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## JUNGIAN APPROACH TO INDIVIDUATION OF PERSONALITY IN THE SHORT STORY *EMPTY ROOMS* BY CAN XUE

*M. Voina*

PhD (Philology)

Institute of Philology, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

14, Taras Shevchenko Blvd., Kyiv, 01601, Ukraine

[marusia1987v@gmail.com](mailto:marusia1987v@gmail.com)

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0447-7928

*O. Vorobei*

PhD (Philology)

Institute of Philology, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

14, Taras Shevchenko Blvd., Kyiv, 01601, Ukraine

[oejia@gmail.com](mailto:oejia@gmail.com)

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4956-8943

Creative work is the highest and most complex form of mental activity, so the elaboration of the role of the unconscious in the structure of artistic creativity and perception is important for the analysis of the psychology of art and fiction works. According to C. G. Jung, the birth of each work is always associated with the action of powerful forces that rest in the collective unconscious and are manifested through the work of an individual artist. In Jungian psychology, Individuation is the process of achieving psychological maturation wherein individuals are integrating their conscious and unconscious mind to create a balanced/mature psyche. The motif of the individuation in literature covers a range of situations in which an individual – typically young, often innocent person – experiences during the plot of the story a moment of enlightenment, a discovery or an initiation leading to recognition of a “significant truth about the world, society people, or [one] self”. A modern Chinese writer Can Xue (残雪, born in 1953) is especially interested in the workings of the mind, thus her works often deal with notions, ideas, and images that lend themselves to a Jungian reading, specifically from the perspective of the principle of individuation which is to be the focus of this analysis. Can Xue’s imagination creates a mysterious and ghostly atmosphere of a literary text, filled with amazing and scary images. The writer has the ability to penetrate deeply into the depths of the human psyche, to unequivocally reveal the tragic essence of human existence through the prism of her own life experience. Thus, the amplification method developed by C. G. Jung, in combination with historical and comparative typological methods, made it possible to carry out an analytical interpretation of Can Xue’s *Empty Rooms* (“空房间”, 2009) short story from the standpoint of self-hood and its reflective consciousness. In the short story *Empty Rooms* there are several aspects of the unconscious mind (The Buildings, The Doors, The Archetypical Inhabitants, The Home Search) that need to be integrated with the conscious, psychological components consisting of all rejected and repressed aspects of one’s personality. The process of dealing with all these aspects is analogous to the journey of the Hero archetype, and the goal of this journey is Individuation, whereby one becomes connected to their Self, an archetype that represents wholeness and totality.

**Keywords:** Can Xue, short story, literature, C. G. Jung, individuation, unconscious, archetype

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### **Introduction**

Despite the wide range of works devoted to the study of Jungian theory, the interest in the application of the amplification method in different literary works is quite relevant and debatable. Thus, the question of Self search and personality fragmentation was studied on the basis of European modern [see: Shirazi and Yahya 2014; Chang 2009; Gulic 2017], European ancient literature [see: Leader 2009], European romantic literature [see: Shams and Farideh 2015], Christian religious texts [see: Helen Efthimiadis-Keith 2017], Oriental literature [see: Dhanya and Sudakshina Bhattacharya 2019; Siddiq 1978; Akam and Yahya 2018; Dil 2010] and cinematography [see: Ellerhoff 2015]. Despite the significant degree of interest of researchers in studying of the Jungian analytical psychology and the amplification method in the literature works, in Sinology, however, the main accent was made within the reflection of Jung theory on the Chinese philosophical thought and vice versa [see: Stein 2005; Zhu 2009], but there are virtually no works dedicated to the psychological analysis of the achieving individuation through the integration of the unconscious component on the basis of the literary works.

Chinese modern writer Can Xue has been noted for her distinctive style among contemporary Chinese writers. Her fiction is often captured by scholars as a surrealist dreamscape that is constituted by fragmentary storylines, bizarre characters, and sensational depiction in eerie details. The logic guiding Can Xue's fantastic fictional space is commonly seen as beyond the mode of reasoning that governs our world of experience. This condition seems to make her literary space a self-contained entity that resists deconstruction.

