

JUNG'S PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF IMAGO DEI

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ABSTRACT

One of the most intricate topics that are still open in connection to a Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung is religion and related issues: What is the relation between religion and psychology? What is Jung's personal stance? Did Jung reject religion as a relict of primitive way of thinking or did he try to replace religion with psychology? Some speculations drawing primarily from Jung's imagery and symbolism revealed in *Liber Novus* put forward the claim that he even aspired to found a new religion. This paper will attempt to square Jung's attitude to religion, mainly Christianity. I will point out the main ideas of his psychology of religion. I will follow the evolution of particular ideas related to religion starting with his early works right through to his last.

Key words

Carl Gustav Jung, imago Dei, religion, Self, psychology of religion, individuation

"I am distressed for thee, my brother..."

2 Samuel 1:26

1 Introduction

There have been many speculations about Jung's attitude towards religion. In his books

and letters he frequently states that he is being portrayed as a prophet [1], an atheist, a mystic, a gnostic [2], a pagan, a theologian or a materialist. He, however, considered himself solely a psychologist. He rejects claims that his theory strives to affirm the existence of transcendent God or any claims about the nature of such being (CW 14 1954). According to Jung, religious experience as such is real, therefore it deserves the attention of psychologists. *"The psychologist has to investigate religious symbols because his empirical material, of which the theologian usually*

knows nothing, compels him to do so." (CW 14 1954, 326).

It was the prominent Jung scholar Sonu Shamdasani, author of *Cult Fictions: C. G. Jung and the Founding of Analytical Psychology* (Shamdasani 1998), who shed a new light on life and work of C. G. Jung.

One of the Jung's current critics focusing on religious contexts of his work is Richard Noll. In his books, *The Jung Cult: The Origins of a Charismatic Movement* and *The Aryan Christ: The Secret Life of Carl Jung*, the American psychologist and historian interprets Jung's psychological theories as "anti-orthodox Christian cult of redemption or a Nietzschean religion" or rather "pagan form of personal religion". Jung was "waging war against Christianity and its distant, absolute, unreachable God and was training his disciples to listen to the voices of the dead, to worship the sun, and to become gods themselves" (Noll 1997, 224). In the conclusion of his book Noll suggests that we could be witnessing a birth of new religious movement arising from the merger of Jungian movement and the New Age spirituality of the late 20th century based on the apotheosis of Jung as a God-man (Noll 1994, 1997).

When reading *Liber Novus*, one is normally so consternated by the religious imagery that it is quite easy to succumb to opinion that the imagery is not "merely" active imagination of an individual but a specific religious message, a prophecy. Noll especially pays attention to the images that prove Jung's alleged conviction that he is the new Christ: a black serpent lying at his feet, Jung spreads his arms wide as he identifies with Christ. Salome approaches him, the serpent winds around Jung's body

and his face transforms into lion's. Salome tells him that he is Christ.

"Salome became very interested in me, and she assumed that I could cure her blindness. She began to worship me. I said, 'Why do you worship me?' She replied, 'You are Christ'. In spite of my objections she maintained this. (...) While the snake was pressing me, I felt that my face had taken on the face of an animal of prey, a lion or a tiger." (Jung 2010, 251).

In his seminars (1925), Jung later offers his interpretation and says that his worshipping by Salome symbolized that side of the inferior function, which is surrounded by an aura of evil. This experience was for him a symbolic deification, he transformed into the Deus Leontocephalus of the Mithraic mysteries from the 1st to the 4th century (Jung 1989). Noll, however, insists that Jung believed he had literally become someone of a God, an Aryan Christ. Noll claims that the lion-headed god Aion became his secret image of God within, and Jung and his close followers realized this truth and concealed it from the world (Noll 1997). Noll is too concrete and too literal in his criticism. Anthony Stevens notes and points out that Noll writes as if Jung believed that it was an actual transformation into God, rather than a symbolic experience. He deals with it in more detail in his book *On Jung* (Stevens 1999, 275–290). Similarly, Sonu Shamdasani, translator of *Liber Novus* and arguably the most renowned Jung scholar, states that there is no evidence that the above mentioned active imagination shaped Jung's self-understanding for the rest of his life or that he even took it literally. More in the book *Cult Fictions* (Shamdasani 1998, 49–55).

