

From Synchronicity to Individuation in Kavery Nambisan's *Mango Coloured Fish*

NindiyaJain.A^{1*}, Dr. Shanthichitra²

¹P.hD Research Scholar, Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, SRMIST, Kattankulathur, Chennai

² HoD, Associate Professor, Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, SRMIST, Kattankulathur, Chennai
hod.@srmist.edu.in

Abstract

Carl Gustav Jung invented the concepts "synchronicity" and "individuation." Individuation refers to the process of realizing one's self and becoming entire, whereas synchronicity refers to a chance connecting principle between two or more events. Every person has a desire for wholeness, yet the path to attaining fulfilment is a mystery. The communication between the unconscious and conscious regions of the human mind is crucial to psychic wholeness. In fact, Jung believes that synchronicity accounts for individuation, especially if an individual recognizes unconscious signals through synchronic experiences. This proposed work titled "Synchronicity to Individuation in Kavery Nambisan's *Mango Coloured Fish*" aims to find the synchronic events and how they subsequently resulted in the individuation of the protagonist Shari. Jungian archetypes can be used to decode synchronic events and their hidden meaning.

Keywords: Synchronicity, Individuation, Unconscious

Shari, the protagonist of Kavery Nambisan's novel, represents millennial Indian girls who, despite a psychological collapse, emerge as alpha females. Shari is determined that she wants to live on her own terms, specifically by escaping her mother Bimmy's sphere. Shari realizes the extent of her mother's grip over her life as she recalls her youth. Bimmy on the other hand chooses a life partner for Shari without considering her consent despite knowing her liking for Naren. This event affects her personally and owing to that she lands inner chaos. Shari even examines the need to please others by suppressing the inner voice. Shari says "For long time now, I have Lived by rules; it's easier. But inside my head, I live against them. It's double life" (Nambisan 12). These statements prove Shari's psychic incompleteness.

Shari's betrothment with Gautam and their casual hangouts bothers her significantly. She expects to be loved and respected by Gautam however he wants to mould her. Instead of questioning Gautam over his statements Shari researches the different means of getting moulded "Moulded. How? pilled, pushed, elongated, flattened, hammered, punched and gouged out until I was the right specimen, the perfect wife" (Nambisan 73). As a result, the word marriage invokes unsafety although she pretends to be happy like any other girl who is about to get married regardless of it Shari unconsciously expresses her frustration towards the institution of marriage,

A legal document on paper, saying who you are married to and when. From then on, in all forms you fill, you write your name and beside that entire "Wife of _____" while previously you entered, "daughter of _____". A woman is always the wife or the daughter of someone (Nambisan 122).

These words express her inner conflict as well as the helplessness she feels around her. She wishes she could shout and tell her family about her confusion and conflicts, but she lacks

the courage. She realises "A fleeting self-discovery" while fighting with her inner issues. I wasn't wiser, but different" (Nambisan 126). Now in the discovery of self, she is however unaware of the road to be taken for her journey. This is where unconscious parts of the psyche help as Jung says "When a man is in the wilderness, the darkness brings the dream And you can be sure the dream is your nearest friend" (Jung 321). The casual connecting principle between Shari's inner conflict and the series of events comes to light via a dream. Even the collective unconscious comes into action as Shari expresses, "Last night I dreamt I was dead and Gautam was cremating me, laying the wood on me very gently and saying, 'Don't Worry now, it won't hurt,' and there Naren walking away from the whole scene" (Nambisan 137). This dream is an alarming sign and Shari has to do something to come out of it additionally it also brings a casual connecting principle behind Shari's inner conflict to her consciousness.

According to Jung death archetype seeks "to generate behaviours. Like what? Reflection, introspection, a turning within, tending to our soul, appreciating things psychic, like dreams and institution, and a deepening of our love of mystery" (Jung, Jungian centre). This is what exactly happens when Shari decides to decode the messages of the Unconscious. In Shari's case dream of dying is the result of the collective unconscious and the part played by Gautam and Naren in it stems out from the personal unconscious. The dream possibly conveys that if Shari gets married to Gautam, then certainly, she will get adjusted to the post-marital lifestyle because she will not have any other choice. The pain which Gautam mentions might refer to Shari's identity and self which will not cause any stir because her Ego death will take place. Shari realises this message therefore analysis the previous meeting with Gautam and notices how much she has to change to make him happy by suppressing her Self. This is Jung's synchronicity and the connecting principle behind all the events is Shari's muted inner voice. For Jung synchronicity can be seen only if an individual has eyes to see it rather than overlooking it as mere coincidence. Dreams, symbols, numbers, random events, conversations, and spontaneous encounters are the signs of synchronicity and on the other hand, it puts an individual on a transition phase in their journey towards psychic wholeness. Synchronic events are interconnected through their meanings and conventional similarities.

These meaningful events are important to the individual who experiences them. Shari's dream encourages her to sort out her confusion and doubts. She decides to go away from her family as she needs change. As mentioned in the *Red Book*

As any change must begin somewhere, it is a single individual who will experience it and carry it through. The change must indeed begin with an individual; it might be any one of us. Nobody can afford to look around and to wait for somebody else to do what he is loath to do himself (Jung 165).

After spending time in isolation Shari encapsulates that "MY LIFE IS like two halves of fruits slit neatly open. I can see both halves, and taste them" (Nambisan 235). Shari's appetite for freedom increases therefore she decides to become a complete individual. After this point, Shari decides to call for quits with Gautam. The Unconscious part of her psychic plays a vital role in her decision because as mentioned in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* the task of the unconscious is to balance the one-sidedness of the conscious as it results in inimical dreams. The unconscious functions for the acknowledgment of the real inner opposition of an individual. Conscious orientation is supplemented by the unconscious (Jung 419). Thus, Shari resolves her inner chaos and nears her wholeness. This also proves that synchronicity puts an individual in a transition mode leading to wholeness and self-efficacy. New Shari believes in her potential as confidence becomes her best accessory. The self-discovery changes her perception of life and the universe. She recorrects that how she was wrong with her perception of the world because she was seeing it through the lens of others but when she starts seeing on her own the world seems to be a better place for her.

Shari's regular travels to the ashram and beneficial chats with Suren Swami allow her to enter a new realm of existence. She has a tremendous yearning to break out from the cage in which her mother and Gautam have imprisoned her. She considers the responsibility to follow the rules set forth by others. She conforms to others' expectations to the extent where she loses sight of her own objectives and aims. The moment she understands the hidden motifs behind such a rule is to make her weak and dependent. She consciously decides to listen to her inner voice and follow the messages of the unconscious as she says "I started hearing my own thoughts a long time ago, now I'm ready to listen and obey" (Nambisan 240). She matures into an individual who is ready to take up the authority of her life. She promises to never indulge in any act of pleasing others at the cost of her happiness. This newness allows her to break the stereotype associated with girls in Indian society.

Shari individuates successfully as she says "When my moment of reckoning comes, I shall know what to do" (Nambisan 256). On this note, the narrative closes, reflecting Shari's newly constructed identity, which varies from the one she had before to individuation. As she wins conflicts against her divided self, Nambisan's Shari emerges as Alpha Female. Nambisan brilliantly builds Shari's character, starting with a bitter upbringing, a confused adolescent, and eventually evolving to an entirely different person. To sum up, Jung's synchronicity paved way for Shari's individuation.

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