

Alex Strader

Dr. Schwarz

MUGC 4980

5/20/18

Personae of the Phantom Thieves and Their Psychological Relation to Rebellion

A fictional case study intended for those who have completed the game.

To provide a deeper look into the symbolism of the game.

Throughout 2015 the self-proclaimed Phantom Thieves of Hearts have run amok within the city of Tokyo. Using the powers of *Persona* they have caused prominent individuals such as Suguru Kamoshida, Ichiryusai Madarame, and Kunikazu Okumura to confess their crimes out of seemingly nowhere. This has been accomplished by the thieves entering their target's cognitive world, also known as the metaverse, and stealing their heart which leads to the guilty conscious taking over. Due to Jungian theory I believe that these *Personae* have deep psychological connections with their wielders, and allow them to chase their philosophy of rebellion against society. Jungian psychology is interesting in that it is the first time the study went against the philosophy of Sigmund Freud by claiming that the *active imagination* allows the unconscious to become present through narrative or action¹. This explains how the Phantom Thieves can summon their *Personas*, and in extreme cases entire cognitive worlds can be created. The studies of Carl Jung also show that the *Persona* is a feature of something larger known as the *Self*. The *Self* can be seen the total sum of the psyche that looks forward and drives ourselves

¹ Goodtherapy.org

towards fulfillment and wholeness². This motive towards fulfillment is also known as the process of individuation. The *Persona* is the part of the self that embodies a person's beneficial qualities and is often described as a "mask" that is used to one's benefit in social situations. A *Persona* used with a business partner would be quite different than the *Persona* used with a loved one. The Phantom Thieves summon a physical manifestation of their *Persona* through the act of ripping off their thief's mask in defiance of society's norms, and exposing their true intentions alongside their powers via *active imagination*. These manifestations often take the forms of gods and demons from various religions and folklore such as the Greek, Egyptian, and Norse pantheons, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Judeo- Christian tradition. However, not every quality of the *Self* is desirable and these aspects that do not contribute to the *Persona* are known as the *Shadow*. Influenced heavily by the unconscious the *Shadow* is a type of mental complex that is accessed by the conscious mind. These *Shadows* also can gain physical form in a similar manner to *Personae* and it has theorized that the *Persona* and the *Shadow* are two sides of the same coin. In fact, it has been rumored that the savvy negotiator can persuade lesser *Shadows* to join their party as new *Personas* in order to expand their combat abilities. Additionally, if an individual has distortive desires that are strong enough their shadow self will appear in the collective unconscious (which is physically represented by the area known as "Mementos") and can attack when provoked. An additional term in Jungian psychology is the *Archetype*, which are the substructures of our personality and a group of primordial skeletons of the human mind that Jung postulated we inherit by

² Journalpsyche.org

evolutionary means³. These archetypes act as a foundation of characterization that one can build upon to create their own personality. An example of an *Archetype* that I will be relying on in this investigation is the trickster, which is employed in various mythos and tales such as Loki of Norse mythology. These archetypes are what the tarot cards were based on and all personas are categorized into one of the twenty-two major arcana. With this in mind the majority of the Phantom Thieves' *Personas* are based on figures categorized within the trickster archetype throughout literature and history, and some even blatantly embody qualities of a gentleman thief. Personal traits of the Phantom Thieves often bear similarities with the qualities of their *Persona's* character. Each member of the Phantom Thieves is covered in detail within the following files, and I hope they prove helpful to your endeavors.

