

*Man and His Symbols*  
Carl Jung  
NY: Dell Publishing, 1964

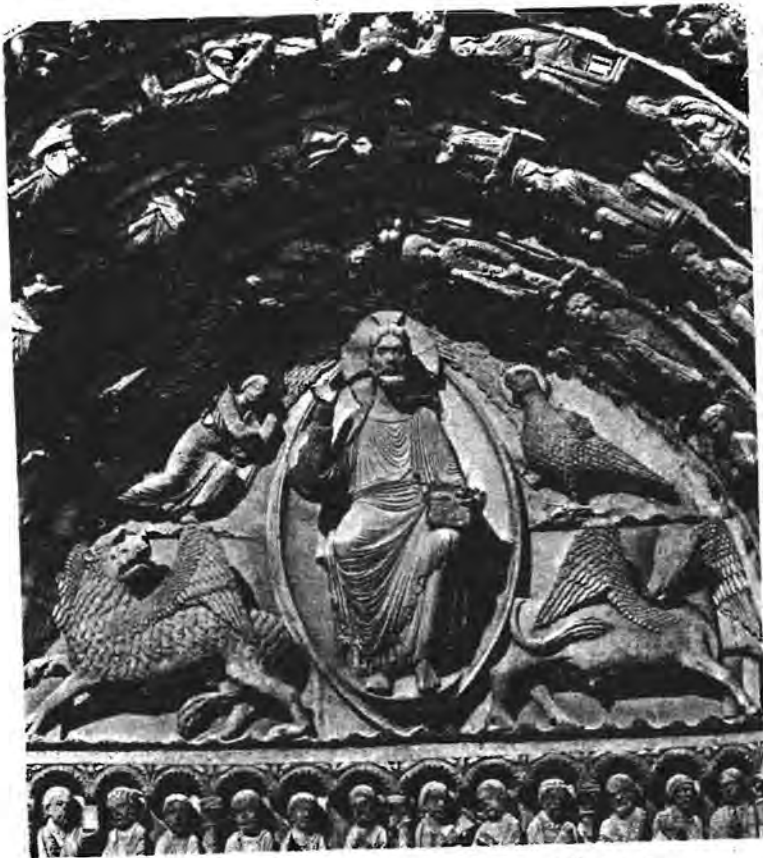
## Ch. 1, "Approaching the Unconscious"

NOTE: Skip "The importance of types" on p. 45 and start again at "The archetype in dream symbolism" on p. 56

### The importance of dreams

Man uses the spoken or written word to express the meaning of what he wants to convey. His language is full of symbols, but he also often employs signs or images that are not strictly descriptive. Some are mere abbreviations or strings of initials, such as UN, UNICEF, or UNESCO; others are familiar trade marks, the names of patent medicines, badges, or insignia. Although these are meaningless in themselves, they have acquired a recognizable meaning through common usage or deliberate intent. Such things are not symbols. They are signs, and they do no more than denote the objects to which they are attached.

What we call a symbol is a term, a name, or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown, or hidden from us. Many Cretan monuments, for instance, are marked with the design of the double adze. This is an object that we know, but we do not know its symbolic implications. For another example, take the case of the Indian who, after a visit to England, told his friends at home that the English worship animals, because he had found eagles, lions, and oxen in old churches. He was not aware (nor are many Christians) that these animals are symbols of the Evangelists and are derived from the vision of Ezekiel, and that this in turn has an analogy to the Egyptian sun god Horus and his four sons. There are, moreover, such objects as the wheel and the cross that are known all over the world, yet that have a symbolic significance under certain conditions. Precisely what they symbolize is still a matter for controversial speculation.



*Three of the four Evangelists (in a relief on Chartres Cathedral) appear as animals: The lion is Mark, the ox Luke, the eagle John.*

Thus a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider "unconscious" aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason. The wheel may lead our thoughts toward the concept of a "divine" sun, but at this point reason must admit its incompetence; man is unable to define a "divine" being. When, with all our intellectual limitations, we call something "divine," we have merely given it a name, which may be based on a creed, but never on factual evidence.

Because there are innumerable things beyond the range of human understanding, we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend. This is one reason why all religions employ symbolic language or images. But this conscious use of symbols is only one aspect of a psychological fact of great importance: Man also produces symbols unconsciously and spontaneously, in the form of dreams.

It is not easy to grasp this point. But the point must be grasped if we are to know more about the ways in which the human mind works. Man, as we realize if we reflect for a moment, never perceives anything fully or comprehends anything completely. He can see, hear, touch, and taste; but how far he sees, how well he hears, what his touch tells him, and what he tastes depend upon the number and quality of his senses. These limit his perception of the world around him. By using scientific instruments he can partly compensate for the deficiencies of his senses. For example, he can extend the range of his vision by binoculars or of his hearing by electrical amplification. But the most elaborate apparatus cannot do more than bring distant or small objects within range of his eyes, or make faint sounds more audible. No matter what instruments he uses, at some point he reaches the edge of certainty beyond which conscious knowledge cannot pass.

There are, moreover, unconscious aspects of our perception of reality. The first is the fact that even when our senses react to real phenomena, sights, and sounds, they are somehow translated from the realm of reality into that of the mind. Within the mind they become psychic events, whose ultimate nature is unknowable (for the psyche cannot know its own psychical substance). Thus every ex-

perience contains an indefinite number of unknown factors, not to speak of the fact that every concrete object is always unknown in certain respects, because we cannot know the ultimate nature of matter itself.

Then there are certain events of which we have not consciously taken note; they have remained, so to speak, below the threshold of consciousness. They have happened, but they have been absorbed subliminally, without our conscious knowledge. We can become aware of such happenings only in a moment of intuition or by a process of profound thought that leads to a later realization that they must have happened; and though we may have originally ignored their emotional and vital importance, it later wells up from the unconscious as a sort of afterthought.

It may appear, for instance, in the form of a dream. As a general rule, the unconscious aspect of any event is revealed to us in dreams, where it appears not as a rational thought but as a symbolic image. As a matter of history, it was the study of dreams that first enabled psychologists to investigate the unconscious aspect of conscious psychic events.

It is on such evidence that psychologists assume the existence of an unconscious psyche—though many scientists and philosophers deny its existence. They argue naively that such an assumption implies the existence of two "subjects," or (to put it in a common phrase) two personalities within the same individual. But this is exactly what it does imply—quite correctly. And it is one of the curses of modern man that many people suffer from

*Three of the sons of the Egyptian god Horus are animals (c. 1250 B.C.). Animals, and groups of four, are universal religious symbols.*



this divided personality. It is by no means a pathological symptom; it is a normal fact that can be observed at any time and everywhere. It is not merely the neurotic whose right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. This predicament is a symptom of a general unconsciousness that is the undeniable common inheritance of all mankind.

Man has developed consciousness slowly and laboriously, in a process that took untold ages to reach the civilized state (which is arbitrarily dated from the invention of script in about 4000 B.C.). And this evolution is far from complete, for large areas of the human mind are still shrouded in darkness. What we call the "psyche" is by no means identical with our consciousness and its contents.

Whoever denies the existence of the unconscious is in fact assuming that our present knowledge of the psyche is total. And this belief is clearly just as false as the assumption that we know all there is to be known about the natural universe. Our psyche is part of nature, and its enigma is as limitless. Thus we cannot define either the psyche or nature. We can merely state what we believe them to be and describe, as best we can, how they function. Quite apart, therefore, from the evidence that medical research has accumulated, there are strong grounds of logic for rejecting statements like "There is no unconscious." Those who say such things merely express an age-old "misonism"—a fear of the new and the unknown.

There are historical reasons for this resistance to the idea of an unknown part of the human psyche. Consciousness is a very recent acquisition of nature, and it is still in an "experimental" state. It is frail, menaced by specific dangers, and easily injured. As anthropologists have noted, one of the most common mental derangements that occur among primitive people is what they call "the loss of a soul"—which means, as the name indicates, a noticeable disruption (or, more technically, a dissociation) of consciousness.

Among such people, whose consciousness is at a different level of development from ours, the "soul" (or psyche) is not felt to be a unit. Many primitives assume that a man has a "bush soul" as well as his own, and that this bush soul is incarnate in a wild animal or a tree, with which the human individual has some kind of psychic



*"Dissociation" means a splitting in the psyche, causing a neurosis. A famous fictional example of this state is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886) by the Scots author R. L. Stevenson. In the story Jekyll's "split" took the form of a physical change, rather than (as in reality) an inner, psychic state. Above, Mr. Hyde (from the 1932 film of the story)—Jekyll's "other half."*

identity. This is what the distinguished French ethnologist Lucien Lévy-Brühl called a "mystical participation." He later retracted this term under pressure of adverse criticism, but I believe that his critics were wrong. It is a well-known psychological fact that an individual may have such an unconscious identity with some other person or object.

This identity takes a variety of forms among primitives. If the bush soul is that of an animal, the animal itself is considered as some sort of brother to the man. A man whose brother is a crocodile, for instance, is supposed to be safe when swimming a crocodile-infested river. If the bush soul is a tree, the tree is presumed to have something like parental authority over the individual concerned. In both cases an injury to the bush soul is interpreted as an injury to the man.

In some tribes, it is assumed that a man has a number of souls; this belief expresses the feeling of some primitive individuals that they each consist of several linked but



distinct units. This means that the individual's psyche is far from being safely synthesized; on the contrary, it threatens to fragment only too easily under the onslaught of unchecked emotions.

While this situation is familiar to us from the studies of anthropologists, it is not so irrelevant to our own advanced civilization as it might seem. We too can become dissociated and lose our identity. We can be possessed and altered by moods, or become unreasonable and unable to recall important facts about ourselves or others, so that people ask: "What the devil has got into you?" We talk about being able "to control ourselves," but self-control is a rare and remarkable virtue. We may think we have ourselves under control; yet a friend can easily tell us things about ourselves of which we have no knowledge.

Beyond doubt, even in what we call a high level of civilization, human consciousness has not yet achieved a reasonable degree of continuity. It is still vulnerable and liable to fragmentation. This capacity to isolate part of one's mind, indeed, is a valuable characteristic. It enables us to concentrate upon one thing at a time, excluding everything else that may claim our attention. But there is a world of difference between a conscious decision to split off and temporarily suppress a part of one's psyche, and a condition in which this happens spontaneously, without one's knowledge or consent and even against one's intention. The former is a civilized achievement, the latter a primitive "loss of a soul," or even the pathological cause of a neurosis.

Thus, even in our day the unity of consciousness is still a doubtful affair; it can too easily be disrupted. An ability to control one's emotions that may be very desirable from one point of view would be a questionable accomplishment from another, for it would deprive social intercourse of variety, color, and warmth.

It is against this background that we must review the importance of dreams—those flimsy, evasive, unreliable, vague, and uncertain fantasies. To explain my point of view, I would like to describe how it developed over a period of years, and how I was led to conclude that dreams are the most frequent and universally accessible source for the investigation of man's symbolizing faculty.

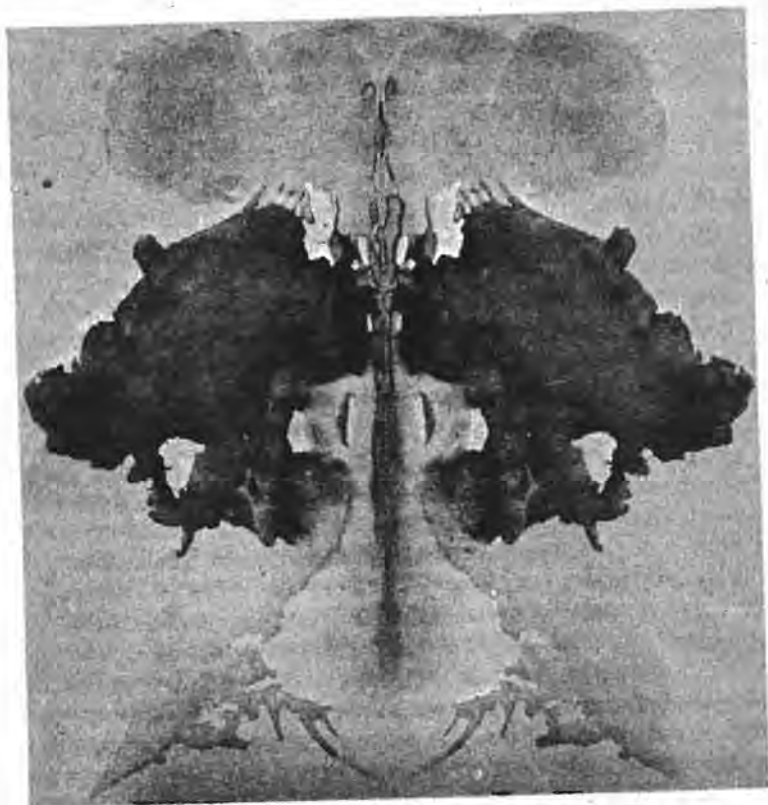
Sigmund Freud was the pioneer who first tried to explore empirically the unconscious background of con-

sciousness. He worked on the general assumption that dreams are not a matter of chance but are associated with conscious thoughts and problems. This assumption was not in the least arbitrary. It was based upon the conclusion of eminent neurologists (for instance, Pierre Janet) that neurotic symptoms are related to some conscious experience. They even appear to be split-off areas of the conscious mind, which, at another time and under different conditions, can be conscious.

