what are you going to take from it?**

MS: BTS has certainly increased the visibility of my writings, especially among the young but not only among them. Their music reaches into spaces in the world that my writings would never touch otherwise and brings some of the ideas and terms into play in the daily conversations of people who would otherwise never have access to them. For this I am extremely grateful to BTS. And besides that, I have enjoyed immensely my contacts with representatives of BTS ARMY organizations. All of my interactions with them have been extremely considerate and positive. I hope we can continue to collaborate in the future.

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