

The Archetype as a Symbolic Form in the Concept of Carl Gustav Jung and in the Art-and-Research Work of Jerzy Grotowski

The archetype, a philosophical term rooted in Neoplatonic thought, was introduced into psychology by Carl Gustav Jung. It has become a concept referring to the conditions of the human psyche, but it has a philosophical, as well as an anthropological, social and cultural dimension. According to Jung, the archetype is a factor that determines collective images, the basis of content that turns into repetitive cultural motifs. Jung created a psychological theory that put the individual in the context of social and cultural life. Religious images, myths, fairy tales, folk beliefs, works of artists were interpreted by him as potential carriers of archetypal content. He defined the archetype as an unconscious psychological factor that the conscious part of the psyche has access to in the form of fantasy images - dreams and symbols rooted in culture.

As part of this project, the archetype will be examined as a culture-creating form (culture as that which arises in the process of overcoming the unconscious, and at the same time has its source in it). In addition, the research will include the archetype as an object of experience. Jung saw the archetypal source in specific experiences, such as rituals, mystical visions, and fantasy images that appear during meditation. An experience of this kind, which was to lead to an ego crossing and an entering of the path of experiencing the spontaneous flow of mental and physical impulses, was a total act, the goal of Jerzy Grotowski's art-and-research work during the period of the theatre's activity (1959-1970). The director is widely known as the creator of the concept of "poor theatre". His work has been repeatedly described on the basis of such fields as theatre and cultural studies in the field of dramaturgy of performances, their historical and social context, and methods of working with an actor. However, there is a lack of research on the theoretical foundations of this artist's activities, including works on the relationship between Jung's theory of archetypes and the director's interest in collective images and their social impact. Grotowski referred to the concept of archetypes (J. Grotowski, 1962). Like Jung, he recognized that in some texts of literature the contents of the collective unconscious were expressed. He believed that Christian myths and works of Romanticism, especially the Messianism they contained, had an impact on the way in which the cultural patterns and collective consciousness of Poles were shaped. According to both authors, the symbol, which is the language of myth expresses archetypal psychic content, is an intuitive, authentic source of feeling and giving meaning. Jung's works contain analyses and explanations of the symbolism of mythical images, repeated in various cultures, as well as in the dreams and schizophrenic visions of his patients. In Grotowski's performances we also deal with repetitive symbols (e.g. the hero-victim personality).

The project involves examining the concept of culture contained in Jung's writings, and then analysing the works of J. Grotowski (the symbolism of representations, the total act), in order to see his work in the light of Jung's thought, and at the same time to verify whether the path of access to the self, developed by the director – i.e. psychological completeness – extends the definition of the archetype found in the source texts of the psychiatrist. Therefore, I will create a description of the specifics of the experience of the total act in the perspective of depth psychology, as well as philosophical anthropology.

The results of the research will be presented at international conferences (including Liminal Forms of Experience, Wrocław 2022) and published in philosophical journals or in monographic collections, and will also be included in my doctoral dissertation The notion of archetype in the concept of C. G. Jung. The archetype and the image.