Before the beginning of this century, Freud and Josef Breuer had recognized that neurotic symptoms—hysteria, certain types of pain, and abnormal behavior—are in fact symbolically meaningful. They are one way in which the unconscious mind expresses itself, just as it may in dreams; and they are equally symbolic. A patient, for instance, who is confronted with an intolerable situation may develop a spasm whenever he tries to swallow: He "can't swallow it." Under similar conditions of psychological stress, another patient has an attack of asthma: He "can't breathe the atmosphere at home." A third suffers from a peculiar paralysis of the legs: He can't walk, i.e., "he can't go on any more." A fourth, who vomits when he eats, "cannot digest" some unpleasant fact. I could cite many examples of this kind, but such physical reactions are only one form in which the problems that trouble us unconsciously may express themselves. They more often find expression in our dreams.

Any psychologist who has listened to numbers of people describing their dreams knows that dream symbols have much greater variety than the physical symptoms of neurosis. They often consist of elaborate and picturesque fantasies. But if the analyst who is confronted by this dream material uses Freud's original technique of "free association," he finds that dreams can eventually be reduced to certain basic patterns. This technique played an important part in the development of psychoanalysis, for it enabled Freud to use dreams as the starting point from which the unconscious problem of the patient might be explored.

Freud made the simple but penetrating observation that if a dreamer is encouraged to go on talking about his dream images and the thoughts that these prompt in his mind, he will give himself away and reveal the unconscious background of his ailments, in both what he says and what



The "inkblot" test devised by the Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach. The shape of the blot can serve as a stimulus for free association; in fact, almost any irregular free shape can spark off the associative process. Leonardo da Vinci wrote in his Notebooks: "It should not be hard for you to stop sometimes and look into the stains of walls, or ashes of a fire, or clouds, or mud or like places in which . . . you may find really marvelous ideas."

he deliberately omits saying. His ideas may seem irrational and irrelevant, but after a time it becomes relatively easy to see what it is that he is trying to avoid, what unpleasant thought or experience he is suppressing. No matter how he tries to camouflage it, everything he says points to the core of his predicament. A doctor sees so many things from the seamy side of life that he is seldom far from the truth when he interprets the hints that his patient produces as signs of an uneasy conscience. What he eventually discovers, unfortunately, confirms his expectations. Thus far,

nobody can say anything against Freud's theory of repression and wish fulfillment as apparent causes of dream symbolism.

Freud attached particular importance to dreams as the point of departure for a process of "free association." But after a time I began to feel that this was a misleading and inadequate use of the rich fantasies that the unconscious produces in sleep. My doubts really began when a colleague told me of an experience he had during the course of a long train journey in Russia. Though he did not know the language and could not even decipher the Cyrillic script, he found himself musing over the strange letters in which the railway notices were written, and he fell into a reverie in which he imagined all sorts of meanings for them.

One idea led to another, and in his relaxed mood he found that this "free association" had stirred up many old memories. Among them he was annoyed to find some long-buried disagreeable topics—things he had wished to forget and had forgotten *consciously*. He had in fact arrived at what psychologists would call his "complexes"—that is, repressed emotional themes that can cause constant psychological disturbances or even, in many cases, the symptoms of a neurosis.

This episode opened my eyes to the fact that it was not necessary to use a dream as the point of departure for the process of "free association" if one wished to discover the complexes of a patient. It showed me that one can reach the center directly from any point of the compass. One could begin from Cyrillic letters, from meditations upon a crystal ball, a prayer wheel, or a modern painting, or even from casual conversation about some trivial event. The dream was no more and no less useful in this respect than any other possible starting point. Nevertheless, dreams have a particular significance, even though they often arise from an emotional upset in which the habitual complexes are also involved. (The habitual complexes are the tender spots of the psyche, which react most quickly to an external stimulus or disturbance.) That is why free association can lead one from any dream to the critical secret thoughts.

At this point, however, it occurred to me that (if I was right so far) it might reasonably follow that dreams have some special and more significant function of their own.

Very often dreams have a definite, evidently purposeful structure, indicating an underlying idea or intention—though, as a rule, the latter is not immediately comprehensible. I therefore began to consider whether one should pay more attention to the actual form and content of a dream, rather than allowing “free” association to lead one off through a train of ideas to complexes that could as easily be reached by other means.

This new thought was a turning-point in the development of my psychology. It meant that I gradually gave up following associations that led far away from the text of a dream. I chose to concentrate rather on the associations to the dream itself, believing that the latter expressed something specific that the unconscious was trying to say.

The change in my attitude toward dreams involved a change of method; the new technique was one that could take account of all the various wider aspects of a dream. A story told by the conscious mind has a beginning, a development, and an end, but the same is not true of a dream. Its dimensions in time and space are quite different; to understand it you must examine it from every aspect—just as you may take an unknown object in your hands and turn it over and over until you are familiar with every detail of its shape.

Perhaps I have now said enough to show how I came increasingly to disagree with “free” association as Freud first employed it: I wanted to keep as close as possible to the dream itself, and to exclude all the irrelevant ideas and associations that it might evoke. True, these could lead one toward the complexes of a patient, but I had a more far-reaching purpose in mind than the discovery of complexes that cause neurotic disturbances. There are many other means by which these can be identified: The psychologist, for instance, can get all the hints he needs by using word-association tests (by asking the patient what he associates to a given set of words, and by studying his responses). But to know and understand the psychic life-process of an individual's whole personality, it is important to realize that his dreams and their symbolic images have a much more important role to play.

Almost everyone knows, for example, that there is an enormous variety of images by which the sexual act can be symbolized (or, one might say, represented in the form of an allegory). Each of these images can lead, by a



*One of the countless symbolic or allegorical images of the sexual act is a deer hunt: A detail from a painting by the 16th-century German artist Cranach. The sexual implication of the deer hunt is underlined by a medieval English folk song called “The Keeper”:*

*The first doe that he shot at he missed,  
And the second doe he trimmed he kissed;  
And the third ran away in a young man's heart,  
She's amongst the leaves of the green O.*

process of association, to the idea of sexual intercourse and to specific complexes that any individual may have about his own sexual attitudes. But one could just as well unearth such complexes by day-dreaming on a set of indecipherable Russian letters. I was thus led to the assumption that a dream can contain some message other than the sexual allegory, and that it does so for definite reasons. To illustrate this point:

A man may dream of inserting a key in a lock, of



wielding a heavy stick, or of breaking down a door with a battering ram. Each of these can be regarded as a sexual allegory. But the fact that his unconscious for its own purposes has chosen one of these specific images—it may be the key, the stick, or the battering ram—is also of major significance. The real task is to understand *why* the key has been preferred to the stick, or the stick to the ram. And sometimes this might even lead one to discover that it is not the sexual act at all that is represented, but some quite different psychological point.

From this line of reasoning, I concluded that only the material that is clearly and visibly part of a dream should be used in interpreting it. The dream has its own limitation. Its specific form itself tells us what belongs to it and what leads away from it. While "free" association lures one away from that material in a kind of zigzag line, the method I evolved is more like a circumambulation whose center is the dream picture. I work all around the dream picture and disregard every attempt that the dreamer makes to break away from it. Time and time again, in my professional work, I have had to repeat the words: "Let's get back to your dream. What does the *dream* say?"

For instance, a patient of mine dreamed of a drunken and disheveled vulgar woman. In the dream, it seemed that this woman was his wife, though in real life his wife was totally different. On the surface, therefore, the dream was shockingly untrue, and the patient immediately rejected it as dream nonsense. If I, as his doctor, had let him start a process of association, he would inevitably have tried to get as far away as possible from the unpleasant suggestion of his dream. In that case, he would have ended with one of his staple complexes—a complex, possibly, that had nothing to do with his wife—and we should have learned nothing about the special meaning of this particular dream.

What then, was his unconscious trying to convey by such an obviously untrue statement? Clearly it somehow expressed the idea of a degenerate female who was closely connected with the dreamer's life; but since the projection of this image on to his wife was unjustified and factually untrue, I had to look elsewhere before I found out what this repulsive image represented.

In the Middle Ages, long before the physiologists demonstrated that by reason of our glandular structure there



*A key in a lock may be a sexual symbol—but not invariably. A section of an altarpiece by the 15th-century Flemish artist Campin. The door was intended to symbolize hope, the lock to symbolize charity, and the key to symbolize the desire for God.*



*The "anima" is the female element in the male unconscious. (It and the "animus" in the female unconscious are discussed in Chapter 3.) This inner duality is often symbolized by a hermaphroditic figure, like the crowned hermaphrodite, above, from a 17th-century alchemical manuscript.*

are both male and female elements in all of us, it was said that "every man carries a woman within himself." It is this female element in every male that I have called the "anima." This "feminine" aspect is essentially a certain inferior kind of relatedness to the surroundings, and particularly to women, which is kept carefully concealed from others as well as from oneself. In other words, though an individual's visible personality may seem quite normal, he may well be concealing from others—or even from himself—the deplorable condition of "the woman within."

That was the case with this particular patient: His female side was not nice. His dream was actually saying to him: "You are in some respects behaving like a degenerate female," and thus gave him an appropriate shock. (An example of this kind, of course, must not be taken as evidence that the unconscious is concerned with "moral" injunctions. The dream was not telling the patient to "behave better," but was simply trying to balance the lopsided nature of his conscious mind, which was maintaining the fiction that he was a perfect gentleman throughout.)

It is easy to understand why dreamers tend to ignore and even deny the message of their dreams. Consciousness naturally resists anything unconscious and unknown. I have already pointed out the existence among primitive peoples of what anthropologists call "misoneism," a deep and superstitious fear of novelty. The primitives manifest all the reactions of the wild animal against untoward events. But "civilized" man reacts to new ideas in much the same way, erecting psychological barriers to protect himself from the shock of facing something new. This can easily be observed in any individual's reaction to his own dreams when obliged to admit a surprising thought. Many pioneers in philosophy, science, and even literature have been victims of the innate conservatism of their contemporaries. Psychology is one of the youngest of the sciences; because it attempts to deal with the working of the unconscious, it has inevitably encountered misoneism in an extreme form.

## Past and future in the unconscious

So far, I have been sketching some of the principles on which I approached the problem of dreams, for when we



want to investigate man's faculty to produce symbols, dreams prove to be the most basic and accessible material for this purpose. The two fundamental points in dealing with dreams are these: First, the dream should be treated as a fact, about which one must make no previous assumption except that it somehow makes sense; and second, the dream is a specific expression of the unconscious.

One could scarcely put these principles more modestly. No matter how low anyone's opinion of the unconscious may be, he must concede that it is worth investigating; the unconscious is at least on a level with the louse, which, after all, enjoys the honest interest of the entomologist. If somebody with little experience and knowledge of dreams thinks that dreams are just chaotic occurrences without meaning, he is at liberty to do so. But if one assumes that they are normal events (which, as a matter of fact, they are), one is bound to consider that they are either causal—i.e., that there is a rational cause for their existence—or in a certain way purposive, or both.

Let us now look a little more closely at the ways in which the conscious and unconscious contents of the mind are linked together. Take an example with which everyone is familiar. Suddenly you find you can't remember what you were going to say next, though a moment ago the thought was perfectly clear. Or perhaps you were about to introduce a friend, and his name escapes you as you were about to utter it. You say you can't remember; in fact, though, the thought has become unconscious, or at least momentarily separated from consciousness. We find the same phenomenon with our senses. If we listen to a continuous note on the fringe of audibility, the sound seems to stop at regular intervals and then start again. Such oscillations are due to a periodic decrease and increase in one's attention, not to any change in the note.

But when something slips out of our consciousness it does not cease to exist, any more than a car that has disappeared round a corner has vanished into thin air. It is simply out of sight. Just as we may later see the car again, so we come across thoughts that were temporarily lost to us.

Thus, part of the unconscious consists of a multitude of temporarily obscured thoughts, impressions, and images that, in spite of being lost, continue to influence our conscious minds. A man who is distracted or "absent-minded"

will walk across the room to fetch something. He stops, seemingly perplexed; he has forgotten what he was after. His hands grope about among the objects on the table as if he were sleepwalking; he is oblivious of his original purpose, yet he is unconsciously guided by it. Then he realizes what it is that he wants. His unconscious has prompted him.

