

Summary

Russian Culture as the Play of Archetypes and the Process of Individuation. Viktor Pelevin's Prose in the Light of Carl Gustav Jung's Method

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the image of Russian culture contained in Viktor Pelevin's novels, using the analytical psychology of Carl Gustav Jung and the work of his followers, such as Erich Neumann, Joe Henderson, and James Hillman. I analyze the writer's first ten novels, published between 1992 and 2013, during the period of political transformation following the collapse of the Soviet Union and before the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict initiated by the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas. I hypothesize that Pelevin's novels from this period symbolically reflect the psychological life of the Russian nation—in line with Jung's thesis that cultural texts reflect not only individual experiences but also exceptionally powerful patterns stemming from the collective and cultural unconscious.

The first chapter is devoted to Viktor Pelevin, a writer surrounded by an aura of myth and mystery. I attempt to deconstruct the "Pelevin myth" based on the adopted methodology, and drawing on the writer's extra-literary writings. In the second chapter, based on the assumption that the Russian postmodernist's prose is primarily archetypal, visionary, and symbolic in nature, and as such transcends the boundaries of the individual psyche, I analyze Pelevin's works for the presence of archetypal symbols and patterns related to the process of individuation, understood as a collective phenomenon. I devote particular attention to the issue of interaction with the Shadow, both in its collective-archetypal aspect, as a universal darkness inherent in every human being, and in its cultural aspect, treating the Shadow as a complex born from the cultural unconscious, as conceptualized by Henderson. I also thoroughly analyze symbolic representations of the Feminine principle, understood not only as the Anima, the instance of the opposite sex in the male psyche, but also as the Great Feminine, the archetype of the Great Mother, and a symbol of the unconscious. Furthermore, I examine images of psychic inflation, possession by the archetype, placing particular emphasis on the collective dimension of this phenomenon. I analyze all these motifs in light of their evolution in subsequent novels.

In the third chapter, I place the resulting image of Russian culture within a broader historical and cultural context and point to a certain continuity of patterns underlying its dynamics. I confront the conclusions drawn from the study of literary works with the philosophy of Nikolai

Berdyaev and the semiotic cultural reflection of Yuri Lotman, as well as the theories of Boris Groys and Sergei Medvedev on Russia as the subconsciousness of the West. By combining the thought of these scholars with analytical psychology, I attempt to demonstrate that many phenomena characteristic of Russian culture, such as ternary cultural development and the evolution of the Russian idea, are closely linked to the influence of archetypes of the collective unconscious and cultural complexes. In this perspective, the archetype of the Great Mother, as conceptualized by Neumann, plays a particularly important role as the elementary character of the Feminine that stifles individual consciousness and prevents it from developing. It corresponds with the numerous symbolic representations of this archetype as a devouring and consuming mother in analyzed novels. Drawing on Thomas Singer's reflections on the clash of Western and Islamic civilizations, I also attempt to define the Russian cultural complex and its influence on Russia's relationship with the West, which is one of the leitmotifs of the Pelevin's prose.