

*Olena Chorna*

Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Docent

Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi

State Pedagogical University Ukraine

[elenachorna77@ukr.net](mailto:elenachorna77@ukr.net)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7067-3695>

## **INDIVIDUATION AS A PROCESS OF BECOMING A COMPLETE PERSONALITY IN JUNGIAN THEORY**

**Annotation.** The article examines the concept of individuation as a central element of psychological development within C. Jung's analytical psychology. The meaning of individuation, its stages, as well as the role of archetypal structures of the collective unconscious in the formation of a whole personality are analyzed. Individuation is considered as the gradual integration of different levels of the psyche – the Ego, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious – with the aim of achieving psychological wholeness.

Archetypal structures such as the Shadow, Anima/Animus, and the Self are analyzed as foundational elements for inner transformation and the achievement of psychological harmony. Attention is drawn to the symbolic nature of this process and its connection to mythology, religion, and cultural narratives.

The stages of personality development according to the Jungian model are examined – from the formation of the Ego to the emergence of the Self. The article emphasizes that individuation is not only an inner work of self-exploration but also a way to attain authenticity, inner harmony, and psychological maturity.

In contemporary society, dominated by rational thinking and identity fragmentation, individuation is viewed as a means of achieving personal balance, harmony, growth, spiritual development, and self-realization.

**Key words:** individuation, analytical psychology, C. Jung, archetypes, Shadow, Self, Anima, Animus, personality development.

**Formulation of the problem.** One of the key concepts of C. Jung's analytical psychology is individuation – a profound process of becoming a whole person, a process that leads to the awareness and realization of one's inner nature. C. Jung proposed a model of the psyche that includes both the personal and the collective unconscious, structured through archetypes. At the core of Jungian theory is the idea of the psyche as a multilayered structure in which not only conscious components, but also the unconscious – both personal and collective – play a significant role.

Modern individuals often lose connection with their true selves, falling under the influence of social masks, roles, and expectations. This is precisely why the concept of individuation gains renewed relevance: it opens the path to the authentic «Self», free from external projections. The

Jungian approach suggests that psychological growth is possible only through the awareness, acceptance, and integration of all aspects of the personality.

**The purpose of the article** The aim of the article is to explore the process of individuation in C. Jung's analytical psychology as the formation of a whole personality through the integration of conscious and unconscious components of the psyche, particularly archetypal structures. The article also analyzes the significance of this process for personal development, self-realization, and psychological maturity in the context of contemporary society.

**The analysis of the latest research and publications.** The issue of individuation as a process of forming a whole personality has attracted the attention of both foreign and Ukrainian researchers. Among contemporary Ukrainian scholars, I. Kolesnyk [4] stands out for his detailed analysis of the stages of individuation and exploration of its application in psychotherapeutic practice. In the study by Y. Medinska [6], the deep-psychological aspects of ethnic mentality are explored through the prism of archetypal symbols, allowing for the examination of the cultural dimensions of the collective unconscious. In the context of identity and self-determination, the research of L. Dzhabbarova [2] is also of value; she investigates personal and social identity among youth, its dynamics, and its influence on the development of the «Self». These studies confirm the relevance of studying individuation in the context of social transformations and highlight the need for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that integrate the conscious and unconscious in the formation of an authentic personality.

**Presenting main material.** C. Jung asserted that the psyche (a term used by Jung as largely analogous to the personality) consists of three distinct yet interconnected systems: the Ego, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious [3].

The Ego is the conscious mind, composed of conscious perceptions, memories, thoughts, and feelings. The Ego is responsible for a sense of identity and continuity and is considered the center of consciousness.

The personal (individual) unconscious contains conflicts and memories that were once conscious but have been repressed or forgotten. It holds complexes – clusters of emotionally charged thoughts, feelings, and memories – that arise from an individual's past personal or inherited experiences. According to Jung, the content of the personal unconscious is unique to each person and is generally accessible to awareness.

The collective unconscious is a repository of latent memories inherited from our ancestors. It serves as the foundation upon which the Ego, the personal unconscious, and other individual acquisitions are built. The structural components of the collective unconscious are called archetypes. It is assumed that the collective unconscious contains a multitude of archetypes.

According to C. Jung's teaching, individuation is not merely a psychotherapeutic or clinical process, but rather an existential task that arises for every person in the course of psychological maturation. Individuation is not simply psychological development – it is a path to self-realization, the integration of various aspects of the «Self», and the achievement of inner harmony.