If you observe the behavior of a neurotic person, you can see him doing many things that he appears to be doing consciously and purposefully. Yet if you ask him about them, you will discover that he is either unconscious of them or has something quite different in mind. He hears and does not hear; he sees, yet is blind; he knows and is ignorant. Such examples are so common that the specialist soon realizes that unconscious contents of the mind behave as if they were conscious and that you can never be sure, in such cases, whether thought, speech, or action is conscious or not.

It is this kind of behavior that makes so many physicians dismiss statements by hysterical patients as utter lies. Such persons certainly produce more untruths than most of us, but "lie" is scarcely the right word to use. In fact, their mental state causes an uncertainty of behavior because their consciousness is liable to unpredictable eclipse by an interference from the unconscious. Even their skin sensations may reveal similar fluctuations of awareness. At one moment the hysterical person may feel a needle prick in the arm; at the next it may pass unnoticed. If his attention can be focused on a certain point, the whole of his body can be completely anesthetized until the tension that causes this blackout of the senses has been relaxed. Sense perception is then immediately restored. All the time, however, he has been unconsciously aware of what was happening.

The physician can see this process quite clearly when he hypnotizes such a patient. It is easy to demonstrate that the patient has been aware of every detail. The prick in the arm or the remark made during an eclipse of consciousness can be recalled as accurately as if there had been no anesthesia or "forgetfulness." I recall a woman who was once admitted to the clinic in a state of complete stupor. When she recovered consciousness next day, she knew who she was but did not know where she was, how or why she had come there, or even the date. Yet after I

had hypnotized her, she told me why she had fallen ill, how she had got to the clinic, and who had admitted her. All these details could be verified. She was even able to tell the time at which she had been admitted, because she had seen a clock in the entrance hall. Under hypnosis, her memory was as clear as if she had been completely conscious all the time.

When we discuss such matters, we usually have to draw on evidence supplied by clinical observation. For this reason, many critics assume that the unconscious and all its subtle manifestations belong solely to the sphere of psychopathology. They consider any expression of the unconscious as something neurotic or psychotic, which has nothing to do with a normal mental state. But neurotic phenomena are by no means the products exclusively of disease. They are in fact no more than pathological exaggerations of normal occurrences; it is only because they are exaggerations that they are more obvious than their normal counterparts. Hysterical symptoms can be observed in all normal persons, but they are so slight that they usually pass unnoticed.

Forgetting, for instance, is a normal process, in which certain conscious ideas lose their specific energy because one's attention has been deflected. When interest turns elsewhere, it leaves in shadow the things with which one was previously concerned, just as a searchlight lights upon a new area by leaving another in darkness. This is unavoidable, for consciousness can keep only a few images in full clarity at one time, and even this clarity fluctuates.

But the forgotten ideas have not ceased to exist. Although they cannot be reproduced at will, they are present in a subliminal state—just beyond the threshold of recall—from which they can rise again spontaneously at any time, often after many years of apparently total oblivion.

I am speaking here of things we have consciously seen or heard, and subsequently forgotten. But we all see, hear, smell, and taste many things without noticing them at the time, either because our attention is deflected or because the stimulus to our senses is too slight to leave a conscious impression. The unconscious, however, has taken note of them, and such subliminal sense perceptions play a significant part in our everyday lives. Without our realizing it, they influence the way in which we react to both events and people.

An example of this that I found particularly revealing was provided by a professor who had been walking in the country with one of his pupils; absorbed in serious conversation. Suddenly he noticed that his thoughts were being interrupted by an unexpected flow of memories from his early childhood. He could not account for this distraction. Nothing in what had been said seemed to have any connection with these memories. On looking back, he saw that he had been walking past a farm when the first of these childhood recollections had surged up in his mind. He suggested to his pupil that they should walk back to the point where the fantasies had begun. Once there, he noticed the smell of geese, and instantly he realized that it was this smell that had touched off the flow of memories.

*In cases of extreme mass hysteria (which was in the past called "possession"), the conscious mind and ordinary sense perception seem eclipsed. The frenzy of a Balinese sword dance causes the dancers to fall into trances and, sometimes, to turn their weapons against themselves.*



In his youth he had lived on a farm where geese were kept, and their characteristic smell had left a lasting though forgotten impression. As he passed the farm on his walk, he had noticed the smell subliminally, and this unconscious perception had called back long-forgotten experiences of his childhood. The perception was subliminal, because the attention was engaged elsewhere, and the stimulus was not strong enough to deflect it and to reach consciousness directly. Yet it had brought up the "forgotten" memories.

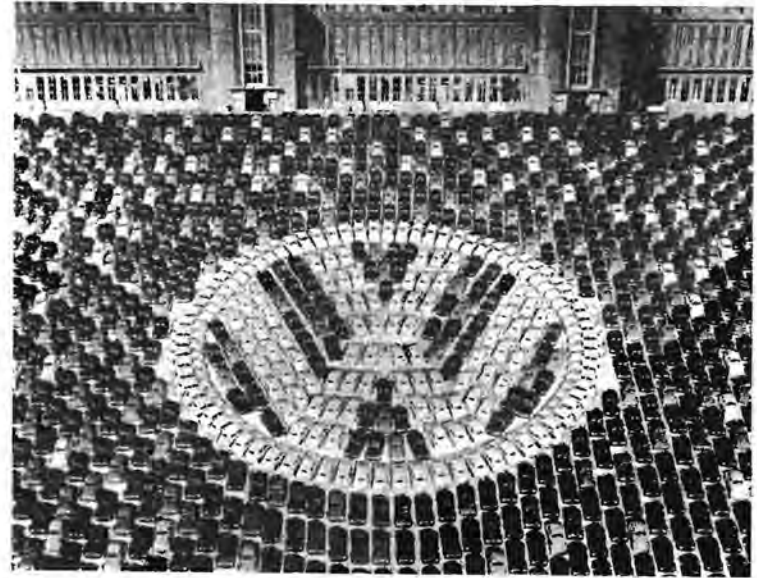
Such a "cue" or "trigger" effect can explain the onset of neurotic symptoms as well as more benign memories when a sight, smell, or sound recalls a circumstance in the past. A girl, for instance, may be busy in her office, apparently in good health and spirits. A moment later she develops a blinding headache and shows other signs of distress. Without consciously noticing it, she has heard the foghorn of a distant ship, and this has unconsciously reminded her of an unhappy parting with a lover whom she has been doing her best to forget.

Aside from normal forgetting, Freud has described several cases that involve the "forgetting" of disagreeable memories—memories that one is only too ready to lose. As Nietzsche remarked, where pride is insistent enough, memory prefers to give way. Thus, among the lost memories, we encounter not a few that owe their subliminal state (and their incapacity to be voluntarily reproduced) to their disagreeable and incompatible nature. The psychologist calls these *repressed* contents.

A case in point might be that of a secretary who is jealous of one of her employer's associates. She habitually forgets to invite this person to meetings, though the name is clearly marked on the list she is using. But, if challenged on the point, she simply says she "forgot" or was "interrupted." She never admits—not even to herself—the real reason for her omission.

Many people mistakenly overestimate the role of will power and think that nothing can happen to their minds that they do not decide and intend. But one must learn to discriminate carefully between intentional and unintentional contents of the mind. The former are derived from the ego personality; the latter, however, arise from a source that is not identical with the ego, but is its "other side." It is this "other side" that would have made the secretary forget the invitations.

There are many reasons why we forget things that we have noticed or experienced; and there are just as many ways in which they may be recalled to mind. An interesting example is that of cryptomnesia, or "concealed recollection." An author may be writing steadily to a preconceived plan, working out an argument or developing the line of a story, when he suddenly runs off at a tangent.



*The toy cars forming the Volkswagen trade-mark in this advertisement may have a "trigger" effect on a reader's mind, stirring unconscious memories of childhood. If these memories are pleasant, the pleasure may be associated (unconsciously) with the product and brand name.*

Perhaps a fresh idea has occurred to him, or a different image, or a whole new sub-plot. If you ask him what prompted the digression, he will not be able to tell you. He may not even have noticed the change, though he has now produced material that is entirely fresh and apparently unknown to him before. Yet it can sometimes be shown convincingly that what he has written bears a striking similarity to the work of another author—a work that he believes he has never seen.



I myself found a fascinating example of this in Nietzsche's book *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, where the author reproduces almost word for word an incident reported in a ship's log for the year 1686. By sheer chance I had read this seaman's yarn in a book published about 1835 (half a century before Nietzsche wrote); and when I found the similar passage in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, I was struck by its peculiar style, which was different from Nietzsche's usual language. I was convinced that Nietzsche must also have seen the old book, though he made no reference to it. I wrote to his sister, who was still alive, and she confirmed that she and her brother had in fact read the book together when he was 11 years old. I think, from the context, it is inconceivable that Nietzsche had any idea that he was plagiarizing this story. I believe that fifty years later it had unexpectedly slipped into focus in his conscious mind.

In this type of case there is genuine, if unrealized, recollection. Much the same sort of thing may happen to a musician who has heard a peasant tune or popular song in childhood and finds it cropping up as the theme of a symphonic movement that he is composing in adult life. An idea or an image has moved back from the unconscious into the conscious mind.

What I have so far said about the unconscious is no more than a cursory sketch of the nature and functioning of this complex part of the human psyche. But it should have indicated the kind of subliminal material from which the symbols of our dreams may be spontaneously produced. This subliminal material can consist of all urges, impulses, and intentions; all perceptions and intuitions; all rational or irrational thoughts, conclusions, inductions, deductions, and premises; and all varieties of feeling. Any or all of these can take the form of partial, temporary, or constant unconsciousness.

Such material has mostly become unconscious because—in a manner of speaking—there is no room for it in the conscious mind. Some of one's thoughts lose their emotional energy and become subliminal (that is to say, they no longer receive so much of our conscious attention) because they have come to seem uninteresting or irrelevant, or because there is some reason why we wish to push them out of sight.

It is, in fact, normal and necessary for us to "forget"

in this fashion, in order to make room in our conscious minds for new impressions and ideas. If this did not happen, everything we experienced would remain above the threshold of consciousness and our minds would become impossibly cluttered. This phenomenon is so widely recognized today that most people who know anything about psychology take it for granted.

But just as conscious contents can vanish into the unconscious, new contents, which have never yet been conscious, can arise from it. One may have an inkling, for instance, that something is on the point of breaking into consciousness—that "something is in the air," or that one "smells a rat." The discovery that the unconscious is no mere depository of the past, but is also full of germs of future psychic situations and ideas, led me to my own new approach to psychology. A great deal of controversial discussion has arisen round this point. But it is a fact that, in addition to memories from a long-distant conscious past, completely new thoughts and creative ideas can also present themselves from the unconscious—thoughts and ideas that have never been conscious before. They grow up from the dark depths of the mind like a lotus and form a most important part of the subliminal psyche.

We find this in everyday life, where dilemmas are sometimes solved by the most surprising new propositions; many artists, philosophers, and even scientists owe some of their best ideas to inspirations that appear suddenly from the unconscious. The ability to reach a rich vein of such material and to translate it effectively into philosophy, literature, music, or scientific discovery is one of the hallmarks of what is commonly called genius.

We can find clear proof of this fact in the history of science itself. For example, the French mathematician Poincaré and the chemist Kekulé owed important scientific discoveries (as they themselves admit) to sudden pictorial "revelations" from the unconscious. The so-called "mystical" experience of the French philosopher Descartes involved a similar sudden revelation in which he saw in a flash the "order of all sciences." The British author Robert Louis Stevenson had spent years looking for a story that would fit his "strong sense of man's double being," when the plot of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was suddenly revealed to him in a dream.

Later I shall describe in more detail how such material



The 19th-century German chemist Kekule, researching into the molecular structure of benzene, dreamed of a snake with its tail in its mouth. (This is an age-old symbol: left, a representation of it from a third-century B.C. Greek manuscript.) He interpreted the dream to mean that the structure was a closed carbon ring—as on the page above, from his Textbook of Organic Chemistry (1861).



arises from the unconscious, and I shall examine the form in which it is expressed. At the moment I simply want to point out that the capacity of the human psyche to produce such new material is particularly significant when one is dealing with dream symbolism, for I have found again and again in my professional work that the images and ideas that dreams contain cannot possibly be explained solely in terms of memory. They express new thoughts that have never yet reached the threshold of consciousness.

I have gone into some detail about the origins of our dream life, because it is the soil from which most symbols originally grow. Unfortunately, dreams are difficult to understand. As I have already pointed out, a dream is quite unlike a story told by the conscious mind. In everyday life one thinks out what one wants to say, selects the most telling way of saying it, and tries to make one's remarks logically coherent. For instance, an educated person will seek to avoid a mixed metaphor because it may give a muddled impression of his point. But dreams have a different texture. Images that seem contradictory and ridiculous crowd in on the dreamer, the normal sense of time is lost, and commonplace things can assume a fascinating or threatening aspect.