Like every prominent work of literature, Can Xue's short story *Empty Rooms* operates on multiple levels of meaning which can be approached from various angles. However, in the overall structure and meaning of the short story much more central is the psychological significance with which the characters and events are invested. In particular, those characters symbolize evolutionary changes in the inner world of mankind, which is unique for each individual person. This partly determines the whole complexity of the personality: it is rich, diverse, changeable, and multilevel, it in a specific mysterious way motivates a person for the search process and it is the result of the transformation of information from the outside world – it is the space of the Person's Id<sup>1</sup>. When we are finally tempted by the real world, the inner world can become the only defensive fortress to which the person can return. Therefore, modern literature in a sense also depicts the lost soul of mankind, its search for a *parental home*.

The leading idea in Can Xue's *Empty Rooms* is the search and achievement of harmony in the inner world of the individual. Thus, the heroine wanders every night in an abandoned two-story house, trying to unravel the mystery of the empty rooms. The house itself and its solitary inhabitants terrify the heroine: "Every night I passed them holding my breath, and what can I say about the night, if even during the day I did not dare to stop in front of them" [Can Xue 2009, 148]. However, every time she does not stop trying to investigate those empty rooms. The fact that the events always take place at night in complete darkness suggests that the heroine is asleep, and everything that happens is the product of her nightmares. Since the realm of the unconscious is precisely dreams, so for a more detailed analysis we should refer to the work of psychoanalysts Z. Freud and C. G. Jung.

#### ***Jung's Individuation: The Pathway to the Whole Self***

Jung's thinking about the Self and its dynamic of individuation separates Jungian analytical psychology from other psychoanalytical schools. He uses the concept of the Self to describe his understanding of who we are and the concept of individuation to describe the process by which we can fulfill our potential to become all that we can be [Schmidt 2005, 595].

The process of wandering and searching of the person in his own inner world, in the realm of the unconscious, was presented by C. G. Jung as *individuation*. He understood the concept of *individuation* as the process of transformation into a full-fledged human being: "I use the term 'individuation' to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'individual', that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole'" [Jung 2014, 275]. In other words, individuation is the awareness of The Self in all its aspects, the development of the conscious personality to such an extent that it can contain all the elements that exist at the subconscious level. This process is designed to identify the individual structure of personality, specific only to a particular person. It demonstrates how the universal traits and abilities of each person come together in a unique combination.

C. G. Jung emphasized the uniqueness of the psychological structure of each person. Thus, the term "individuation" has not been chosen accidentally. It reflects the scientist's confidence that the closer a person approaches the unconscious and the more he combines its content with the content of the conscious mind, the stronger is his sense of his own individuality. Unique individuality, according to C. G. Jung, consists of the common to all world's psychological images and energy systems. C. G. Jung called these schemes archetypes, and although they are universal and present in the unconscious of each of us, their infinite combinations constitute the individuality of the soul. Thus, the fact is emphasized that individuation is a process of development of an independent personality, separate from the collective psyche.

The path of individuation is possible only for those who have achieved the development of a strong Ego, because this process is characterized by awareness and integration into the consciousness of unconscious mental meanings. C. G. Jung is convinced that it is inborn and develops according to a single scheme. It is divided into independent stages, which correspond to the first and second halves of human life. The task of the first half is to strengthen The Self by deep immersion in external reality, thus could be achieved the adaptation of the individual to the environment. The second half is devoted to immersion in the inner reality, i.e., deep knowledge of human nature and self-knowledge, appeal to those features of the nature of personality that previously remained unknown.

The unconscious process of individuation is able to balance the conscious and unconscious attitudes with the unconscious integrity of the individual. In his later work, *The Answer to Job*, C. G. Jung wrote: "The difference between the 'natural' individuation process, which runs its course unconsciously, and the one which is consciously realized, is tremendous. In the first case consciousness nowhere intervenes; the end remains as dark as the beginning. In the second case so much darkness comes to light that the personality is permeated with light, and consciousness necessarily gains in scope and insight" [Jung 2014, 468].

