PERCEIVING THE SACRED FEMININE: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CYCLADIC FIGURINES AND JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES

Purpose. Without claiming to explain the meaning and purpose of the Cycladic figurines of the canonical type (FAF) in the context of the culture that created them, the author attempts to investigate the phenomenon of these ancient images and their impact on contemporary humans through the lens of Carl Gustav Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes. The primary meanings and purposes of the Cycladic figurines are ambiguous and incomprehensible to us. We cannot understand them in the context of their original culture. But we are able to create our own meanings: unfinished images generate an opportunity to bypass our conscious mind and to contact the unconscious. The Cycladic figurines may resonate with female archetypes in the male and female psyche, as well as symbolize the ontological primacy of creative unity of opposites, the integrity of consciousness and the unconscious. Originality. The author outlined the possible unconscious meanings generated by the Cycladic figurines for human psyche. The Cycladic figurines actualize the archetypes of the collective unconscious, such as the Great Mother, the Anima, and the Self. These ancient images can be used for introspection, art therapy, active imagination, meditation, mindfulness. Conclusions. The results show that the Cycladic figurines have had a huge impact on the artists of the 20th century and continue to influence our contemporaries due to the emotional response they evoke in the unconscious, which conceals the primordial features of the ancient mind. Laconic ancient images provide a vast space of options for human imagination. In an attempt to interpret them, we are suddenly seized and carried away into unknown depths. Archetypal images are manifested in any form – from sublime and beautiful to terrible, but they create a single space full of numinous awe and beauty. Engaging with the archetypes and revealing their hidden messages, we establish a connection between consciousness and the unconscious, between the personal and collective unconscious to achieve a deep self-awareness and inner growth.

Keywords: Cycladic figurines; C. G. Jung; collective unconscious; archetypes; Great Mother; Anima; Self

Introduction

There are so-called eternal, or universal, themes that art has always addressed and reinvented, and the theme of a woman is among them. Each epoch has its own ideal of a woman. The whole history of humankind is reflected in the women’s images and narratives about them. Women have always attracted the special attention of the artists. Created in the visual arts, images of women represent a poetic ideal in its harmonic unity of body, mind, and soul. Perhaps, there is nothing more admirable than a stunning beauty of a woman – a Muse whom songs, poems, paintings, movies are dedicated to. For eons, men have performed many great exploits for beautiful women. Not surprisingly, even the ancient creators of the wall paintings tried to perpetuate the eternal idea of beauty.

Nowadays, despite the fact that beauty is turned into a feminist issue (Khmil, 2019; Khmil, & Korkh, 2014; Storozhuk, & Hoyan, 2017) and many representatives of the feminist movement struggle against the oppressive beauty standards, "beauty is still here. Fashion – political and otherwise – changes, but certain universal ideals seem to have remained fairly intact throughout human history" (Lehrman, 1999). Thus, beauty appears to be more than just a social construct. Even if the idea of beauty can be challenged, the experience of beauty cannot be denied, and artists since the beginning of the world till now have been trying to reveal the true beauty of humans – first and foremost women.
One of the amazing creations of the human genius are the Cycladic figure sculptures (Cycladic idols) – monochrome and laconic, yet sophisticated and elegant marble images, mostly female, which became the hallmark of the Cycladic culture. The Cycladic culture refers to the culture of the Cyclades of the southern Aegean Sea. It dates back to the Neolithic (5200 – 3200 BCE) and the Early Bronze Age (3200 – 2100 BCE). Lacking any written sources or oral narratives, the researchers know very little about the daily life, religion, beliefs, values, customs, and traditions of the Cycladic culture. Therefore, the purpose and the meaning of the marble figurines gave rise to the different interpretations. They are interpreted as the funerary objects, ritual images, votive objects, even toys and educational aids, or the personification of the Great Mother-Goddess (Goodison, 1989; Renfrew, 2010; Renfrew, Philaniotou, Brodie, Gavalas, & Boyd, 2018). Based on the findings of C. Stephanos and M. Marthari (Marthari, Renfrew, & Boyd, 2017) on the island of Syros, E. Gonzales (2018) argues that the mysterious figurines should be demystified and studied within the archaeological context. She claims that the Cycladic figurines are likely to have many features depending on their context and "these objects were instrumental in illuminating women’s roles in ritual and the construction of an elite Cycladic identity" (Gonzales, 2018, p. 13).

