

UNITED WISDOM

When an image helps acknowledge a contradiction

The Person and the Inner World

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

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@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

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Epigraph

“Two souls”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, part I, scene II “Before the City-Gate,” Faust's speech; translated by Bayard Taylor. The Russian version uses our own translation of this short English fragment.

What this article is about

Sometimes a person discusses a choice as if one need must be unreal. If they want to move, wanting to stay is called fear. If they stay, interest in moving is dismissed as fantasy. A simpler possibility disappears between these accounts: different things really matter to them, and no available decision yet shows how to approach them.

An image can then help retain both sides. A house by water, a bridge between banks, a room with two windows: these are possible ways of speaking, rather than discovered structures of personality. This article examines how an image can acknowledge a contradiction and where its usefulness ends. Historical Jung passages retain their status; the transcendent function is presented through an explicitly secondary abstract, without claiming to have read an entire volume. The article's exercise is not analytical treatment. All everyday scenes are hypothetical, and the outcome is assessed through a more accurate question and an available decision.

I. Different wishes do not always form a logical error

A person can want a stable routine and new experience simultaneously. These wishes do not negate each other's existence. Difficulty arises when one action cannot satisfy both, or time and resources are insufficient. Naming both wishes is not yet making incompatible decisions. It is a first step toward understanding what constitutes the choice.

In a hypothetical example, Nina considers moving. She likes the opportunity to study elsewhere, but proximity to family matters too. Calling the first wish courage and the second weakness quickly makes discussion a moral contest. Reversing the labels does not remove the problem. Acknowledging both values allows examination of distance, timing, communication, and the cost of each option.

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

Distinguishing a wish, an obligation, and a factual assertion is useful here. I want to be close to loved ones. I promised to participate in a particular activity. I believe moving would make this impossible. The first two statements name different grounds; the third can be checked. Participation might permit another format or require physical presence. Internal difficulty does not remove the need to clarify external circumstances.

A contradiction may also be apparent. Nina says that she must choose between independence and caring for her family. Yet independence need not mean an absence of care, or proximity complete dependence. Sometimes definitions that are too broad create the collision. Instead of deepening symbolic analysis, asking which particular action lies beneath each large word is more useful.

Actual incompatibility also occurs. Two events happen at the same time, and attending both is impossible. Acknowledging wishes creates no second body or additional day. It may help choose what will be done and which loss remains. This clarity matters more than a promise that the right image will reconcile everything a person values.

Keeping the scale in view is useful too. Wanting to try life elsewhere does not say that one's entire present life is wrong. Wanting to retain a familiar arrangement does not prove inability to change. One choice may affect important aspects of experience without becoming a referendum on the whole personality. A narrower subject makes further examination more specific and prevents searching for a universal answer when a decision for a particular period is needed.

II. An image can show a relationship that is difficult to name

Sometimes listing arguments does not show how a person experiences their relationship. A table contains advantages and disadvantages, yet one side seems to disappear when the other is described. An image can temporarily shape this relationship. Nina, for example, imagines a house beside water: a place to return to, with a view of movement.

This does not make the house an established symbol of stability or water of freedom. Nina herself connects these elements with those meanings in this conversation. Another participant might see flooding, enclosure, or an ordinary landscape. Meaning emerges in her description and remains open to clarification. It does not follow from a ready dictionary of drawings.

We can ask which part of the image matters now. Nina says she needs somewhere to return after travelling. The question has changed: it does not necessarily concern refusing to move, but preserving connection and an available return. This remains her working account. It requires testing against possibilities rather than confirmation through the beauty of a picture.

An image is convenient because it need not be final immediately. Nina can modify it: add a road, remove a bridge, or make the house temporary. Such changes help notice what remains and what was incidental decoration. Yet every detail need not automatically become a breakthrough to hidden truth. Sometimes someone simply seeks a clearer way to express an already known thought.

If an image clarifies nothing, it can be set aside. A visual approach does not suit everyone. Writing two brief sentences, taking a walk and returning to a list of conditions, or discussing a specific deadline may be easier. Different means do not establish different depths in people. Usefulness depends on whether the subject becomes clearer rather than how expressive the chosen means appears.

Authorship of meaning can be retained simply: record alongside the image what you currently connect with an element. For example, the house means an available return for me, rather than the entire family or compulsory abandonment of independence. This caption does not impoverish the image. It prevents someone later assigning other meanings and declaring that these were always what you meant. Meaning can change, but the change should remain visible.

