Analyzing the Novel 'the Beggar' (Al-Shahaz) Based on Jung’s Archetypes

Dr. Rooh Allah Nasiri 1
Assistant Professor of, Department of Quran and Ahlul-Bayt (PBUH) in Arabic Language and Literature University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Seyed Mohamad Jalil mostafavi Rozati
PhD student in Persian Language and Literature, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
Carl Gustav Jung, a famous Swiss psychiatrist, defines archetype as the behavioral themes common among human beings throughout the history. Man through a spiritual journey and in interaction with the archetype completes his individuation. Individuation is a process during which “I” as the center of consciousness moves to ‘self’ which is the innermost part of unconsciousness. Dream and vision are the ones within which the content of archetype becomes clear and interpretable.

Ashahaz (beggar) written by Naguib Mahfouz, the well-known Egypt writer and noble winner in literature can be interpreted considering the basis. This novel, as a psychoanalytical work, has the potential of being interpreted variously. It is the story of the human being’s spiritual journey to the deepest parts of unconscious.

2. Theoretical Framework
The story is about three friends called Omar, Othman and Mustafa, seeking revolutionary ideals, try to assassinate an official but fail. Othman is caught by the police but the two others escape. Omar and Mustafa live a life of wealth and positions, while Othman is imprisoned but does not give out his connections with Omar and Othman. Omar Hamzavi, the protagonist becomes depressed and gives up his life and work. He indulges in sexual activities with women who do not care about him but want to enjoy the moment. Passing some time in this way he suddenly changes. This is when all darkness vanishes, he feels light and experiences an unreasonable joy. Toward the end of the story, dream dominates and everything is surprising and spectacular.

3. Method
Using a descriptive-analytical method and the approach of psychoanalytic criticism authors try to answer these questions in the present study: how are Jung's archetypes represented in this novel? And how are they effective on the completion of psychological process of individuation in the novel?

1 Corresponding Author: roohallah62@yahoo.com
4. Results and Discussion
Jung’s important archetypes such as ‘shadow’, ‘mask’, ‘anima’ and ‘rebirth’ are easily traceable in the story. Shadow as the negative aspect of character and the one which man generally denies, is represented in the form of Omar’s feelings of uselessness and inefficacy. The other manifestation is declaiming the ideals and turning to wealth and transient prestige which leads to the masks of ‘reliable attorney’ and ‘magnificent house’.

The protagonist wears the masks but they are not his real identity and have to be put away at the end of the story. The archetype of anima is very remarkable in this story. To complete the process of individuation, the protagonist has to test some of the negative and destructive animas – such as the women with whom he experiences short-lived love - to get the positive and constructive anima of his soul. So, the existence of negative animas is necessary for reaching the appropriate anima. The positive anima in this story comes up in the form of Omar’s wife (Zeinab) who is kind, loves her family and is pregnant (pregnancy and birth are symbols of constructive anima). The other effective anima in the story is Bathia (Omar’s daughter) who loves poesy. Omar himself was a poet when he was young but in the second part of his life he puts it aside.

Rebirth is the other important archetype in this story in which the protagonist, after having a very difficult journey, finds himself. At the end of the story Omar Hamzavi’s poetic illuminations appear and he remembers his forgotten poems. Samir, Omar’s son, is born. This can be considered as Omar’s ‘self’, since to Jung, child is a symbol of ‘self’. Going back home is also the sign of completeness of individuation process and success in ‘self-discovery’. In the end, the protagonist successfully passes the masks and shadows. Othman is a symbol of reconciliation of conscious and unconscious. Omar meets Othman after several years. This is again a symbol of meeting self (rejoining the unconscious and conscious), especially because the meeting happens after his son is born (rebirth) and returns home (the end of journey in unconscious). Othman has been imprisoned for several years and this is a symbol of Omar’s imprisonment with the fetter of shadow and mask and Othman’s release from prison means Omar’s return to life.

5. Conclusion
Considering all aspects of the story and Jung’s ideas, it can be concluded that all characters of the story are different aspects of one person, i.e. Omar (protagonist). Bathina and Zeinab are positive animas of his soul and Warda, Mona, and Margaret are negative and destructive animas. Othman (the one whom Omar has forgotten for many years) is considered his lost half and Mustafa (who always asks Omar to ignore the individuation and his past problems) is the symbol of the shadow of Omar’s personality. One of the reasons of coming to the conclusion is Omar’s surprising dream at the end of the story.

Omar is a symbol of modern man that sadness, depression, and fear of death have ruined his peace and science is incapable of treating his spiritual disaster.

Keywords: Jung, archetype, shadow, mask, Anima the Beggar (Al-Shahaz).
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