It may seem strange that the unconscious mind should order its material so differently from the seemingly disciplined pattern that we can impose on our thoughts in waking life. Yet anyone who stops for a moment to recall a dream will be aware of this contrast, which is in fact one of the main reasons why the ordinary person finds dreams so hard to understand. They do not make sense in terms of his normal waking experience, and he therefore is inclined either to disregard them or to confess that they baffle him.

Perhaps it may be easier to understand this point if we first realize the fact that the ideas with which we deal in our apparently disciplined waking life are by no means as precise as we like to believe. On the contrary, their meaning (and their emotional significance for us) becomes more imprecise the more closely we examine them. The reason for this is that anything we have heard or experienced can become subliminal—that is to say, can pass into the unconscious. And even what we retain in our conscious mind and can reproduce at will has acquired an unconscious undertone that will color the idea each time it is recalled. Our conscious impressions, in fact, quickly assume an element of unconscious meaning that is physically significant for us, though we are not consciously aware of the existence of this subliminal meaning or of the way in which it both extends and confuses the conventional meaning.

Of course, such psychic undertones differ from one per-

son to another. Each of us receives any abstract or general notion in the context of the individual mind, and we therefore understand and apply it in our individual ways. When, in conversation, I use any such terms as "state," "money," "health," or "society," I assume that my listeners understand more or less the same thing I do. But the phrase "more or less" makes my point. Each word means something slightly different to each person, even among those who share the same cultural background. The reason for this variation is that a general notion is received into an individual context and is therefore understood and applied in a slightly individual way. And the difference of meaning is naturally greatest when people have widely different social, political, religious, or psychological experiences.

As long as concepts are identical with mere words, the variation is almost imperceptible and plays no practical role. But when an exact definition or a careful explanation is needed, one can occasionally discover the most amazing variations, not only in the purely intellectual understanding of the term, but particularly in its emotional tone and its application. As a rule, these variations are subliminal and therefore never realized.

*An ordinary European highway with a familiar sign that means "look out for animals crossing." But the motorists (their shadows appear in the foreground) see an elephant, a rhinoceros, even a dinosaur. This painting of a dream (by the modern Swiss artist Erhard Jacoby) accurately depicts the apparently illogical, incoherent nature of dream imagery.*



One may tend to dismiss such differences as redundant or expendable nuances of meaning that have little relevance to everyday needs. But the fact that they exist shows that even the most matter-of-fact contents of consciousness have a penumbra of uncertainty around them. Even the most carefully defined philosophical or mathematical concept, which we are sure does not contain more than we have put into it, is nevertheless more than we assume. It is a psychic event and as such partly unknowable. The very numbers you use in counting are more than you take them to be. They are at the same time mythological elements (for the Pythagoreans, they were even divine); but you are certainly unaware of this when you use numbers for a practical purpose.

Every concept in our conscious mind, in short, has its own psychic associations. While such associations may vary in intensity (according to the relative importance of the concept to our whole personality, or according to the other ideas and even complexes to which it is associated in our unconscious), they are capable of changing the "normal" character of that concept. It may even become something quite different as it drifts below the level of consciousness.

These subliminal aspects of everything that happens to us may seem to play very little part in our daily lives. But in dream analysis, where the psychologist is dealing with expressions of the unconscious, they are very relevant, for they are the almost invisible roots of our conscious thoughts. That is why commonplace objects or ideas can assume such powerful psychic significance in a dream that we may awake seriously disturbed, in spite of having dreamed of nothing worse than a locked room or a missed train.

The images produced in dreams are much more picturesque and vivid than the concepts and experiences that are their waking counterparts. One of the reasons for this is that, in a dream, such concepts can express their unconscious meaning. In our conscious thoughts, we restrain ourselves within the limits of rational statements—statements that are much less colorful because we have stripped them of most of their psychic associations.

I recall one dream of my own that I found difficult to interpret. In this dream, a certain man was trying to get behind me and jump on my back. I knew nothing of this



man except that I was aware that he had somehow picked up a remark I had made and had twisted it into a grotesque travesty of my meaning. But I could not see the connection between this fact and his attempts in the dream to jump on me. In my professional life, however, it has often happened that someone has misrepresented what I have said—so often that I have scarcely bothered to wonder whether this kind of misrepresentation makes me angry. Now there is a certain value in keeping a conscious control over one's emotional reactions; and this, I soon realized, was the point the dream had made. It had taken an Austrian colloquialism and translated it into a pictorial image. This phrase, common enough in ordinary speech, is *Du kannst mir auf den Buckel steigen* (You can climb on my back), which means "I don't care what you say about me." An American equivalent, which could easily appear in a similar dream, would be "Go jump in the lake."

One could say that this dream picture was symbolic, for it did not state the situation directly but expressed the point indirectly by means of a metaphor that I could not at first understand. When this happens (as it so often does) it is not deliberate "disguise" by a dream; it simply reflects the deficiencies in our understanding of emotionally charged pictorial language. For in our daily experience, we need to state things as accurately as possible, and we have learned to discard the trimmings of fantasy both in our language and in our thoughts—thus losing a quality that is still characteristic of the primitive mind. Most of us have consigned to the unconscious all the fantastic psychic associations that every object or idea possesses. The primitive, on the other hand, is still aware of these psychic properties; he endows animals, plants, or stones with powers that we find strange and unacceptable.

An African jungle dweller, for instance, sees a nocturnal creature by daylight and knows it to be a medicine man who has temporarily taken its shape. Or he may regard it as the bush soul or ancestral spirit of one of his tribe. A tree may play a vital part in the life of a primitive, apparently possessing for him its own soul and voice, and the man concerned will feel that he shares its fate. There are some Indians in South America who will assure you that they are Red Arara parrots, though they are well aware that they lack feathers, wings, and beaks. For in the primi-

tive's world things do not have the same sharp boundaries they do in our "rational" societies.

What psychologists call psychic identity, or "mystical participation," has been stripped off our world of things. But it is exactly this halo of unconscious associations that gives a colorful and fantastic aspect to the primitive's world. We have lost it to such a degree that we do not recognize it when we meet it again. With us such things are kept below the threshold; when they occasionally reappear, we even insist that something is wrong.

I have more than once been consulted by well-educated and intelligent people who have had peculiar dreams, fantasies, or even visions, which have shocked them deeply. They have assumed that no one who is in a sound state of mind could suffer from such things, and that anyone who actually sees a vision must be pathologically disturbed. A theologian once told me that Ezekiel's visions were nothing more than morbid symptoms, and that, when Moses and other prophets heard "voices" speaking to them, they were suffering from hallucinations. You can imagine the panic he felt when something of this kind "spontaneously" happened to him. We are so accustomed to the apparently rational nature of our world that we can scarcely imagine anything happening that cannot be explained by common sense. The primitive man confronted by a shock of this kind would not doubt his sanity; he would think of fetishes, spirits, or gods.

Yet the emotions that affect us are just the same. In fact, the terrors that stem from our elaborate civilization may be far more threatening than those that primitive people attribute to demons. The attitude of modern civilized man sometimes reminds me of a psychotic patient in my clinic who was himself a doctor. One morning I asked him how he was. He replied that he had had a wonderful night disinfecting the whole of heaven with mercuric chloride, but that in the course of this thorough-going sanitary process he had found no trace of God. Here we see a neurosis or something worse. Instead of God or the "fear of God," there is an anxiety neurosis or some kind of phobia. The emotion has remained the same, but its object has changed both its name and nature for the worse.

I recall a professor of philosophy who once consulted me about his cancer phobia. He suffered from a compulsive

conviction that he had a malignant tumor, although nothing of the kind was ever found in dozens of X-ray pictures. "Oh, I know there is nothing," he would say, "but there *might* be something." What was it that produced this idea? It obviously came from a fear that was not instilled by conscious deliberation. The morbid thought suddenly overcame him, and it had a power of its own that he could not control.

It was far more difficult for this educated man to make an admission of this kind than it would have been for a primitive to say that he was plagued by a ghost. The malign influence of evil spirits is at least an admissible hypothesis in a primitive culture, but it is a shattering experience for a civilized person to admit that his troubles are nothing more than a foolish prank of the imagination. The primitive phenomenon of *obsession* has not vanished; it is the same as ever. It is only interpreted in a different and more obnoxious way.

I have made several comparisons of this kind between modern and primitive man. Such comparisons, as I shall show later, are essential to an understanding of the symbol-making propensities of man, and of the part that dreams play in expressing them. For one finds that many dreams present images and associations that are analogous to primitive ideas, myths, and rites. These dream images were called "archaic remnants" by Freud; the phrase suggests that they are psychic elements surviving in the human mind from ages long ago. This point of view is characteristic of those who regard the unconscious as a mere appendix of consciousness (or, more picturesquely, as a trash can that collects all the refuse of the conscious mind).

Further investigation suggested to me that this attitude is untenable and should be discarded. I found that associations and images of this kind are an integral part of the unconscious, and can be observed everywhere—whether the dreamer is educated or illiterate, intelligent or stupid. They are not in any sense lifeless or meaningless "remnants." They still function, and they are especially valuable (as Dr. Henderson shows in a later chapter of this book) just because of their "historical" nature. They form a bridge between the ways in which we consciously express our thoughts and a more primitive, more colorful and pictorial form of expression. It is this form, as well, that

appeals directly to feeling and emotion. These "historical" associations are the link between the rational world of consciousness and the world of instinct.

I have already discussed the interesting contrast between the "controlled" thoughts we have in waking life and the wealth of imagery produced in dreams. Now you can see another reason for this difference: Because, in our civilized life, we have stripped so many ideas of their emotional energy, we do not really respond to them any more. We use such ideas in our speech, and we show a conventional reaction when others use them, but they do not make a very deep impression on us. Something more is needed to bring certain things home to us effectively enough to make us change our attitude and our behavior. That is what "dream language" does; its symbolism has so much psychic energy that we are forced to pay attention to it.

There was, for instance, a lady who was well known for her stupid prejudices and her stubborn resistance to reasoned argument. One could have argued with her all night to no effect; she would have taken not the slightest notice. Her dreams, however, took a different line of approach. One night, she dreamed she was attending an important social occasion. She was greeted by the hostess with the words: "How nice that you could come. All your friends are here, and they are waiting for you." The hostess then led her to the door and opened it, and the dreamer stepped through—into a cowshed!

This dream language was simple enough to be understood even by a blockhead. The woman would not at first admit the point of a dream that struck so directly at her self-importance; but its message nevertheless went home, and after a time she had to accept it because she could not help seeing the self-inflicted joke.

Such messages from the unconscious are of greater importance than most people realize. In our conscious life, we are exposed to all kinds of influences. Other people stimulate or depress us, events at the office or in our social life distract us. Such things seduce us into following ways that are unsuitable to our individuality. Whether or not we are aware of the effect they have on our consciousness, it is disturbed by and exposed to them almost without defense. This is especially the case with a person whose extraverted attitude of mind lays all the emphasis upon ex-

ternal objects, or who harbors feelings of inferiority and doubt concerning his own innermost personality.

The more that consciousness is influenced by prejudices, errors, fantasies, and infantile wishes, the more the already existing gap will widen into a neurotic dissociation and lead to a more or less artificial life far removed from healthy instincts, nature, and truth.

The general function of dreams is to try to restore our psychological balance by producing dream material that re-establishes, in a subtle way, the total psychic equilibrium. This is what I call the complementary (or compensatory) role of dreams in our psychic make-up. It explains why people who have unrealistic ideas or too high an opinion of themselves, or who make grandiose plans out of proportion to their real capacities, have dreams of flying or falling. The dream compensates for the deficiencies of their personalities, and at the same time it warns them of the dangers in their present course. If the warnings of the dream are disregarded, real accidents may take their place. The victim may fall downstairs or may have a motor accident.

I remember the case of a man who was inextricably involved in a number of shady affairs. He developed an almost morbid passion for dangerous mountain climbing, as a sort of compensation. He was seeking "to get above himself." In a dream one night, he saw himself stepping off the summit of a high mountain into empty space. When he told me his dream, I instantly saw his danger and tried to emphasize the warning and persuade him to restrain himself. I even told him that the dream foreshadowed his death in a mountain accident. It was in vain. Six months later he "stepped off into space." A mountain guide watched him and a friend letting themselves down on a rope in a difficult place. The friend had found a temporary foothold on a ledge, and the dreamer was following him down. Suddenly he let go of the rope, according to the guide, "as if he were jumping into the air." He fell upon his friend, and both went down and were killed.

Another typical case was that of a lady who was living above herself. She was high and mighty in her daily life, but she had shocking dreams, reminding her of all sorts of unsavory things. When I uncovered them, she indignantly refused to acknowledge them. The dreams then be-



*One influence to which an individual's consciousness is subjected today: political propaganda (a French poster for a 1962 referendum, urging a vote of "yes" but plastered with the opposition's "no"). This and other influences may cause us to live in ways unsuited to our individual natures; and the psychic imbalance that can follow must be compensated for by the unconscious.*

came menacing, and full of references to the walks she used to take by herself in the woods, where she indulged in soulful fantasies. I saw her danger, but she would not listen to my many warnings. Soon afterwards, she was savagely attacked in the woods by a sexual pervert; but for the intervention of some people who heard her screams, she would have been killed.