III. A historical symbol does not become a universal code

In the selected passage of “Psychoanalysis,” Jung rejects assigning a single unchanging interpretation to a symbol. This is a historical statement about dream analysis, rather than evidence that any drawing reveals the unconscious.

The distinction matters when using an everyday image. If Nina drew water, we gain no right to declare that she represented a particular internal structure. Asking Nina supplies more immediate grounds. She might say that she thought about travel, feared losing connection, or remembered somewhere seen yesterday. An image allows different explanations of its emergence.

Recognising a suggested interpretation does not complete the check either. A person hears a description and says it resembles their life. This is an important response about a present impression, rather than confirmation of a drawing's origin or the entire model's truth. Which part fits and which does not can be clarified. A general statement should not force agreement with details the person does not recognise.

An image can work without assertions about a hidden origin. A house by water helps Nina formulate wanting a reversible step. This result does not require establishing where the house originated in her psyche. Checking whether the thought expressed through it is more accurate is enough. Explaining causes and assessing a means' usefulness remain separate questions.

The historical limitation should not become reverse dogmatism. The absence of one code does not mean every interpretation is equally grounded. An interpretation should relate to the participant's description, circumstances, and available facts. If it contradicts these, it should change. Freedom of meaning preserves responsibility for accuracy rather than removing it.

When discussing another person's image, distinguishing a question from an induced answer is useful. “What matters to you here?” leaves room. “This is your fear of intimacy, isn't it?” already proposes a plot that needs contesting. A direct hypothesis may sometimes be appropriate if clearly labelled and rejectable. But the number of persuasive outside interpretations does not measure how well someone was heard.

IV. Acknowledging opposing sides does not promise treatment

In its abstract of “The transcendent function,” the IAAP describes a relationship between conscious and unconscious attitudes in analytical practice. The abstract was read here, rather than the primary CW8 text. Everyday consideration of two wishes is not declared an enactment of this function.

Similar words can create false certainty. If a historical concept discusses different sides and we retain two intentions, the processes may seem identical. Yet a shared general theme does not establish identical methods, grounds, or outcomes. The article's practice needs a more modest aim: stop erasing one known need in favour of another.

Nina can acknowledge wanting to study while preserving her availability to help loved ones. This establishes nothing definite about her unconscious. She next examines scheduling, programme duration, journeys, and other family members' participation. The work takes place within known conditions. An image helps retain a question without adding facts about possibilities.

This limit does not remove reflection's value. Clarifying one decision can matter without promising deep transformation. A person stops arguing through labels and begins distinguishing actual conditions. A new option, a clearer refusal, or an unavoidable loss can be checked. None of these outcomes requires a clinical name.

A lack of reconciliation should not be declared insufficient readiness either. Sometimes sides are difficult to combine. Sometimes a person does not want to continue the exercise. Sometimes an image increased confusion. These responses belong to the observed outcome and must be retained. If every failure is explained by hidden resistance, the method becomes immune to checking and stops considering the participant's choice.

A historical text can remain a source of questions rather than a ready instruction. We can investigate how an author understood opposites and separately decide whether an image

helps in our situation. This preserves distinctions between reading, personal practice, and an outcome claim. It also permits stopping after meaningful reading without turning respect for a thinker into a duty to test every idea on oneself.

V. A third possibility need not be an attractive compromise

Acknowledging two sides often produces a wish to invent a unifying solution immediately. It seems a sign of doing the work correctly: contradiction must end in harmony. Yet a possible third option can be inconvenient, temporary, or unavailable. It should be considered through its conditions rather than its ability to finish a story beautifully.

In the hypothetical example, Nina finds a programme involving short study trips rather than moving. This is another option, but not automatically the best. Expenses, workload, educational quality, and whether the format actually suits the family need checking. The house by water suggested reversibility; it neither chose the programme nor proved its suitability.

Sometimes a sequence is the solution. A person completes an obligation now and tries another format in several months. A sequence needs an honest deadline and an actual opportunity to return to the question. If every new circumstance postpones a wish indefinitely, an attractive plan can preserve immobility. The check concerns what will be done and when.

Sometimes there is no third option. One possibility must then be chosen while acknowledging the cost of declining another. An image can help name loss without accusation: I chose study and will miss daily proximity; I stayed nearby and will not have the experience I wanted now. Such acknowledgment does not prove a wrong decision. It preserves the actual composition of the choice.

Others should not be required to compensate for the entire remaining loss. If Nina stayed, her family need not continually confirm that she made the best choice. If she moved, the new city need not immediately produce freedom. A recognised cost belongs to agreements and circumstances; it should not become everyone's hidden debt to the person.