The extreme laconism of the Cycladic figurines, their purity and a certain "detachment" from the earthly life resonate with the contemporary ideas of beauty and give us a possibility of universal interpretations and different meanings. In the 20th century the Cycladic idols fascinated and inspired such well-known artists as A. Modigliani, G. Moore, C. Brancusi, A. Giacometti, P. Picasso, G. de Chirico, H. Arp, B. Hepworth who breathed new life into these ancient forms. What attracts modern people to these ancient masterpieces?

The interpretation of beauty differs in temporal and spatial aspects, but the very concept of beauty is firmly embedded in the human psyche. It is not a complete image per se, but a certain dynamic or motivational trend that contributes to the synthesis of a personal factor, which largely depends on the spatial-temporal continuum, and the impersonal motives. Beauty goes beyond the purely aesthetic characteristics of the world and, as N. Berdyaev (1993) emphasized, becomes a "characteristic of the highest state of being, the highest achievement of existence" (p. 327). How does the synthesis of personal and impersonal, profane and numinous occur in our perception of beauty? How is this encounter of two worlds encoded in the human psyche?

**Purpose**

Without claiming to explain the meaning and purpose of the Cycladic figurines of the canonical type (FAF) in the context of the culture that created them, the author attempts to investigate the phenomenon of these ancient images and their impact on contemporary humans through the lens of Carl Gustav Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes. The author used an interpretive research paradigm, integrative anthropological approach, and multidisciplinary analysis.

**Statement of basic materials**

Returned from oblivion, the Cycladic figurines at first provoked a negative aesthetic reaction among European art connoisseurs: «the Karlsruhe catalogue is introduced with early opinions such as "small monsters made of bits of marble", "ugly", and "barbarian"» (Gill, & Chippindale, 1993, p. 605). Indeed, the marble images that were named "primitive idols" defied the established canons of beauty and were far from both the ideal of beauty of the 19th century and the
aesthetic ideal of classical Greece. The most common group of the Cycladic idols, the so-called FAF (Folded Arm Figurines), shares certain characteristics:

The head is tilted upward and backward on a short neck, with only the nose indicated among the facial features. Ears and eyes are not normally shown. The figurines are generally female, always naked. The arms are folded at the waist, nearly always right below left. Above them the two breasts are lightly indicated. There is sometimes a horizontal line at the waist, and the pubic triangle is often indicated by incision. The legs, always held together, are often slightly bent at the knees, and the feet… are inclined so that the figure, if it was indeed imagined as upright, was standing on tiptoe. There is a marked lack of detail: often only fingers and toes are indicated by incision, and details such as ankles, kneecaps, navel, ribs or hair are not shown. The back is extremely simple, with only an incised line for the backbone, and sometimes incisions behind the arms. All the figurines, including the several pregnant ones, are notably slim. In general the figurines are very graceful. (Renfrew, 1969, p. 9)

To the museum visitors, the Cycladic idols with their simple shapes and minimal details most likely personified the primitive world, the world of the "Other", which was perceived as hostile Chaos in the refined world of Cosmos and familiar beauty. But eventually they turned into a source of inspiration for the 20th century artists – "primitive idols" were transformed into the new aesthetic archetypes. Evading conscious awareness, a forgotten language directly appealed to the heart of a modern human: "it was a symbolic language – the primordial language of the unconscious and humanity" (Neumann, 2015, p. 16). Although the original images were once generously painted (Birtacha, 2018; Hendrix, 2003) and their creators most likely saw the marble statuettes as a blank canvas for the further development of the desired images, white marble of the figurines, which lost the original image of the Cycladic culture, has become the inspiration for our contemporaries: "unfinished Cycladic figures resemble finished 20th century sculptures" (Gill, & Chippindale, 1993, p. 656).