There was no magic in this. What her dreams had told me was that this woman had a secret longing for such an adventure—just as the mountain climber unconsciously sought the satisfaction of finding a definite way out of his difficulties. Obviously, neither of them expected the stiff price involved: She had several bones broken, and he paid with his life.



Thus, dreams may sometimes announce certain situations long before they actually happen. This is not necessarily a miracle or a form of precognition. Many crises in our lives have a long unconscious history. We move toward them step by step, unaware of the dangers that are accumulating. But what we consciously fail to see is frequently perceived by our unconscious, which can pass the information on through dreams.

Dreams may often warn us in this way; but just as often, it seems, they do not. Therefore, any assumption of a benevolent hand restraining us in time is dubious. Or, to state it more positively, it seems that a benevolent agency is sometimes at work and sometimes not. The mysterious hand may even point the way to perdition; dreams sometimes prove to be traps, or appear to be so. They sometimes behave like the Delphic oracle that told King Croesus that if he crossed the Halys River he would destroy a large kingdom. It was only after he had been completely defeated in battle after the crossing that he discovered that the kingdom meant by the oracle was his own.

One cannot afford to be naïve in dealing with dreams. They originate in a spirit that is not quite human, but is rather a breath of nature—a spirit of the beautiful and generous as well as of the cruel goddess. If we want to characterize this spirit, we shall certainly get closer to it in the sphere of ancient mythologies, or the fables of the primeval forest, than in the consciousness of modern man. I am not denying that great gains have resulted from the evolution of civilized society. But these gains have been made at the price of enormous losses, whose extent we have scarcely begun to estimate. Part of the purpose of my comparisons between the primitive and the civilized states of man has been to show the balance of these losses and gains.

Primitive man was much more governed by his instincts than are his "rational" modern descendants, who have learned to "control" themselves. In this civilizing process, we have increasingly divided our consciousness from the deeper instinctive strata of the human psyche, and even ultimately from the somatic basis of the psychic phenomenon. Fortunately, we have not lost these basic instinctive strata; they remain part of the unconscious, even though they may express themselves only in the form of dream

images. These instinctive phenomena—one may not, incidentally, always recognize them for what they are, for their character is symbolic—play a vital part in what I have called the compensating function of dreams.

For the sake of mental stability and even physiological health, the unconscious and the conscious must be integrally connected and thus move on parallel lines. If they are split apart or "dissociated," psychological disturbance follows. In this respect, dream symbols are the essential message carriers from the instinctive to the rational parts of the human mind, and their interpretation enriches the poverty of consciousness so that it learns to understand again the forgotten language of the instincts.

Of course, people are bound to query this function, since its symbols so often pass unnoticed or uncomprehended. In normal life, the understanding of dreams is often considered superfluous. I can illustrate this by my experience with a primitive tribe in East Africa. To my amazement, these tribesmen denied that they had any dreams. But through patient, indirect talks with them I soon found that they had dreams just like everyone else, but that they were convinced their dreams had no meaning. "Dreams of ordinary men mean nothing," they told me. They thought that the only dreams that mattered were those of chiefs and medicine men; these, which concerned the welfare of the tribe, were highly appreciated. The only drawback was that the chief and the medicine man both claimed that they had ceased having meaningful dreams. They dated this change from the time that the British came to their country. The district commissioner—the British official in charge of them—had taken over the function of the "great dreams" that had hitherto guided the tribe's behavior.

When these tribesmen conceded that they did have dreams, but thought them meaningless, they were like the modern man who thinks that a dream has no significance for him simply because he does not understand it. But even a civilized man can sometimes observe that a dream (which he may not even remember) can alter his mood for better or worse. The dream has been "comprehended," but only in a subliminal way. And that is what usually happens. It is only on the rare occasions when a dream is particularly impressive or repeats itself at regular intervals that most people consider an interpretation desirable.

Here I ought to add a word of warning against unintelligent or incompetent dream analysis. There are some people whose mental condition is so unbalanced that the interpretation of their dreams can be extremely risky; in such a case, a very one-sided consciousness is cut off from a correspondingly irrational or "crazy" unconscious, and the two should not be brought together without taking special precautions.

And, speaking more generally, it is plain foolishness to believe in ready-made systematic guides to dream interpretation, as if one could simply buy a reference book and look up a particular symbol. No dream symbol can be separated from the individual who dreams it, and there is no definite or straightforward interpretation of any dream. Each individual varies so much in the way that his unconscious complements or compensates his conscious mind that it is impossible to be sure how far dreams and their symbols can be classified at all.

It is true that there are dreams and single symbols (I should prefer to call them "motifs") that are typical and often occur. Among such motifs are falling, flying, being persecuted by dangerous animals or hostile men, being insufficiently or absurdly clothed in public places, being in a hurry or lost in a milling crowd, fighting with useless weapons or being wholly defenseless, running hard yet getting nowhere. A typical infantile motif is the dream of growing infinitely small or infinitely big, or being transformed from one to the other—as you find it, for instance, in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. But I must stress again that these are motifs that must be considered in the context of the dream itself, not as self-explanatory ciphers.

*Top of page, a famous example of the common dream of growing larger: a drawing from Alice in Wonderland (1877) shows Alice growing to fill a house. Below, the equally common dream of flying, in a drawing (by the 19th-century British artist William Blake) entitled: "O, How I Dreamt of Things Impossible."*



The recurring dream is a noteworthy phenomenon. There are cases in which people have dreamed the same dream from childhood into the later years of adult life. A dream of this kind is usually an attempt to compensate for a particular defect in the dreamer's attitude to life; or it may date from a traumatic moment that has left behind some specific prejudice. It may also sometimes anticipate a future event of importance.

I myself dreamed of a motif over several years, in which I would "discover" a part of my house that I did not know existed. Sometimes it was the quarters where my long-dead parents lived, in which my father, to my surprise, had a laboratory where he studied the comparative anatomy of fish and my mother ran a hotel for ghostly visitors. Usually this unfamiliar guest wing was an ancient historical building, long forgotten, yet my inherited property. It contained interesting antique furniture, and toward the end of this series of dreams I discovered an old library whose books were unknown to me. Finally, in the last dream, I opened one of the books and found in it a profusion of the most marvelous symbolic pictures. When I awoke, my heart was palpitating with excitement.

Some time before I had this particular last dream of the series, I had placed an order with an antiquarian bookseller for one of the classic compilations of medieval alchemists. I had found a quotation in literature that I thought might have some connection with early Byzantine alchemy, and I wished to check it. Several weeks after I had had the dream of the unknown book, a parcel arrived from the bookseller. Inside was a parchment volume dating from the 16th century. It was illustrated by fascinating symbolic pictures that instantly reminded me of those I had seen in my dream. As the rediscovery of the principles of alchemy came to be an important part of my work as a pioneer of psychology, the motif of my recurring dream can easily be understood. The house, of course, was a symbol of my personality and its conscious field of interests; and the unknown annex represented the anticipation of a new field of interest and research of which my conscious mind was at that time unaware. From that moment, 30 years ago, I never had the dream again.

## The analysis of dreams

I began this essay by noting the difference between a sign and a symbol. The sign is always less than the concept it represents, while a symbol always stands for something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. Symbols, moreover, are natural and spontaneous products. No genius has ever sat down with a pen or a brush in his hand and said: "Now I am going to invent a symbol." No one can take a more or less rational thought, reached as a logical conclusion or by deliberate intent, and then give it "symbolic" form. No matter what fantastic trappings one may put upon an idea of this kind, it will still remain a sign, linked to the conscious thought behind it, not a symbol that hints at something not yet known. In dreams, symbols occur spontaneously, for dreams happen and are not invented; they are, therefore, the main source of all our knowledge about symbolism.

But symbols, I must point out, do not occur solely in dreams. They appear in all kinds of psychic manifestations. There are symbolic thoughts and feelings, symbolic acts and situations. It often seems that even inanimate objects co-operate with the unconscious in the arrangement of symbolic patterns. There are numerous well-authenticated stories of clocks stopping at the moment of their owner's death; one was the pendulum clock in the palace of Frederick the Great at Sans Souci, which stopped when the emperor died. Other common examples are those of a mirror that breaks, or a picture that falls, when a death occurs; or minor but unexplained breakages in a house where someone is passing through an emotional crisis. Even if skeptics refuse to credit such reports, stories of this kind are always cropping up, and this alone should serve as ample proof of their psychological importance.

There are many symbols, however (among them the most important), that are not individual but *collective* in their nature and origin. These are chiefly religious images. The believer assumes that they are of divine origin—that they have been revealed to man. The skeptic says flatly that they have been invented. Both are wrong. It is true, as the skeptic notes, that religious symbols and concepts have for centuries been the object of careful and quite conscious elaboration. It is equally true, as the be-



liever implies, that their origin is so far buried in the mystery of the past that they seem to have no human source. But they are in fact "collective representations," emanating from primeval dreams and creative fantasies. As such, these images are involuntary spontaneous manifestations and by no means intentional inventions.

This fact, as I shall later explain, has a direct and important bearing upon the interpretation of dreams. It is obvious that if you assume the dream to be symbolic, you will interpret it differently from a person who believes that the essential energizing thought or emotion is known already and is merely "disguised" by the dream. In the latter case, dream interpretation makes little sense, for you find only what you already know.

It is for this reason that I have always said to my pupils: "Learn as much as you can about symbolism; then forget it all when you are analyzing a dream." This advice is of such practical importance that I have made it a rule to remind myself that I can never understand somebody else's dream well enough to interpret it correctly. I have done this in order to check the flow of my own associations and reactions, which might otherwise prevail over my patient's uncertainties and hesitations. As it is of the greatest therapeutic importance for an analyst to get the particular message of a dream (that is, the contribution that the unconscious is making to the conscious mind) as accurately as possible, it is essential for him to explore the content of a dream with the utmost thoroughness.

I had a dream when I was working with Freud that illustrates this point. I dreamed that I was in "my home," apparently on the first floor, in a cosy, pleasant sitting room furnished in the manner of the 18th century. I was astonished that I had never seen this room before, and began to wonder what the ground floor was like. I went downstairs and found the place was rather dark, with paneled walls and heavy furniture dating from the 16th century or even earlier. My surprise and curiosity increased. I wanted to see more of the whole structure of this house. So I went down to the cellar, where I found a door opening onto a flight of stone steps that led to a large vaulted room. The floor consisted of large slabs of stone and the walls seemed very ancient. I examined the mortar and found it was mixed with splinters of brick. Obviously

the walls were of Roman origin. I became increasingly excited. In one corner, I saw an iron ring on a stone slab. I pulled up the slab and saw yet another narrow flight of steps leading to a kind of cave, which seemed to be a prehistoric tomb, containing two skulls, some bones, and broken shards of pottery. Then I woke up.

If Freud, when he analyzed this dream, had followed my method of exploring its specific associations and context, he would have heard a far-reaching story. But I am afraid he would have dismissed it as a mere effort to escape from a problem that was really his own. The dream is in fact a short summary of my life, more specifically of the development of my mind. I grew up in a house 200 years old, our furniture consisted mostly of pieces about 300 years old, and mentally my hitherto greatest spiritual adventure had been to study the philosophies of Kant and Schopenhauer. The great news of the day was the work of Charles Darwin. Shortly before this, I had been living with the still medieval concepts of my parents, for whom the world and men were still presided over by divine omnipotence and providence. This world had become antiquated and obsolete. My Christian faith had become relative through its encounter with Eastern religions and Greek philosophy. It is for this reason that the ground floor was so still, dark, and obviously uninhabited.

My then historical interests had developed from an original preoccupation with comparative anatomy and paleontology while I was working as an assistant at the Anatomical Institute. I was fascinated by the bones of fossil man, particularly by the much discussed *Neanderthalensis* and the still more controversial skull of Dubois' *Pithecanthropus*. As a matter of fact these were my real associations to the dream; but I did not dare to mention the subject of skulls, skeletons, or corpses to Freud, because I had learned that this theme was not popular with him. He cherished the peculiar idea that I anticipated his early death. And he drew this conclusion from the fact that I had shown much interest in the mummified corpses in the so-called Bleikeller in Bremen, which we visited together in 1909 on our way to take the boat to America.

Thus I felt reluctant to come out with my own thoughts, since through recent experience I was deeply impressed by the almost unbridgeable gap between Freud's mental out-

look and background and my own. I was afraid of losing his friendship if I should open up to him about my own inner world, which, I surmised, would look very queer to him. Feeling quite uncertain about my own psychology, I almost automatically told him a lie about my "free associations" in order to escape the impossible task of enlightening him about my very personal and utterly different constitution.