Comprehensive study of Jung's works allowed me to examine his relationship to religion, or God in great detail. Jung publicly distanced himself from anything that could be called a Jungian movement or a school, for instance in his lecture "Is Analytical Psychology a Religion?" [3] from 1936 (Jung 1977). In the course of his life he started to appreciate a psychological importance of religion, such as Christianity, while he explicitly warned against the spiritual vacuum he observed in some countries during his lifetime.

Jung's literary remains consist of nineteen volumes of *Collected Works*, two volumes of letters, several seminars, the autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, and the collection of interviews and casual writings in *C. G. Jung Speaking*. The amount of unpublished material exceeds the amount of the published one by far (Shamdasani 2003). Therefore, to create a tight theory out of it is somewhat risky. Jung himself did not make it easier with the unsystematic nature of his writing style. I will attempt to present Jung's principal concepts in relation to religion, God and psychological experience of religion in general. I will try to proceed in a chronological order.

2 Religious activity as psychiatric diagnosis

At the beginning of his career Jung did not show any interest in religion as an independent subject matter, but he did so almost exclusively in relation to mental disorders when examining religious hallucinations, visions of God, self-identification of patients with

prophets or divine beings. Jung mentions God in his writings for the first time at the age of 34. In *The Significance of the Father in the Destiny of the Individual* (1909a) Jung puts forward more complex statement about religion and its function. Influenced by Freud's *Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices* (1907), Jung interprets religion as "fantasy structure" created in order to resolve sexual problems (Heising 1979). Freud's concept of sublime sexuality, at that time, was not only a significant piece of knowledge but oftentimes also the only explanatory framework for a vast array of phenomena. At that time, according to Heising, Jung even agreed with Freud in stating that the parent-child relationship is primarily sexual. If it is religion in which the most basic transformation of the child – parent relationship into the man – God relationship takes place, it is then a purpose of every religion to process, or, to be more precise, to tame the human sexuality with the difference that the Moses' relationship with God was lawful, while the Jesus' relationship was personal (CW 4 1909a).

However subversive this notes might seem in relation to religion, Jung did not agree with Freud, not even in his most radical early period: Christianity cannot be simply opposed, because it might be useful in psychoanalysis. First explicit and general definition of relationship between religion and psychoanalysis can be found in *The Analysis of Dream* (1909b): psychoanalysis can heal and strengthen human spirit where the Church has only crushed it (CW 4 1909b).

Jung turned away from Freud and the whole psychoanalytical movement when he start-

ed to doubt a sexual sublimation theory [4] and he embarked on an intensive study of mythology and its potential for psychology. Findings of his studies on astrology and psychology were summed up in a book titled *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1916). There Jung went beyond purely functional understanding of religion. He poses a question of why religious desire and motivation occur in a man (*final cause*). He also offers an answer that it is a psychic response to unfulfilled wishes – religion is, therefore, a concept of ideas of what we miss. He adds yet another question: where does this desire and motivation originate from (*material cause*) and answers that it is a common receptacle of “archaic inclination” shared by all people (Jung 1916). These reflections are Jung’s first steps towards the formulation of *theory of collective unconscious* and *archetypes*. And thus religion is the field on which Jung created his most essential theory. Religion will remain an inseparable motif throughout Jung’s research into human Psyche.

Rejection of Freud’s reductionism also manifested itself in terms of partial psychic phenomenon, whose manner of understanding still determines interpretation of all human desires and motivations: libido. Instead of using it in a Freudian’s spirit – as a sexual drive energy – he transformed the meaning of libido into ungraspable psychological energy. According to Jung, sexuality is only one of the manifestations of libido (CW 5 1911). By saying that, he unlocked absolutely different understanding of one’s self-realization and added to this process a dignity, wholeness and versatility that have no place in Freud’s psychological mechanics. Reformulation of li-

bido means that there are deeper layers of psyche than only sexual.

