

Institute of Art Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire Faculty of Film, Art and
Creative Technologies

**The importance of the alter ego in the work of Cindy Sherman and Grayson
Perry**

“by”

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Declaration of Originality

This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire in partial fulfilment of the examination for the BA (Hons) in Art. it is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institution.

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Date: 16-02-2022

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Introduction

An alter ego is the second version of oneself that can be seen or shown in a variety of different ways. Many artists use a mask in their work, such as Cindy Sherman, whose work is created from her wearing many different masks. An example of her work would be '*Untitled A*' (fig 1). (1975) In this piece, Sherman has a prosthetic nose and extremely harsh makeup to distort her look, almost creating a mask on her face. This thesis will investigate why there is a need to use a mask within the art industry and why artists chose to alter or distort their own image to create this mask. I will be looking at the psychology behind the idea of the alter ego. The background of the two case studies of Cindy Sherman and Grayson Perry will be examined and investigated to show why their alter egos were developed. The childhood and career of these case studies will be analyzed to support the statement as it will highlight what leads to the development of their alter egos or in Cindy Sherman's case multiple and diverse alter egos.



Fig 1, Cindy Sherman, *Untitled A*, 1975, image: 414 × 283 mm, Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, The National Portrait Gallery, London

When researching for this thesis there was a large amount of information for both of my chosen case studies and for the psychology of the alter ego. Given the volume of information available for both artist's central to this thesis, it was decided to narrow the scope of this investigation to the following issues: childhood and the early career of Cindy Sherman and Grayson Perry, as both use aspects of the childhood in their careers. For the psychology side of my thesis, I decided to focus on Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung theories as they specifically focus on the ego and the alter ego and how it is developed in childhood.

The dissertation will be organised in three chapters. Chapter One will look at Sigmund Freud's and Carl Jung's theories, I want to gain an understanding of the idea of the ego and the Id and how this leads to the development of personality of a child, and how this leads to the type of adult they become. I believe I will understand the science behind why the artists decided to hide behind a mask instead of showing their identities within their work. Furthermore, in the following two chapters, the artists will be discussed.

In the second chapter, I will be investigate Cindy Sherman as an artist and referring to her childhood, and how it led to her developing her way of working. I believe looking at her childhood and analysing it from a psychology point of view will give some insight as to why she creates characters for her portraits. I will also be highlighting the development of her many alter egos and her thought process behind some of her characters and series.

In the third chapter, I will examine the life of Grayson Perry and I will be examining similarities and differences to the artist of Cindy Sherman. The chapter will focus primarily on what led to the development of his alter ego, Claire. I want to discover why there was a need to create Claire in the first place and why she is so important to become his solo alter ego.

In the conclusion, I will put all the information I have gathered and summarize why bot Cindy Sherman and Grayson Perry chose to create and use an alter ego within their work.

Due to the Pandemic, I was limited to the use of the web as my access to the library was limited.

CHAPTER ONE:

Alter ego in Latin translates to “second I” in English. It is another part of the self that is believed to be a person’s original personality. The first mention of the alter ego was by Cicero as a Philosophical construct in 1st Century BC Rome, “a friend is a second self.”¹ The term Alter Ego was recorded in English for the first time in 1537; it was mentioned in a letter by Richard Layton to Tomas Cromwell. “Ye muste have suche as ye may trust evyn as well as your owne self, wiche muste be unto yowe as alter ego.”²

In the 1880s, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian neurologist explored the conscious and the unconscious mind. Freud’s works offer the theory of the ego and the id and the science behind it, “The system Pcpt begins by being Pcs, the Ego, and by following this entity extends and which behaves as though it were Ucs, the name of the Id(Es)”³ (fig 2) Here, Freud explains how each person develops their ego, the Id, the Super-Ego and the Ego Ideal in childhood. The diagram shows that the ego develops beside the Id; it grows to mediate between the unrealistic id and the external world in order to make decisions as it is the decision-making part of the personality. ‘Pcpt’ and ‘Pcs’ is what Freud called Perception-consciousness which is “a part of the human mind that is aware of a person's self, environment and mental activity.”⁴ He refers to the unconscious as ‘Ucs.’

It is easy to see that the ego is the part of the id, which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world acting through the Pcpt-Cs: in a sense, it is an extension of the surface-differentiation. Moreover, the ego has the task of bringing the influence of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies.⁵

¹ **Marcus Tullius Cicero** <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/270606-a-friend-is-a-second-self>

² <https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/alter-ego.html>

³ Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and The ID*. New York, Dover Publication, INC, 2019, p. 14

⁴ <https://dictionary.reverso.net/english-definition/conscious+perception>

⁵ Freud p. 15

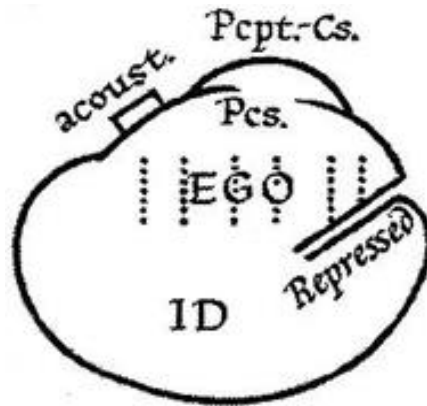


Fig 2: *Diagram showing how the ego and Id works* Freud, Sigmund, *The Ego and The ID*. New York, Dover Publication, INC, 2019

Sigmund Freud employs the Oedipus complex theory as an explanation to back up his theory. “Oedipus complex, in psychoanalytic theory, a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a concomitant sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex; a crucial stage in the normal developmental process.”⁶ Oedipal complex occurs during the Phallic stage of development which is the third stage of psychosexual development which is usually between the ages of three to six years old. During this stage, the infant’s libido centers at their genitalia as the erogenous zone. Freud explains how the Oedipus complex aids the development of the ego and id. He states that the rivalry between a father and son will lead to the development of the young boy’s masculinity in his personality, and then the child resolves this issue by copying and joining in the masculine behaviour his father possesses. “the first and most important identification of all, the identification with the father, which takes place in the pre-history of every person.”⁷ However, this process is different for a young female at the same age.