I must apologize for this rather lengthy narration of the jam I got into through telling Freud my dream. But it is a good example of the difficulties in which one gets involved in the course of a real dream analysis. So much depends upon the personal differences between the analyst and the analyzed.

I soon realized that Freud was looking for some incompatible wish of mine. And so I suggested tentatively that the skulls I had dreamed of might refer to certain members of my family whose death for some reason, I might desire. This proposal met with his approval, but I was not satisfied with such a "phony" solution.

While I was trying to find a suitable answer to Freud's questions, I was suddenly confused by an intuition about the role that the subjective factor plays in psychological understanding. My intuition was so overwhelming that I thought only of how to get out of this impossible snarl, and I took the easy way out by a lie. This was neither elegant nor morally defensible, but otherwise I should have risked a fatal row with Freud—and I did not feel up to that for many reasons.

My intuition consisted of the sudden and most unexpected insight into the fact that my dream meant *myself*, *my life* and *my world*, my whole reality against a theoretical structure erected by another, strange mind for reasons and purposes of its own. It was not Freud's dream, it was mine; and I understood suddenly in a flash what my dream meant.

This conflict illustrates a vital point about dream analysis. It is not so much a technique that can be learned and applied according to the rules as it is a dialectical exchange between two personalities. If it is handled as a mechanical technique, the individual psychic personality of the dreamer gets lost and the therapeutic problem is reduced to the simple question: Which of the two people concerned—the

analyst or the dreamer—will dominate the other? I gave up hypnotic treatment for this very reason, because I did not want to impose my will on others. I wanted the healing processes to grow out of the patient's own personality, not from suggestions by me that would have only a passing effect. My aim was to protect and preserve my patient's dignity and freedom, so that he could live his life according to his own wishes. In this exchange with Freud, it dawned on me for the first time that before we construct general theories about man and his psyche we should learn a lot more about the real human being we have to deal with.

The individual is the only reality. The further we move away from the individual toward abstract ideas about *Homo sapiens*, the more likely we are to fall into error. In these times of social upheaval and rapid change, it is desirable to know much more than we do about the individual human being, for so much depends upon his mental and moral qualities. But if we are to see things in their right perspective, we need to understand the past of man as well as his present. That is why an understanding of myths and symbols is of essential importance.

## The problem of types

In all other branches of science, it is legitimate to apply a hypothesis to an impersonal subject. Psychology, however, inescapably confronts you with the living relations between two individuals, neither of whom can be divested of his subjective personality, nor, indeed, depersonalized in any other way. The analyst and his patient may set out by agreeing to deal with a chosen problem in an impersonal and objective manner; but once they are engaged, their whole personalities are involved in their discussion. At this point, further progress is possible only if mutual agreement can be reached.

Can we make any sort of objective judgment about the final result? Only if we make a comparison between our conclusions and the standards that are generally valid in the social milieu to which the individuals belong. Even then, we must take into account the mental equilibrium

ferent and it would be obviously absurd to interpret both dreams in the same way.

An example that comes to my mind is a dream in which a group of young men are riding on horseback across a wide field. The dreamer is in the lead and he jumps a ditch full of water, just clearing this hazard. The rest of the party fall into the ditch. Now the young man who first told me this dream was a cautious, introverted type. But I also heard the same dream from an old man of daring character, who had lived an active and enterprising life. At the time he had this dream, he was an invalid who gave his doctor and nurse a great deal of trouble; he had actually injured himself by his disobedience of medical instructions.

It was clear to me that this dream was telling the young man what he *ought* to do. But it was telling the old man what he actually was still *doing*. While it encouraged the hesitant young man, the old man was in no such need of encouragement; the spirit of enterprise that still flickered within him was, indeed, his greatest trouble. This example shows how the interpretation of dreams and symbols largely depends upon the individual circumstances of the dreamer and the condition of his mind.

## The archetype in dream symbolism

I have already suggested that dreams serve the purpose of compensation. This assumption means that the dream is a normal psychic phenomenon that transmits unconscious reactions or spontaneous impulses to consciousness: Many dreams can be interpreted with the help of the dreamer, who provides both the associations to and the context of the dream image, by means of which one can look at all its aspects.

This method is adequate in all ordinary cases, such as those when a relative, a friend, or a patient tells you a dream more or less in the course of conversation. But when it is a matter of obsessive dreaming or of highly emotional dreams, the personal associations produced by the dreamer do not usually suffice for a satisfactory interpretation. In such cases, we have to take into consideration the fact (first observed and commented on by Freud) that elements often occur in a dream that are not individual and that cannot be derived from the dreamer's personal experi-

ence. These elements, as I have previously mentioned, are what Freud called "archaic remnants"—mental forms whose presence cannot be explained by anything in the individual's own life and which seem to be aboriginal, innate, and inherited shapes of the human mind.

Just as the human body represents a whole museum of organs, each with a long evolutionary history behind it, so we should expect to find that the mind is organized in a similar way. It can no more be a product without history than is the body in which it exists. By "history" I do not mean the fact that the mind builds itself up by conscious reference to the past through language and other cultural traditions. I am referring to the biological, prehistoric, and unconscious development of the mind in archaic man, whose psyche was still close to that of the animal.

This immensely old psyche forms the basis of our mind, just as much as the structure of our body is based on the general anatomical pattern of the mammal. The trained eye of the anatomist or the biologist finds many traces of this original pattern in our bodies. The experienced investigator of the mind can similarly see the analogies between the dream pictures of modern man and the products of the primitive mind, its "collective images," and its mythological motifs.

Just as the biologist needs the science of comparative anatomy, however, the psychologist cannot do without a "comparative anatomy of the psyche." In practice, to put it differently, the psychologist must not only have a sufficient experience of dreams and other products of unconscious activity, but also of mythology in its widest sense. Without this equipment, nobody can spot the important analogies; it is not possible, for instance, to see the analogy between a case of compulsion neurosis and that of a classical demonic possession without a working knowledge of both.

My views about the "archaic remnants," which I call "archetypes" or "primordial images," have been constantly criticized by people who lack a sufficient knowledge of the psychology of dreams and of mythology. The term "archetype" is often misunderstood as meaning certain definite mythological images or motifs. But these are nothing more than conscious representations; it would be absurd to assume that such variable representations could be inherited.



The archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif—representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern. There are, for instance, many representations of the motif of the hostile brethren, but the motif itself remains the same. My critics have incorrectly assumed that I am dealing with “inherited representations,” and on that ground they have dismissed the idea of the archetype as mere superstition. They have failed to take into account the fact that if archetypes were representations that originated in our consciousness (or were acquired by consciousness), we should surely understand them, and not be bewildered and astonished when they present themselves in our consciousness. They are, indeed, an instinctive *trend*, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies.

Here I must clarify the relation between instincts and archetypes: What we properly call instincts are physiological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call the archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world—even where transmission by direct descent or “cross fertilization” through migration must be ruled out.

I can remember many cases of people who have consulted me because they were baffled by their own dreams or by their children's. They were at a complete loss to understand the terms of the dreams. The reason was that the dreams contained images that they could not relate to anything they could remember or could have passed on to their children. Yet some of these patients were highly educated: A few of them were actually psychiatrists themselves.

I vividly recall the case of a professor who had had a sudden vision and thought he was insane. He came to see me in a state of complete panic. I simply took a 400-year-old book from the shelf and showed him an old woodcut depicting his very vision. “There's no reason for you to believe that you're insane,” I said to him. “They knew about your vision 400 years ago.” Whereupon he sat down entirely deflated, but once more normal.

A very important case came to me from a man who

was himself a psychiatrist. One day he brought me a handwritten booklet he had received as a Christmas present from his 10-year-old daughter. It contained a whole series of dreams she had had when she was eight. They made up the weirdest series of dreams that I have ever seen, and I could well understand why her father was more than just puzzled by them. Though childlike, they were uncanny, and they contained images whose origin was wholly incomprehensible to the father. Here are the relevant motifs from the dreams:

1. “The evil animal,” a snakelike monster with many horns, kills and devours all other animals. But God comes from the four corners, being in fact four separate gods, and gives rebirth to all the dead animals.
2. An ascent into heaven, where pagan dances are being celebrated; and a descent into hell, where angels are doing good deeds.
3. A horde of small animals frightens the dreamer. The animals increase to a tremendous size, and one of them devours the little girl.
4. A small mouse is penetrated by worms, snakes, fishes, and human beings. Thus the mouse becomes human. This portrays the four stages of the origin of mankind.
5. A drop of water is seen, as it appears when looked at through a microscope. The girl sees that the drop is full of tree branches. This portrays the origin of the world.
6. A bad boy has a clod of earth and throws bits of it at everyone who passes. In this way all the passers-by become bad.
7. A drunken woman falls into the water and comes out renewed and sober.
8. The scene is in America, where many people are rolling on an ant heap, attacked by the ants. The dreamer, in a panic, falls into a river.
9. There is a desert on the moon where the dreamer sinks so deeply into the ground that she reaches hell.
10. In this dream the girl has a vision of a luminous ball. She touches it. Vapors emanate from it. A man comes and kills her.
11. The girl dreams she is dangerously ill. Suddenly birds come out of her skin and cover her completely.
12. Swarms of gnats obscure the sun, the moon, and all the stars, except one. That one star falls upon the dreamer.

In the unabridged German original, each dream begins with the words of the old fairy tale: "Once upon a time. . . ." By these words the little dreamer suggests that she feels as if each dream were a sort of fairy tale, which she wants to tell her father as a Christmas present. The father tried to explain the dreams in terms of their context. But he could not do so, for there seemed to be no personal associations to them.

The possibility that these dreams were conscious elaborations can of course be ruled out only by someone who knew the child well enough to be absolutely sure of her truthfulness. (They would, however, remain a challenge to our understanding even if they were fantasies.) In this case, the father was convinced that the dreams were authentic, and I have no reason to doubt it. I knew the little girl myself, but this was before she gave her dreams to her father, so that I had no chance to ask her about them. She lived abroad and died of an infectious disease about a year after that Christmas.

Her dreams have a decidedly peculiar character. Their leading thoughts are markedly philosophic in concept. The first one, for instance, speaks of an evil monster killing other animals, but God gives rebirth to them all through a divine *Apokatastasis*, or restitution. In the Western world this idea is known through the Christian tradition. It can be found in the Acts of the Apostles III:21: "[Christ] whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things. . . ." The early Greek Fathers of the Church (for instance, Origen) particularly insisted upon the idea that, at the end of time, everything will be restored by the Redeemer to its original and perfect state.



*The hero-god Raven  
(of the Haidu Indians of  
America's Pacific Coast)  
in the belly of a whale—  
corresponding to the  
"devouring monster"  
motif in the girl's first  
dream (p. 59).*

But, according to St. Matthew XVII:11, there was already an old Jewish tradition that Elias "truly shall first come, and, restore all things." I Corinthians XV:22 refers to the same idea in the following words: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

One might guess that the child had encountered this thought in her religious education. But she had very little religious background. Her parents were Protestants in name; but in fact they knew the Bible only from hearsay. It is particularly unlikely that the recondite image of *Apokatastasis* had been explained to the girl. Certainly her father had never heard of this mythical idea.

Nine of the 12 dreams are influenced by the theme of destruction and restoration. And none of these dreams shows traces of specific Christian education or influence. On the contrary, they are more closely related to primitive myths. This relation is corroborated by the other motif—the "cosmogonic myth" (the creation of the world and of man) that appears in the fourth and fifth dreams. The same connection is found in I Corinthians XV:22, which I have just quoted. In this passage too, Adam and Christ (death and resurrection) are linked together.

The general idea of Christ the Redeemer belongs to the world-wide and pre-Christ theme of the hero and rescuer who, although he has been devoured by a monster, appears again in a miraculous way, having overcome whatever monster it was that swallowed him. When and where such a motif originated nobody knows. We do not even know how to go about investigating the problem. The one apparent certainty is that every generation seems to have known it as a tradition handed down from some preceding time. Thus we can safely assume that it "originated" at a period when man did not yet know that he possessed a hero myth; in an age, that is to say, when he did not yet consciously reflect on what he was saying. The hero figure is an archetype, which has existed since time immemorial.

The production of archetypes by children is especially significant, because one can sometimes be quite certain that a child has had no direct access to the tradition concerned. In this case, the girl's family had no more than a superficial acquaintance with the Christian tradition. Christian themes may, of course, be represented by such ideas as God, angels, heaven, hell, and evil. But the way in which

they are treated by this child points to a totally non-Christian origin.

Let us take the first dream of the God who really consists of four gods coming from the "four corners." The corners of what? There is no room mentioned in the dream. A room would not even fit in with the picture of what is obviously a cosmic event, in which the Universal Being himself intervenes. The quaternity (or element of "fourness") itself is a strange idea, but one that plays a great role in many religions and philosophies. In the Christian religion, it has been superseded by the Trinity, a notion that we must assume was known to the child. But who in an ordinary middle-class family of today would be likely to know of a divine quaternity? It is an idea that was once fairly familiar among students of the Hermetic philosophy in the Middle Ages, but it petered out with the beginning of the 18th century, and it has been entirely obsolete for at least 200 years. Where, then, did the little girl pick it up? From Ezekiel's vision? But there is no Christian teaching that identifies the seraphim with God.