It implies that even the causes of neuroses lie much deeper and they are not only sexual, as Freud assumed. It would correspond with urgency and fatal severity of many psychological problems that evidently have no sexual origin. On the other hand, such approach promotes sexuality itself as a manifestation of a broader psychic energy, a manifestation of richness of spiritual life. Libido asserts itself in many concrete human activities of which it is the most profound driving force. As energy force it is ungraspable and it can be, according to Jung, identified with the symbol of God: “*If one honors God, the sun or the fire, then one honors one’s own vital force, the libido*” (Jung 1916, 96, 227). In *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (1916) he states that from the psychological point of view to worship God is to worship one’s own libido: “*Mankind wishes to love in God only their own ideas, that is to say, the ideas which they project into God. By that they wish to love their unconscious, that is, that remnant of ancient humanity and the centuries-old past of all people.*” (Jung 1916, 200).

Jung’s psychological interpretation of a symbol of God leads him to the notion that in monotheistic religions libido manifests itself in the most comfortable manner, inasmuch as one source is worshipped. Just as libido is full of contradictory desires, God is such, too [5]. He can be forgiving and cruel beyond human logic or ethics, as later seen in the book of Job. Here Jung seems to appear as an explicit atheist, he even speaks of God as of a kind of fantasy projection known to psychologists in cases of paranoia (Jung 1916). He

deems religious myths as ever beneficial for the not enlightened masses. But then, when those myths are cleared of obsolete elements it means protection against “monsters of the universe” similar to peace and security received in the childhood from parents. Only the enlightened elite can uncover religion for themselves in a form of crippling neurosis because their spiritual needs go far beyond urge for security. For Jung individuation means continuous loss and re-establishing of psychic balance, while neurosis is accompanying effect of this process. For modern man religion seems to play clear part in one part of the individuation cycle but unclear in the latter: “[A]mong all his patients in the second half of life there is not one whose main problem is not related to his attitude towards religion” (Ellenberger 1970, 714).

In the years when opus *Liber Novus* was being created, Jung underwent a period of inner turmoil during which he tested his theories on himself. In his lectures, however, especially in *The Theory of Psychoanalysis* (1913), he again emphasized a need to study parallelism between unconscious fantasies and mythical religious motifs and to search for common grounds between them. He identifies the mind of a child with that of the primitive, thus implying again ontogeny-phylogeny model (CW 4 1913). It is precisely in that time when Jung uses the term *archetype* [6] for the first time (1919–1920).

Jung repeatedly stated that Christianity is strictly an ascetic response to uncontrolled instinctiveness, and so the fate of Christianity is to be absorbed by history as a consequence of the human spirit advancement.

As long as it is done collectively, there is only a couple of individuals with the courage and insight to embed their values elsewhere. Some commentators, for instance James Heisig, see Nietzsche’s [7] influence here, even if Jung did not reflect on that at the time (Heisig 1979).

3 Religious activity as psychological fact

Jung’s growing lenience towards God and deity as psychologically indisputable phenomenon can be seen in small modifications of his theory of symbols. Based on a comparison of dreams and fantasies of patients with mythological symbolism across cultures he establishes hypothesis of transpersonal level of unconscious – as an area of a number of spiritual, paranormal and transcendental experiences, including ESP phenomena, ego transcendence and other states of expanded consciousness – within one’s mind. This psychological layer common to all human species cannot be, according to Jung, exhausted by the theory of wish fulfilment that Jung previously fiddled with. In the letter to Hans Schmid he writes: “*The core of the individual is a mystery of life, which is snuffed out when it is grasped. That is why symbols want to be mysterious (...) they are not so merely because what is at the bottom of them cannot be clearly apprehended. The symbol wants to guard against Freudian interpretations, which are indeed such pseudo-truths that they never lack for effect...*” (Letters 1, 31).

Jung made here a subtle shift: Religion is not only allegorical wish fulfillment, or hundreds

of years old refined management of believer's instincts, but in religion "something" is being authentically expressed. Jung never shared Freud's theory of sexual sublimation without reservations and he considered religious activity as a general human desire. Even though, the desire fulfilment had been a frame within which he partially operated, hence the interpretation of God as psychologically portrayed libido. Abandoning the theory of wish fulfilment as such also changed his view on a symbol of God. It is not a symbol of libido anymore, but transpersonal unconscious as such (CW 7 1912). Jung here refers to the unconscious as a union of opposites, both God and Devil at the same time.

