

1. Introduction and conditions

Jung's discovery of Active Imagination - A way of working with the transcendental function. Necessity of appropriate conditions of place and time for the process of active imagination. Jung's tower at Bollingen in this context. Later the tower of Barbara Hannah and Von Franz in this same context. Jung's description of his encounter at Bollingen with the stone rejected as having the wrong measurements. His allowing that stone to speak for itself.

2. Identification of image and giving it tangible form

Starting points for active imagination. Jung's descent into the depths in 1913 to meet his image- " I let myself drop...and I plunged down into dark depths... "

Possible starting points: a dream image, the shadow, a complex, a mood, a body sensation, a spontaneous art expression. Jung's description of a tribal god represented in stone who could be approached with a question that he the god would answer.

An example from ancient Egypt where the starting point for a man contemplating suicide was the voice of his "Ba" or soul confronting him and arguing against his intention.

3. The autonomy of the image.

Allowing the image its autonomy. Discussion of the experience, function and value of the autonomous image in the arts with examples from authors describing how their fictional characters would think and behave independently of the authors' intentions. The difference between the experience of autonomous entities in a state of psychosis and in a creative process. Autonomy in active imagination as a way to the discovery of unconscious levels of knowledge within our Selves.

4. Confrontation between the ego and the image from the unconscious

Confronting the autonomous image. The necessity of an auseinandersetzung or “coming to terms” with that image and its message for you. The active involvement of the ego in this aim. The moral and ethical commitment to relate the insights achieved to your everyday reality. On another level, the awareness of the spiritual aspect of active imagination.

Reading before the seminar

Jung,C.G. edited by Joan Chodorow (1997) Jung on Active Imagination. New Jersey: Princeton. Introduction and Chapters 1,2,3. Scans of the introduction and chapter one are attached. (*Chapter 1 “Confrontation with the Unconscious” is taken from Jung’s autobiography, “Memories, Dreams and Reflections”, where it is chapter 6. It can be read there in the Hebrew translation.*)

Chodorow collected here all that Jung wrote on Active Imagination, so this is the basic book on the subject. Her introduction compares active and passive fantasy, lays out the division into stages, discusses the main dangers that may arise, and concludes with the story of the rainmaker that Jung warmly recommended telling in every active imagination seminar.

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