The white marble bodies, the lack of specific details, clean geometric lines made the figurines ideal source of our own beauty ideas. This allows us to go beyond our own emic reality, the structure of metaphors and to encounter a phenomenon that is beyond any culture and deeply
rooted in the unconscious. The meanings encoded in the images exist in our unconscious in a latent state. The Cycladic idols trigger the archetypal ideas. Their primary meanings and purposes are ambiguous and incomprehensible to us. We cannot understand these figurines in the context of their original culture. But we are able to create our own meanings: unfinished images generate an opportunity to bypass our conscious mind and to contact the unconscious. Human fantasy acquires a "field of activity", in which eternal archetypes can be "translated" into acceptable cultural forms.

The figurines themselves have become symbols that contain much more than the things they reflect (Losev, 2012). A symbol implicitly contains all possible manifestations of a thing, gives it a deep meaning and forms its internal regularity. Symbols cannot be interpreted within the frame of formal logic: they appeal not only and not that much to reason, but to instincts, affects, and emotions. They provide an opportunity to comprehend life, because life itself generates emotions and symbolic ideas.

Perceiving the Cycladic figurines as a certain symbol, the mind inevitably reaches the ideas, which lie beyond logic, and goes into the sphere of representations that are collective by their nature, those "archaic remnants", which C. G. Jung called "archetypes" or "primordial images". Consciousness perceives archetypes at the level of symbols. The prominent psychologist warned against misunderstanding of the archetypes as the certain mythological images or motives. C. G. Jung (1964) defined the archetype as "a tendency to form such representations of a motif – representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern… They are, indeed, an instinctive trend, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies" (p. 67). Being manifested in a symbolic form, instincts are transformed into the archetypes. And the very "archetypical image symbol corresponds, then, in its impressiveness, significance, energetic charge, and numinosity, to the original importance of instinct for man’s existence" (Neumann, 2015, p. 5).

The energy of the archetypes can be felt due to the special charm that accompanies their appearance. They evoke enchanted awe. So it was with the Cycladic images: "today, four and a half thousand years later, they enchant us again with the purity of their forms, their freshness, and their perfection" (Thimme, 1977, p. 282). The subconscious of the modern humans intuitively captured the spirit of the figurines and transformed them through the prism of the archetypes. Filled with specific energy, archetypal thinking in its symbolic form interpreted the meaning of the figurines as Divine Feminine. Divine Feminine has an infinite number of faces that represent the Great Goddess of the past, present, and future. She is a blooming maiden, a mother – life giver, and a crone who knows the secrets of life and death. This Goddess with many faces belongs to all epochs and all cultures (Bazaluk, 2019).

Since ancient times, people were aware of the impact of nature’s cycles on their being, and in particular the moon cycles. Representations of the Great Goddess correlate with moon phases – Goddess-Maiden is the new waxing moon, Goddess-Mother is the full moon, and Goddess-Crone is the waning moon (Graves, 2013). Embodied in the Triple Goddess, three-in-one changing faces of the moon became one of the most famous symbols of Neopaganism, Wicca in particular.

The Great Mother is one of the main archetypes of the collective unconscious. Behind the image of the most significant for each person real maternal figure, there is always an archetypal image of the Great Mother – Mother-Goddess, Mother-Nature. The image of the Great Mother emerged from the primordial archetype. It is represented in three forms: the good, the horrible,
and the good-bad mother. This archetype has a great variety of manifestations – from Virgin Mary and Sophia to Lilith and Kali. According to C. G. Jung,

The qualities associated with it are maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother. On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate. (Jung, 1969, p. 158)

An archetypal image of both a merciful and hostile Goddess, a loving and terrible Mother who gives and sustains life and pulls into the abyss is the embodiment of perfect bio-survival security and the threats, destruction, and death. This dialectic of the image generates its authority and numinosity.

Another female archetype – the Anima – is directly related to the Great Mother. It personifies feminine psychological patterns within a man: the ability to love, feeling for nature, vague moods, prophetic insights, susceptibility to the irrational, contact with the unconscious mind (Franz, 1964). This is an unconscious female component of the male psyche, which "represents a supreme feminine (i.e. anima) figure such as Kwan-Yin in Chinese Buddhism, Sophia in the Christian-Gnostic doctrine, or the ancient Greek goddess of wisdom Pallas Athena" (Henderson, 1964, p. 152).

