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Whether Jung Was a Kantian?

VALENTIN BALANOVSKIY*

Independent Researcher, Russia

Abstract

Researchers often talk about a powerful heuristic potential of the Kantian heritage, but sometimes they do not show concrete examples in defense of this opinion outside Kantianism and Neo-Kantianism. This article contains an attempt to demonstrate that on the example of how efficiently C.G. Jung used Kant's ideas to construct the theoretical basis of analytical psychology in general and his conception of archetypes in particular, we can see the urgency of Kant's heritage not only for his direct spiritual successors. In addition the question is discussed: why did Jung claim that epistemologically he took his stand on Kant?

Keywords

Transcendental Idealism, Analytical Psychology, Psychic and Physic Experience

It would be mistake to propose that German thinkers of XVIII century, which contributed to psychology to become an independent discipline (first in a form of philosophical psychology), dealt only with conscious ('light') part of the soul. Unconscious ('dark' or 'vague') contents of the psyche also became a subject of research very soon, exactly already in works of G. Leibniz (Leibniz 1921, p. 15-18). That is why it is not surprising that I. Kant, despite he was a champion of studying of the conscious structure of the soul, contributed a lot in emergence of philosophy and psychology of the unconscious. The measure of Kant's influence to the studies of the unconscious was precisely defined by A. Nicholls and M. Liebscher, who published a collective monograph on the topic

* Valentin Balanovskiy (Ph.D., independent researcher, Russia) studied philosophy at Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University of Russia. The author specializes in history of philosophy. Key scientific interests are Kant's transcendental philosophy, Jung's analytical psychology, history of Russian philosophy, particularly Vladimir Solov'ev's philosophical system, Alexander Bogdanov's empiriomonism and tectology (the universal theory of organization), monodualism and energy theory of Nicolas Grot. Contacts: v.v.balanovskiy@ya.ru, <https://independent.academia.edu/Balanovskiy/>

Thinking the Unconscious: Nineteenth Century German Thought. They write that ‘with the possible exception of Leibniz, Immanuel Kant arguably determined the way in which unconscious phenomena were understood in nineteenth-century German thought more than any other philosopher of the eighteenth century’ (Nicholls, Liebscher 2010, p. 9). But what is the probability that transcendental idealism was in demand in XX century? There are many chances that the answer would be: Yes, it was in demand. So what are the facts? I will try to demonstrate this point of view on the example of perceiving Kant’s main ideas by C.G. Jung – outstanding thinker of the XX century, the creator of psychology of the collective unconscious.

What are the grounds to believe that in Jung’s conception – analytical psychology, which heuristic potential goes far beyond psychotherapy and successfully implements in philosophical anthropology, studies in philosophy religion, culture or art, – has trails of transcendental idealism? For example Jung himself maintains that Kant is his philosopher (Shamdasani 2003, p. 168); epistemologically he takes his stand on Kant’s philosophy (Jung 2015, p. 294). Moreover Jung regretted that in his student years he could not spend enough time in studying Kant (Jung, Jaffé 2003, S. 108). Furthermore Jung in his wrings turned directly to Kant’s personality or works more often, than to other philosophers, even A. Schopenhauer¹. But what if Jung confused about his philosophical identity? What if he was crucially improper Kantian, as P. Bishop, S. De Voogt, L. Huskinson identify him? Did Jung arrange his analytical psychology in accordance with Kant’s basic postulates? Let’s consider these issues.

As it often happens, there are radically different opinions on the issue of Jung’s attitude to transcendental philosophy. The only one thing, which is undoubted, is that there are not so much works on this topic. The most characteristic opinions were expressed by a narrow range of researchers. E.g. adherents of the point of view that Jung perceived a lot from Kant’s heritage and founded analytical psychology on the methodological basis of transcendental idealism are W.A. Shelburn, who tried to make a rational reconstruction of theory of the collective unconsciousness through the prism of Kant’s ideas (Shelburn 1976); D.T. Brent, whose PhD thesis was ‘Jung's Debt to Kant: The Transcendental Method and the Structure of Jung's Psychology’ (Brent 1977); E. Bär, who demonstrated in his article (Bär 1976, p. 114-123) that Kant’s notion ‘idea’ is logically isomorphic to Jung’s notion ‘archetype’; D. Vuksanovic (Vuksanovic 1996, p. 121-130); and S. Palmquist, who dedicated a range of works to concordance between some Kant’s and Jung’s ideas². The last researcher in his time proposed an idea of ‘Kant-Jung Book’ (KJB). This is an interesting multi-level project, which is aimed to demonstrate that Kant’s and

¹ It is a simple statistical fact. In Jung’s collected works Kant and his writings was mentioned 89 times (Adler, Hull 1979, p. 386-387). The 2nd place belongs to Schopenhauer – 87 times (Ibid., p. 598-599). But it should be mentioned that Jung predominantly turned to Schopenhauer to criticize him. With Kant Jung predominantly agreed.

