

Carl Jung and Religion

Lecture 4

Rev. Dr Sahaya G. Selvam, sdb



Institute of Youth Studies
Tangaza University College, Nairobi



www.sahayaselvam.org

1



Carl G. Jung (1875-1961)

- Born 1875
- Died 1961
- Sometime collaborator & friend of Freud
- Founder of analytical psychology
- Family background: Swiss Reformed Church
- Work in psychiatry in Zurich

www.sahayaselvam.org

2

Jung 1: Structure of the Psyche

Summary Point 1:

The psyche (self) has different layers and components within itself



www.sahayaselvam.org

3

Structure of the Psyche

Persona: The "I," usually ideal aspects of ourselves, that we present to the outside world.

Ego: The central complex in the field of consciousness.

Shadow: Hidden or unconscious aspects of oneself, both good and bad, which the ego has either repressed or never recognized.

Anima: The inner feminine side of a man;

Animus: The inner masculine side of a woman.

Self: The archetype of wholeness and the regulating center of the psyche; a transpersonal power that transcends the ego.

www.sahayaselvam.org

4

Jung 2: Collective Unconscious

A structural layer of the human psyche containing inherited elements, distinct from the personal unconscious.

"The collective unconscious contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual" [The Structure of the Psyche, CW 8, par. 342.]

Religious symbols and myths are drawn from the Collective Unconscious.

www.sahayaselvam.org

5

Jung 3: Archetypes

Summary Point :

The archetype is the primordial, structural elements of the human psyche; part of the collective unconscious.

- Archetypes are systems images and emotions.
- They are inherited with the brain structure.
- It is that portion through which the psyche is attached to nature.
- Archetypal images, as universal patterns or motifs are the basic content of religions, mythologies, legends and fairy tales.

www.sahayaselvam.org

6

Jung: Archetypes

“Innate predispositions towards the formation of certain common images... By them I understand forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myths and at the same time as autochthonous, individual products of unconscious origin.”

C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, p.63

www.sahayaselvam.org

7

Jung: Archetypes

Summary Point :

The archetypes manifest themselves in different forms.

- **archetypal events:** birth, death, initiation, marriage, the union of opposites;
- **archetypal figures:** great mother, father, devil, god, wise old man, the trickster, hero;
- **archetypal motifs:** the apocalypse, the deluge, the creation.

www.sahayaselvam.org

8

Jung 4: Individuation

- Individuation is a process informed by the archetypal ideal of **wholeness**, which depends on the **integration** between ego and unconscious. The aim is not to overcome one's personal psychology, to become perfect, but to become familiar with it. Thus individuation involves an increasing awareness of one's unique psychological reality, including personal strengths and limitations, and at the same time a deeper appreciation of humanity in general.

www.sahayaselvam.org

9

Jung 5: Synchronicity

A phenomenon where an event in the outside world coincides meaningfully with a psychological state of mind.

“Synchronicity . . . consists of two factors: a) An unconscious image comes into consciousness either directly (i.e., literally) or indirectly (symbolized or suggested) in the form of a dream, idea, or premonition. b) An objective situation coincides with this content. The one is as puzzling as the other.”
[“Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle,” C.W. 8, par. 858.]

www.sahayaselvam.org

10

Jung 6: Religion as a privileged road to Individuation

- “Religions spring from the natural life of the unconscious soul and give adequate expression to it.”
- Religious Symbols mediate individuation; (religious symbols portray integration).

www.sahayaselvam.org

11



12

Symbols

"As a uniter of opposites, the symbol is a totality which can never be addressed only to one faculty in a man – his reason or intellect, for example – that always concerns our wholeness, touches and produces a resonance in all four of our functions at once. The symbol as 'image' has the nature of a summons, and stimulates a man's whole being to a total reaction; his thought and feeling, his senses and his intuition participate in this reaction..."

Jolande Jacobi, *Complex-Archetype-Symbol in the psychology of C.G. Jung*, 1959, p.88.

www.sahayaselvam.org

13

God and the Self

"When I say as a psychologist that God is an archetype, I mean by that the 'type' in psyche. The word 'type' is, as we know, derived from 'typos' - imprint; thus an archetype presupposes an imprinter!" (Jung, *Psychology & Alchemy*, p.12-13).

Imago Dei: "The religious point of view... puts the accent on the imprinter, whereas scientific psychology emphasises the typos, the imprint – the only thing it can understand.

The religious point of view understands the imprint as the working of an imprinter..." (Jung, *Psychology & Alchemy*, p.17).

www.sahayaselvam.org

14

Jungian Concept of God

- God as the Self: **imago dei**!
- God as Trinity is incomplete – there is a need for the integration of the **feminine**;
- **Answer to Job** (1952): God must have a shadow side. There is a shadow side in the self – which is imago dei; and besides the shadow in God will explain the presence of evil in the world; this will reflect the whole of reality.

www.sahayaselvam.org

15

A Religious Critique of Jung

- A better appreciation of religion in Jung than Freud.
- Does religion have only a functional value (mediating individuation)?
- Does Jung include a transcendental dimension of religion? "the greatest difference btw Jung and the Christian tradition is, clearly, that Jung is operating without the transcendental element" (Avis Dry, *The psychology of Jung: A critical interpretation*, 1961).

www.sahayaselvam.org

16

Transpersonal Psychology

Transpersonal psychology is a school of psychology (?) that integrates the spiritual and transcendent aspects of the human experience with the framework of modern psychology. It is also possible to define it as a "spiritual psychology".

The Transpersonal has been defined as "experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos" (Walsh, R. & Vaughan, F., 1993. On transpersonal definitions. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 25 (2),125-182).

Contributors: Abraham Maslow (self-actualization and peak experiences) Stanislav Grof, Anthony Sutich, Ken Wilber, Frances Vaughan...

www.sahayaselvam.org

17

Jung & Transpersonal Psychology

NOTE: Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (PRS) is not to be reduced to Transpersonal Psychology (TP); often a course in PRS may not have a class on TP; here I only make a mention.

Besides the direct influence of contributors (not all of them are rigorous psychologists) it would be fair to acknowledge that Jung, besides William James and later Maslow, played a key role in pioneering TP.

www.sahayaselvam.org

18