C. Jung defined individuation as «the process of the formation of an individual as a psychic integrity distinct from collective psychology» [10]. The goal of individuation is not separation from society, but the attainment of inner autonomy through the integration of the conscious and the unconscious. C. Jung viewed individuation as the process by which a person becomes who

they truly are – that is, the unfolding of their inner essence. It is the realization of the Self – the central archetype of psychic wholeness, which unites the conscious and the unconscious.

Individuation is not the isolation of the individual from the world or others – it is an inner growth that enables a person to take their unique place in the world by consciously embracing both the light and the shadow aspects of their psyche. The central structure that emerges in the process of individuation is the Self – the archetype of psychological wholeness, symbolizing the integration of opposites. Thus, individuation is the journey from identification with the Ego to the realization of the Self as the true center of personality.

The process of individuation is non-linear, symbolic, and deeply personal. In analytical psychology, several key stages are identified [5]:

1. Confrontation with the Shadow. The first step in the individuation process is the encounter with the so-called Shadow – those aspects of the personality that have been repressed into the unconscious, denied, or rejected. The Shadow contains both negative traits (aggression, envy, fear) and positive but unrealized potentials. The Shadow is not necessarily «bad»; it is simply that which has been disowned, repressed, or denied. Accepting the Shadow is a prerequisite for deeper self-knowledge.

2. Encounter with the Anima/Animus. This stage involves becoming aware of one's inner psychic opposite: the Anima is the feminine archetype in the male psyche, while the Animus is the masculine archetype in the female psyche. Working with these figures allows for the integration of both emotional-intuitive and rational-logical aspects of the personality. Their integration helps establish a deeper psychological connection with one's inner world and with the opposite sex.

3. Transition to the Self. After integrating the Shadow, Anima/Animus, and other archetypal figures, the individual approaches the deepest level – the Self. The Self symbolizes wholeness and the completeness of the psyche. At this stage, the internal conflict between the conscious and unconscious, between desire and duty, between the social and the personal, begins to dissolve. Achieving wholeness means that the personality functions as a unified, integrated psychic organism.

In the process of individuation, archetypes play a crucial role. Archetypes are universal images, motifs, symbols, or behavior patterns embedded in the collective unconscious of humanity and recur in myths, fairy tales, literature, art, and the cultures of various peoples.

C. Jung defined «archetypes» (from the Greek archetypon – «primordial image») as innate psychic structures that influence behavior and perception of the world. Archetypes are images passed down from generation to generation and exist eternally in the consciousness of humanity [7].

According to C. Jung, the main archetypes include [7]:

The Self – the symbol of personality wholeness, being oneself, harmony. It is the center of the personality around which all other systems are organized. The Self is the goal of life that a person strives for but rarely fully attains. It motivates individuals and drives the search for wholeness.

The Persona – the «mask» a person wears in society, a social role. The purpose of the mask is to create a certain impression on others and often conceals the true nature of the individual.

The Shadow – hidden, often negative traits of the personality; the dark, repressed part of the self (that which is not accepted within oneself). It reflects the negative side of human nature and is responsible for the emergence in consciousness and behavior of unpleasant and socially unacceptable thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Anima / Animus – the feminine/masculine image in the consciousness of the opposite sex. The Anima represents the feminine qualities in a man (emotions, intuition), while the Animus represents the masculine qualities in a woman (logic, strength, action). These are feminine and masculine archetypes representing the feminine side of the personality (Anima) and the masculine side of the personality (Animus).

The Hero – a symbol of struggle and overcoming difficulties.

The Wise Old Man / Wise Woman – a symbol of knowledge, a mentor, spiritual guide, and advisor.

The Mother – a symbol of care, protection, and fertility. However, the Mother archetype can also have a «dark side», such as a controlling mother.

The Father – a generalized image of all fathers of the past. This archetype defines a person's attitude toward men, law, the state, and reason. Initially, the Father archetype may represent God, authority, struggle, and the «face» of all elemental forces ready to help or harm.

Individuation, in general terms, is the process of creating and differentiating individuality – the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the norms of collective psychology. Thus, individuation is a process of differentiation aimed at the development of the individual personality, or, as C. Jung described it, «a process of integrating many intra-personal functions and tendencies».