“Compromise” also needs clarification. One option really offers each side something desired; another merely makes refusal less clear. For example, formally joining a programme and continually missing classes does not necessarily combine learning and proximity. Both areas may receive insufficient attention. Honestly revising the decision is then more useful than defending it to preserve an image of balance. A harmonious formulation does not replace an executable arrangement.

VI. An image should return to conditions that can be checked

An internal description can become more accurate while a decision stays untested. Someone understands wanting reversibility without checking whether a contract permits withdrawal. They find a road image without knowing travel costs. Shifting from what an image means toward which external information is needed is useful then.

Two different lists can be made. One contains personal values: continuing connection, new study, a possible return. The other contains conditions: deadlines, money, obligations, and participants' consent. The lists connect without replacing each other. A strong need does not create another person's consent; an inexpensive option does not prove alignment with a purpose.

In a hypothetical scene, Nina assumes she can return weekly. This is still a plan. Checking the timetable shows that a journey takes more time than expected. The image did not become false; information about an action changed. Another schedule, different help, or acknowledgment that the option is too costly can now be considered.

Identifying uncertainty is useful too. Nina may not yet know how she will experience distance. Looking at the drawing again cannot establish this. A limited trial can be chosen if available, or a decision made with acknowledged uncertainty. Both are more honest than declaring a sense of recognition a guarantee of future satisfaction.

The origin of each inference can be considered. Nina named the wish herself. The programme confirmed the deadline. A relative agreed to help. An assumed response remains an assumption. This simple map of grounds does not make conversation dry. It helps an image perform its task without giving it authority to decide questions needing other evidence.

When a new condition changes a choice, it need not destroy the meaning of earlier work. Nina could understand her need to return more accurately and decline a particular programme. Distinction helped her see why it did not fit. Sometimes a negative result preserves more freedom than premature agreement to validate an attractive image. Excluding one option can be a practical result that makes the search narrower and more honest.

VII. Another person is not a detail in your picture

An image can express a personal need while quietly assigning roles to others. In a house by water, the family becomes an always-open place of return. Actual people have schedules, wishes, and limits of their own, however. Occupying a role in Nina's imagination does not mean consenting to occupy it in life.

In a hypothetical conversation, she tells her sister that she wants to preserve their previous arrangement for helping their parents. Her sister says her schedule changed too. Particular participation now needs discussion. Saying that the sister destroys Nina's necessary sense of home would turn a personal image into a demand upon another person's choice.

The image can be shared as a way of explaining one's question. For example, I need to understand how I can return and remain involved in family matters. Moving toward proposals is useful afterwards: which days are available, who will participate, and what needs changing. Another person may decline the image while responding meaningfully to the request.

Showing a drawing or disclosing an experience in detail is optional. An agreement may need only an ordinary sentence. If a personal story becomes the principal argument, declining is difficult without feeling that the whole person is being rejected. A request should therefore be manageable: one action, deadline, or question. Respecting experience does not mean compulsory agreement with a proposed arrangement of life.

Consent to the conversation itself can be checked too. A partner may be unwilling to discuss symbols but willing to examine a plan. They may want to hear the story later. This does not prove an inability to understand depth. Different forms of participation allow different degrees of closeness. An internal contradiction can be acknowledged without requiring another person to join its detailed exploration.

If a story has already created pressure, it can be clarified. Nina can say she described her wish rather than assigned her sister a role. She then examines the actual proposal and accepts the response. This clarification does not cancel initial sincerity. It makes sincerity compatible with the recipient's independence. The image remains a personal means of expression, while a shared agreement rests on what participants actually will do, including refusal or another distribution of tasks.

Consent to listen differs from consent to act. Nina's sister can understand why returning matters and still decline an additional obligation. These responses are compatible. If understanding is declared insufficient without a practical concession, the story becomes a hidden demand. After a personal explanation, directly asking about the proposed action and allowing an independent answer is useful. Closeness is then not measured by willingness to do everything that currently supports your internal balance.

VIII. A contradiction can change with the situation

An image accurately conveying today's question need not retain its meaning forever. In a month, Nina may understand returning differently, while family and study conditions change. This does not make her first account deceptive. It worked at a particular time and revealed a particular connection. Keeping its date and circumstances prevents demanding permanent fidelity to the earlier picture.

Sometimes one side changes. After a short trip, Nina discovers that another study format matters more. Sometimes the sides' relationship changes: closeness proves compatible with distance differently than expected. Sometimes experience adds a third need. All these changes need ordinary examination. They need not be labelled progress toward wholeness or departure from a true path beforehand.