² E.g., (Palmquist 1997), (Palmquist 2000), (Palmquist 2005, p. 1-27).

Jung's ideas may be represented as complementary to each other like Yin and Yang are manifestations of the single Tao.

Their opponents, who time to time criticize even the idea that Kant's and Jung's conceptions may have common places, are P. Bishop³, who in his book 'Synchronicity and Intellectual Intuition in Kant, Swedenborg, and Jung' claimed that Jung corrupted Kant's apriorism (Bishop 2000, p. 49); S. De Voogt⁴; and L. Huskinson, who tried to demonstrated in her book (Huskinson 2004) irrelevance between such crucial notions as Jung's 'archetype' and Kant's 'idea', because the first is the result of historical all-humankind experience, which roots in instincts and has an emotional nature, and the second roots in our reason and has absolutely a priori nature.

In my humble opinion, this difference in views is caused by a complexity of the subject of research, first of all, by complexity of put into compliance and comparing Kant's and Jung's terms. Such situation is normal, if we keep in mind that transcendental idealism and analytical psychology are the subjects of different brunches of the knowledge: history of philosophy and clinical psychology or may be history of psychotherapy. That is why in number of cases researchers choose really irrelevant parts of Kant's and Jung's theories for a comparison, to establish a correspondence between which is impossible or almost impossible indeed. At the same time more suitable for the comparison material remains unclaimed. That is why I propose to confide in Jung, who was not bad expert in transcendental idealism and the best expert analytical psychology.

So, following the Jung's thought, where should we search similarities between transcendental idealism and analytical psychology? For example, Palmquist proposes at first to explore architectonic level of Kant's and Jung's systems. To implement this approach, he offers to compare Jung's *psychological types* and Kant's *categories of the understanding*. How does it possible? According to Palmquist (Palmquist 1997, p. 168), psychological types seem to be the best Jung's attempt of systematization the conception of archetypes of the collective unconsciousness – and this can be used as a key for understanding of fundamental similarity between ideas of both of the thinkers. If I briefly try to reconstruct and simplify Palmquist's arguing, it would be something like this: 1) there are 12 categories of the understanding in Kant's system, which are divided to 4 groups; 2) in Jung's system we also can find 12 basic archetypes, which can be divided to 4 groups; 3) ergo Kant's and Jung's systems are similar in their architectonic. I think that Palmquist's version has big heuristic potential and in general structurally and formally right. But, at the same time, such interpretation can cause a lot of questions too. For example, why does Palmquist in one of his works (Palmquist 2005) try to compare Jung's archetypes and Kant's categories *indirectly* through the notion '*psychological type*'?

To compare Kant's notion '*idea*' and Jung's notion '*archetype*', like Huskinson clearly demonstrated (Huskinson 2004, p. 75-77), is definitely bad idea. Indeed, it would

³ E.g. (Bishop 1996, p. 107-140), (Bishop 2000), (Bishop 2009, S.133-156).

⁴ E.g. (De Voogd 1977, p.175-182), (De Voogd 1984, p. 204-228).

be better to compare almost identical for transcendental idealism and analytical psychology term 'idea'. Jung defines it as something purely noumenal, which has no empirical admixture. A possible difference between Kant's and Jung's views on the nature of *idea* may be found in the historical genesis of *ideas*. The difficulty is that Jung had a hypothesis on the historical genesis of ideas, but Kant hadn't, if I confuse nothing.

According to Jung, ideas emerged as a result of long-time process of abstraction of the most characteristic and general features from concrete contents of every-human psyche. Now they are pure a priori noumenal structures, which are independent from any possible experience (Jung 1976, p. 437). At the same time, he, following Kant, underlines that ideas as concepts of reason "may perhaps make a possible transition from the concepts of nature to the practical concepts, and in that way may give support to the moral ideas themselves" (Ibid., p. 438) and that their "essence is not just something derived, but, psychologically speaking, exists *a priori*, as a given possibility for thought combinations in general. Hence, in accordance with its essence (but not with its formulation), the idea is a psychological determinant having an *a priori* existence" (Ibid.). It should be noted that Jung's point of view reflects an antinomic nature of the issue of ideas' genesis. Indeed it seems that even Kant, if he could, would not dispute that both of hypotheses – 1) ideas are purely a priori, or 2) ideas are the result of abstraction from concrete contents of the psyche – would be simultaneously right or wrong – it is beyond of the possible experience, so, who knows? For example, Huskinson believes that Jung takes his stand on empiricism in the issue of ideas' genesis and thus he is out of the Kant's way. But I think that Jung demonstrated enough to identify him as a person, who arranged his point of view with Kant.