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/science/Oedipus-complex>

⁷ Freud p. 22

In this way the passing of the Oedipus complex would consolidate the masculinity in the boy's character. In a precisely analogous way, the outcome of the Oedipus attitude in the little girl may be an intensification of the identification with her mother (or such an identification may thus be set up for the first time) - a result which will stamp the child character in the feminine mould.⁸

The young girl will wish to be a boy but resolves this by repressing this feeling to remove tension, and she wishes for a baby, which then helps her identify with her mother and takes on the female gender role as she identifies herself with her mother, which will help her express the feminine side of her character.

Freud's theory on ego is central to this thesis, which focuses on the alter egos created by artists for their work. "The Ego represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast, the id which contains the passions"⁹. Freud describes the ego as a mediator between the Id and the natural world. The ego decides on appropriate behaviour for the person by considering the social reality and norms. "If the ego were merely the part of the id that is modified by the influence of the perceptual system, the representative in the mind of the external world, we should have a simple state of things to deal with."¹⁰ Freud is stating that the ego is what helps us fit into society and helps control the Id, the ego is influenced by society it is show how to act and behave by surrounding people, as the Id what holds our passions, one needs to have an ego to control the Id. Alongside the ego, there is the superego, which has two systems that create it, which are the ego-ideal and the conscience. This part of the personality controls the id impulses. The impulses or behaviours of the child are heavily influenced by the parents and other authority figures' approval of these behaviours. This influence helps create the conscience due to the moral influence of an authority figure such as a parent.

Conflicts between the different identifications into which the ego is split up, conflicts which cannot, after all, be described as purely pathological. But whatever the character's capacity for resisting the influences of abandoned object-cathexes may turn out to be in

⁸ Freud, p. 24

⁹ Freud, p.15

¹⁰ Freud, p.19

after years, the effects of the first identifications in earliest childhood will be profound and lasting. This leads us back to the origin of the ego-ideal; for behind the latter there lies hidden the important identification of all, the identification with the father, which takes place in the prehistory of every person.¹¹

Freud states that the ego is conflicted between the influences of society and the inner desires of the person, the person is trying to ‘abandon object-cathexes’, which is the person resisting their wishes and goals as they are beginning to identify with their parental figure, which is the beginning of the development of the ‘ego-ideal’.

Sigmund Freud says that each person has many influences, as ‘the ego’ is split up as they have their inner desires and what is acceptable in society, almost fighting each other which is what Carl Jung's theory states, and one learns society norms from parental figures. Understanding the theory that Sigmund Freud discovered helps discover why these artists chose to create a new identity for their art. Freud's theory states that the ego is developed in childhood.

Freud thought that all babies are initially dominated by unconscious, instinctual and selfish urges for immediate gratification, which he labelled the Id. As babies attempt and fail to get all their whims met, they develop a more realistic appreciation of what is realistic and possible, which Freud called the “Ego”¹²

With this, it is beneficial to understand the artists Cindy Sherman and Grayson Perry more as it suggests that the development of their alter egos came from aspects of their childhoods. “At 10, he (Perry) had not heard of transvestism and felt he must be a solitary freak. He asked his sister if he could borrow a dress and wore it in private.”¹³ This experience that Grayson Perry had during his childhood suggests that he developed an alter ego to hide behind who he is and to experiment freely without consequence. In contrast to Perry, who would prefer to mask himself with these experiments, there is Lucien Freud, who does not hide behind anything and experiments with

¹¹ Freud, p. 22

¹² https://www.gulfbend.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=7926&cn=

¹³ Simone, Hattenstone, Grayson Perry “Just because you don’t have a dress on doesn’t stop you from being a tranny.”, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/04/grayson-perry-dress-tranny-art-who-are-you-tv>

himself such as his naked self-portrait, “*Painter Working Reflection*” (fig 3). In this piece, he shows himself in an unflattering way, and he confronts the viewer with himself rather than hiding behind an alter ego.



Fig 3: Lucian Freud, *Painter Working, Reflection*, 1993, oil, canvas 14.8 x 10.5cm, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Carl Jung created a theory which states that some aspects of our ego-personality that people choose to repress, and reject are due to our morality, or that one may not particularly enjoy those parts of our personalities. For example, the law is there to help guide the morality of people and people might desire to break the law but choose to repress this desire as it is unmoral. “Our experience of the shadow is therefore firstly a physical one - as sensations, disease, hunger, thirst, sexuality, and an awareness of bodily functions.”¹⁴ Jung is stating that the ‘shadow’ begins with the desire to sort out an uncomfortable feeling in the body such as hunger and it grows into other desires. Jung’s theory also strengthens Sigmund Freud’s theory that the ego is created and

¹⁴ Jasbinder, Garnermann, The Origin of The Shadow, Ireland, Jung Centre, 2017, <https://www.jungcentre.com/the-origin-of-the-shadow>

developed in our childhood. This will also help discover why Cindy Sherman and Grayson Perry decided to wear masks within their artwork. “It has its origins in our physical formation, in our childhood development, and in our attempts to become civilized human beings.”¹⁵ The theory states that we evolve our personality in order to fit in with what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in society.

