

THE PROCESS OF ACHIEVING THE SELF ARCHETYPE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY (TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF GOD-MAN)

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ABSTRACT: *The Process of Achieving the Self Archetype from the Perspective of Analytical Psychology (Towards Understanding the Concept of God-Man).*

This article is dedicated to Jung's notion of the individuation process which is inseparable from his idea of Soul as a harmonious and dynamic wholeness of self. The individuation process pursues its own objectives and places specific demands on human being in a course of his or her life. Ultimately it tries to integrate different components of soul – the complexes – into one organic unit. The individuation process manifest itself as spontaneous vital activity but generally it is a very problematic and enigmatic phenomenon because it raises from confrontation between outside and inside influences of human Psyche. This article also puts emphasis on Jung's notion of God-Man.

Keywords: individuation, archetypes, ego, self, God-Man, analytical psychology, neurosis, C. G. Jung

REZUMAT: *Procesul dobândirii arhetipului sinelui din perspectiva psihologiei analitice (spre înțelegerea conceptului de Dumnezeu-Om).*

Studiul de față este dedicat noțiunii de proces de individuare a lui Jung, care nu poate fi despărțită de concepția sa cu privire la suflet ca un întreg armonios și dinamic al sinelui. Procesul de individuare urmează propriile sale obiective și îl confruntă pe om cu cerințe specifice de-a lungul vieții sale. În ultimă instanță, el încearcă să integreze diferitele componente ale sufletului – complexe – într-o unitate organică. Procesul de individuare se manifestă ca o activitate spontană vitală, dar este în general un fenomen foarte problematic și enigmatic, deoarece apare din confruntarea influențelor interne și externe ale psihicului uman. Articolul accentuează de asemenea noțiunea de Dumnezeu-Om a lui Jung.

Cuvinte cheie: individuare, arhetipuri, ego, sine, Dumnezeu-Om, psihologie analitică, nevroză, C. G. Jung

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Introduction

“Whatever you did to one of my brothers, you did to me, too”. In the Gospel According to St. Matthew, Jesus Christ says: *Love your enemies*. But what if we learn that the smallest, the most miserable and the worst enemy of all is in ourselves? What if I learn that the enemy I shall love is myself?... To care for oneself does not necessarily have to be an expression of egoism. Just the contrary, it is a rewarding activity. Centre of Jung’s psychological interest is man’s individuality. Jung perceives the process of birth and maturation of human individuality as the process of individuation. The aim of this lifelong process, as elaborated further in the article, is the gradual shift from the Ego, which Jung sees as the centre of consciousness, to so called “Self” (das Selbst), which Jung sees as the centre of the wholeness of man’s personality, including both consciousness and unconscious. For Jung, the most developed and personified symbol of the Self from the psychological point of view is Jesus Christ. What in Christian theology is called *Imitatio Christi*,¹ is for Jung a religious equivalent to a journey of psyche in the process of individualization. “The deification of Jesus, as also of the Buddha, is not surprising, for it affords a striking example of the enormous valuation that humanity places upon these hero figures and hence upon the ideal of personality”². However, Jung points out that individuation does not mean placing a burden on Jesus, but to undergo the same experiment with one’s life as done by Jesus: realization of oneself³.

Individuation as Both the Integration and Modification of the World

According to C.G. Jung,⁴ the Swiss psychologist and founder of analytical psychology, individuation is primarily a complex lifelong process that brings together conscious and unconscious. However, it is also understood as a process of differentiation of the psyche necessary to establish a person’s wholeness and it can manifest itself as a destabilization of the original psychological balance resulting in neurosis: “Individuation means becoming an individual – and, in so far as individuality embraces our innermost, last and incomparable uniqueness, it also means becoming one’s own Self. Individuation could be, therefore, translated as a ‘coming to selfhood’ (Verselbstung) or ‘self-realization’ (Selbstverwirklichung)”⁵.

¹ J. Heisig, *Imago Dei - A Study of Jung’s Psychology of Religion*, Lewisburg 1979.

² C.G. Jung, *A Psychological Theory of Types*. Collected Works. Vol. 6, 815-817.

³ Ivana Ryška Vajdová, Jung’s Psychological Analysis of Imago Dei, *Spirituality Studies*, 2, 1, 2016, 49-64.

⁴ Haymann Ronald, *Life of Jung*, NYC/ London 2001.

⁵ Jung, *Výbor z díla III – osobnost a přenos*, Brno 2000, 69.

