

TCOAAL - A pair as a whole. Or possibly, a middle ground.

End-game spoilers for **The Coffin of Andy and Leyley** and **Remember11 -the age of infinity-**. This essay assumes that the reader has already completed **The Coffin of Andy and Leyley**.

If there's a logical explanation for something, then I'll believe it, but if there isn't one I... will choose the most romantic option.

—Fuyukawa Kokoro

The overarching plot of Remember11 -the age of infinity-, one of my favorite visual novels of all time, revolves around a central theme of Jungian concepts and archetypes. We will do a surface-level Jungian analysis of The Coffin of Andy and Leyley, draw parallels to the themes of Remember11, and explore some of the character archetypes that are present in both games and the meanings behind them.

The Age of Infinity

We begin with Remember11—an overview and analysis of the game, for those who are unfamiliar with it.

In the most literal interpretation of the story, Remember11 is a sci-fi-mystery-thriller that follows two protagonists, Fuyukawa Kokoro and Yukidoh Satoru, as they are caught up in a series of strange and inexplicable events. In the first half of the story, we follow Kokoro's perspective as she ends up stranded in a survival situation with three other people after their flight crashes in the mountains. Over the course of a week, as they wait for rescue, Kokoro experiences a “time-space transfer phenomenon”, where her consciousness is repeatedly switched into the body of a man named Satoru. Satoru's body is at different location known as SPHIA, a psychiatric institution that houses three other people. As a result, the other characters incorrectly conclude that Kokoro and Satoru suffer from Dissociative Identity Disorder.

The two of them are forced to communicate indirectly with each other through notes and voice messages as they seek escape, try to save the plane crash survivors, and investigate the events that are happening to them. To make matters worse, Satoru seems to suffer from amnesia, as a result of falling from the clock tower of SPHIA in the opening of the story. The two of them discover that their consciousnesses are being switched through both time and space, as Kokoro is in 2011, while Satoru is in 2012.

If the player manages to avoid all of the “bad endings”, the story continues into the second half, where we follow Satoru’s perspective through the same events. This fills in most of the gaps of the story and answer numerous questions that were left open during Kokoro’s route. Depending on the choices the player makes in Kokoro’s route, changes in the story are also propagated to Satoru’s route. There are 33 possible endings, most of which are bad endings where characters die, but there is a “true ending” that can be reached.

After every ending, a familiar message is displayed before the game returns to the main menu:

“The story has not finished yet.

Truth is not revealed.

And it circulates through an incident.

— — It is an infinity loop!”

To anyone who has played visual novels before, the meaning is obvious. “You haven’t finished the story yet. Try again and get a different ending.”

At least, this is how the story appears to unfold on the surface.

However, many questions are left unanswered even after all endings have been completed. In the “true ending”, the story ends on a (literal and metaphorical) cliffhanger.

Near the end of the game, in several branching routes, multiple mind-shattering twists are revealed to the reader. Namely, the fact that the player’s POV character is not actually Satoru, there is a real!Satoru who is the person behind the “YUKIDOH Plan” and the time-space transfer phenomenon, and that the YUKIDOH Plan’s goal, aside from rescuing the victims of the plane crash, is to exact revenge – revenge against someone or something that real!Satoru only refers to as “That Guy” (アイツ).

The characters ask several questions that are ultimately left unanswered:

“Who is... That Guy?”

“Where is SELF?”

This mysterious entity, known only as That Guy/SELF, never once makes an appearance in the story. TIP 088 (That Guy) tells us this:

“For this person, there is no past. For this person, there is no future. To be more accurate, the concept of time does not exist for this person.

For this person, the past, the present, and the future are all condensed into a single point.

Point. Emptiness. 0th dimension.

Three concepts that overlap.

This person exists in a place devoid of everything.

That absolute will is the only thing there.

An absolute will.”

Through this hint, and numerous other pieces of evidence that are scattered throughout the story, the player must arrive at the final twist and the conclusion of this tale by themselves—the answer to the final mystery of Remember11 that was intentionally left unsolved.

The final goal of the YUKIDOH Plan: “To seize SELF in this time-space plane, and contain it.”

SELF is the player.

A zero-dimensional being, similar to a god, who exists outside the bounds of the story.