Even though Jung strengthens the theory that the ego or the shadow develops during childhood, there are many conflicts between his theory and Sigmund Freud’s theory on the ego or shadow. There are three main views that differ between the two theories: the nature and purpose of the libido, the nature of the unconscious and the cause of the behaviour. Jung believed that the purpose of the libido was a generalized source of psychic energy that motivates different behaviours. This contradicts Freud theory as Jung believed that the purpose of the libido was explicitly for sexual gratification. “it (the shadow) has its origins in our physical formation, in our childhood development, and in our adult attempts to become civilized human beings.”¹⁶ Regarding the purpose of the unconscious, Jung believed that it stored repressed memories that were specific to the individual, whereas Freud believed that it was repressed desires that were not acceptable to society.

Filling the conscious mind with ideal conceptions is a characteristic of Western theosophy, but not the confrontation with the shadow self and the world of darkness. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.¹⁷

Jung believes that the conscience mind is a characteristic of Western theosophy which is religion based and this is what teaches people different morals which conflicts with their ‘shadow’ and the only way to solve this conflict is by confronting their ‘darkness’ and making it known so they can work on it and make it go away.

¹⁵ Garnermann

¹⁶ Garnermann

¹⁷ Garnermann

The shadow self-acts out like a disobedient child until all aspects of the personality are acknowledged and integrated. Whereas many spiritual philosophies often denounce the shadow as something to be overcome and transcended, Jung insists that the true aim is not to defeat the shadow self, but to incorporate it with the rest of the personality. It is only through this merging that true wholeness can be attained, and when it is, that is enlightenment.¹⁸

Jung describes the ‘shadow’ as a ‘disobedient child’ as if it needs to be acknowledged to why it is behaving this way and it needs to be taught a different way. The Swiss psychologist believe that the ‘shadow’ is not something to over-power and defeat, but it is something that needs to be a part of the personality in a tamed manner. Jung’s theory expresses that the cause of the behaviour is related to past experiences and future aspirations where Freud’s theory says that the behaviours are related to past experiences but particularly within childhood.

This theory is also demonstrated in Grayson Perry’s book as it expresses how he used to hide his cross-dressing side as he would feel too embarrassed in public-facing the judgment of society. It helps create and develop and understand the alter ego and how the artist, Cindy Sherman, evolved from dressing up in costumes as a child to doing it for their entire career. The theory gives a reason for why many artists use an alter ego to hide behind, such as the artist Salvador Dali, (1904-1982) who created an alter ego behind his moustache and his persona. Dali was a Spanish Surrealist painter, one of his most famous works was “*The Persistence of Memory*.” (Fig 4). “His fellow students at the Madrid art academy later described Dali as ‘morbidly shy’”¹⁹ Dali uses the moustache as a way of protecting himself as he was a timid man. “Halsman asks Dalí why he wears a moustache. “In order to pass unobserved,” he replies. “[they are] like two erect sentries, defending the entrance to my real self.”²⁰ However, in contrast to these artists who choose to hide their true selves, there are many artists who choose to confront the audience with their true self and body, such as the artist Jenny Saville. Jenny Saville is a British Contemporary painter, she is

¹⁸ Garnermann

¹⁹ <https://talentdevelop.com/2911/robert-pattinson-salvador-dali-introversion-shyness-and-sensitive-people/#:~:text=His%20fellow%20students%20at%20the,one%20tragic%20sequence%20of%20exhibitionism.%E2%80%9D>

²⁰ <https://thevoiceoffashion.com/intersections/famous-wardrobes-then-and-now/salvador-dals-disguise-1879/>

known for her large-scale paintings of women in the nude, including herself. (Fig 5) Saville does not hide behind anything and she shows herself in unflattering angles and pulls her skin to make herself more unflattering. By looking at the two theories created and developed by both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, it helps create a better picture and a better understanding as to why certain artists such as Grayson Perry, Cindy Sherman, and Salvador Dali, feel the need to use a mask to hide behind. The mask also helps them stand out from other artists such as Jenny Saville, who choose to not hide behind anything.

For the next chapter I will be looking into the life and career of the artist, Cindy Sherman. Her early childhood will be examined to understand why she chose to use a mask rather than using her own appearance in her artwork.



Fig 4: Salvador Dali, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931, Oil on canvas, 24cm x 33cm, Museum of /modern Art



Fig 5: Jenny Saville, *Propped*, 1992, Oil on Canvas, 213.4 x 182.9 cm, Saville's Degree Show in Edinburgh

CHAPTER TWO:

Cindy Sherman

Cindy Sherman is an artist who experiments with the idea of identity. She is an artist who alters her image to create many different alter egos for her work “She is a chameleon, changing her appearance from photograph to photograph, so that she is many people but never Cindy.”²¹ An example of her becoming a chameleon would be her clown series (Fig 6) where she uses herself as a model but creates different clowns using a variety of costumes, she has created a plethora of different series using this technique.