Jung perceives neurosis as an attempt to re-establish the balance of the psyche which causes external and visible symptoms of disturbed consciousness. In the early stages, it can manifest itself by memory loss, partial aphasia, problems with thinking functions, and often an activation of a complex towards some person, situation, object or phenomenon. Long-term psychological imbalance can lead to psychosis, i.e. a state in which the integrity of consciousness collapses and the affected individual can get out of such state only with the help of a professional⁶.

Character of individuation immanently speaks of re-establishment of wholeness, while neurosis attempts to expose dissociative character of one's personality which does not correspond with one's persona, i.e. with how one presents oneself outwardly, for Jung, the aim of individuation is to free the Self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and of the suggestive powers of unconscious contents on the other.⁷

Even before he conceptualised his theory of archetypes, Jung had coined the term 'individuation' in 1916 to denote the process of self-realization⁸. Individuation, however, does not mean excellence or infallibility of the individual, but the full development of one's prerequisites and freeing oneself of unconscious suppressions, outwardly projecting themselves in a destructive way – known as the shadow archetype. The aim of the individuation process, therefore, is to assimilate those unconscious contents that do not correspond with the persona and also bring the individual to become conscious of one's own uniqueness and depth of self-knowledge.

According to Jung, the individuation process does not end in strict individualism or egocentrism, as it is often simply assumed. In a wider context, it manifests itself in the integration in society, which is not a product of convention anymore, but a conscious and profound decision and establishment of an individual within society. "Individualism means deliberately stressing and giving prominence to some supposed peculiarity rather than to collective considerations and obligations. But individuation means precisely the better and more complete fulfillment of the collective qualities of the human being, since adequate consideration of the peculiarity of the individual is more conducive to a better social performance than when the peculiarity is neglected or even suppressed"⁹.

However, it is unlikely for an individual completing the individuation process to become hyper-altruistic, as by acting this way one would limit oneself and therefore negate the concept of individuation itself. Individuation also means to

⁶ Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, New York 2005.

⁷ Jung, Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation, In: *Collected Works 9 I*, Princeton 1939

⁸ P. Pietikainen, *Alchemists of Human Nature*, London 2007, 105.

⁹ Jung, *Výbor z díla III*, 70-71.

work with conscious functions and to become aware of one's own complexes often activated by inferior function of the consciousness: "The least differentiated 'inferior' function is so contaminated with the collective unconscious that during the individuation process it brings along the archetype of the Self"¹⁰.

Subjective or intrapsychic integration takes place within the framework of differentiation, and at the same time of establishment of dissociative and primarily unconscious contents in the subject. It is then followed by object-relations process or social integration, generally called the secondary stage of socialization. In relation to the rest of the world, it is generated through interruption which thus becomes a central question in individuation¹¹.

It is, however, impossible to pre-determine the preference of action for an individual, or even the kind of values one will bring to the society. It is the variety of inner life and outer projection that is specific and unique in every individuated personality. At the instant when a subject becomes an individual in society, there is a higher tendency for new opinions and values to emerge and be applied in everyday life. Such contents and values do not need to be of technological character. They mostly present philosophical, ethical, aesthetic, or radically methodological contribution to the sociocultural sphere.

The individuation process is accompanied by the deviation from the collective norms, yet it does not culminate in anomic behaviour or in preference of one's own infallibility. A personality in which individual components of the psyche are integrated, automatically reforms its world view, but diverges from the clearly defined individualism: "A real conflict with the collective norm arises only when an individual way is elevated to a norm, which is the actual aim of extreme individualism. Naturally, this aim is pathological and inimical to life and it has nothing to do with individuation that hold collective norms in esteem"¹².

In the individuation process the Ego is transcended and the gradual constitution of an individual, that is of what is indivisible (in-dividere), occurs with the subsequent realization of the Self. To attain the archetype of the Self means to expand one's self-knowledge beyond the boundaries of subject's consciousness and to create a balance between consciousness and unconsciousness. The Self, therefore, can be referred to as abstract psychic equilibrium, that is the imaginary point of psychic balance of the individual when, although, the whole unconsciousness is not revealed in the individual's introspection, it is no longer a place for burdensome suppressed contents that would have disintegrated effect for the Self.¹³ Individuation is not a process crowned with perfection, but wholeness. The

¹⁰ Jung, *Výbor z díla V – nové symboly individuálního procesu*, Brno 1999, 38.

¹¹ I. Gray, *Jung, Irigaray, Individuation*, New York 2008, 80.

¹² D. Sharp, *Slovník základních pojmů Junga*, Brno 2005, 60.

¹³ Jung, *A Study in the Process of Individuation*, In: *Collected Works 9 I*, Princeton 1934/1950.

wholeness has a specific character for each and every individual, for Jung no one is ever completely individuated. The goal of individuation is wholeness and a healthy working relationship with the Self.