Like the image of the Great Mother, the image of the Anima has both positive and negative aspects: from the instinctive stage of witch creatures – mermaids, lamias, sirens, fairies, which lead to confusion, depression, destructive affects, and personality disorders, to a wise mediator and guide to personal empowerment and the inner world of the True Self.

While for men the Cycladic figurines may resonate with the archetypal image of the Anima, in the realm of the female psyche they may actualize the deepest core of the psyche – the Self, which is embodied in female images (Franz, 1964). Like the previous archetypal images, the Self has positive and negative expressions. In the archetypes themselves binary oppositions exist in the undivided form.

Facing the archetypes of the collective unconscious and integrating them, we make contact with the primordial layers of our psychic energy. These deep encounters with the archetypes bring us back to the initial experience: we take the Cycladic figurines "from their makers in prehistory and bring them into the values and psychologies of our own worldviews" (Gill, & Chippindale, 1993, p. 657).
The Cycladic idols’ body images attract special attention – the canonical Cycladic figurines are androgy nous despite the schematically marked female biological features. Broad shoulders, narrow enough hips, lack of facial features can be attributed to both women and men. Many of the features that researchers regard as female can be seen in the figurines interpreted as male (Phillips, 2019). The androgy nous of the canonical Cycladic figurines resonates with C. G. Jung’s idea of the androgy nous of the Anima: "The androgy nous of the anima may appear in the anima herself at a certain stage, but it derives at a higher level from unity of the self" (Jung, 2015, p. 509).

Such images may embody the lost primordial unity and a figurine itself may symbolize the ontological primacy of creative unity of opposites, the integrity of consciousness and the unconscious, and the lost harmony (Danylova, 2015). Entering modern life in the form of symbols, prehistoric sculpture masterpieces may fill it with fullness, purpose and wide horizons and give rise to a deep sense of being.

**Originality**

The author investigated the Cycladic figurines of the canonical type (FAF) through the lens of Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes and outlined the possible unconscious meanings generated by these images for human psyche. Transcending the chthonic and the uranic elements of the Cosmos, uniting the Void and all Forms, the Cycladic figurines actualize the archetypes of the collective unconscious, such as the Great Mother, the Anima, and the Self. These ancient images can be used for introspection, art therapy, active imagination, meditation, mindfulness. Engaging with the archetypes and revealing their hidden messages, we establish a connection between consciousness and the unconscious, between the personal and collective unconscious to achieve a deep self-awareness and inner growth.

**Conclusions**

The results show that the Cycladic figurines have had a huge impact on the artists of the 20th century and continue to influence our contemporaries due to the emotional response they evoke in our unconscious, which conceals the primordial features of the ancient mind. Human beings as an independent form of existence manifest themselves at the intersection of the worlds of nature and culture being deeply rooted in each of them (Danylova, & Salata, 2018). Human instincts are decisive in the world of nature (Lorenz, 2017, 2019), while the world of culture is ruled by symbols (Cassirer, 2020; Kolesnykova, & Matveyeva, 2019). Symbols are the mediators between humans and the world, and this symbolic universe defines humans as much as they are aware of themselves in it.

Laconic ancient images provide a vast space of options for human imagination. In an attempt to interpret them, we are suddenly seized and carried away into unknown depths. Archetypal images are manifested in any form – from sublime and beautiful to terrible, but they create a single space full of numinous awe and beauty. Deprived of details, Cycladic figurines without faces or with a thousand faces don’t say anything directly. They merely hint as a great work of art, which as C. G. Jung (1979) put it is similar to a dream "that never has an unambiguous interpretation. None of dreams says: "You are obliged" or "This is the truth"; it reveals the image like the nature grows the plant, and we are given the opportunity to draw our own conclusions from this image" (p. 196). The Cycladic figurines convey their universal beauty through their silent universal language and call us into the lost world of harmony.
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ОСЯГАЮЧИ СВЯЩЕНУ ЖІНОЧНІСТЬ: ДЕЯКІ ДУМКИ ПРО КІКЛАДСЬКІ СТАТУЕТКИ ТА АРХЕТИПИ ЮНГА

Мета. Не претендуєчи на вирішення питання про сенс і призначення кікладських статуеток канонічного типу (FAF) у контексті культури, що створила їх, автор робить спробу осмислити феномен цих дрібних зображень, а зокрема, їхній вплив на сучасну людину з позиції теорії колективного несвідомого та архетипів Карла Густава Юнга.