³ ExtraCreditz

⁴Name: Akira Kurusu
 Codename: Joker
 Role: The thief
 Age: 16-17
 Height: 5'9"
 Weight: Unknown
 Blood Type: Unknown
 Arcana: The Fool
 Persona: *Arsene*

Akira Kurusu



Phantom Thief



Persona



A recent transfer student to Shujin Academy second year Akira Kurusu is the leader the Phantom Thieves and is the lynchpin to the group. After being falsely condemned by electoral candidate Masayoshi Shido for “assault” after standing up for a woman against unwanted drunken sexual advances of the politician Akira was placed under probation for one year in Tokyo. Specifically living in Café LeBlanc in the Yongen-Jaya residential district under the watchful eye of Sojiro Sakura the shop’s owner. When learning of the abuses of Suguru Kamoshida within Shujin Academy Akira decides to take action with Ryuji Sakamoto, Ann Takamaki and Morgana within the metaverse to change Mr. Kamoshida’s heart and stop his treachery. Akira’s initial *Persona* is *Arsene* a highly stylized interpretation of Maurice Leblanc’s character who

⁴ megamitensei.wikia.com

created the gentleman thief category: Arsene Lupin. What a “gentleman thief” entails is that Arsene Lupin only steals from those who are worse criminals than him or can afford a financial loss. This is shown in Akira’s philosophy of rebellion by “stealing the hearts” of corrupt individuals with distorted desires in order to make society better off. This sense of justice can also be seen when Akira defended the young woman being harassed by Masayoshi Shido before coming to Tokyo. Another characteristic of the gentleman thief archetype is the use of a calling card sent before a crime, which is a tradition the Phantom Thieves partake in as well. Arsene Lupin was also a renowned master of disguise being able to fool the most insightful people. Since Akira possesses the exclusive power of the “wild card” he is able to change masks and summon different *Persona*. Like Lupin, Akira changes his “disguise” to accommodate the battle or social situation and turn the tides in his favor. Employing the charismatic qualities of the gentleman thief Akira has set out to accomplish his goals of changing his fate and settling things with the one who has put him through this ordeal. Possessing the power to switch *Persona* as well as his mental fortitude and motivation to find out who ruined his life Akira acts as the team’s leader and the spokesman. Being categorized in the Fool arcana, and acting as the Akira’s first persona *Arsene* represents his long journey of rebellion ahead comparable to the fool’s journey of the tarot deck.

⁵Name: Ryuji Sakamoto
 Codename: Skull
 Role: The muscle
 Age: 16-17
 Height: 5'9"
 Weight: 135lbs
 Blood Type: B
 Arcana: The Chariot
 Persona: *Captain Kidd*



Unlike the rest of the Phantom Thieves Ryuji Sakamoto had the flame of rebellion burning inside him long before he joined the group. A second year delinquent of Shujin Academy Ryuji was quite the gifted athlete on the school's track team, and brought a fair amount to fame to the group. However, his home life was not nearly as glamorous with an abusive alcoholic father that eventually left Ryuji and his mother to survive on their own. The school's volleyball coach, Suguru Kamoshida, was jealous of the track team's and Ryuji's repeated success and physically abused the team during practice because of it. Furthermore he slandered Ryuji's name by informing the school's population of his abusive home life. Due to Ryuji's devious nature he physically assaults Kamoshida in response to these rumors, which is received with the coach breaking Ryuji's leg in "self-defense". With the track team disbanded and his inability to run again competitively due

⁵ ibid

to a limp Ryuji grew a hatred for malicious adults. His involvement in athletics has placed him in the muscle role within the Phantom Thieves, often taking the tasks that require brute force or athleticism. His *Persona*, *Captain Kidd*, reflects Ryujis's physical well-being by possessing the strongest strength stat amongst the Phantom Thieves but also being one of the slowest due to it wielder's crippled leg. Even though Ryuji is still a fast runner he psychologically sees himself as slow since he cannot run as fast as he once did. *Captain Kidd* is based of the seventeenth century privateer William Kidd who was once a privateer for the English crown but was denounced to being a pirate after attacking a neutral ship. Despite his pleas for innocence he was sentenced to trial and found guilty of the murder of his gunner and five indictments of piracy, and was sentenced to death by hanging. However, two important pieces of evidence were withheld at the trial, which has questioned the legitimacy of the guilty verdict⁶. Like the history of his *Persona* Ryuji was put to death (academically and socially) at the authority of a system that he once utilized his skills for. In fact Ryuji can be seen showing aspects of his *Shadow* when he blames himself for the disbursement of the track team. However, unlike his William Kidd, Ryuji was able to find a new calling with the Phantom Thieves and is able to start his own rebellion against the school system that ruined him by exposing Kamoshida's abusiveness. Being a user of a *Persona* of the Chariot arcana Ryuji utilizes his self-confidence to conquer the lying adults that have ruined society.