A being who exerts their will over the characters by making choices for them, manipulating their minds.

Someone who can save, load, jump through time, and experience all the events of the story “simultaneously”.

“The way that Satoru confines Self — a transcendental being — is by trapping it in an infinitely repeating loop. The true form of the infinity loop is the never-ending story of Remember 11. The player/Self tries to hunt for answers, to discover a third route that doesn’t exist, to discover why things are happening the way they are. Going through the 33 endings, trying all the choices, but never becoming satisfied with the answer. It has no ending, and the player’s desire to solve the mystery keeps them trapped in it.”

– Remember11 EXPLAINED

This is the true intent of the meta (and controversial!) ending of Remember11, and the meaning behind the concept of the “infinity loop”. The YUKIDOH Plan was to create as many mysteries as possible to make an interesting story that would force the reader to keep reading. The characters all *hate* you. They’re out to get YOU.

This episode is titled: Andy and Leyley and the Infinity Loop

This is all very interesting, of course. But how does this tie into the ideas of Jung and the plot of TCOAAL?

In the opening of Remember11, we are shown that each character represents a single Jungian archetype.

“Roughly speaking, beneath a person’s consciousness is the collective unconscious which contains all archetypes like the anima, animus, and so on. Within each person, these archetypes are integrated into the person’s self... If we extend this interpretation from a single human to the world itself, does that mean that there is an entity that controls every human being...? In the story, “SELF” was born from this idea. The reason why each character represented an archetype is because they are all under the control of “SELF”. In other words, you can think of the world of Remember11 as the psychological experience of a single entity.”

— Nakazawa Takumi, scenario writer of Remember11

This was entirely intentional and another major hint to the “answer” of Remember11.

Where are we going with this? Let’s examine the characters of TCOAAL again with this answer in mind.

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the writer of this game *also* wrote the characters in such a way that each one fits neatly into a single Jungian archetype, just like the characters of Remember11.

Character	Archetype	Significance
Andy/Leyley	Primordial Child/Miracle Child	Potential to do and become anything. A “god-child”
Nina	Eternal Boy	Highly creative and imaginative, but acts immaturely
Julia	Anima	Femininity
Warden	Animus	Masculinity
Mr. Graves	Wise Old Man	A fatherly symbol of wisdom
Mrs. Graves	Great Mother	A motherly symbol of love and affection
Andrew	Persona	The mask we wear in front of others
Lady from 302	Trickster	Someone with intellect or hidden knowledge, and uses it to play tricks or act unconventionally
Ashley	Shadow	The flaws and dark side of ourselves that we try to express
Entity	Self	The unified personality of the entire person. A single whole that encompasses the entire range of mental phenomena.

Let's first focus our attention on Ashley and Andrew, the POV characters of this story. They share many similarities with Kokoro and Satoru, who represent the Anima and the Animus. One cannot have one without the other.

Ashley and Andrew can be said to represent the Anima and Animus. The game heavily implies that if one of them dies, the other would also die of suicide.

"The twins born from the same axis share a mysterious destiny."

The Anima represents the feminine within the masculine. This can be seen in Andrew's dream, where a representation of Leyley appears.

However, we can see that the two of them also represent the Persona and the Shadow – two different sides of one's personality.

"Swiss psychologist Carl Jung mentioned that a personality has two components: the Persona (literally meaning the Mask), that which is our conscious personality and which determines how we deal with the world, and the Shadow: the person we'd rather not be, the opposite of our conscious personality. The Shadow consists of all the aspects of our psyches that we prefer not to look at and are ashamed of all through our lives. But the truth is that when certain negative tendencies remain hidden from our conscious awareness, they tend to drive our emotions and behaviour in unpredictable ways."

Ashley is the Shadow. Throughout the story, it is Andrew who is portrayed as the one who has to clean up after her, the one who is "fixing" the problems that she creates. She puts him into situations where he has to do the dirty work, directly killing the Lady from 302 and the Hitman and making him complicit in the murder of Nina. It is her idea to eat their parents, a completely pointless action since they already had plenty of food and money at that point. She is extremely possessive of Andrew, chasing off all of his girlfriends and even killing Nina for appearing to be slightly interested in him. Of the two of them, she represents the "dark side" of one's consciousness. In Remember11, Inibushi Keiko, a convicted serial killer who suffers from Borderline Personality Disorder and Dissociative Identity Disorder, represents the Shadow. Parallels can be drawn between Keiko and Ashley's behavior.