The Self as an analytico-psychological concept of the God-man¹⁴

According to Jung, the Self can be described as an archetype representing wholeness and at the same time a centre of the psyche. Generally speaking, the Self is “a totality of all psychic phenomena of oneself”. Unlike the Ego that covers the contents of consciousness, the Self is a unification of conscious and unconscious contents in a person. It is in essence an abstraction, more precisely transcendent concept belonging to every individual¹⁵.

The Self, however, does not assume objectivistic concept, which means that, although, it can be rationalised in general, on the individual level it differs in its realization and it stays dynamic: “Our own Self is an architect and also a builder of our dynamic structure on which, in a course of a lifetime, our spiritual existence leans, transcends the Ego and preserves a long-term potential of the mankind. The aim the Self tries to achieve is wholeness, a complex realization of the plan for human existence in a course of a lifetime of an individual”¹⁶.

Archetypal images of the Self appear in dreams and myths mostly as symbolic figures of the subordinate character. It is, for instance, the archetype of the Saviour, the King, the Hero¹⁷, the Wise Old Man or the Magician. In the image of mandala quarternity, Jung positions the Self in its centre, as it represents the union of opposites, in other words completion of a process of enantiodromia. Jung states that the Self is not recorded only in gnostic or alchemistic works, but also in literature of crypto-religious character, be it Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* or Goethe’s *Faust*. The Self has functional meaning only when it can act compensatorily to Ego-consciousness. If the Ego is dissolved in

¹⁴ The Self (das Selbst) is not an Ego (das Ich) but a supraordinate totality embracing the conscious and the unconscious. As a result, it continually creates that ubiquitous “participation mystique” which is the unity of many, the one man in all men. This psychological fact forms the basis for the archetype of the Anthropos, the Son of Man, the Home Maximus, the only man (vir unus), purusha. Jung, *Výbor z díla IV – obraz člověka a obraz boha*, Brno 2001, 247.

¹⁵ Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Self*, In: *Collected Works 9 II*, Princeton 1951.

¹⁶ A. Stevens, *On Jung. With a reply to Jung’s critics*, Princeton 1999, 62.

¹⁷ “The hero symbolizes a man’s essential unconscious Self which manifests itself empirically as the sum and most complete and pure prototype of all archetypes therefore it includes the archetype of the ‘father’ and of the wise old man alternatively. To that extent the hero is his own father and his own begetter”. Jung, *Výbor z díla VIII – brdina a archetyp matky*, Brno 2009, 236.

identification with the Self, it gives rise to a sort of nebulous superman with a puffed-up Ego and a shrunken Self. It means that the concept of analytical psychology of the Ego assumes not only the existence of the Self, but also a direct transition to the Self through the individuation process. At the same time, however, we must not “divinise” the integrated Ego to the pure Self since by doing so any kind of individual character is being lost.

At that moment an individual would cease to exist as an individual and one would become emanation of collective consciousness syncretically connected to unconscious contents where it would be impossible to differentiate a personal character from the collective one. When decision making is concerned, it is not possible to apply the rational “either-or” to making decisions about the Ego and the Self. The reason is that: “the new personality is not in any case a third thing midway between the conscious and unconscious, but it is both together. Since it transcends consciousness it can no longer be called the Ego, but the Self. Reference must be made here to the Indian concept of the Atman, whose personal and cosmic modes of being form an exact parallel to the psychological concept of the Self and the *filii philosophorum*: the Self too is both ego and non-ego, subjective and objective, individual and collective. It is the uniting symbol which epitomizes the total union of opposites. As such and with respect to its paradoxical nature, it can only be expressed by means of symbolic figures”¹⁸.

One Coptic tractate included in the Bruce Codex (*Codex Brucianus*) already contains a reference to Only Begotten Son (*Monogenes* or *Anthropos*) dwelling in the monadic form in the Maker (*Setheus*) surrounded by people of all races. He is also known as *Anthropos* whose limbs make up the four gates, hence the analogy to four basic functions of the conscious. The *Monad* is a spark of light (*spinther*), an atom of the Deity. “The *Monogenes* is thought of as standing upon a *tetrapeza*, a platform supported by four pillars, corresponding to the Christian quaternarium of the four Evangelists, or to the *Tetramorph*, the symbolic steed of the Church, composed of the symbols of four evangelists – the angel, eagle, ox and lion”¹⁹. In the Barbelognostic system, *Autogenes* conceived of himself, or the *Uncreated* is surrounded by lights from all four sides. This figure is analogous to *Monogenes*, the figure from the Gnostic Coptic Bruce Codex. Medieval alchemy often regarded the *Philosopher’s Stone* (*Lapis Philosophorum*), or the primary matter (*Prima Materia*) as a mystical being referred to as the earthly God (*Deus terrestis*), the Saviour (*Salvator*) or first numinous man – *Thanthropos*. He is seen as a matter

¹⁸ Jung, *Výbor z díla III*, 271-272.