She uses herself as both director and model. She does all her own makeup, costumes, and lighting. She suggests or implies a story. She works in series, groups of photographs related by theme. She presents stereotypes - common ways society labels women - for example, by their age, attractiveness, clothing, or social status.²²



Fig 6: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled- 410*, 2003 145x105 cm, The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

²¹Greenburg and Jordan, *Meet Cindy Sherman, Artist, Photographer, Chameleon*, New York, Roaring Brook Press, 2017 p. 25

²²Greenburg and Jordan p. 25

Cindy Sherman was the youngest of five children, the sibling closest to her age was nine years older than her which is a massive age gap for siblings due to lack of common interest which would isolate Sherman and make her feel like an only child.

Nobody in the family thought her dressing up was strange. In fact, nobody commented on it. They were simply glad she had found something to occupy herself. Was dressing up a means of escape? "It was partly that, but, to be really psychological about it, it was also partly, 'If you don't like me this way, how about you like me this way?' " Her voice rises with mock joie de vivre. "Or maybe you like this version of me." She felt disliked? "It wasn't that they didn't like me, but I came along so late and they already had a family. Four kids and a family, and I was like this total latecomer."²³

Sherman felt like an outcast and so she found ways to entertain herself such as cycling and directing make believe games, however most of her time was spent in front of the television, keeping herself busy creating costumes for her doll. "I was always the kid watching TV and doing something else"²⁴

The artist enjoyed dressing up as a child and becoming this new person which, she carried on throughout her practice

Growing up in the '50s and early '60s women did wear a lot of makeup and yet, you know, as the '60s and the '70s progressed it was all about being natural and so I kind of missed the stuff and the before and after, I guess, of what it does to you and the transformation. So, I would play in my room out of curiosity to see what makeup could do, you know, become a character.²⁵

Sherman's father's hobby was collecting cameras and using them to take photographs of his family, perhaps this is what sparked this love of dressing up as she would dress up for her father's photographs. (Fig 7) In this photo, she found her great grandmother's clothes in a wardrobe in the basement and used them to turn herself and her friend, Janet, into old women. The two of them played the part by slumping their shoulders and wearing glasses, they sucked their lips over their teeth to appear toothless. From a young age, she was developing characters and taking on their personas and characteristics. Many people who saw Cindy Sherman grow up believed that she would grow out of the dressing up phase; they saw it as something only children do, however, Sherman never grew out of this phase and made it her practice.

²³ Simon Hattenstone, *Cindy Sherman: Me, Myself and I*, *The Guardian*, January 2011

²⁴ Greenburg and Jordan p. 13

²⁵<https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s5/cindy-sherman-in-transformation-segment/>



Fig 7: Photograph of Cindy Sherman and her friend Janet Zink

Art always came easy to Cindy Sherman, however growing up she did not know that there were many different types of artists as her parents never took her to museums or galleries. “My idea of being an artist as a kid was a courtroom artist or one of those boardwalk artists who do caricatures”²⁶ When she was accepted into college and chose to major in art she did not know what artists really did and she studied in Buffalo from 1972-76. However, she studied painting which she quickly became frustrated with due to its limitations. The 70s artists had the aftermath of Minimalism and the feeling of “there was nothing more left to say [through painting]”²⁷ After experimenting with painting she turned to photography, but this proved to be a problem for her as her art teacher focused on the technical aspects of photography and the picture-making process. Sherman did not have much interest in it, however, her next year had more experimentation. When she switched from painting to photography she felt she had more to say with the camera and almost freed her, however her advisor accused her of not taking it seriously when she switched. The next year however, she had a new teacher, Barbara Jo Revelle , she

²⁶ Greenburg and Jordan p. 13

²⁷ <https://www.theartstory.org/artist/sherman-cindy/>

cared more about the photographer's ideas rather than the technique of photography. "Sherman calls Revelle as 'my influential college professor in photography.'" ²⁸ This led to Sherman experimenting with the idea of women and she was liberated, "did not wear makeup, you did not dye your hair, you didn't wear a bra - we were all natural." ²⁹ This experimentation is seen in one of her pieces she worked on in the 70s (Fig 8). This piece allowed Sherman to slowly start creating characters as in the beginning of the line of photographs she is a natural looking woman however as you got through each picture this natural looking woman slowly becomes more glamorous and the final photograph, she is unrecognisable.



Fig 8: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled 479*, 1975, 52.1 x 85.3cm, Twenty-three hand-coloured gelatin silver prints, Collection Dorothy and Peter Waldt

When Cindy Sherman creates work she almost wants to prove the camera wrong she dresses up in disguises, she is always interested in experimenting with many different identities.

²⁸ <https://danielblochwitz.blogspot.com/2012/02/barbara-jo-revelle.html>

²⁹ Greenburg and Jordan p. 15

“She took photos of herself that were anything but self-portraits; photos that stuck two fingers at the then received wisdom that the camera never lies - her camera always lies.”³⁰ She makes the efforts to completely change her appearance and take on a personas characteristics for her photographs.