⁶ Britanica William Kidd

⁷Name: Ann Takamaki
 Codename: Panther
 Role: The seductress
 Age: 16-17
 Height: 5'6"
 Weight: Unknown
 Blood Type: B
 Arcana: The Lovers
 Persona: *Carmen*



Second year at Shujin Academy alongside Akira Kurusu and Ryuji Sakamoto, Ann Takamaki is the manipulator of the group who uses her sexuality to con people usually as a distraction or for the rest of the group to obtain access to a once closed area. Because of her foreign blood and her charm she stands out within a homogenous Japanese society, which draws negative attention to her. Additionally, she is a part time model, which was introduced to her by her parents who are both fashion designers. Like Ryuji she has dealt with Suguru Kamoshida's abuse albeit in a sexual rather than physical manner. In order to prevent her best friend from being kicked off the volleyball team led by Kamoshida, she was almost blackmailed into having sexual relations with the coach. After awakening her *Persona*, *Carmen*, Takamaki learns that she is not a mere doll to be taken advantage of, and is willing to fight against Kamoshida for putting her in this

⁷ ibid

position. In literature Carmen is a Spanish gypsy who fits the definition of the femme fatale: a beautiful woman that brings the downfall to men who get involved with her as with the case of Don Jose in the eponymous opera by Georges Bizet. No matter how many men ask for her love Carmen either rejects them or plays with their emotions until she is bored. This is clearly seen in Carmen's appearance as a *Persona*, as she possesses two comically love-struck men on thorn-laden leashes alongside her trademark cigar. She also is stepping on one of the men signifying that she is bound to no one and will always be free. This can also be a nod to sadist and masochist sexual acts which is further implied by Ann's use of a whip as a melee weapon. Although she did not do this completely on purpose Ann ended up being the femme fatale to Kamoshida as it was her who helped bring about the teacher's downfall after he decided to get involved with her. Ann's newfound mindset through awakening her *Persona* has caused her to quit holding herself back at the cause her *Shadow* insisting that what happened to her best friend was Ann's fault.

⁸Name: Morgana
 Codename: Mona
 Role: The mastermind
 Age: Unknown
 Height: 1'8"
 Weight: 8lbs
 Blood Type: Unknown
 Arcana: The Magician
 Persona: *Zorro*



Although Akira Kurusu is the leader of the phantom thieves Morgana is the mastermind behind the thieves' heists and is the one who taught them the basics and nuances of thievery as well as combat. How a feline is able to talk, take on a cartoonish appearance, and even transform into a bus in certain areas of the metaverse is beyond my understanding... Regardless, *Zorro* is the cat burglar's *Persona*, and he represents everything Morgana aspires to be since he has suffered amnesia before he first came in contact with the founding members of the Phantom Thieves of Hearts. Since he has no recollection of who he is he wishes desperately that he were a chivalrous debonair human trapped in the form of a cat. In literature Zorro was a nobleman turned bandit who fought on behalf of the peasantry and indigenous peoples of Los Angeles. He accomplished this