¹⁹ Jung, *Výbor z díla IV – obraz člověka a obraz boha*, Brno 2001, 79.

of oneness, which never dies and creates and transform itself. It is a monadic matter of firm point analogous to the Self as a fixed centre of dynamic spectrum of the psyche.

Teaching about the Son of God having attributes of the God-man can be already found in the work of Gnostic Zosimus from the third century AD. Zosimus talks about Anthropos who is gifted with the mystic connection with the hieratic art (*hieratiké techné*). Jung also points out Paracelsus who refers to the fact that the archaic texts about the Original Man or Anthropos showed that deity in a form of demiurg presented itself through primordial conceived man (*protoplasus*), who possessed cosmic proportions. It is, therefore, possible to be identified with an image of the first matter (*prima materia*) in alchemic texts: “The symbolic names of the *prima materia* all point to the *anima mundi*, Plato’s Primordial Man, the Anthropos and mystic Adam, who is described as a sphere (wholeness), consisting of four parts (uniting different aspects in itself), hermaphroditic (beyond division by sex), and damp (i.e. Psychic). This paints a picture of the self, the indescribable totality of man”²⁰.

At the same time, the life of a man is only specific phase of perpetual cycle. With regard to alchemy: “death is at once the conception of *filius philosophorum*, a peculiar variation of the doctrine of Anthropos”²¹. It is therefore possible to state that the concept of the God-man is of equal religious, psychological and especially therapeutic importance with regard to the symbolic role of individuation in a life of man. Ignorance of such importance contributes to deepening of the postmodernism crisis of a man as a subject, and it called for the constitution of a subject on the individual level.

Conclusion

Jung’s expression “God-man” sounded blasphemous in his era, but it has peculiar psychological meaning. It highlights the dynamics of an individual psyche trying to reach a state of wholeness, analogous to Nietzsche’s concept of *Übermensch*²². On this journey the significance of analytical psychology arises as its main purpose is to overcome seemingly impervious boundary between secular world-view – with its empirical and scientific character – and an introspective, mystical and religious experience.

²⁰ Jung, *Paracelsica – dvě studie o renesančním mysliteli a lékaři*, Praha 2002, 67.

²¹ Jung, *Výbor z díla III*, 271.

²² Nietzsche’s influence on Jung has been discussed by a lot of historians and philosophers, especially by P. Bishop (1995) *The Dionysian Self: Jung’s Reception of Nietzsche* or Liebscher, Martin (2012) *Libido und Wille zur Macht*.

A wide gap between the two has caused current psychological crisis notes Jung. Neurotic nature of modern man makes his advance towards the ideal of wholeness impossible. We need to bridge the gap as well as surpass rigid value dualism contained in traditional religion. Human being can't exist nor individuate itself without values, in the same time the obsolete value system became a main obstacle in the individuation process of modern man.

Jung sees the goal of individuation process in achieving man's uniqueness, discovery of who he truly is or who he should be in accordance with his inner specificity and determination. That requires liberation from the disguise of Persona on one hand and from the suggestive power of unconscious on the other. Individuation means also awareness of the continuation of one's life through the ages. It gives a man a feeling of eternity on this Earth²³.

It is Jung's demand for syncretism that can positively and creatively express the state "beyond good and evil" as well as create a sustainable state which is not based on rigidity of outside ideology. It ought to be based on inner and profound reality lived through by every human who will willingly become an individual.

The process of individuation is always, more or less, in contrast with collective norms since the birth of individuality is connected with breaking away from the collectiveness and with differentiating from the universality. The concept of "das Selbs" epitomises an organic link between the unique and the eternal, the individual and the universal, the individual and the collective. At the same time, it can be characterised as a conflict "coniunctio oppositorum", the unity of opposites. In that sense it signifies the compact personality of man. It is impossible to live as Ego forever, it would be childish, says Jung. The true centre is the Self, just as the centre of our solar system is not the Earth but the Sun. Achieving the genuine human maturation depends on the acknowledgment of this higher psychic and spiritual authority²⁴.

²³ Jung, *Introduction to Jungian Psychology. Notes of the Seminar on Analytical Psychology Given in 1925*, Princeton 2012, 154.

²⁴ R. Starý, *Potřže s hlubinnou psychologií*, Prostor 1990, 200.