Cindy Sherman has shown herself to be the ultimate master of self-morphing, utilizing everything from old-fashioned makeup and prosthetics to digital technology, inventing and portraying extraordinary alter egos and multiple identities that brilliantly reflect our image-saturated culture—and in the process inventing her own genre.³¹

Sherman's process is slow as she very slowly creates the character from an object that sparks an idea and it grows. The character is developed when she begins by experimenting with her camera and a few pieces of tape. She then proceeded to get a wig and she incorporated a costume. Her next step was her examining and documenting her pictures and realising something was missing and going back to retake them. “ I was trying to make her seem Dowdy but very like she’s firm, and, you know, she’s... the rock, center of her family, or thinks she is.”³² Seeing the process of Cindy Sherman creating this work (fig 4), we get a glimpse inside her head as it shows her talking out loud about each detail of her work and artist life that is significant to her. When working on the series, ‘*Society Pictures*’ (2008), it was very reminiscent of her as when she was growing up she dressed in her grandmother's clothing and tried to make herself look older. However, in 2008, she had a completely different view on aging from when she was a little girl and became high-class society wives of the rich and famous. “It’s a little scary when I see myself. It’s especially scary when I see myself in these older women.” Sherman saw herself in most of her work even though she would do many different techniques to disguise herself for example the use of prosthetics or photoshop. This helps prove Jung's theory of the shadow as he stated that the shadow is a part of the person that they suppress, due to social norms that they were taught, and Cindy Sherman is hiding herself behind many different characters, but she still sees herself in each one as they are a part of her.

³⁰ Simon Hattenstone, Cindy Sherman: Me, Myself and I, The Guardian, January 2011

³¹ <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/the-cindy-sherman-effect-505/>

³² <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s5/cindy-sherman-in-transformation-segment/>



Fig 9, *Untitled 468*, Cindy Sherman, 2008, 178.44 x 137.16cm, The National Portrait Gallery, London

For most of Cindy Sherman's career, she addresses the ideas of female stereotyping and images shown in a historical context. When the attack on the World Trade Centre happened on September 11, 2001, Sherman was struggling. “ I couldn’t figure out what I wanted to say, I still wanted to work to be the same kind of mixture - intense, with a nasty side or an ugly side, but also with a pathos about the characters - and [clowns] have an underlying sense of sadness while they’re trying to cheer people up.”³³ She wanted to create something that would almost cheer people up a small bit while keeping her typical style. She developed the clown series and in it each clown plays a strong character, and they are all very different. One of the clowns (fig 10) is shown wearing a teal printed oversized jacket and a light pink afro wig. The makeup she has on her face is a dark orange and she has painted a massive smile on the clown which creates an

³³ Greenburg and Jordan p. 44

almost creepy look when pair with the expression of disinterest she has created for this particular clown as her eyes are squinted. For this series it was important to Sherman to completely disguise herself; she did not want anyone to see them as her with makeup on, she wanted them to be viewed as their characters. “So it wouldn’t seem like they were just me with clown makeup on.”³⁴ She threw away any photographs that had any resemblance to her, so the series really does stand out as she does not look like herself.



Fig 10, Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #414*, 2003, 147.4 x 96.8cm, Image courtesy: The artist and Metro Pictures, New York

³⁴ Greenburg and Jordan p. 44

During her stay in Rome, Cindy Sherman created her *History portraits* she would take inspiration from artists such as Raphael, Caravaggio and Ingres. “Sherman turns her impious attention to the history of art and diverse artists such as Raphael, Caravaggio and Ingres.”³⁵ She would use her usual costumes, prosthetics and makeup to almost recreate the paintings however they are not typical recreations. “Sherman’s portraits are in no means faithful mirrors of the original works of art, but instead bring into question the distortion that such historical works undergo through functions of time and memory”³⁶ In Sherman’s portrait *Untitled # 183-A* (fig 11) she wears a low-cut dress accompanied by a prosthetic bust this is reminiscent of the dress worn in François Boucher’s portrait *Madame de Pompadour*, 1759 (fig 12). Sherman has a different pose to the woman in Boucher’s painting however she has kept the same characteristics that stand out in the painting such as they both have a book in their right hand, they both wear a lace dress and have their hair styled the same. Sherman has a playful aspect to her portrait even though her face is quite serious.

The strength of the narrative attracts the viewer, who then must reconcile the work’s internal inconsistencies. Regarding the camera in a calm yet frosty manner, Sherman dares the viewer to challenge her studio fiction. However, this challenge does not end at the borders of this work, but instead reaches back to infect the Boucher portrait with conspicuous exaggerations.

Sherman wants to show a comedic quality to not only her work but Boucher’s as well as she has made connections between the two portraits. She puts focus on the femininity while making it amusing with the prosthetic bust which looks intentionally unnatural.

³⁵ <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/the-multiple-worlds-of-cindy-shermans-history-portraits-2/>

³⁶ <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/the-multiple-worlds-of-cindy-shermans-history-portraits-2/>



Fig 11, Cindy Sherman, *Untitled 183*, 1988, 96.5x 57 cm, National Gallery of Victoria Felton Bequest



Fig 12, François Boucher's portrait *Madame de Pompadour*, 1759, oil on canvas, 91 x 68 cm, Wallace Collection, London

Cindy Sherman is one of the few artists who does not have a consistent alter ego, she has many that she uses as a mask, unlike Grayson Perry whose alter ego is Claire, she is always creating a new image or a new character by using herself but not using her image as she is always altering it. It started when she was younger when she was trying to find out where she fit in with her family and she has turned it into a lifelong career. Jung explained that peoples alter egos, or as Jung calls it 'The Shadow', come from the childhood and adolescence years which supports Freud's theory about the Ego. "Through childhood and adolescence, we pick up from our parents/carers both conscious and unconscious messages about what is acceptable in terms of our body, our feelings and our behaviour. All that is unacceptable is suppressed and repressed and becomes part of the shadow."³⁷ From looking at this theory it has shown that artists like Cindy Sherman and Grayson Perry who disguise their images behind an alter ego have broken out of the social norms and embraced the shadow which many people would not do.