The synthesis of processed and modified conscious and unconscious elements of the subject in the process of individuation leads to the creation of a new whole – "Self", which is different from the archetype of The Self, which exists as the primary unity of conscious and unconscious. C. G. Jung defines the archetype of The Self as the "initiator of psychic life", as the unconscious "image of the goal of life", in which "it stands for the goal of the total man, for the realization of his wholeness and individuality with or without the consent of his will" [Jung 2014, 459].

C. G. Jung was convinced that all these well-known facts show beyond a doubt that, on the heights of our civilization, human consciousness has not yet attained a reasonable degree of continuity. It is still dissociable and vulnerable, in a way fortunately so, since the dissociability of the psyche is also an advantage in that it enables us to concentrate on one point by dismissing everything else that might claim attention [Jung 2010, 78]. For the normal functioning of the human mind and mental health, it is necessary to coordinate the work of consciousness and subconscious, their constant connection, the rupture

of which can lead to mental disorders, and in this context “Dreams try to re-establish the equilibrium by restoring the images and emotions that express the state of the unconscious. One can hardly ever restore the original condition by rational talk, which is far too flat and colourless. One could even say that the interpretation of dreams enriches consciousness to such an extent that it relearns the forgotten language of the instincts” [Jung 2010, 92]. C. G. Jung argued that in a dream the activity of consciousness is inhibited, and subconscious delusions and visions get out of control of the rational. In the deep layers of the subconscious are hidden the secrets of the personality, which, apparently, the heroine is trying to find out. And at this stage, the process of characterization of the character actually begins.

Hence, C. G. Jung identified the main function of dreams as auxiliary / compensatory one, which is designed to restore our delicate mental balance. In other words, we dream of what is necessary for our mental balance: “The general function of dreams is to balance such disturbances in the mental equilibrium by producing contents of a complementary or compensatory kind” [Jung 2010, 91]. Thus, its evident purpose is to maintain the psychic balance [Jung 2010, 24].

### ***Buildings and the Exploration of the Soul***

The inner world of the human in the works of Can Xue correspond mainly to the buildings. The building is a human dwelling, which acts as a refuge for the physical body of man and is created by him. In this symbolism, the images of buildings are closely connected with the human soul. C. G. Jung believed that the building in the dreams has an important symbolic meaning, and everything that happens in this building can happen in real life, because we ourselves are this building [Jung 2010, 61–61].

In support of this thesis, the psychoanalyst cites an example from his own dream, which he dreamed for many years: “I myself dreamt of a motif that was repeated many times over a period of years. It was that I discovered a part of a wing of my house which I did not know existed. Sometimes it was the place where my parents lived – who had died long ago – where my father, to my great surprise, had a laboratory in which he studied the comparative anatomy of fishes, and where my mother ran a hostelry for ghostly visitors” [Jung 2010, 94].

According to the scientist, such recurring dreams are made to correct certain defects in the worldview of dreams, and C. G. Jung interpreted the house in his dream as his own personality and the spheres of his conscious interest.

Can Xue is a very sensual woman, who never felt completely safe in her real home, and despite the incident with her parents, the loss of her grandmother and the anxious years during the Cultural Revolution<sup>2</sup>, she always denied the feeling of family belonging. Therefore, in the process of delving into her inner world, Can Xue has created her own “home” that was close enough to her and the road that only she could pass. She described her spiritual home as follows: “Probably, I should not return my ‘home’, but to the house that I have been known for a long time... As soon as I close the door, my thoughts become light and free... When I am not at home, ‘the house’ becomes terribly empty” [Can Xue 2010, 247]. This house is the true Self, when the Self finds it and returns to it, it gets the desired sense of security in the everyday world, and when it loses this true Self, the house is empty, and the Self remains confused. The emphasis on buildings is a conscious choice in Can Xue’s writing. She may have developed a special awareness of space as a child and drawn inspiration from her childhood experience in writing. In *Empty Rooms* Can Xue described her fascination with three empty rooms upstairs in the two-story apartment building where she used to live. Although Can Xue does not mention the time in the piece, it could be inferred from the description of her fear of being captured by the ghosts or the secret agents jumping out from the empty rooms that the event most possibly took place in Can Xue’s childhood [Pi 2012, 2].