The initial statements can be revisited to ask which remain true. I want to study. I want to participate in family life. I thought a permanent move was necessary. The last statement permits revision while the first two remain. This shows what changed and prevents the entire story being rewritten to fit a new outcome.

Sometimes an old image remains appealing but no longer helps deciding. It can be kept as a drawing or memory while another language serves the current question. This is a permissible outcome. Respecting a created form does not require continually extracting recommendations from it. Something can retain personal value after its practical work ends.

A changed personal choice does not automatically cancel previous promises either. If others are affected, an agreement needs updating. Nina may change her mind but should tell those who planned around her participation. An image helps understand a new wish; communicating changes responsibly remains another task.

Distinguishing revision from endless restarting is useful. Revision brings a new circumstance or changes an important answer. Repetition examines the same picture again without adding information. In the latter case, a limit can be stated: available understanding is sufficient for a small next step. The image need not become entirely clear and free of questions. Every actual decision retains uncertainty that should be named rather than endlessly removed through imagination.

IX. A sufficient outcome can be small

An image exercise need not conclude in a new personality story. Sometimes stopping calling one need shameful and seeing two tasks instead of one is enough. Sometimes a conversation about timing becomes clearer than an argument about courage. Sometimes the image does not fit and ordinary words are more useful.

In the hypothetical example, Nina ends reflection with: I need a trial period and an understandable way to return. This is not yet a decision to move, but the question became testable. She can examine available conditions and discuss family participation. The image worked when it helped move from general accusation toward a particular subject allowing an answer.

Remaining loss can be named without being removed. Nina may miss loved ones if she travels or regret an unlived experience if she stays. Acknowledging the cost does not demand a positive conclusion. Respecting contradiction means seeing its composition and choosing an action with open grounds while preserving further revision.

A small outcome should be named accurately. Instead of “I resolved all my contradictions,” say “I separated wanting to study from assuming it requires leaving forever.” Instead of “my family accepted my path,” say “we agreed to discuss a particular period.” Precision allows checking what happened later. It also preserves unfinished questions that would otherwise disappear behind an attractive conclusion. An image need not explain everything to help with one significant transition from experience to conversation and action.

What this means in practice

Write two important sides of one specific choice in ordinary sentences. If one sounds accusatory, try naming a need without judging personality. Then, only if the approach suits you, find an image in which both sides can be present. No artistic result is required. Record alongside it what each element means for you now.

Ask which new distinction appeared. Perhaps reversibility, a deadline, or another arrangement of participation matters. Translate this distinction back into an ordinary question. Separately record facts, agreed conditions, and uncertainty. If the image clarified nothing, set it aside and use a more convenient means.

Choose one next step: check a condition, ask a limited question, state a refusal, or agree a trial. Do not announce enactment of a historical psychological function from an everyday exercise. Recording what became clearer and which cost remains is enough. This preserves the image's meaning without making it a diagnosis, compulsory answer, or promise of treatment.

Key quotation

> *“no fixed symbolic meanings”*

C. G. Jung, Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology, chapter VII “Psychoanalysis,” pp. 218–219; a short fragment about interpreting dreams. The Russian version uses our own translation of the English edition; this is not a general prohibition on discussing images.

Connections between traditions

Comparison	Shared question	Significant boundary
Faust's speech ↔ Nina's choice	How can different wishes be expressed?	A literary voice is not psychological evidence
Historical Jung reading ↔ a personal image	What clarifies meaning?	A passage supplies no universal code
An image ↔ an agreement	What is needed in action?	Other people retain their own choice

This comparison is limited to a literary fragment, historical psychology, and the article's independent hypothetical scenes; identical doctrines are not assumed.

Primary sources

• Goethe, Faust, part I, translated by Bayard Taylor, Gutenberg14591. Title information and a selected speech by Faust with Wagner's response in scene II were read, rather than the whole play.

• C. G. Jung, Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology, second edition reprinted1920, chapter VII, pp. 218–219. A selected passage and context were read, rather than the full collection. The particular chapter's translator was not established from the information read.

• IAAP, Volume8 abstracts, entry000216. Selected abstract paragraphs were read, rather than the primary CW8 essay. Reuse rights are UNKNOWN. Gutenberg's United States conditions were read; status outside the United States is UNKNOWN.

Tags

image, symbol, contradiction, choice, Jung, Goethe, Faust, analytical psychology, history of psychology, transcendent function, wish, need, action, decision, moving, connection, family, study, reversibility, meaning, interpretation, uncertainty, boundaries, consent, agreement, revision, cost of choice, practice

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a coauthor of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.