³⁷<https://www.thesap.org.uk/resources/articles-on-jungian-psychology-2/about-analysis-and-therapy/the-shadow/>

CHAPTER THREE

Grayson Perry is a printmaker, actor and a visual artist who, in one of his more prominent pieces, creates an alter ego in which he cross-dresses up as a woman and names her Claire.(Fig 13) “he was the first potter to win the Turner prize but also because of his tendency to appear in public as a cross-dresser, frequently as his alter ego, Claire, and often accompanied by his wife and daughter.”³⁸ Claire as an alter ego helps Perry to express his cross-dressing side and his love of fashion as he achieves the look by designing the outfits himself. He can also explore his transvestite side through this alter ego which began to develop from the age of thirteen. “You don’t decide to be a transvestite when you’re a sophisticated adult - you’re a child. Our sexuality is formed in the Petri dish of our childhood.”³⁹ There is a similar statement during in the first chapter on the psychology of the ego as Freud says that the ego is developed in early childhood.

Freud thought that all babies are initially dominated by unconscious, instinctual and selfish urges for immediate gratification which he labeled the Id. As babies attempt and fail to get all their whims met, they develop a more realistic appreciation of what is realistic and possible, which Freud called the "Ego".⁴⁰

Psychology suggests that this development began in his late childhood and early teen years. This is expressed when he describes how he would sneak out and go to a hiding spot where he would change into a girl. “I pulled off my boy’s clothes, stuffed them under a hedge then set off for a walk as a girl.”⁴¹ Perry was initially embarrassed to be seen as a girl in his fledgling years as a cross-dresser. However, this led to the creation of his alter ego Claire.

³⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Grayson-Perry>

³⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/04/grayson-perry-dress-tranny-art-who-are-you-tv>

⁴⁰ https://www.gulfbend.org/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=7926&cn=

⁴¹ Wendy Jones, *Grayson Perry Portrait of the Artist as a Young Girl*, London, Vintage Books, 2007, p 55



Fig 13: Grayson Perry Picture in The Guardian Outfit designed by Central St Martins student Carmen Chan. Photograph: Tim Walker/Guardian

Perry's home life had an effect on his development and made him see life differently to how many people would typically view it. His mother had an affair with the milkman, which led to his father leaving them when he was four years old, having found out his mother fell pregnant with the milkman's baby, which forced a new family on both Perry and his sister very rapidly causing resentment and estrangement with his mother. "Early childhood in Essex is a rural Eden that ends abruptly with the arrival of his stepfather, leading to constant swerving between his parents' house, and between boys' and women's clothes"⁴² All this change led to a lot of confusion for Perry.

Perry revealed how he discovered his fetish of dressing up as a woman and how embarrassed he would become to be seen dressed as Claire in public. "Humiliation is one of the

⁴² Jones, Book summary

most powerful turn-ons for me.”⁴³ This embarrassment made the experience of dressing up as a woman more exciting for him. When Perry was around the age of seven, he read his first sexual fetish story which sparked something in him, it was about a man that dressed up as a woman who went to visit a prostitute and the prostitute tied a crucifix to him while he had a noose tied around his neck so he could experience hanging. Unfortunately, the man in this story died but it inspired Perry to start experimenting with his sexuality. It began with him borrowing his sister's dress and dressing up every Saturday. “At 10, he had not heard of transvestism and felt he must be a solitary freak. He asked his sister if he could borrow a dress and wore it in private”⁴⁴ His realisation that this was a sexual fetish happened to him all of a sudden when he had his first orgasm. “I strapped myself to the bedpost wearing a dress, becoming so excited I spontaneously ejaculated”⁴⁵ After this experience he experimented more with cross-dressing. He would start to dress up as a girl in public, he loved the thrill of almost getting caught. “I pulled off my boy’s clothes, stuffed them under a hedge then set off for a walk as a girl. It was the first time I had dressed up and gone out of the doors.”⁴⁶ This evidence further highlights Perry’s growing urge to develop an alter ego, Claire.

When Perry was still in school, he developed a persona that he had not named until much later. He would look at all the schoolgirls and imagine himself dressing up as them or in their clothes, he moved on to experimenting with his mother’s makeup and loved what he saw in the mirror and, in that moment, discovered he was a transvestite. “I was padding out a bra with socks and borrowing a pair of tights and shoes - I could just about squeeze into my mother’s shoes. All I needed was a wig.”⁴⁷ On November 5th, 1975, which he now calls Claire's birthday although at this time she had no name, he went out in public in female clothes with makeup on.