The Austrian writer F. Kafka liked to use images of buildings in his works: the image of a castle in the novel of the same name *Castle*, the image of the gates in the novel *Before the Law* and so on. In the novel *Castle*, F. Kafka gives a very detailed description of the castle, creating an image of an almost real castle, accessible to the reader. F. Kafka vividly depicted the appearance of the building with high walls, windowsills, green ivy curled around the windows. All this aroused great interest in the castle and the deepest desire to visit it, not only from the position of the main character K., but from the reader himself. The reader believed that the protagonist would definitely be able to get there. However, as events unfold, the reader gradually realizes that he, like the protagonist K., can only contemplate the castle without being able to get there, its existence is like a mirage. Every time K. tries to approach it, it resolutely throws him back. Only at the end of the novel, K. was not able to approach the castle, and because of this it is difficult for us to determine whether this building really existed or not. From the specifically existing at the beginning of the novel, the castle with the development of the plot turned into a barely visible line that supported the framework of events in the novel. The main idea of the novel in the process of unfolding events comes down to K.'s tireless search for this castle, which is a more or less clear image of the building itself at the beginning of the novel, at the end it becomes more and more vague and distant, and finally is denied. Similarly, in the allegorical novel *Before the Law*, the protagonist all his life cannot get permission from the guard to get inside, and only before the death of the protagonist, the guard explained to him: "No one else could ever be admitted here, since this gate was made only for you. I am now going to shut it" [Kafka 1971, 14]. The end of the novel thus generally denies the existence of any door to the law, it seemed that they existed only in the soul of the character.

Can Xue, like F. Kafka, doubts about this world and the goals pursued by modern humanity. The only difference between them is that Kafka was convinced that humanity would never achieve these goals, while Can Xue believed that such goals did not exist at all. The "parental home" in which humanity can find itself has long been lost, whether it is unattainable or non-existent. The buildings in the works of Can Xue, as well as in F. Kafka, have similar features to those in the real world, but the reader does not leave a sense of their whimsy. Besides, in the text of the novels the reality of their existence is not important, more important is their symbolic content, which is so multifaceted that all interpretations are relative. Whether it is the castle in *Castle*, or the door to the law in the novel *Before the Law* by F. Kafka, or, as if the existing street in *Yellow Clay Street* ("黄泥街"), or the empty rooms in the house in *Empty Rooms* by Can Xue – all these images generate many interpretations, encourage researchers to a thorough comprehensive analysis of the novels. In any case, there is no denying the fact that the images of rooms, houses, high-rises, and other buildings are closely connected with the inner world of man.

Commonly, in dreams we come to unconsciously perceived aspects of events, moreover, not in a rational, but in a symbolic, figurative form. If the story of the conscious mind has its beginning, development and ending, then in a dream everything is different. The dream's spatio-temporal coordinates are different from our usual ones. In order to understand this, dreams should be carefully studied as "an unknown object round and round in one's hands to absorb every detail of it" [Jung 2010, 74].

According to C. G. Jung, the individual is the only reality, so the further we move from the individual to abstract ideas, the more we make a mistake. With a comprehensive approach to the problem, awareness of the present and the past is equally important, for which knowledge of myths and symbols is important [Jung 2010, 134].

The whole architecture of the house in the story of Can Xue *Empty Rooms* resembles "the home of the human soul", which was mentioned by of C. G. Jung, here "there are no apartments, only a long corridor, on both sides of which are located small rooms"

[Can Xue 2009, 148]. The key elements of the house are empty rooms, symbolizing the deepest layer of the subconscious, which seeks to get the heroine. In the carefully woven bizarre world of Can Xue, in addition to the houses and rooms on the surface, deep in the depths stretch many secret passages, corridors, crevices. If we say that buildings represent the search for a deep Self, then these branches are the links that connect consciousness with the depths of the subconscious. Can Xue believes that the Self “is the information channel that leads to the subconscious” [Can Xue 2005, 66]. In the short story, the path to the rooms leads through a long corridor, which the heroine is so afraid to overcome in complete darkness: “Closing the front door, I gaze once more at the door of the adjacent empty rooms at the end of the corridor, but my gaze is instantly lost in complete darkness” [Can Xue 2009, 148]. The image of water, which is a conductor into the world of the subconscious, can be considered an important proof of the relevance of our interpretation: “One day, a window sash, opposite one of the empty rooms, opened from a strong gust of the wind, raindrops flooded the floor. Streams of rainwater ran down the wooden floor, seeped through the cracks in the door and got lost somewhere inside the empty room” [Can Xue 2009, 149].