C. Jung understood the mechanism of the ultimate realization of individuation as the emergence of the archetype of the Self at the center of the personality. The Self – an archetype in C. Jung's theory – becomes the central structure of the personality when all opposing forces within it are integrated through the process of individuation. The Self determines the wholeness and order within the human psyche, encompasses all psychic phenomena of a person, and expresses the unity and completeness of the entire personality. The manifestation of the Self in the personality is archetypal in nature: it appears in dreams, myths, and fairy tales. Therefore, the Self represents not only the center but also the totality that includes both the conscious and the unconscious; it is the center of this wholeness, similar to how the Ego is the center of consciousness.

The development of the Self is the process of individuation, «shifting from the center of the Ego to the region localized between the conscious and the unconscious» [9]. However, the archetype of the Self rarely reaches perfection. C. Jung regarded the Self as the most important component of the personality and called it «the God within us» [9]. The development of the Self is the main goal of human life.

Based on the understanding of the Self, individuation can be broadly defined as the process of creating and differentiating individuality – the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from collective psychological norms. Therefore, individuation is a process of differentiation aimed at the development of the individual personality, or «a process of integrating many intra-personal functions and tendencies» [9].

C. Jung views individuation as a fundamental human need, especially when collective norms dominate an individual's life. Therefore, representatives of Jungian analytical psychology

still consider individuation to be a difficult and dangerous path for the personality. Both the conscious and unconscious come into play here: the unconscious manifests through images, representations, dreams, and ideas.

C. Jung believed that the process of individuation involves self-realization, which is accessible only to highly educated and morally developed individuals [7].

He also maintained that personality develops throughout life through individuation – the process of becoming a whole person by integrating the conscious and unconscious – passing through certain stages [10]:

1. Stage of Ego Formation (Childhood). The Ego (the conscious «I») is formed. The individual begins to distinguish between self and the world. This is the first encounter with social norms.

2. Stage of the Persona (Adolescence – Early Adulthood). The individual develops the Persona – the social mask worn in society. Career, social roles, and adaptation actively develop. Often, there is an identification of the self with the Persona (external image).

3. Crisis Stage of Midlife. The individual begins to doubt the meaning of life and their true identity. Personal values are re-evaluated. A crisis may occur, commonly known as the «midlife crisis».

4. Individuation (Second Half of Life). The individual turns inward toward the inner world and the unconscious. They integrate the Shadow – rejected or unconscious aspects of the self; the Anima/Animus – opposite gender traits; and the Self – the archetype of wholeness. Deeper self-awareness and harmony are achieved.

5. Integrity and Completion (Old Age). Acceptance of oneself and one's life. Preparation for death not as fear but as the completion of the journey. Symbolically, this is a return to the Self.

For C. Jung, personality development is not merely socialization but a path toward inner wholeness, which involves the integration of archetypes and the conscious acceptance of the self.

Based on these reflections, C. Jung in psychotherapeutic practice introduced the concept of amplification – the expansion and deepening of experience through similar or analogous symbolic motifs from the realms of religion, culture, and spirituality across virtually all stages of human development. C. Jung understood the mechanism of the final realization of individuation as the emergence of the archetype of the Self at the center of the personality.

Tracing personality development in the context of deep analytical psychology, C. Jung concluded that it is impossible to gain an initial understanding of the correct developmental path for any particular individual without recognizing the fact that people of different psychological types grow and develop differently.

Thus, the path of individuation for «intuitives» is characterized by the fact that they may never fully integrate the sensing function; nevertheless, sensing for intuitives can become the key that unlocks all life's mysteries. For extraverts, a major difficulty in the process of individuation is the awareness of the existence of the inner world. They find it hard to imagine an inner dialogue, which makes it difficult, for example, to feel their own body – something that is not a significant problem for introverts. Introverts, while individuating, often have to mentally rehearse scenarios of future social events repeatedly to achieve maximum adaptation among people.

The connection of individuation with the «inferior function» in a person's psychic structure is evident. It is expressed in the fact that «we consciously develop certain skills in ourselves, while our undeveloped talents retreat into the unconscious» [8].

However, C. Jung's analytical psychology, like many other branches of depth psychology, supports the view that the individual strives to perfect their «Self». And development, as is well known, requires consistency, perseverance, intellect, and significant life experience and suffering.