⁸ ibid

with his skill at the sword employing his trademark “z” slash as well as abilities in both marksmanship and horsemanship. Morgana’s weapons of choice also emulate the hero his *Self* wishes to be by using curved swords that pay homage to Zorro’s swordsmanship and slingshots which utilize marksmanship. Morgana is also shown to possess a chivalrous side especially when interacting with the female members of the group oftentimes calling them “lady”. However, Morgana is troubled by his doubts of what he truly is which is shown in his recurring nightmares of transforming into a *Shadow*. This insecurity of identity is further intensified when newer members of the thieves take over his previous roles such as Makoto Nijima becoming the strategist and Futaba Sakura taking over as the navigator. As a result, he psychologically compensates by becoming as close to Zorro as possible both in aesthetics and abilities. When he is unable to live up to his own lofty standards he leaves the group for a time, and attempts to continue thievery on his own. Morgana’s form of rebellion is inverse of Zorro’s as he is rebelling against ignorance by learning of who he truly is while assisting those in need whereas Zorro helped those less fortunate while concealing his true identity as Don Diego Vega. One of the trademarks of users of the Magician arcana tend to have are large egos that hide insecurities. After spending time with the Phantom Thieves Morgana finally has the psychological need of social acceptance fulfilled and is able to focus on the top of the needs pyramid on his quest for self fulfillment.

⁹Name: Yusuke Kitagawa
 Codename: Fox
 Role: The counterfeiter
 Age: 16-17
 Height: 5'11"
 Weight: 139lbs
 Blood Type: O
 Arcana: The Emperor
 Persona: *Goemon*



Honor student at Kosei High School Yusuke Kitagawa produces flawless counterfeits using his artistic ability to the benefit of the Phantom Thieves. Student and dependent of the famous artist Ichiryusai Madarame Yusuke was shocked when he learned of his treachery in plagiarizing his student's artwork, and the mass reproduction his mother's highest artistic achievement: the painting *Sayuri*. With *Goemon* as his *Persona* Yusuke inherits the will to rebel against his abusive master. *Goemon* is designed after the existing thief Goemon Ishikawa who took up arms after his father was assassinated by men of the current Shogunate, which Goemon vowed to avenge. As such he became a thief who learned ninjutsu and eventually created a band of like-minded individuals that were merchants who conducted reconnaissance by day and enacted heists at night. Stories conflict to the cause of Goemon's death of being boiled alive. Some

⁹ ibid

claim that captured comrades sold him out while others state that he was caught attempting to assassinate the ruler of Japan to enact his revenge. Similarly to Goemon, Yusuke is an orphan that sees the truth in Madarame's deceitfulness when he learns of his mother's death at the hands of his master, is part of a band of thieves to accomplish his revenge, and is weak to fire magic in reference to Goemon's death. However, Yusuke and his *Persona*'s depiction of Goemon draw more inspiration from the legend of the thief rather than the historical figure. After his death Goemon became romanticized as a Robin Hood-esque figure in Kabuki Theater who would behave flamboyantly. Yusuke's personality fits with this statement as his social mannerisms can be quite odd which he admits to. As an artist Yusuke draws an immense amount of inspiration from this version as seen with his *Persona*'s traditional kabuki stage makeup and poses. Additionally, Yusuke's mask is fashioned after a traditional kabuki half mask designed after a fox, which leads to his codename. After the Madarame incident Yusuke struggles with finding inspiration for his art, and is revolted by the idea of creating beautiful art for solely monetary gain, which leads him to find new paths that leads to art that he can call his own.

¹⁰Name: Makoto Nijima
 Codename: Queen
 Role: The Advisor/ The Driver
 Age: 17-18
 Height: 5'5"
 Weight: Unknown
 Blood Type: A
 Arcana: The Priestess
 Persona: *Johanna*



Third year, and student council president at Shujin Academy Makoto Nijima is the prime example of a model student. Her mature nature and seriousness even inspired the administration of Shujin Academy to ask her to deduct if the Phantom Thieves are students at the school after the resolution of the Kamoshida incident in exchange for a letter of recommendation to a top college of her choosing. Being the younger sister of the SIU's highly capable Sae Nijima Makoto often suffers from an inferiority complex especially when she does not live up to her perfectionist nature. This psychological feeling of uselessness has allowed her *Shadow* to greatly influence her actions, which is seen when she rushes headfirst into the Mafia's base of operations as a last ditch effort to save the students of Shibuya area from the mafia's drug trafficking scam. When