He reshapes a symbol [8] of God into something that arrives to man from the collective psyche, but at the same time it is a symbol for the collective psyche – the deepest, mysterious layer of mind. Symbol of God has become a true content, not sublimation of something else: *"The contents of the unconscious lay the same claim to reality on account of their obstinate persistence as do real things of the external world (...) It must not be forgotten that there have always been many people for whom the contents of the unconscious possessed a greater reality than the things of the outside world."* (CW 6, 168).

Jung is not interested in "essence" of religion, but in its psychological effect. Therefore, when he writes about religious orientation being a psychological need, it does not mean a defense of irreplaceable role of a particular religion. It only means that one will always behave in a manner known to him from religion. Religious function is for him an essen-

tial component of the psyche and is found always and everywhere, however undifferentiated it may be (CW 6, 315).

It must be kept in mind that Jung uses a term "symbol of God" as a declaration of psychological effect, not a term "God" as a thing-in-itself, and he did so all of his life. He refused to speculate metaphysically as he mentioned many times. What Kant called *"thing-in-itself"* (*Ding an sich*), Jung refers to as *"merely negative borderline concept"* (Jung 1932, 10) saying that *"every statement about the transcendental is to be avoided because it is only a laughable presumption on the part of a human mind unconscious of its limitations"* (CW 13 1929, 54).

Psychology is to study not God in himself, but the human idea of God. It relates to the fact that, according to Jung, psychology is a science not metaphysics. For Jung the God-image is a symbol and therefore it cannot be reduced to completely subjective origin. Anyway, in his another work *The Relation Between the Ego and the Unconscious* (1928) Jung converts to a concept of God and the divine as an autonomous psychic content: *"[B]y affixing 'divine' to the workings of the autonomous contents, we are admitting their relatively superior force... It is a force as real as hunger and the fear of death."* (CW 7 1928, 239). Jung explicitly discusses that although science cannot prove God's existence in any way, the experience with God as a psychic fact cannot be disproved.

Science has never discovered any "God", epistemological criticism proves the impossibility of knowing God, but the psyche comes forward with the assertion of the experience of God. God is a psychic fact of immediate ex-

perience, otherwise there would never have been any talk of God. The fact is valid in itself, requiring no non-psychological proof and inaccessible to any form of non-psychological criticism. It can be the most immediate and hence the most real of experiences, which can be neither ridiculed nor disproved (CW 8 1926, 328).

For better understanding of his theory, Jung introduces new terms, listed in a lexicon at the end of the book titled *Psychological Types* (1921). And so for man to be actually able to create symbols, one needs a mediator between the ego-consciousness and unconscious. The mediator, according to Jung, is an innate transcendent function (Jung 1921, 115). Another important term introduced by Jung is individuation – a process of differentiation of human being from unconscious with the purpose of understanding the unconscious contents (Jung 1921, 448–450). The aim of individuation is a birth of the Self and in Jung's work we can find many comparisons of the image of Self and the symbol of Jesus. He represents a goal to which every man is summoned in one's own way: Self-realization. The beginnings of such comparison can be found in *Liber Novus*, as indicated in Introduction.

What in Christian theology is called "*imitatio Christi*", 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.*" (Jung 1932, 181). However, Jung points out that in-

dividuation does not mean placing a burden on Jesus, but to undergo the same experiment with one's life as done by Jesus: realization of oneself.

"The Christian subordinates himself to the superior divine person in expectation of his grace; but the Oriental knows that redemption depends on the work he does on himself. The Tao grows out of the individual. The 'imitatio Christi' has this disadvantage: in the long run we worship as a divine example a man who embodied the deepest meaning of life, and then, out of sheer imitation, we forget to make real our own deepest meaning: self-realization. As a matter of fact, it is not altogether inconvenient to renounce one's own meaning. Had Jesus done so, he would probably have become a respectable carpenter and not a religious rebel to whom the same thing would naturally happen today as happened then." (CW 13 1929, 52–54, *Psychotherapists or the Clergy* 1932, 340).