### *Self-searching by virtue of Home Search*

In the psychoanalytical tradition, self is a by-product of ego-development. By contrast, for Jung the self is primary, and it is the ego that develops from it. The self retains its mystery. We can never fully know or embrace it because we are dependent upon the relatively inferior ego to perceive it. Perhaps this struggle in apprehension has led to very different understandings of the self's qualities. Analytical psychology sees the self as many things, including psychic structure, developmental process, transcendental postulate, affective experience and archetype. It has been depicted as the totality of body and mind, the God image, the experience of overpowering feelings, the union of opposites and a dynamic force which pilots the individual on his / her journey through life [Schmidt 2005].

Finding home (which is usually presented in stories as a room / building) is actually a process of finding one's own self. According to Can Xue, different parts of the Self coexist in the human soul, and her novels are a process of constant meetings and interactions between these various Selves, it is rather a continuous dialogue between different parts of the Self after the split that took place in the human soul, where each character of the story is part of the same soul. Though coexist the irrational Self, the everyday Self, the artistic Self, the ideal Self and the dying Self, which acquire various forms and shapes, intertwining with each other, motivating a person to find the true Self – the beautiful Self. The beauty in the stories of Can Xue is not limited to its traditional understanding, for her beauty is the beauty of chaos at the beginning of the birth of the World, it is the beauty of life force. Whether purely spiritual or dirty bodily, if they are closely connected with life, they are characterized by the beauty of primordial power – natural beauty. This understanding of beauty is different from the cultural beauty and intellectual beauty defined by humanity in the course of its historical development.

### *The Image of Doors as the Personification of Mind*

Alexander Graham Bell once said that “as one door closes, another door opens, but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the ones which open for us” [The Winona Times 1935, 2]. Thus, every ending heralds a new beginning. As one opportunity closes, another presents itself. “Individuation” is Jung's term for the process of achieving such command of all four functions that, even while bound to the cross of this limiting earth, one might open one's eyes at the center, to see, think, feel and intuit transcendence, and to act out of such knowledge [Jung 1976, XXVIII].

An important element on the way to the depths of the subconscious are the Doors: “Those doors were dark gray, covered with time-varnished varnish. It seemed that although

they looked tightly closed, they could be easily opened at any time” [Can Xue 2009, 149]. In fact, what prevents this from happening is the mind, the personification of which are the Doors. Despite their old age and unreliability, “dark gray, covered with time-varnished varnish” [Can Xue 2009, 149], they firmly hold inside everything that can be spilled out, allows the Self, convincingly for itself and for others, to slowly live a “quiet” life, warning the heroine from delving into the depths of the splitting of her own Self, which can have catastrophic, destructive effects. However, the ability to look inside appears for the heroine in the dream: “In the dream, the doors were wide open, and oil lamps were flickering on the table” [Can Xue 2009, 149]. This indicates that only by losing control of the mind, immersing in the unconscious, a person is able to travel freely in spaces that are suddenly much wider than it seemed at first glance: “The rooms were strangely so long, about eleven or twelve meters, there was only one small narrow window above the head, darkness enveloped everything around. The flicker of an oil lamp illuminated only a corner of the room” [Can Xue 2009, 149]. This proves the conviction of C. G. Jung that the realm of the unconscious is boundless, deeper, and wider than it seems.