Such interpretation, according to which Jung is empiricist in resolving the issue of ideas' genesis, allows Huskinson to criticize even the possibility of comparing Kant's and Jung's conceptions with each other. The fact is that she concentrates on the part, where Jung writes that in 'Psychological Types' term '*idea*' deeply connected with term '*image*' or '*primordial image*' (Ibid., p. 437-438). Huskinson's arguments can be reconstructed in this way: if idea is derived from some image, ergo it has an empirical affective-nature (Huskinson 2004, p. 77). But in Kant's system idea is a priori noumenon. Thus Jung's 'empirical' idea incomparable with Kant's a priori idea. Furthermore, primordial image is nothing, but archetype. That is why Jung's archetypes and Kant's ideas are principle incomparable too. Huskinson writes that 'Jung's self-proclaimed allegiance to Kant is unfounded' (Ibid.), because

Jungian archetype, with its instinctive and emotionally affective constitution, is therefore contrary to the Kantian Idea that constitutes merely intellectual and practical functioning. Thus, the rationality and intellectual functioning of the Kantian Idea is antithetical to the irrational feeling aspect of the Jungian archetype. And this irrationality is antithetical to the practical, and thus 'moral', functioning of the Kantian Idea. [...] Indeed, perhaps the most significant

difference between Jung's archetype and Kant's Idea is that the latter has not a constitutive but a regulative function (Huskinson 2004, p. 77).

But, firstly, as I mentioned above, Jung permits a moral usage of ideas (Jung 1976, p. 438). Secondly, the fact is that for Jung primordial image (or archetype) is purely deprived of something empirical, because archetype as itself cannot be directly given even in myth of dreams. It only can be given as phenomenon, which called '*archetypal image*' (Jung 1975, p. 213)⁵. So, I can say, that in analytical psychology there is nothing more noumenal as a primordial image or archetype. Thirdly, when we are talking about constitutive status of ideas or archetypes in analytical psychology, we should always remember that archetypes have constitutive status not in nature, but in psyche. Doesn't it correlate with Kant, for whom ideas are negative and regulative in cognition of the nature, but positive and constitutive in morality (Kant, KpV, AA 05: 3-6), or sphere of relationships between human psyches? It should be noted that according to Jung, if somebody becomes to perceive archetypal image as something real, i.e. an object of the outer world, then either it is illness, or normal thing for very archaic culture.

Anyway, the main intention of Huskinson's argumentation seems to be right – once more I underline that to compare archetypes and ideas is a bad venture. At the same time Huskinson makes an important remark, which unfortunately remains undeveloped in her book, that '*archetype*' is closer in meaning to the term '*category*', because both of them relate to some a priori principle, which arranges our experience. Indeed something like this we can find in Jung's works⁶. Let's deal with this hypothesis.

The task now is to find out, why Jung decided to compare his archetypes with Kant's categories of the understanding? In this context it is impossible to disagree with Palmquist, who regrets that

unfortunately, Jung does not provide any details concerning his understanding of the relationship between the archetypes and the categories. One obvious difference is that, in contrast to Kant's highly logical map of the categories, Jung shies away from providing a systematic description of the archetypes. He makes it clear that the shadow and the anima (or animus) are the two main archetypal personalities, and that several others [...] are of secondary importance; but he also claims to have discovered numerous others. How Kant's categories can be regarded as 'applications' of these archetypes is far from evident (Palmquist 2004, p. 14-15).

Perhaps, an essence of Jung's *apriorism* is the key to understand a connection between *archetype* and *category*. So, what does it about? For example, Jung writes that "there is no

⁵ Also see on the topic: (Shelburn1976, p. 63-72).

⁶ E.g. see (Jung 1984, p. 120), (Jung 1972, p. 190).

human experience, nor would experience be possible at all, without the intervention of a subjective aptitude.

[...] Ultimately it consists in an innate psychic structure which allows man to have experiences of this kind. Thus the whole nature of man presupposes woman, both physically and spiritually. His system is tuned in to woman from the start, just as it is prepared for a quite definite world where there is water, light, air, salt, carbohydrates, etc. The form of the world into which he is born is already inborn in him as a virtual image. Likewise parents, wife, children, birth, and death are inborn in him as virtual images, as psychic aptitudes. These *a priori* categories have by nature a collective character” (Jung 1972, p. 190).