For Jung, the figure of Christ is, similarly to Buddha, the most highly developed and differentiated symbol of the Self (CW 12 1943). The basic symbol the Self is *mandala*, which means a "circle" [9]. Based on hundreds of mandalas drawn by patients Jung later notes that in the centre of them there is not only God but always a variety of symbols of abstract and concrete nature (a golden flower, or a serpent, a dish, a man, the Sun, a star, a cross, etc.). According to Jung, patients with psychological problems do not primarily yearn for deity, but they search wholeness of themselves. This wholeness is fulfilled in the Self and so the image of the Self "is not a substitute but a symbol for the deity" (CW

11 1937). Jung thus identifies psychological effect of the image of the Self and the image of God: "[A]nything a man postulates as being a greater totality than himself can become a symbol of the Self". Jesus then represents suffering of ego that must persist on his journey to individuation. He addresses this matter in greater detail in his work *A Psychological Approach to Dogma of the Trinity* (1948).

As far as Christian terminology is concerned, Jung explains its psychological meaning. God and Father represent psychological image of collective unconscious, God and Trinity show birth of consciousness and unconscious, God as Quaternity represents a symbol for the aim of individuation process, the Self.

The Trinity is for Jung a symbol of perfection while the Quaternity is a symbol of totality or wholeness. Reaching Quaternity, however, means theoretical, for man unattainable reaching of wholeness. Jesus is then a psychological story of a struggle to reach the aim, a symbol for individuation process; the Holy Spirit is an ideal imitation Christi, an individual decision to fight towards the Self through earthly existence. For Jung himself, this is a fresh breath for Christianity that has become so remote from the ordinary people (CW 11 1948, 152–163).

In *Aion* (1950) Jung poses a question: Is the Self a symbol of Christ or is Christ a symbol of the Self? He responds: A psychologist does not have another option but to opt for the second one (CW 9 II 1950, 68). In the same work he also touches on issues of good and evil, where he, for the first time, attacks a concept of "*privatio boni*" as metaphysical definition of evil. For Jung the concept was not accept-

able for two reasons. On one hand, the concept denies the evident reality of evil, which is a commonplace but painful part of all human life. On the other hand, "*privatio boni*" view of evil is not an adequate expression of the psychological reality of moral judgement. For him "good" and "evil" were evaluative categories, applied to given facts of experience. They are not themselves facts, but human responses to facts, which may differ from one person to another (CW 9 II 1950). Figuratively speaking, Jung does not take it only as a metaphysical problem but also something that directly and continuously intervenes with our lives. Therefore, for Jung, the teaching of "*privatio boni*" means repression of evil which can lead to evil working from the depth of our unconscious, and thus become even more concealed, stronger and devious. Jung believes that Augustinus arrived at his perception of "*privatio boni*", because he did not contemplate evil as an equal pole to good. He claims that evil, unlike God is not absolute [10]. Augustinus does not acknowledge eternal existence of evil, because he imagined the world in the moment as if no evil existed and all of creation was a part of God – things, ideas, or human will etc. may be closer to or further from God's perfection and appear evil by comparison.

For Jung, on the other hand, the non-existence of evil is not possible. As long as there is a man, the evil cannot cease to exist, given it has already existed. Simply because we must symbolize evil, therefore, it must exist at the symbolic level as a psychological fact. As a matter of fact, there is no annihilation in psyche, only compensation. Therefore, even that what is fading from the light of con-

sciousness is carried with us in the matrix of unconscious. And thus, what disrupts wholeness for Augustinus, makes wholeness possible for Jung.

It is, however, necessary to note that for Jung evil is not entirely evil. It becomes evil providing we banish it there. At the end of the *Archetype and Collective Unconscious* (1934) he adds: *"We do not know what good and evil are in themselves. It must therefore be supposed that they spring from a need of human consciousness and that for this reason they lose their validity outside the human sphere. That is to say, a hypostasis of good and evil as metaphysical entities is inadmissible because it would deprive these terms of meaning. If we call everything that God does or allows 'good', then evil is good too and 'good' becomes meaningless."* (CW 9II 1950, 267). Jung did not intend to relativize moral good and evil. On the contrary, he claims that the moral evil arises from the fact that we cannot, due to our own natural tendencies, come to terms with evil and instead of integrating it, we repress it and we pretend it does not belong to us. In unconscious, however, "death" does not stand for demise, but as if it inevitably implied the resurrection in renewed force. Despite the mutual fondness Jung came to a disagreement with Victor White [11] especially when the matter of "*privatio boni*" is concerned.