### *Archetypal Inhabitants*

Various settlers appear in the empty rooms from time to time, e.g., an old man in a woolen hat: “...I suddenly noticed that the door of one of the rooms was wide open, an old man in an old woolen hat was peeking out of it, he glanced outside and hid immediately” [Can Xue 2009, 148], a married couple from Xinjiang: “Once later I saw a married couple there, as if from Xinjiang, and they have been living there for two or three days and left” [Can Xue 2009, 148], young maid: “There were also suitcases on the floor, a slender girl was sitting under a lamp flipping through a magazine, she stretched her bare legs on a chair, her wet hair was falling in waves” [Can Xue 2009, 148]. Who are they, these people in the heroine’s dreams, and what is their function? There could be found many different neighbors, which can take different forms. They don’t come out of nowhere; they’ve been living there for a long time. The concept of the neighbor appears at the moment when the protagonist enters the building of his own soul in search of the true Self. They can from time to time bother the protagonist, encouraging for the more active or passive search of the Self. All these neighbors are usually a concrete embodiment of the abstract ones in the human soul. Different neighbors represent different levels of the Self. Where the mind is the strongest, they have the highest authority, the right to set the rules. But where physical intentions and various kinds of desire prevail, there is a fierce struggle and resistance. There are also representatives of reality, the power of which is the greatest one because the inner world of each individual must be subordinated to the outer reality. These types are adjacent to those archetypes which, according to C. G. Jung, meet a man on the path of individuation. Here we see the Wise Old Man, and Anima / Animus, the Persona, and the Shadow.

C. G. Jung represents the image of the Wise Old Man, which is often found in dreams and fairy tales, as the archetype of the Spirit. This archetype forces a person to rise above his capabilities, to find solutions to complex problems, to overcome obstacles. In the story we can assume that such a carrier is the image of an old man in a woolen hat because even his appearance helps to overcome the fear of the unknown and darkness – empty rooms – to encourage the heroine to take a step towards her own search: “I sighed with relief, finally someone settled here, and I will no longer be afraid to come here” [Can Xue, 2009, 149].

C. G. Jung called the images that mediate between the conscious and unconscious nature of the individual the Anima and Animus. This is a subconscious complementary element of the feminine in man and the masculine in woman. In *Empty Rooms*, these images take the form of a married couple from Xinjiang, and this is very symbolic because

marriage indicates the inseparable unity of these two archetypes, the integrity of the feminine and masculine principles of yin-yang. The territorial affiliation of the images to the autonomous region of China also does not seem accidental. Xinjiang is a region in northwestern China where historically shamanism has developed. At the heart of this early form of belief is the creed in the possibility of communicating with spirits in a trance. Like Can Xue's homeland, it is a territory where magic and animism have sprung up. Dreaming can be considered a kind of renunciation of reality and the contact with images-archetypes can be perceived as communication with the spirits of the own Self in the depths of the subconscious.

Virtually the only characters in *Empty Rooms* who are more or less connected to reality are the images of a friend and her mother. They are still practically the only interlocutors of the Self. Archetype which is directly related to the real conscious world and society, according to C. G. Jung theory, is the Persona. It weighs the most on human consciousness and at the same time is the most superficial and accessible for various assessment, it correlates with the social image of the human at that. The Persona reflects the social face of the individual and therefore is the archetype of the collective rather than the individual unconscious. It is a set of social masks that we use in various groups and situations. The functions of the Persona, in our opinion, were absorbed by a friend and her mother. At their first meeting, the Self is horrified and does not recognize them: "The bright glow of the lamp in the room again causes me a sense of fear, in its rays, the hostess resembles the terrible ghosts of the dead!" [Can Xue 2009, 148]. Obviously, their social masks cause negative feelings in the subconscious of the Self. At the same time, the Persona is needed, it simplifies contacts, indicates what to expect from others. Another function of the Persona is to protect the Ego from the possible detection of its own negative sides, because of this they – the Ego and the Persona – constantly oppose the Self in identifying other occupants of empty rooms: "Then I asked my friend's mother if she knew what kind of old man lives next door, but she only flatly refused with an iron face: 'I don't know!'. This answer scared me, I immediately realized that I had violated this topic in vain because a lot of things in the world should not be asked" [Can Xue 2009, 148]. The same idea could be read in the next lines: "I asked my friend if she sometimes hears that strange sound, but she shook her head very confidently and refused to go on: 'These are just sheets outside the window, they were not removed in time'" [Can Xue 2009, 148]. Let us recall that C. G. Jung was convinced that a person's encounter with the subconscious could have catastrophic consequences for a person who did not fully pass the first stage of individuation. At the same time, the mother though warns to go into the middle of the room, due to "the completely rotten floor there" [Can Xue 2009, 149], along with this she seems to hint that there have been no visitors for a long time, and "a master should be called" [Can Xue 2009, 149], i.e., someone who is prepared and able to bring order.