In other words, according to Jung there are some *a priori* structures in our souls – *archetypes*, which cannot be given in any experience, but at the same time which are *the necessary condition for any possible psychic experience*. I.e., for example, if it is impossible to cognize relationships between natural phenomena without *categories of relation* (which mere a priori forms of the understanding, not real objects or properties of real objects), it is also impossible to understand and create family relationships without *Father, Mother and Child archetypes* (which are not exist in the outer world on their own, but mere a priori forms of psyche).

Thus if Kant found out that *physical experience*, thanks to which we are functioning in the natural world and able to cognize it objectively, is impossible without a priori forms of sensibility and understanding, then Jung found out that *psychic experience*, thanks to which we are functioning in the human world and able to cognize human senses, emotions and relationships, is impossible without a priori forms of psyche – *archetypes of the collective unconsciousness*. And if Kant created a system of transcendental idealism, which is extremely suitable for orientation in the world of things, existing in the reality (*esse in re*) and existing in the intellect (*esse in intellectu*), then Jung indicated a third world between these two – the world of things, existing in the psyche (*esse in anima*) (Jung 1976, p. 45-46).

Because the world of *esse in anima* directly connected with the unconsciousness, methods of its studying would be a little bit different from methods, which were used by Kant for studying conscious phenomena and given-in-senses reality. That is why, in my opinion, it is not correct, following Bishop (Bishop 2000, p. 49), to accuse Jung of distorting of Kant’s ideas. Particularly Jung is blamed of introducing of *synchronicity* – an especial principle for describe a unique type of acausal connection between psychical and physical phenomena, which is strongly different from traditional views on determinism in natural sciences. But Jung was forced to develop synchronicity conception by the pressure of facts, which cannot be explained by means of the old paradigms⁷. Also we should keep

⁷ See: (Jung 2011, S. 457–553).

in mind that psyche is not stone, which moves in vacuum with a constant velocity, ergo its studying is required in nonstandard methods.

There is another one moment, connected with the issue of studying the world of *esse in anima*, which allows for critics to identify Jung as ‘improper’ Kantianist. This is about a searching for substance (or substrate) of the psychical. To describe, what could it be, Jung developed a conception of ‘*psychoid*’ or ‘*psychoid factor*’. According to him ‘*psychoid factor*’ is a transcendent psychical, a bridge between the matter and the pure spirit (Jung 1975, p. 216). To be precise, this is the border itself between the matter (instincts) and the spirit (archetypes)⁸, which cannot be directly studied by us, unlike animate and inanimate nature and pure ‘spiritual’ or mental objects (like ideas and notions), which are available for our direct researching. So, *psychoid factor* itself always remains beyond the frames of possible cognition.

Despite of all differences, it is possible to maintain that Kant’s and Jung’s apriorism and rational approach to the study of the psyche are similar. Thus transcendental idealism and analytical psychology may be represented as two parts of unified knowledge, like in its time were represented classical mechanics and relativistic physics. This would become obvious, if we will try to analyze this issue from some metalevel. Something like that Palmquist offers in his KJB-project.

Answering the question, formulated in the header of this article, I have to admit that Jung, of course, wasn’t pure or extremely proper Kantianist. But it is undoubtedly that Kant’s ideas influenced him strongly and primarily were used to build epistemological basis of analytical psychology.

Summarizing, firstly, it should be noted that continuity between thoughts of great thinkers shows that the genesis of fruitful conceptions is an ongoing process. Thus philosophical knowledge may be cumulative like natural science’s knowledge. It is important, because allows us to speak about some kind of the truth for humanitarian knowledge in situation, when fruitful ideas give shoots in conceptions, which belong to different trends and epochs.

For example, Aristotle was one of the first, who derived *categories* through the analysis of *natural language*. Kant abstracted *categories of the understanding* from real *logic forms of possible judgments*, which are more complex objects, than Aristotle’s categories. At his turn, Jung derived his ‘*categories*’ – *archetypes* – from ‘*judgments*’ (or *propositions*) of *figurative language of a myth* that is more complex task, because the object of analysis is hidden under the cover of collective unconsciousness. As we can see from this example, transcendental idealism is suitable not only for cognition of the consciousness, like E. Husserl and K. Popper showed, but also for cognition of such a complex and meaningful object as the collective unconsciousness.

Secondly, the fact that Jung perceived a range of Kant’s ideas allows us to engage interdisciplinary research at the junction of philosophy and psychology to understand

⁸ See more: (Eckman 1986, p. 88-99).

human nature better. For example, it seems to be possible to make an integral model of the psyche within bounds of European apriorism. As Palmquist offers, Kant's philosophy we can use to describe conscious part of the psyche, and Jung's conception to model unconscious part of the psyche by means of the aprioristic methodology.

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