4 Psychological defense and criticism of religion

Jung's attitude towards religion changes with time. He accepts it practically – as a cultural convenience that enables people things that

are impossible on biological level – progress, sacrifice of oneself, etc. He also acknowledges that religion can serve us in a way of connecting us with the realms of unconscious otherwise unreachable. Therefore, it would be short-sighted to try to replace it altogether with science. The realm of unconscious from which the images of God and the Self emerge are, according to Jung, unknown and uncontrollable (CW 10 1918). As a psychologist, Jung takes into account healing capacities of religion that bring release to chaotic instincts by means of fantasy. Therefore, we cannot simply get rid of religion without putting our own psychic health in jeopardy. Jung proposes to distinguish religious functions from religious dogmas that serve in every religion to prevent believers from confronting their own unconscious (CW 6 1921).

Dogmas act as a protective shield of a believer against his own first-hand experience with God and as such it has its pros and cons. The advantage is that man is not directly confronted with his unconscious. Jung himself experienced it and he thinks that not everybody is capable of handling it. A strong man, however, can break this shield of religion and individually "experience God". In the light of this dichotomy between the "mass" and the strong and enlightened individuals Jung puts emphasis on "nobleness" of more individually understood religion: *"The astonishing range of Catholic symbolism, for instance, has an emotional appeal which for many natures is absolutely satisfying (...) It is perhaps only temporarily and for relatively few individuals that the existing collective religious have become inadequate."* (CW 8 1928, 59).

The figure of Jesus or rather his interpretation is one of the Christian dogmas which, instead of developing its promising psychological potential, has become an obstacle in the authentic relationship to the unconscious: Jesus, the alleged savior, conceals before his believers that his inner conflicts ("sins") have psychological origin and thus oversimplifying the significance of the unconscious. God-Father as presented in Christianity does not fulfil his symbolic potential either, because his function is only to ensure that man did not need to sacrifice the security of a child dependence. While Jung understands the term God psychologically as a part of the mind unknown to us, the Western theology objectified God to such an extent that he became Totally Other and hence he cannot by any means, descend to our soul. Moreover, the result is that an imitation of Jesus also loses its power and claim for a following of ideal of man's life (CW 12 1944). As *"for it is not a question of an imitation that leaves a man unchanged and makes him into a mere artifact, but of realizing the ideal on one's own account – Deo concedente – in one's own individual life"* (CW 12 1944, 7).

Psychological science must, according to Jung, battle the infantilization of believers. Only a barbarian man needs God who assigns tasks and is an external judge of good and evil. Jung asserts that God must be withdrawn from objects and brought to the Soul [12]. Unless the Church [13] accommodates to this need arriving with the development of modern consciousness, they will no longer be able to grant refuge to a thinking man. Psychology picks up the baton where the Church after two millennia run out of steam. It helps

man to cope with unconscious and its "spiritual" archetypal images. By doing so it does not accomplish destruction of religion, quite the opposite. It unties the hands of religion: *"It opens people's eyes to the real meaning of dogmas, and far from destroying, it throws open an empty house to new inhabitants."* (CW 12 1944, 12). Apparently, Jung deems psychology an essential complement to religion for every believer. The role of psychology is to shed light on a psychological origin of dogmas that claim absoluteness and by doing so to instigate a thinking man: *"[T]he archetypes of the unconscious can be shown empirically to be the equivalents of religious dogmas"* (CW 12 1944, 17). In spite of that psychology cannot fully substitute for religion, as well as functions of reason cannot fully psychologically suppress the function of religion: *"Every extension and intensification of rational consciousness, however, leads us further away from the sources of symbols and, by its ascendancy, prevents us from understanding them. (...) But if we understand these things for what they are, as symbols, then we can only marvel at the unfathomable wisdom that is in them and be grateful to the institutions which has not only conserved them but developed them dogmatically."* (CW 11 1948, 199).