Теоретичний базис. Первинне призначення та сенс кікладських статуеток є неоднозначними і незбагненими. Ми не можемо зрозуміти ці фігурки в контексті їхньої оригінальної культури. Але ми здатні відтворити власні смисли: "незавершені" зображення генерують можливість обминути раціональні бар’єри нашої свідомості та звернутися безпосередньо до несвідомого. Кікладські статуетки можуть резонувати з жіночими архетипами в чоловічій і жіночій психіці, а також символізувати онтологічну первинність творчого єднання протилежностей, цілісності свідомості та несвідомого.

Наукова новизна. Автор окреслив можливі несвідомі змісті і значення, породжені кікладськими фігурками, для сучасної людини. Кікладські фігурки актуалізують архетипи колективного несвідомого, такі як Веліка Матір, Аніма, Самість. Ці давні зображення можна використовувати в самоаналізі, арт-терапії, активній уяві, медитації, майндфулнес. Висновки. Результати дослідження демонструють, що кікладські статуетки, як і будь-які інші зображення, можуть викликати у нашому несвідомому емоційний відгук, що приховує у собі первісні риси, від бажаних і до жахливого. Архетипів, які викликають неосяжного простору людської фантазії. Взаємодіючи з архетипами і розкриваючи їхні приховані послання, ми створюємо нові загадки світ людської інтелектуальності.

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ПОСТИГАЯ СВЯЩЕННУЮ ЖЕНСТВЕННОСТЬ: НЕКОТОРЫЕ МЫСЛИ О КИКЛАДСКИХ СТАТУЭТКАХ И АРХЕТИПАХ ЮНГА

Цель. Не претендуя на разрешение вопроса о смысле и предназначении кикладских статуэток канониче-

ского типа (FAF) в контексте культуры, созданной их, автор делает попытку осмыслить феномен этих древ-

них изображений и их влияние на современного человека с позиции теории коллективного бессознательного

и архетипов Карла Густава Юнга. Теоретический базис. Первоначальное предназначение и смысл киклад-

ских статуэток является неоднозначным и непостижимым. Мы не можем интерпретировать эти фигурки в

контексте их оригинальной культуры. Но мы способны создать собственные смыслы: “незавершенные”

изображения генерируют возможность обойти рациональные барьеры нашего сознания и обратиться непо-

средственно к бессознательному. Кикладские статуэтки могут резонировать с женскими архетипами в муж-

ской и женской психике, а также символизировать онтологическую первичность творческого единения про-

тивположностей, целостность сознания и бессознательного. Научная новизна. Автор обозначил возмож-

ные бессознательные содержания и значения, инициированные кикладскими статуэтками, для современного

человека. Кикладские фигурки актуализируют архетипы коллективного бессознательного, такие как Вели-

кая Мать, Анима, Самость. Эти древние изображения можно использовать в самоанализе, арт-терапии, ак-

тивном воображении, медитации, майндфулнес. Выводы. Результаты исследования демонстрируют, что

кикладские статуэтки оказали огромное влияние на искусство XX века и продолжают оказывать его на

наших современников благодаря тому эмоциональному отклику, который они вызывают в нашем бессозна-

тельном, тающим в себе первобытные черты, характерные для древнего разума. Лаконичные древние изоб-

ражения предоставляют огромное пространство для человеческой фантазии. Архетипические образы могут

проявляться в любом виде – от возвышенного и прекрасного до ужасного, но они создают единое простран-

ство, полное трепета и священной красоты. Взаимодействуя с архетипами и раскрывая их скрытые послан-

ия, мы устанавливаем связь между сознанием и бессознательным, между индивидуальным и коллективным

бессознательным для самопознания и внутреннего роста.

Ключевые слова: кикладские статуэтки; К. Г. Юнг; коллективное бессознательное; архетипы; Великая

Мать; Анима; Самость

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