Andrew is the Persona. He is portrayed as the "sane and rational" one, and he appears to be more normal when seen by the outside world, compared to Ashley's rather impulsive, controlling, and unhinged behavior. He is the one that has to try to stop her from doing things to worsen their situation, such as eating the last can of tomatoes that they have. Of course, he doesn't always win. In the "questionable" ending, he is the one who is against the two of them having a sexual relationship, keeping in mind how they would appear to the outside world, while Ashley, the Shadow, sees no issue with it. In Remember11, Mayuzumi Lin, a lawyer, is the representation of the Persona.

On another level, "Andy" and "Leyley" also represent parts of their psyche that they would rather cast aside and forget about. However, as we have learned, you can't have one without

the other. Andy and Leyley still unconsciously influence the thoughts and actions of Andrew and Ashley, despite their attempts to leave those memories behind. It's not just Andy who is a part of Andrew—Leyley is also a part of Andrew, and we see her in his dream. Andrew and Andy also appear in Ashley's dreams at times, represented by plushies. Even Julia and Nina appear, reinforcing the idea that there are parts of these other characters that exist within her mind.

From all of this, could we conclude that the entirety of TCOAAL is also the psychological experience of a single entity?

Maybe.

The most likely candidate for this interpretation would be one of the demons, perhaps the summoned Entity or Lord Unknown. Through a meta lens, it could also be that the “dream world” that Ashley enters is one level *up* from the “real world”, rather than one level down. The “real world” is simply a story or a gameboard that the demons are playing around with. They have complete control over it, and this explains why Ashley and Andrew's personalities are not set in stone—they change depending on the decisions that are made. You could think of it as a game of Dungeons and Dragons. The demons occasionally pull Andrew and Ashley *out* of the game, perhaps just to mess with them for entertainment.

We have only scratched the surface of possible interpretations. Of course, one can go far deeper than this with a Jungian analysis of this game, and a brief essay by someone as inexperienced as I am could not possibly do this topic justice. (Maybe that will be left for a later essay?)

The Narrator: Finding Self

There is another question that the game leaves unanswered. “Who is the narrator?”

We know that the narrator cannot be merely Ashley or Andrew. While the narrator's available information appears to be limited to the information that is available to the POV character:

“Someone is talking on the other end of the line, but you can't make out the words.

They sound more and more upset as they talk though.”

The narrator is also capable of sarcasm, making jokes, and giving information to the player that should not be available to the characters:

“For the record, Andrew doesn't fare much better.

When it comes to cutting people up, the hitman whoops his amateur ass dead.

Though given his romantic streak, he probably didn't want to live without you anyway.

I bet you'd be happy about that, if you weren't too fucking dead to feel anything.”

In addition, they seem to have a distinct personality:

“And then you got run over by a car!

Just kidding.

Get off the road, stupid.”

Assuming that the narrator is a transcendental being similar to Self, and that Self is *not* the player (there aren't many clues hinting to the player's involvement as a key character in the game), we can look for the next-closest thing: the Entity that is summoned by Ashley at different points throughout the game.

Why is the Entity able to give them visions of the future?

Perhaps it has already experienced the entirety of the game. It has played through the entire story to see the events of the future, and like the SELF of Remember11, it jumps back in time afterwards and transfers its memories to Ashley (and Andrew in some routes), giving them the ability to change their future.

This also feeds into the idea of the “real world” of TCOAAL being the setting of a game that the demons are (re)playing.

Finally, the game ends on an unsatisfying note, and there is no Chapter 3, just like in Remember11. This lack of an ending is intentionally designed to keep the player guessing and theorizing, replaying the game to search for messages that aren't there... nah, just kidding.

Credits

This paper was written by onehalf.



Thanks to Arsym for writing Remember11 EXPLAINED, a site that provides a complete analysis and breakdown of Remember11. Without it, this essay could not have been made.

<https://adayem.wordpress.com/>