The last most interesting and probably the most ambiguous image of the story is the character of a Xinjiang girl. This is the only inhabitant of one of the empty rooms that the Self meets face to face. Her bizarre image and strange manners surprise and at the same time frighten the heroine: "I immediately felt her wet hair stink of pond fish, she looked like a Xinjiang girl" [Can Xue 2009, 149]. If we assume that the room in which the girl lived is exactly the one in which the streams of rainwater from the corridor symbolically led, we can guess that this room represents the deepest layer of the subconscious, and the girl herself, a resident of the deepest subconscious waters. Her image in this case should be considered in the context of the archetype of *the Shadow* – something dark and shaky, incompatible with social standards. This is a lower level of consciousness in relation to modern society. According to C. G. Jung, "The Shadow [...] represents those qualities that people do not wish to acknowledge but attempt to hide from themselves and others. The shadow consists of morally objectionable tendencies as well as a number of



constructive and creative qualities that people, nevertheless, are reluctant to face” [Feist 2002, 101]. Meeting the Shadow is the first and obligatory stage of individuation: “People must continually strive to know their shadow and that this quest is their *first test of courage*” [Feist 2002, 101]. The shadow cannot be fully nurtured and most often remains the same as in childhood or adolescence, when our actions were largely impulsive. The girl herself notes: “I have lived here for a long time! You look in the suitcases and You’ll find out” [Can Xue 2009, 149]. Special attention deserves the symbol of the suitcase, which occurs throughout the story: “Many different suitcases were scattered on the floor, both large and small, they cluttered almost all the free space of the rooms, they were stacked in the dark by touch” [Can Xue 2009, 149]. C. G. Jung also noted that the inner world of the person often acts as a drawer: “Modern people within the segmenting the space system are trying to protect themselves from schizophrenia. Different areas of existence and actions in them are allegedly stored in different drawers, which never intersect one with each other” [Jung 2010, 50]. Arranging things in a drawer also means finding the true Self and introspection. In *Empty Rooms* we are dealing with suitcases, not drawers (the drawer is found in the story *Hut on the Hill*), but the semantic content of the image does not change. Suitcases, the composition of which needs to be arranged, are separate for each of the inhabitants of the house, and these suitcases hint the heroine that she must do a huge piece of work to achieve harmony and comfort in the room. However, the heroine could not overcome this when she tries to look into the suitcase, at once “My eyes were numb, all those suitcases became blurred and indistinct. I was scared and groping left my room” [Can Xue 2009, 149–150].

Obviously, the process of individuation is complex and gradual, requires psychological training and resilience. Some daredevils, sages, just sincere people (like Can Xue, for instance) were able to open the door to the mysterious, moreover, seek to know and explore it. They reach a certain level in their search and are able to exist freely between the levels of consciousness and the unconscious, without losing control and the danger of inevitable mental changes. Others are very eager for this, because the opportunity to find a whole Self, to master the Self, is always very attractive to humanity; it is a kind of treasure. However, to meet a life that differs from everyday life, to become a person who differs from others, to become primitive Self, to plunge into such an unknown, uncontrollable state – all this frightens the modern rational civilized people. Therefore, despite the great temptation, most people can only contemplate from the threshold, and not daring to go this way to the end.

