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Aion: Researches Into The Phenomenology Of The Self (Collected Works Of C.G. Jung Vol.9 Part 2)



Synopsis

Aion, originally published in German in 1951, is one of the major works of Jung's later years. The central theme of the volume is the symbolic representation of the psychic totality through the concept of the Self, whose traditional historical equivalent is the figure of Christ. Jung demonstrates his thesis by an investigation of the Allegoria Christi, especially the fish symbol, but also of Gnostic and alchemical symbolism, which he treats as phenomena of cultural assimilation. The first four chapters, on the ego, the shadow, and the anima and animus, provide a valuable summation of these key concepts in Jung's system of psychology.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Much of the material in this book and many of the conclusions are fascinating. There is a great deal here to illustrate the background of modern mysticism and much which the reader, of whatever orientation, will regard as insight."--Psychiatric Quarterly
"Aion contains some of Jung's most advanced thinking on the integrative principles of the psyche, and on the relation of matter to the symbolic processes of the collective unconscious. This is difficult ground to explore, but those who attempt the journey will find that their horizons have been surprisingly widened."--Psychosomatic Medicine

Aion is a continuation of Jung's work in psychology. He explores the role of symbols in archetypes and how symbols are used to create connection with archetypes, as well as exploring different

figure of Christ. As a result of this 'anamnesis,' the original state of in oneness with the God-image is restored. It brings about an integration, a bridging of the split in the personality caused by the instincts striving apart in different and mutually contradictory directions (in the shadow) (40).

There is so much trivial stuff and useless junk in this book, footnotes are larger than the main text. You lost your way and can't grasp the meaning Jung has to offer. Also you must be a fully loaded intellectual to get a whole paragraph without saying "Who/what the heck is this" which I don't think is a downside. In my opinion there are such valuable parts in this book but only for the experienced Jung reader otherwise it is a swamp because he is showing off his talents and knowledge. You have to use the smallest fork instead of a big shovel.

"Jung in a nutshell" does not do justice to this topic. It is a bowl of nuts. But my very rudimentary understanding (to put forth one nut of many) is that consciousness, or the differentiation of self is a progression, which arises from a world of the unconscious. Anybody might say such a thing and get lucky, without having read Aion at all. But to read Aion and then say it is putting your money where your mouth is. The template of self begins at the Anthropos (relying on the second-to-last chapter on the quaternario schema), and crystalizes in the lapis, where consciousness becomes fully realized. Jung was not prosyletizing Christianity, but used Christ as an allegory of development of self. This is why he resorts to alchemy and Gnosticism, more than patristic forms of Christianity. He saw the philosophical underpinnings of Christianity as a workable model to explain how the higher human, who operates on his environment as well as on his own thinking, rises above his primal, animalist soma. We began as a perfect template in the realm of the unconscious, we descended into the world of formation (borrowing from the Sephir Yetzirah here), or "Physis," as Jung called it, only to rise again through the quaternario ladder to become Anthropos once again. By the way, the reader might note that in later chapters Jung seems to drop any mention about "Aion", a term better explained in the middle parts of the book (Ch. 5-11). I think Jung wanted us to apply his quaternario model on a meta-scale, not just as an explanation of the perfection of self and the emergence of consciousness. As we know, we are nearing the end of the present Piscean Aion (the Jesus era), which was preceded by the war-like Arien Aion (the Greco/Roman conquest era), but which is to be followed by a more intellectual Aquarian Aion (whatever that will be). The progression of the Aions, I think Jung hoped we would discern, correspond directly to his quaternario schema, and that human consciousness is tied to the meta-physical laws of the universe (in this case, astronomy) just like the ocean's tides correspond to the lunar phases.

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