Jung relatively specifically diagnoses two fundamental hazards of faith: the first, mentioned above, is a projection of the God-archetype fully on external object, the second one, on the other hand, is a projection of the God-archetype on himself. Both of these extremes have concrete consequences: in the first case, the God-archetype does not have consciousness within his reach and remains in his primitive, unconscious state. In the se-

cond case, the God-archetype inflates consciousness to the extent that he loses contact with unconscious (e.g., *"Nietszche fully identified himself with the figure Zarathustra [Mana personality] completely..."* (Jacobi 1973, 144). Religious symbols need to be therefore kept within these two extremes supposing they should help a man to get on well with his unconscious mind (CW 11 1948).

The Swiss psychologist warns not only against passive, thoughtless devotion to a symbol of God but also against a naive form of atheism that ignores deeper function of faith and ends in self-divination. A man living in a despiritualized world where reality is measured purely materially, can easily fall a victim to his own archaic instincts *"the destruction of the God-image is followed by the annulment of the human personality"* (CW 9 II 1950, 109, 123).

His book *Answer to Job* in 1951, written at the age of 76, has gained the greatest response. The book has earned him not only admiration, but a harsh criticism, too, especially in the theological circles. *"Job is a direct continuation of Aion: it traces the growth of consciousness through a study of changing images of God, both within and without the limits of defined doctrine"* (Heisig 1979, 79). Jung begins his *Answer to Job* with a declaration of spiritual truth where religious testimonies are also included. Jung again points out that he refuses to deal with transcendent realities. A testimony from the Bible is considered *"expression of the Soul"* that refers to archetypes growing from collective unconscious. The Biblical story of Job and Yahweh trying Job is well-known but Jung arrives at completely new interpretation. Job blames Yahweh for tormenting him

and reveals his antinomic nature. Job then gets to a higher moral level because he sees that Yahweh only projects own doubts about himself. *"Yahweh is (...) too unconscious to be moral. Morality presupposes consciousness."* (CW 11 1952, 372). Yahweh sees that Job has something that surpasses him – the self-reflection and he strives to transform, to become a man. Only Christ with his death on the cross clears man of his guilt. God then lives out what he imposed on man. Christ here represents an archetype of the Self and the whole process from Yahweh to Christ is an individuation, from unconscious to fulfilment (CW 11 1952). Jung starts his book *Answer to Job* with a motto from the Bible, the Second book of Samuel: *"I am distressed for thee, my brother"*, for Jung it means a higher degree of consciousness as well as higher morality. At the end of his life he often draws attention to the fact that at the age of nuclear and chemical weapons man has too much power to remain ignorant. *"For his aim is to offer modern man, faced with the problem of evil, an alternative to atheism and pious submission."* (Heisig 1979, 82). However, he did not want to say that Christianity as such should come to an end. *"I am, on the contrary, convinced that it is not Christianity, but our conception and interpretation of it, that has become antiquated in the face of the present world situation. The Christian symbol is a living thing that carries in itself the seeds of further development."* (CW 10 1957, 279; CW 10 1958, 328).

5 Conclusion

Jung's attitude towards religion was always ambivalent. From the very beginning he criticizes the inhibitory nature of religion, but over the course of his career he starts to appreciate potential healing capacities of religion: for a believer, religious symbolism can become a means of finding a balanced relationship with own unconscious. Christianity in particular, according to Jung, is quite effective in this intermediary function. At the same time, though, Christianity is also rather destructive in pursuing collectivism that swallows an individual up and hence degrades one's inner values. Until his death Jung stood firm on the idea of "helping" believers, that means partially placing competencies of religion to psychology. He does not consider a religious ritual a full expression of spiritual content but as something that is needed to analyze and explain further so that a man can be ridden of shackles of ignorance. In one of the letters to Hans Schmid (6 November 1915) he writes: *"We must help people towards those hidden and ununlockable symbols, where the germ lies hidden like the tender seed in the hard shell."* (Letters 1, 32).

I have demonstrated that Jung does never entirely give up an interpretation of God's image partially as an attempt to fulfil desire for parents and security, but he refuses to interpret the God's image in a Freudian way, purely as a symptom of personal neuroses. He states that as an archetypal symbol God is a source of inexhaustible intelligibility and a bearer of possible, unpredictable meanings, therefore, never to be fully explained.

Jung is not an unbiased commentator of the

end of Christianity in Europe. He starts to see the danger in inability of a modern man to acknowledge deep roots that Christianity sent out into the Western culture. That then leads to filling the spiritual vacuum by theosophy, anthroposophy and Eastern religions (CW 11, 531; CW 9, 14–15, 22; CW 8, 58–59, 336; CW 10, 83–91; CW 6, 36; CW 4, 326).