¹⁰ *ibid*

awakening her *Persona Johanna* Makoto becomes rebellious against the authority figures in her life that have expected unrealistic tasks of her such as the school administration and even her sister Sae. *Johanna* is based on the fictional female liturgical leader of medieval times who was disguised as a man: Pope Joan, and is depicted unorthodoxly as a motorcycle which Makoto pilots. Unlike other members of the Phantom Thieves Makoto already possessed a strong sense of justice before joining the group being frustrated in her inability to do anything during when the Kamoshida incident occurred. As such, her *Persona* has assisted her in casting her doubt as being useless by pursuing her view of justice instead of fulfilling the shallow justice of administrations. Like the story of Pope Joan and the literal appearance of her *Persona* Makoto is through with acting the way others perceive her as a modest honors student. This point is seen in her brutal thief attire that is reminiscent of biker suit as well as punching her enemies to death via brass knuckles being her melee weapon of choice. Upon rebelling Makoto also finds her freedom to choose her life decisions instead of simply going down the path she was told.

¹¹Name: Futaba Sakura
Codename: Oracle

¹¹ *ibid*

Role: The Hacker
 Age: 15-16
 Height: 4'11"
 Weight: Unknown
 Blood Type: AB
 Arcana: The Hermit
 Persona: *Necronomicron*



Daughter of the late Wakaba Isshiki Futaba Sakura is the adoptive daughter of Sojiro Sakura and is the hacker of the Phantom Thieves allowing them to broadcast messages over public airwaves or opening locked paths in heists. Futaba's mother was a prominent researcher and creator of the field of "*cognitive psicence*" which focuses on entire worlds hidden within the human mind. Corrupt politicians that were already using this information to eliminate their rivals learned of Wakaba Isshiki and murdered her and destroyed her research before forging a suicide note stating that she wished her daughter was never born to Futaba. As a result this put Futaba into a serious depression that was further intensified with horrid care at the hands of her uncle who would deny her a bed or bath. Futaba's state of mind became so poor that she developed post traumatic stress disorder, social anxiety, hallucinations of her mother, and suicidal impulses from the shock received. Due to these reasons Futaba does not leave her bedroom and has not attended school since graduating middle school even though she is over fifteen years of

age. Her condition was extreme to the point where her *Shadow* gained physical form and even assisted the Phantom Thieves in the stealing of her heart to ensure the real Futaba's happiness. Although her self-esteem is extremely low she is a very smart individual especially on the topic of hacking computers. Her skill was so great that she founded the famous hacking group *Medjed* under the alias Alibaba. After learning the truth of her mother's death at the hands of a conspiracy group Futaba's *Shadow* transforms into the *Persona Necronomicron* in the guise of a UFO. The *Necronomicron* is a book in Lovecraftian lore that contains forbidden knowledge of the "old ones" and that reading it can make one go insane. The *Persona*'s shape of a UFO alludes to Futaba's lifestyle of alienation from society and plays into the thief motif of UFOs stereotypically depicted as stealing humans away to perform experiments. Being a hacker Futaba encounters large amounts of information that should be forbidden had she not hacked into the system, which further connects her to her *Persona*. While the *Necronomicron* made sane people mad Futaba's *Persona* allowed her to see the truth of her mother's death and assisted in her personal rebellion against herself. Even though her physical *Shadow* was benevolent her mental shadow was so overbearing it would only be satisfied with her destruction through suicide. When the Phantom Thieves saved her and helped her with reintegrating into society she joined as their navigator converting her internal form of rebellion into an external one in exacting revenge against the conspiracy that killed her mother and ruining her life.