I put on the full rig and stepped out the door. There I stood in my lipstick, blue chiffon head scarf over an auburn wig, a brown polyester blouse and black-and-white dog-tooth check skirt, tan tights, black court shoes and a beige mac: a middle-aged look.⁴⁸

⁴³ Jones, p. 40

⁴⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/04/grayson-perry-dress-tranny-art-who-are-you-tv>

⁴⁵ Jones, p. 55

⁴⁶ Jones, p. 55

⁴⁷ Jones, p. 74

⁴⁸ Jones, p. 75

He began to feel more comfortable with his transvestite side and began to take more risks by venturing outside of his home. Grayson Perry moved out with his girlfriend at the time and came out to her as a transvestite and she then along with her flat mate at the time helped Perry develop his wardrobe of women's clothes and advised him on his make-up. He bought himself a cheap camera and took his first photograph of Claire (fig 14) which was an important moment for both Perry and Claire. "I wasn't sure if I was Grayson or Claire in the dress: many things, 'Claire' and 'transvestite' included, didn't exist until they had a name."⁴⁹ When Perry named Claire it solidified this persona he created and helped develop Claire's look.

⁴⁹ Jones, p. 135



Fig 14, Earliest photo of Grayson Perry dress in women's clothes

Grayson Perry describes Claire as a “cross between Camilla Parker Bowles and Katie Boyle, seemed just the type of woman who might produce pots at evening class.”⁵⁰ In his younger years Perry's alter ego, Claire, dressed more conservative and simpler as he was borrowing other people's clothes and he was starting to open up with his transvestite side. He wanted to look like a woman, however, later on in his art career he became bored of looking like a woman in women's clothing and wanted to start looking like a man in women's clothes.

I would dress like a regular high street woman and hope to pass as a woman, I found in the end that the deception worked and it was boring to do, it wasn't as much fun. For me it's more important I look interesting rather than feminine and so I decided I want to be a man in a dress and so that's what I do now I am a man in a dress.⁵¹

⁵⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/04/grayson-perry-dress-tranny-art-who-are-you-tv>

⁵¹ [Grayson Perry discusses his gender identity | BORN RISKY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssHUGe29vy8)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssHUGe29vy8>

It turned from Grayson Perry becoming a woman to fashion and Claire as the accessory. He would have Claire wear these elaborate outfits that are full of colour. (fig 15)(fig 16) He typically wears Puffy sleeves, either colourful wigs or his hair straightened and styled and a large skirt that flares out very wide. Dressing as Claire however has multiple purposes for Perry, the first one would be it is part of his sexuality and identity of being a transvestite but the second reason he dresses up as Claire has a purpose for his art. When he speaks about his work, he would dress as Claire to show that this piece's theme is gender. "I am transvestite so I like to dress up and it's handy for publicity , you know, but it's not really a super intrinsic part of the art, I use my dressing up as a way of simply signaling that I am talking about gender."⁵² Although using it as an aid for his art is a small reason to dress up as Claire, it is a great opportunity to put on a performance as his alter ego and simply enjoy being dressed as a woman.



Fig 15, Grayson Perry dressed as Claire, accepting the Turner Prize in 2003. Photograph: Andy Paradise/Rex

⁵² [Grayson Perry: Turner Prize winner on transvestism, Trump and Brexit](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wanbhQ-tfYE)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wanbhQ-tfYE>



Fig 16, Grayson Perry Outfit by Central St Martins student Oto Kazumi. Photograph: Tim Walker/*Guardian*

Saint Claire 37 Wanks Across Northern Spain (fig 17) is a ceramic piece that Grayson Perry created and it is one of few that contains his alter ego, Claire, on the piece which alongside him showing up to exhibit the piece as Claire which directly deals with his sexuality. This piece stands at a metre in height and shows his alter ego Claire, surrounded by a collage of imagery inspired by a cycling trip in northern Spain.

It was based in large part on religious art, in particular, those polychrome wooden altarpieces that often look a bit knocked about. I tried to create the ceramic equivalent of this, the look of worn paintwork, in the figures that are in low relief. Alongside some of my kinky iconography – me in a chastity belt, Claire as a saint with a halo, and a bizarre transfer I found of Santa Claus in a dress – these are drawings based on the landscape I'd seen, including the Santiago cathedral which appears in the background⁵³

This ceramic is gold with most of the background drawn in with a black colour, there are three distinct figures that painted in duller colours making them stand out. These figures are religious except for Claire but he blends her in with the religious figures making her a powerful character within the piece.

⁵³ <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6100689>



Fig 17, Grayson Perry (b. 1960), *Saint Claire 37 Wanks across Northern Spain*, glazed earthenware, 33 x 22 x 22in. (84 x 56 x 56cm.), Executed in 2003

Claire is not the only figure that Perry created and developed; he has also created a masculine figure called Alan Measles. “Alan Measles represents my maleness”⁵⁴ He found that creating Alan Measles helped to create some balance for him internally. Alan Measles is a teddy bear who played a massive part in Perry’s life while growing up so it was only fitting that he became an iconic part of his artwork. “Growing up, Perry’s cuddly friend helped him deal with childhood anxieties and went on to become the subject of many ceramic and metal representations.”⁵⁵ He was named after Perry’s best friend and neighbour and the name Measles was added as the toy comforted him while he had the Measles. Grayson Perry views Alan Measles as the ‘perfect role model’⁵⁶ Grayson had comfort with this teddy and it helped him

⁵⁴ <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/perry-aspects-of-myself-t07904>

⁵⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2kPL0pL1Fp0pwyGtd69qzbx/seven-things-we-learned-about-grayson-perry-on-private-passions>

⁵⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2kPL0pL1Fp0pwyGtd69qzbx/seven-things-we-learned-about-grayson-perry-on-private-passions>

develop his character and personality as he was part of all of Perry's experiences. As Carl Jung's theory states the ego-personality that people choose to repress and reject are due to their morality and as Perry viewed Alan Measles as 'a perfect role model' he was similar to a morality guide to Perry making him feel safe to cross-dress and experiment with Claire.