C. Jung believed that individuation is the life path of every person, but not everyone completes it fully. This task primarily belongs to the second half of life when questions of meaning, wholeness, and inner harmony come to the forefront, and the need for self-realization begins to dominate over the need for adaptation.

Individuation allows the formation of a whole, autonomous, and authentic personality that is not dependent on social roles or expectations. A personality that has undergone this process is characterized by: a high level of self-awareness; the ability to integrate conflicting inner aspects; creative self-expression in society; and a deep sense of life's meaning.

According to Jungian theory, the process of individuation is a profound psychic journey leading to inner harmony, unity, and personal wholeness. Its realization requires the active participation of consciousness in integrating unconscious elements of the psyche, such as the Shadow, Anima/Animus, and the Self. In the modern context, individuation can be viewed as a resource for mental health, personal maturity, and spiritual development.

**Conclusions.** Thus, individuation is the central idea of Jungian psychology, which describes the process of forming a holistic, harmonious, self-realized personality. This is not a one-time event, but a dynamic and long-term internal process. In the course of individuation, the integration of the conscious and unconscious occurs, which includes working with archetypes such as the Shadow, Anima/Animus, and Self. This allows a person to accept and transform both the «dark» and light aspects of his own «I». The archetype of the Self acts as the ultimate goal of individuation – as a symbol of complete mental integration, the center of the psyche, around which all aspects of the personality are united. Individuation has not only psychological, but also spiritual significance: it leads to deep self-awareness, personal autonomy, and the existential meaning of being.

In the modern world, dominated by rationality, a fast pace of life, and external standards of success, turning to the Jungian concept of individuation can give a person a point of support – a path to inner truth, harmony, and authentic being.

**Prospects for further explorations in this direction.** Further research may be aimed at empirically studying the process of individuation as a mechanism for integrating unconscious experience, overcoming intrapersonal conflicts, and forming a holistic identity. The analysis of manifestations of archetypal structures in psychotherapeutic practice is relevant, as well as research into the role of individuation in the context of personal adaptation, emotional maturity, and stress resistance.

#### **References:**

- [1] Osnovy hlybynnoi psykhologii: kurs lektsii: navchalnyi posibnyk / uklad. N. V. Hryniova. Vyd. 2-he, dopov. Uman: Vizavi, 2023. 145 s.

*Personality and Environmental Issues, 2025. Volume 4, Issue 1.*

- [2] Dzhabbarova L. V. Teoretychnyi analiz doslidzhen osobystisnoi ta sotsialnoi identychnosti studentskoi molodi. Psykholohichnyi zhurnal. 2021. Vyp. 8. S. 47-53. <https://pj.journal.kspu.edu/index.php/pj/article/view/662>
- [3] Kokorina Yu. Ye. Hlybynna psykholohiiia (v korotkomu vykazdi): navchalno-metodychnyi posibnyk. Odesa: Astro-prynt, 2021. 120 s.
- [4] Kolesnyk I. Rozrobka problemy indyviduatsii ta yii metodiv v analitychnii psykholohii K. Yunga. Visnyk Natsionalnoho universytetu «Lvivska politehnika». Filosofski nauky. 2019. № 2 (4). S. 58–64. <https://ena.lpnu.ua/items/f57a75be-3ff8-47c4-a02d-29ead694547b>
- [5] Medvid Ye. S. Osnovy hlybynnoi psykholohii. Nizhynskyi derzhavnyi universytet imeni Mykoly Hoholia. Nizhyn, 2019. 203 s.
- [6] Medinska Yu. Hlybynno-psykholohichni osoblyvosti etnichnoho mentalitetu v formati eksperimentalno-psykholohichnogo doslidzhennia. Ukrainskyi arkiv psykhoanalyzu. 2021. Vyp. 3. S. 120-132. <https://pis.wunu.edu.ua/index.php/uapis/article/view/292>
- [7] Yung K. H. Arkhetypy ta kolektivne nesvidome. Kyiv: Tsentr navchalnoi literatury, 2018. 597 s.
- [8] Yung K. H. Liudyna ta yii symvoly. Kyiv: Tsentr navchalnoi literatury, 2022. 409 s.
- [8] Yung K. H. Psykholohiiia nesvidomoho. Kyiv: Tsentr navchalnoi literatury, 2022. 404 s.
- [10] Yung K. H. Analitychna psykholohiiia. Kyiv: Tsentr navchalnoi literatury, 2025. 340 s.

Review received 19.03.2025