### **Conclusions**

Theory of C. G. Jung’s archetypes and the concept of the process of individuation of personality are the basis of our psychoanalytic interpretation of the Can Xue’s short story *Empty Rooms*. The path to self-knowledge is a leading idea in major works by Can Xue, and in this article this process is investigated, detailed and individualized. The psychoanalytic discourse in the research determines the awareness of the existence in the depths of the subconscious of various manifestations of the Self (the Persona, the Shadow, the Anima / Animus, etc.) and meeting the main character with them on the way to self-awareness. The architecture of the inner world of the individual is vividly represented in the image of a two-story house and several empty rooms. The text actively involves the image of water as a symbol of the depths of the subconscious, as well as the image of suitcases as various dimensions of mental activity. On the example of *Empty Rooms* we trace the individual beginning on the way to self-analysis and the attempt to achieve the Self – a new integrity of the conscious and unconscious in person. Thus, *Empty Rooms* provides a look into Can Xue’s early psychological experience with unknown space. Can Xue resorts to dreaming to explore the space with her subconscious imagination, which is later transcribed into literary exploration through her fiction.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Freud's theory, the human personality is composed of three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego, however the most of our nature is not from a conscious level, but instead lays on a subconscious level. Freud believed that the conscious level of personality was only the tip of the iceberg. Thus, personality is the sum of the id, the ego, and the superego and their interactions with each other both consciously and unconsciously.

<sup>2</sup> The Cultural Revolution, formally the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, was a violent sociopolitical purge movement in China from 1966 until 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Italicized by author.

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*M. O. Война, O. C. Воробей*

### **Юнгiанське розумiння iндивiдуацiї особистостi в оповiданнi Цань Сюе "Порожнi кiмнати"**

Творчiсть – це найвища й найскладнiша форма психiчної дiяльностi, вiдтак розробка питання про роль несвiдомого у структурi художньої творчостi i сприйняття важливи для аналізу психологiї мистецтва. На думку К.-Г. Юнга, народження кожного твору завжди пов'язане з дiєю могутнiх сил, що спочивають у колективному несвiдомому й виявляються кризь творчiсть окремого митця. У юнгiанськiй психологiї iндивiдуацiя – це процес досягнення iндивiдом психiчної зрiлостi шляхом формування збалансованої системи свiдомих i несвiдомих компонентiв психiки. Мотив iндивiдуацiї в лiтературi охоплює цiлу низку ситуацiй, коли людина – типово молода, часто наївна – переживає пiд час сюжету твору момент просвiтлення, вiдкриття чи iнiцiацiї, що приводить до визнання «значущої iстини про свiт, суспiльство або власне "я"». Сучасну китайську письменницю Цань Сюе (残雪, нар. у 1953 р.) особливо цiкавила психiчна дiяльностi людини, тому у своїх творах вона часто оперує поняттями, iдеями та образами, що пiддаються юнгiанському прочитанню, зокрема з погляду принципу iндивiдуацiї, який є нарiжним каменем цього аналізу. Фантазiя Цань Сюе творить втаємничено-примарну атмосферу художнього тексту, наповнену дивовижними та страшними образами. Письменниця володiє здатнiстю глибокого проникнення у глибини людськiй психiки, безапеляцiйного виявлення трагiчної сутi людського iснування кризь призму власного життєвого досвiду. Вiдтак, метод амплiфикацiї, розроблений К.-Г. Юнгом, у поєднаннi з iсторичним та порiвняльно-типологiчним методами, дав змогу здiйснити психоаналiтичну iнтерпретацiю новели Цань Сюе "Порожнi кiмнати" з позицiй самостi та її рефлексивної свiдомостi. У новелi "Порожнi кiмнати" є кiлька аспектiв несвiдомого (будiвлi, дверi, архетиповi мешканцi, пошук домiвки), якi потрiбно iнтегрувати зi свiдомими психологiчними компонентами, що складаються з усiх вiдторгнених та пригнiчених елементiв особистостi. Процес комплексної роботи з цими аспектами є аналогiчним до подорожi архетипу героя, кiнцевою метою цих блукань є iндивiдуацiя, завдяки якiй людина вiдновлює спорiдненiсть зi своїм "я", архетипом, що представляє цiлiснiсть i всеосяжностi.

**Ключовi слова:** Цань Сюе, новела, лiтература, К.-Г. Юнг, iндивiдуацiя, несвiдоме, архетип

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