Conclusion

An individual's childhood has a massive impact on their mindset and personality development which will impact their decisions. When people reach the stage of adulthood, they try to fulfil the desires that were made when they were growing up. Many different factors from an environment of a child will help form their personality. This will lead to forming their desires; factors that would affect their personality, such as whether the child has a supportive or unsupportive parental figure. This usually determined if the child followed rules as they had more structure if a parental figure controlled everything for the child. This would lead to the child becoming unable to make a choice for themselves and illustrates how attached the child is to the parental figure.

Given the known long-term effects of ACEs on individual health, the negative relationship between ACEs and family health is not surprising. Individuals with high ACE scores often struggle with the mental health issues of anxiety and depression, which influence how an individual is able to process emotions, support others, respond to stressors, communicate, and make emotional connections. These emotional and social skills affect the family, including social and emotional health processes that are so important to relationship development and accrual of resources. The inverse relationship between ACEs and family social and emotional health process may be explained by existing research showing that negative experiences in childhood adversely affect interpersonal relationships and may cause adult relationship difficulties including to existing family relationships dynamics and that of new family relationships (e.g., marriage and parenting). The current study showed that ACEs had the strongest negative association with the family health resources domain.⁵⁷

This statement is taken from a study of the effects of positive and negative childhood experiences on adult family health, it proves that individuals who came from positive childhood experiences (PCEs) tend to have a healthy family life in adulthood. It also speaks about how the individuals who come from Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) tend to have more struggle in their adult life which includes bad mental health, struggling with all types of relationships as their adverse childhood experiences affected their emotional and social skills which are vital to developing connections with people.

Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung also believe that childhood is where the personality is developed. He describes the conscious and unconscious mind by looking at the ego and the Id. Both the ego and the Id development in childhood and how they are developed is from experiences and parental guidance. He uses Oedipus complex to both back up his theory and describe how the parental figure influences the child. "Oedipus complex, in psychoanalytic

⁵⁷ <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-10732-w>

theory, a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a concomitant sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex; a crucial stage in the normal developmental process.”⁵⁸ Carl Jung theory is similar to Freud's theory however, parts of it are altered, he referred to the ego-personality as “the shadow” and it is more related to desires the people choose to reject due to morality and social norms that are demonstrated to children by their parents. Jung's theory says cause the behavior is related to previous experiences and the persons future aspirations which is also demonstrated in the study of the effects of positive and negative childhood experiences on adult family health.

Cindy Sherman experiments with her appearance for her art, she uses costumes, makeup and photoshop to make herself into different characters such as clowns, classical paintings or old women. This is what she started doing when she was playing as a child with her friends, she would find what she could and make a character. She began to do this as she was looking for a place to fit in with her family as she was much younger than her siblings and entertaining her family gave her a feeling of belonging. The fact that Sherman's family approved of this behavior helps prove Carl Jung's theory where he says that people learn social norms from the influence of parental figures, and this was a heavy influence on Cindy Sherman. “Through childhood and adolescence, we pick up from our parents/carers both conscious and unconscious messages about what is acceptable in terms of our body, our feelings and our behaviour. All that is unacceptable is suppressed and repressed and becomes part of the shadow.”⁵⁹ Cindy Sherman creates these characters and use them as a mask to hide behind and uses these masks to entertain people just like she did with her family.

Grayson Perry has a prominent alter ego who he named, Claire. He is a tranvestite who explores his sexuality through his alter ego, as he can dress up in elaborate clothing and uses Claire to show that the particular art that he is showing is to do with sexuality. Perry spent the majority of his childhood exploring his sexuality, it began with wearing dresses in private and he slowly became more confident with dressing up so started to venture out in dresses where people could see him dressed up. The more confidence he gained the more he experimented with Claire's look making them more colourful and more elaborative. Perry had a more adverse childhood experiences in comparison to how other people grew up due to his mother leaving his father for another man, this left an opening for a strong moral influence in his life, which is why he created ‘Alan Measles.’ Perry views Alan Measles as his ‘perfect role model’ and he represents Perry's maleness. This cuddly childhood friend helped Perry with his moral compass and to feel okay about him experimenting with his sexuality. Which is similar to what Sigmund

⁵⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/science/Oedipus-complex>

⁵⁹ <https://www.thesap.org.uk/resources/articles-on-jungian-psychology-2/about-analysis-and-therapy/the-shadow/>

Freud says about the ego and the Id the difference is that Perry puts this part of his personality into the teddy.

From writing this Thesis I feel confident in saying that I believe that the experiences that my chosen artist's, Cindy Sherman, and Grayson Perry, went through when they were younger had an effect on their artwork in their adulthood. Both Grayson Perry and Cindy Sherman developed the habits that they use in their work when they were young, I believe they use these habits as a mask to hide behind as it is a form of comfort to them. By looking into the psychology behind the ego and the Id helped me understand how we develop our personalities as the theory of both Freud and Jung describe how our parents help us with this development by showing us acceptable behaviour. However, Shermans and Perry's choice to dress up as adults is not widely accepted by society, their family and homelife accepted their choices similar to what Jung says which makes them comfortable to do it.

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