In the introduction I have already outlined the extent in which the speculations about Jung's personal opinion on religion fluctuate; the speculation about whether he had any particular religion, or whether he himself regarded as a prophet. The truth is that Jung analyses Christian dogmas in depth. He discusses the nature of God and he attempts to prove that the principle of Trinity "does not function" psychologically. Does it mean then that Jung sets out for own "remedial metaphysical expedition" or does he only state what symbols and principles do not correspond with his clinical practice? Jung himself never admitted the first option and he also explicitly resisted it many times. Yet he threaded a thin line his entire life teasing the imagination of his readers and commentators to the maximum.

Finally, let me present one more quotation from a letter to Robert Corti, dated 30 April 1929: *"God wants to be born in flame of man's consciousness, leaping even higher (...) One must be able to suffer God. That is the supreme task for the carrier of ideas. He must be the advocate of the earth (...) My inner principle is: Deus et homo. God needs man in order to become conscious, just as he needs limitation in time and space. Let us therefore be for him limitations in time and space, an earthly tabernacle."* (Letters 1, 65).

Notes

[1] The term “prophet” is speculated on by Ronald Hayman in his biography *Life of Jung* (Hayman 1999).

[2] He refuses the term “gnostic” and claims that his psychological interest in gnosticism does not make him a gnostic (Jung and Neumann, 2015).

[3] In his lecture he claims that psychology can be referred to as religion only in *statu nascendi*, that means in the *state of being born* (Jung 1977).

[4] In September 1912, during his lecture at Fordham University in New York, he names reasons for this split, later published as *The Theory of Psychoanalysis*: (a) with regard to the fact that repression cannot be an explanation for every condition, (b) unconscious images have theological meaning, (c) libido, as psychic energy, is not purely sexual as assumed by Freud (CW 4 1913). He also publishes *Symbols of Transformation* (CW 5), where he deals with a term libido in more detail. He also claims that fantasies of incest have more likely a symbolic rather than a literal value.

[5] To express the ambivalence of God Jung uses Bleuler’s term “ambitendency”: “One can assume the dualism of the human will for which Bleuler, from the psychiatric point of view, has coined the word ‘ambitendency’ as something generally present, bearing in mind that even the most primitive motor impulse is in opposition” (Heising 1979, 194).

[6] Primarily, the concept of “archetype” resulted from his self-analysis and from a work with a psychotic patient in the Burgölzli Hospital. From 1912 he used the term “primor-

dial images”, in spite of numerous changes and modifications in the theory. By 1917 he speaks of “dominants”, special nodal points around which imagery clustered. In 1919 Jung introduced the term “archetype” (Samuels 1986).

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

[8] In Jung’s view, a *sign* stands for something known, as a word stands for its referent. He contrasted this with *symbol*, which he used to stand for something that is unknown and that cannot be made clear or precise. An example of a symbol in this sense is Christ as a symbol of the archetype called self (CW 6 1928, 815–817).

[9] *Mandalas* are found not only throughout the East but also among us. The early Middle Ages are especially rich in Christian mandalas. Most of them show Christ in the center, with the four evangelists, or their symbols, at the cardinal points (CW 13 1929, 22).

[10] In his reflections, Augustinus draws from the initial state of absolute good that was disrupted and will return towards the end of history (Evans 1982).

[11] See “Correspondence between C. G. Jung and Victor White.” In *The Jung-White Letters*, edited by Lammers Ann Conrad and Adrian Cunningham.

[12] “Soul” is a translation of the German word “Seele”, whose connotations are not easily rendered in English. In some context it has

been translated as “*psyche*” or “*mind*”. Consistency would betray Jung’s meaning. For several years he wavered between describing the object of psychology as Seele and as Psyche, eventually settling for the latter after 1933 (Hull comment in CW 8, 300).

[13] Jung distinguishes between Protestantism and Catholicism. He deals with the differences especially in an essay *A Psychological Approach to Dogma of the Trinity* (CW 11 1948, 192) and also in *The Psychology of the Transference* (CW 16 1946, 194).

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