The same question may be asked about the horned serpent. In the Bible, it is true, there are many horned animals—in the Book of Revelation, for instance. But all these seem to be quadruped, although their overlord is the dragon, the Greek word for which (*drakon*) also means serpent. The horned serpent appears in 16th-century Latin alchemy as the *quadricornutus serpens* (four-horned serpent), a symbol of Mercury and an antagonist of the Christian Trinity. But this is an obscure reference. So far as I can discover, it is made by only one author and this child had no means of knowing it.

In the second dream, a motif appears that is definitely non-Christian and that contains a reversal of accepted values—for instance, pagan dances by men in heaven and good deeds by angels in hell. This symbol suggests a relativity of moral values. Where did the child find such a revolutionary notion, worthy of Nietzsche's genius?

These questions lead us to another: What is the compensatory meaning of these dreams, to which the little girl obviously attributed so much importance that she presented them to her father as a Christmas present?

If the dreamer had been a primitive medicine man, one could reasonably assume that they represent variations of

the philosophical themes of death, of resurrection or restitution, of the origin of the world, the creation of man, and the relativity of values. But one might give up such dreams as hopelessly difficult if one tried to interpret them from a personal level. They undoubtedly contain "collective images," and they are in a way analogous to the doctrines taught to young people in primitive tribes when they are about to be initiated as men. At such times they learn about what God, or the gods, or the "founding" animals have done, how the world and man were created, how the end of the world will come and the meaning of death. Is there any occasion when we, in Christian civilization, hand out similar instructions? There is: in adolescence. But many people begin to think again of things like this in old age, at the approach of death.

The little girl, as it happened, was in both these situations. She was approaching puberty and, at the same time, the end of her life. Little or nothing in the symbolism of her dreams points to the beginning of a normal adult life, but there are many allusions to destruction and restoration. When I first read her dreams, indeed, I had the uncanny feeling that they suggested impending disaster. The reason I felt like that was the peculiar nature of the compensation that I deduced from the symbolism. It was the opposite of what one would expect to find in the consciousness of a girl of that age.

These dreams open up a new and rather terrifying aspect of life and death. One would expect to find such images in an aging person who looks back upon life, rather than to be given them by a child who would normally be looking forward. Their atmosphere recalls the old Roman saying, "Life is a short dream," rather than the joy and exuberance of its springtime. For this child's life was like a *ver sacrum vovendum* (the vow of a vernal sacrifice), as the Roman poet puts it. Experience shows that the unknown approach of death casts an *adumbratio* (an anticipatory shadow) over the life and dreams of the victim. Even the altar in Christian churches represents, on the one hand, a tomb and, on the other, a place of resurrection—the transformation of death into eternal life.

Such are the ideas that the dreams brought home to the child. They were a preparation for death, expressed through short stories, like the tales told at primitive initiations or



the *Koans* of Zen Buddhism. This message is unlike the orthodox Christian doctrine and more like ancient primitive thought. It seems to have originated outside historical tradition in the long-forgotten psychic sources that, since pre-historic times, have nourished philosophical and religious speculations about life and death.

It was as if future events were casting their shadow back by arousing in the child certain thought forms that, though normally dormant, describe or accompany the approach of a fatal issue. Although the specific shape in which they express themselves is more or less personal, their general pattern is collective. They are found everywhere and at all times, just as animal instincts vary a good deal in the different species and yet serve the same general purposes. We do not assume that each new-born animal creates its own instincts as an individual acquisition, and we must not suppose that human individuals invent their specific human ways with every new birth. Like the instincts, the collective thought patterns of the human mind are innate and inherited. They function, when the occasion arises, in more or less the same way in all of us.

Emotional manifestations, to which such thought patterns belong, are recognizably the same all over the earth. We can identify them even in animals, and the animals themselves understand one another in this respect, even though they may belong to different species. And what about insects, with their complicated symbiotic functions? Most of them do not even know their parents and have nobody to teach them. Why should one assume, then, that man is the only living being deprived of specific instincts, or that his psyche is devoid of all traces of its evolution?

Naturally, if you identify the psyche with consciousness, you can easily fall into the erroneous idea that man comes into the world with a psyche that is empty, and that in later years it contains nothing more than what it has learned by individual experience. But the psyche is more than consciousness. Animals have little consciousness, but many impulses and reactions that denote the existence of a psyche; and primitives do a lot of things whose meaning is unknown to them.

You may ask many civilized people in vain for the real meaning of the Christmas tree or of the Easter egg. The fact is, they do things without knowing why they do them.

I am inclined to the view that things were generally done first and that it was only a long time afterward that somebody asked why they were done. The medical psychologist is constantly confronted with otherwise intelligent patients who behave in a peculiar and unpredictable way and who have no inkling of what they say or do. They are suddenly caught by unreasonable moods for which they themselves cannot account.

Superficially, such reactions and impulses seem to be of an intimately personal nature, and so we dismiss them as idiosyncratic behavior. In fact, they are based upon a pre-formed and ever-ready instinctive system that is characteristic of man. Thought forms, universally understandable gestures, and many attitudes follow a pattern that was established long before man developed a reflective consciousness.

It is even conceivable that the early origins of man's capacity to reflect come from the painful consequences of violent emotional clashes. Let me take, purely as an illustration of this point, the bushman who, in a moment of anger and disappointment at his failure to catch any fish, strangles his much beloved only son, and is then seized with immense regret as he holds the little dead body in his arms. Such a man might remember this moment of pain for ever.

We cannot know whether this kind of experience was actually the initial cause of the development of human consciousness. But there is no doubt that the shock of a similar emotional experience is often needed to make people wake up and pay attention to what they are doing. There is the famous case of a 13th-century Spanish hidalgo, Raimon Lull, who finally (after a long chase) succeeded in meeting the lady he admired at a secret rendezvous. She silently opened her dress and showed him her breast, rotten with cancer. The shock changed Lull's life; he eventually became an eminent theologian and one of the Church's greatest missionaries. In the case of such a sudden change one can often prove that an archetype has been at work for a long time in the unconscious, skilfully arranging circumstances that will lead to the crisis.

Such experiences seem to show that archetypal forms are not just static patterns. They are dynamic factors that manifest themselves in impulses, just as spontaneously as

the instincts. Certain dreams, visions, or thoughts can suddenly appear; and however carefully one investigates, one cannot find out what causes them. This does not mean that they have no cause; they certainly have. But it is so remote or obscure that one cannot see what it is. In such a case, one must wait either until the dream and its meaning are sufficiently understood, or until some external event occurs that will explain the dream.

At the moment of the dream, this event may still lie in the future. But just as our conscious thoughts often occupy themselves with the future and its possibilities, so do the unconscious and its dreams. There has long been a general belief that the chief function of dreams is prognostication of the future. In antiquity, and as late as the Middle Ages, dreams played their part in medical prognosis. I can confirm by a modern dream the element of prognosis (or precognition) that can be found in an old dream quoted by Artemidorus of Daldis, in the second century A.D.: A man dreamed that he saw his father die in the flames of a house on fire. Not long afterward, he himself died in a *phlegmone* (fire, or high fever), which I presume was pneumonia.

It so happened that a colleague of mine was once suffering from a deadly gangrenous fever—in fact, a *phlegmone*. A former patient of his, who had no knowledge of the nature of his doctor's illness, dreamed that the doctor died in a great fire. At that time the doctor had just entered a hospital and the disease was only beginning. The dreamer knew nothing but the bare fact that his doctor was ill and in a hospital. Three weeks later, the doctor died.

As this example shows, dreams may have an anticipatory or prognostic aspect, and anybody trying to interpret them must take this into consideration, especially where an obviously meaningful dream does not provide a context sufficient to explain it. Such a dream often comes right out of the blue, and one wonders what could have prompted it. Of course, if one knew its ulterior message, its cause would be clear. For it is only our consciousness that does not yet know; the unconscious seems already informed, and to have come to a conclusion that is expressed in the dream. In fact, the unconscious seems to be able to examine and to draw conclusions from facts, much as consciousness does. It can even use certain facts, and anticipate their possible results, just because we are *not* conscious of them.



In a cartoon by James Thurber, a henpecked husband sees his home and his wife as the same being.

But as far as one can make out from dreams, the unconscious makes its deliberations instinctively. The distinction is important. Logical analysis is the prerogative of consciousness; we select with reason and knowledge. The unconscious, however, seems to be guided chiefly by instinctive trends, represented by corresponding thought forms—that is, by the archetypes. A doctor who is asked to describe the course of an illness will use such rational concepts as "infection" or "fever." The dream is more poetic. It presents the diseased body as a man's earthly house, and the fever as the fire that is destroying it.

As the above dream shows, the archetypal mind has handled the situation in the same way as it did in the time of Artemidorus. Something that is of a more or less unknown nature has been intuitively grasped by the unconscious and submitted to an archetypal treatment. This suggests that, instead of the process of reasoning that conscious thought would have applied, the archetypal mind has stepped in and taken over the task of prognostication. The archetypes thus have their own initiative and their own specific energy. These powers enable them both to

produce a meaningful interpretation (in their own symbolic style) and to interfere in a given situation with their own impulses and their own thought formations. In this respect, they function like complexes; they come and go very much as they please, and often they obstruct or modify our conscious intentions in an embarrassing way.

One can perceive the specific energy of archetypes when we experience the peculiar fascination that accompanies them. They seem to hold a special spell. Such a peculiar quality is also characteristic of the personal complexes; and just as personal complexes have their individual history, so do social complexes of an archetypal character. But while personal complexes never produce more than a personal bias, archetypes create myths, religions, and philosophies that influence and characterize whole nations and epochs of history. We regard the personal complexes as compensations for one-sided or faulty attitudes of consciousness; in the same way, myths of a religious nature can be interpreted as a sort of mental therapy for the sufferings and anxieties of mankind in general—hunger, war, disease, old age, death.

The universal hero myth, for example, always refers to a powerful man or god-man who vanquishes evil in the form of dragons, serpents, monsters, demons, and so on, and who liberates his people from destruction and death. The narration or ritual repetition of sacred texts and ceremonies, and the worship of such a figure with dances, music, hymns, prayers, and sacrifices, grip the audience with numinous emotions (as if with magic spells) and exalt the individual to an identification with the hero.

If we try to see such a situation with the eyes of the believer, we can perhaps understand how the ordinary man can be liberated from his personal impotence and misery and endowed (at least temporarily) with an almost superhuman quality. Often enough such a conviction will sustain him for a long time and give a certain style to his life. It may even set the tone of a whole society. A remarkable instance of this can be found in the Eleusinian mysteries, which were finally suppressed in the beginning of the seventh century of the Christian era. They expressed, together with the Delphic oracle, the essence and spirit of ancient Greece. On a much greater scale, the Christian era itself owes its name and significance to the antique mystery of

the god-man, which has its roots in the archetypal Osiris-Horus myth of ancient Egypt.

It is commonly assumed that on some given occasion in prehistoric times, the basic mythological ideas were "invented" by a clever old philosopher or prophet, and ever afterward "believed" by a credulous and uncritical people. It is said that stories told by a power-seeking priesthood are not "true," but merely "wishful thinking." But the very word "invent" is derived from the Latin *invenire*, and means to "find" and hence to find something by "seeking" it. In the latter case the word itself hints at some foreknowledge of what you are going to find.

Let me go back to the strange ideas contained in the dreams of the little girl. It seems unlikely that she sought them out, since she was surprised to find them. They occurred to her rather as peculiar and unexpected stories, which seemed noteworthy enough to be given to her father as a Christmas present. In doing so, however, she lifted them up into the sphere of our still living Christian mystery—the birth of our Lord, mixed with the secret of the evergreen tree that carries the new-born Light. (This is the reference of the fifth dream.)

Although there is ample historical evidence for the symbolic relation between Christ and the tree symbol, the little girl's parents would have been gravely embarrassed had they been asked to explain exactly what they meant by decorating a tree with burning candles to celebrate the nativity of Christ. "Oh, it's just a Christmas custom!" they would have said. A serious answer would require a far-reaching dissertation about the antique symbolism of the dying god, and its relation to the cult of the Great Mother and her symbol, the tree—to mention only one aspect of this complicated problem.

The further we delve into the origins of a "collective image" (or, to express it in ecclesiastical language, of a dogma), the more we uncover a seemingly unending web of archetypal patterns that, before modern times, were never the object of conscious reflection. Thus, paradoxically enough, we know more about mythological symbolism than did any generation before our own. The fact is that in former times men did not reflect upon their symbols; they lived them and were unconsciously animated by their meaning.