¹²Name: Haru Okurmura
 Codename: Noir
 Role: The Backer
 Age: 17-18
 Height: 5'2"
 Weight: Unknown
 Blood Type: A
 Arcana: The Empress
 Persona: *Milady*



Daughter of the president of Okumura Foods: Kunikaze Okumura Haru Okumura is a current third year at Shujin Academy. Due to the success of Okumura Foods the Okumura family is quite rich as evidenced by their use of chauffers, and their elegant demeanor. However, greed has infiltrated the values of the company, and President Okumura has been known to severely overwork his employees in order to reap greater profits. This mindset of avarice has also extended to his daughter whom he created an unwanted arranged marriage with the intention of expanding his company through the union. Psychologically Haru is conflicted with not willing to go against her father's wishes, and wanting to preserve her chastity by not becoming married to an abusive husband. Haru eventually learns of her father's apathy within his cognitive world firsthand by hearing him say that her fiancé could use Haru as his "plaything" in order to

¹² *ibid*

preserve the deal made between the two businessmen. As a result Haru becomes infuriated at all the individuals who see her only as a yen symbol and awakens her *Persona Milady* from Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Often playing the Femme Fatale role Milady seduces and betrays in order to advance her objectives. When Haru first comes in contact with her *Persona* she asked who shall she betray in order to pursue a life of freedom? Haru decides to cross her father's wishes to go through in the marriage and cooperates with the Phantom Thieves in order to accomplish this goal much like how Milady escaped her forced covenant. Due to her family's wealth Haru is considered the backer of the group being able to make large amount of liquid assets available. While this is rarely taken advantage of by the group the option functions as a strong back up plan. Like Makoto, Haru engages in a rather savage style of combat making use of large axes and grenade launchers to defeat her enemies which rebels against society's view of her as a polite upper class woman.

Sources

- Ann Takamaki. megamitensei.wikia.com. http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Ann_Takamaki (accessed May 25, 2018).
- Arsene. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Arsene> (accessed May 25, 2018).
- Captain Kidd. megamitensei.wikia.com. http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Captain_Kidd (accessed May 25, 2018).
- Carmen. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Carmen> (accessed May 25, 2018).
- ExtraCreditz. “Persona 5 and Jungian Psychology- Masks, Major Arcana, and Meaning – Extra Credits.” *YouTUBE*, YouTube, 28 June 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4a4EdAES0fk&t=278s&index=3&list=WL
- Futaba Sakura. megamitensei.wikia.com. http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Futaba_Sakura (accessed May 25, 2018).
- Goemon. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Goemon> (accessed May 25, 2018).
- Haru Okumura. megamitensei.wikia.com. http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Haru_Okumura (accessed May 25, 2018).
- Johanna. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Johanna> (accessed May 25, 2018).
- “Jungian Psychotherapy.” www.goodtherapy.org. <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/jungian-psychotherapy> (accessed May 20, 2018).
- Makoto Nijima. megamitensei.wikia.com. http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Makoto_Nijima (accessed May 25, 2018).
- Milady. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Milady> (accessed May 25, 2018).

Morgana. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Morgana> (accessed May 25, 2018).

Necronomincon. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Necronomicon> (accessed May 25, 2018).

Protagonist (Persona 5). megamitensei.wikia.com. [http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Protagonist_\(Persona_5\)](http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Protagonist_(Persona_5)) (accessed May 25, 2018).

Ryuji Sakamoto. megamitensei.wikia.com. http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Ryuji_Sakamoto (accessed May 25, 2018).

“The Jungian Model of the Psyche.” journalpsyche.org. <http://journalpsyche.org/jungian-model-psyche/> (accessed May 20, 2018).

Yusuke Kitagawa. megamitensei.wikia.com. http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Yusuke_Kitagawa (accessed May 25, 2018).

Zorro. megamitensei.wikia.com. <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Zorro> (accessed May 25, 2018).