I will illustrate this by an experience I once had with the primitives of Mount Elgon in Africa. Every morning at dawn, they leave their huts and breathe or spit into their hands, which they then stretch out to the first rays of the sun, as if they were offering either their breath or their spittle to the rising god—to *mungu*. (This Swahili word, which they used in explaining the ritual act, is derived from a Polynesian root equivalent to *mana* or *mulungu*. These and similar terms designate a "power" of extraordinary efficiency and pervasiveness, which we should call divine. Thus the word *mungu* is their equivalent for Allah or God.) When I asked them what they meant by this act, or why they did it, they were completely baffled. They could only say: "We have always done it. It has always been done when the sun rises." They laughed at the obvious conclusion that the sun is *mungu*. The sun indeed is not *mungu* when it is above horizon; *mungu* is the actual moment of the sunrise.

What they were doing was obvious to me, but not to them; they just did it, never reflecting on what they did. They were consequently unable to explain themselves. I concluded that they were offering their souls to *mungu*, because the breath (of life) and the spittle mean "soul-substance." To breathe or spit upon something conveys a "magical" effect, as, for instance, when Christ used spittle to cure the blind, or where a son inhales his dying father's last breath in order to take over the father's soul. It is most unlikely that these Africans ever, even in the remote past, knew any more about the meaning of their ceremony. In fact, their ancestors probably knew even less, because they were more profoundly unconscious of their motives and thought less about their doings.

Goethe's Faust aptly says: "*Im Anfang war die Tat* [In the beginning was the deed]." "Deeds" were never invented, they were done; thoughts, on the other hand, are a relatively late discovery of man. First he was moved to deeds by unconscious factors; it was only a long time afterward that he began to reflect upon the causes that had moved him; and it took him a very long time indeed to arrive at the preposterous idea that he must have moved himself—his mind being unable to identify any other motivating force than his own.

inventing itself, yet there are many people who believe that the psyche or mind invented itself and thus was the creator of its own existence. As a matter of fact, the mind has grown to its present state of consciousness as an acorn grows into an oak or as saurians developed into mammals. As it has for so long been developing, so it still develops, and thus we are moved by forces from within as well as by stimuli from without.

These inner motives spring from a deep source that is not made by consciousness and is not under its control. In the mythology of earlier times, these forces were called *mana*, or spirits, demons, and gods. They are as active today as they ever were. If they conform to our wishes, we call them happy hunches or impulses and pat ourselves on the back for being smart fellows. If they go against us, then we say that it is just bad luck, or that certain people are against us, or that the cause of our misfortunes must be pathological. The one thing we refuse to admit is that we are dependent upon "powers" that are beyond our control.

It is true, however, that in recent times civilized man has acquired a certain amount of will power, which he can apply where he pleases. He has learned to do his work efficiently without having recourse to chanting and drumming to hypnotize him into the state of doing. He can even dispense with a daily prayer for divine aid. He can carry out what he proposes to do, and he can apparently translate his ideas into action without a hitch, whereas the primitive seems to be hampered at each step by fears, superstitions, and other unseen obstacles to action. The motto "Where there's a will, there's a way" is the superstition of modern man.

Yet in order to sustain his creed, contemporary man pays the price in a remarkable lack of introspection. He is blind to the fact that, with all his rationality and efficiency, he is possessed by "powers" that are beyond his control. His gods and demons have not disappeared at all; they have merely got new names. They keep him on the run with restlessness, vague apprehensions, psychological complications, an insatiable need for pills, alcohol, tobacco, food—and, above all, a large array of neuroses.

## The soul of man

What we call civilized consciousness has steadily separated itself from the basic instincts. But these instincts have not disappeared. They have merely lost their contact with our consciousness and are thus forced to assert themselves in an indirect fashion. This may be by means of physical symptoms in the case of a neurosis, or by means of incidents of various kinds, like unaccountable moods, unexpected forgetfulness, or mistakes in speech.

A man likes to believe that he is the master of his soul. But as long as he is unable to control his moods and emotions, or to be conscious of the myriad secret ways in which unconscious factors insinuate themselves into his arrangements and decisions, he is certainly not his own master. These unconscious factors owe their existence to the autonomy of the archetypes. Modern man protects himself against seeing his own split state by a system of compartments. Certain areas of outer life and of his own behavior are kept, as it were, in separate drawers and are never confronted with one another.

As an example of this so-called compartment psychology, I remember the case of an alcoholic who had come under the laudable influence of a certain religious movement, and, fascinated by its enthusiasm, had forgotten that he needed a drink. He was obviously and miraculously cured by Jesus, and he was correspondingly displayed as a witness to divine grace or to the efficiency of the said religious organization. But after a few weeks of public confessions, the novelty began to pale and some alcoholic refreshment seemed to be indicated, and so he drank again. But this time the helpful organization came to the conclusion that the case was "pathological" and obviously not suitable for an intervention by Jesus, so they put him into a clinic to let the doctor do better than the divine Healer.

This is an aspect of the modern "cultural" mind that is worth looking into. It shows an alarming degree of dissociation and psychological confusion.

If, for a moment, we regard mankind as one individual, we see that the human race is like a person carried away by unconscious powers; and the human race also likes to keep certain problems tucked away in separate drawers. But this is why we should give a great deal of considera-

tion to what we are doing, for mankind is now threatened by self-created and deadly dangers that are growing beyond our control. Our world is, so to speak, dissociated like a neurotic, with the Iron Curtain marking the symbolic line of division. Western man, becoming aware of the aggressive will to power of the East, sees himself forced to take extraordinary measures of defense, at the same time as he prides himself on his virtue and good intentions.

What he fails to see is that it is his own vices, which he has covered up by good international manners, that are thrown back in his face by the communist world, shamelessly and methodically. What the West has tolerated, but secretly and with a slight sense of shame (the diplomatic lie, systematic deception, veiled threats), comes back into the open and in full measure from the East and ties us up in neurotic knots. It is the face of his own evil shadow that grins at Western man from the other side of the Iron Curtain.

It is this state of affairs that explains the peculiar feeling of helplessness of so many people in Western societies. They have begun to realize that the difficulties confronting us are moral problems, and that the attempts to answer them by a policy of piling up nuclear arms or by economic "competition" is achieving little, for it cuts both ways. Many of us now understand that moral and mental means would be more efficient, since they could provide us with psychic immunity against the ever-increasing infection.

But all such attempts have proved singularly ineffective, and will do so as long as we try to convince ourselves and the world that it is only *they* (i.e., our opponents) who are wrong. It would be much more to the point for us to make a serious attempt to recognize our own shadow and its nefarious doings. If we could see our shadow (the dark side of our nature), we should be immune to any moral and mental infection and insinuation. As matters now stand, we lay ourselves open to every infection, because we are really doing practically the same thing as *they*. Only we have the additional disadvantage that we neither see nor want to understand what we ourselves are doing, under the cover of good manners.

The communist world, it may be noted, has one big myth (which we call an illusion, in the vain hope that our superior judgment will make it disappear). It is the time-



"Our world is dissociated like a neurotic." The Berlin Wall.

hallowed archetypal dream of a Golden Age (or Paradise), where everything is provided in abundance for everyone, and a great, just, and wise chief rules over a human kindergarten. This powerful archetype in its infantile form has gripped them, but it will never disappear from the world at the mere sight of our superior points of view. We even support it by our own childishness, for our Western civilization is in the grip of the same mythology. Unconsciously, we cherish the same prejudices, hopes, and expectations. We too believe in the welfare state, in universal peace, in the equality of man, in his eternal human rights, in justice,

truth, and (do not say it too loudly) in the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The sad truth is that man's real life consists of a complex of inexorable opposites—day and night, birth and death, happiness and misery, good and evil. We are not even sure that one will prevail against the other, that good will overcome evil, or joy defeat pain. Life is a battleground. It always has been, and always will be; and if it were not so, existence would come to an end.

It was precisely this conflict within man that led the early Christians to expect and hope for an early end to this world, or the Buddhists to reject all earthly desires and aspirations. These basic answers would be frankly suicidal if they were not linked up with peculiar mental and moral ideas and practices that constitute the bulk of both religions and that, to a certain extent, modify their radical denial of the world.

I stress this point because, in our time, there are millions of people who have lost faith in any kind of religion. Such people do not understand their religion any longer. While life runs smoothly without religion, the loss remains as good as unnoticed. But when suffering comes, it is another matter. That is when people begin to seek a way out and to reflect about the meaning of life and its bewildering and painful experiences.

It is significant that the psychological doctor (within my experience) is consulted more by Jews and Protestants than by Catholics. This might be expected, for the Catholic Church still feels responsible for the *cura animarum* (the care of the soul's welfare). But in this scientific age, the psychiatrist is apt to be asked the questions that once belonged in the domain of the theologian. People feel that it makes, or would make, a great difference if only they had a positive belief in a meaningful way of life or in God and immortality. The specter of approaching death often gives a powerful incentive to such thoughts. From time immemorial, men have had ideas about a Supreme Being (one or several) and about the Land of the Hereafter. Only today do they think they can do without such ideas.

Because we cannot discover God's throne in the sky with a radiotelescope or establish (for certain) that a beloved father or mother is still about in a more or less corporeal form, people assume that such ideas are "not



true." I would rather say that they are not "true" enough, for these are conceptions of a kind that have accompanied human life from prehistoric times, and that still break through into consciousness at any provocation.

Modern man may assert that he can dispense with them, and he may bolster his opinion by insisting that there is no scientific evidence of their truth. Or he may even regret the loss of his convictions. But since we are dealing with invisible and unknowable things (for God is beyond human understanding, and there is no means of proving immortality), why should we bother about evidence? Even if we did not know by reason our need for salt in our food, we should nonetheless profit from its use. We might argue that the use of salt is a mere illusion of taste or a superstition; but it would still contribute to our well-being. Why, then, should we deprive ourselves of views that would prove helpful in crises and would give a meaning to our existence?

And how do we know that such ideas are not true? Many people would agree with me if I stated flatly that such ideas are probably illusions. What they fail to realize is that the denial is as impossible to "prove" as the assertion of religious belief. We are entirely free to choose which point of view we take; it will in any case be an arbitrary decision.

There is, however, a strong empirical reason why we should cultivate thoughts that can never be proved. It is that they are known to be useful. Man positively needs general ideas and convictions that will give a meaning to his life and enable him to find a place for himself in the universe. He can stand the most incredible hardships when he is convinced that they make sense; he is crushed when, on top of all his misfortunes, he has to admit that he is taking part in a "tale told by an idiot."

It is the role of religious symbols to give a meaning to the life of man. The Pueblo Indians believe that they are the sons of Father Sun, and this belief endows their life with a perspective (and a goal) that goes far beyond their limited existence. It gives them ample space for the unfolding of personality and permits them a full life as complete persons. Their plight is infinitely more satisfactory than that of a man in our own civilization who knows that he is (and will remain) nothing more than an underdog with no inner meaning to his life.



*Every society has its idea of the archetypal paradise or golden age that, it is believed, once existed and will exist again. A 19th-century American painting embodies the idea of a past utopia: It shows William Penn's treaty in 1682 with the Indians occurring in an ideal setting where all is harmony and peace.*



*The Garden of Eden, depicted as a walled (and womb-like) garden in the 15th-century French painting, and showing the expulsion of Adam and Eve.*

A sense of a wider meaning to one's existence is what raises a man beyond mere getting and spending. If he lacks this sense, he is lost and miserable. Had St. Paul been convinced that he was nothing more than a wandering weaver of carpets, he certainly would not have been the man he was. His real and meaningful life lay in the inner certainty that he was the messenger of the Lord. One may accuse him of suffering from megalomania, but this opinion pales before the testimony of history and the judgment of subsequent generations. The myth that took possession of him made him something greater than a mere craftsman.

Such a myth, however, consists of symbols that have not been invented consciously. They have happened. It was not the man Jesus who created the myth of the god-man. It existed for many centuries before his birth. He himself was seized by this symbolic idea, which, as St. Mark tells us, lifted him out of the narrow life of the Nazarene carpenter.

Myths go back to the primitive storyteller and his dreams, to men moved by the stirring of their fantasies. These people were not very different from those whom later generations have called poets or philosophers. Primitive story tellers did not concern themselves with the origin of their fantasies; it was very much later that people began to wonder where a story originated. Yet, centuries ago, in what we now call "ancient" Greece, men's minds were advanced enough to surmise that the tales of the gods were nothing but archaic and exaggerated traditions of long-buried kings or chieftains. Men already took the view that the myth was too improbable to mean what it said. They therefore tried to reduce it to a generally understandable form.

In more recent times, we have seen the same thing happen with dream symbolism. We became aware, in the years when psychology was in its infancy, that dreams had some importance. But just as the Greeks persuaded themselves that their myths were merely elaborations of rational or "normal" history, so some of the pioneers of psychology came to the conclusion that dreams did not mean what they appeared to mean. The images or symbols that they presented were dismissed as bizarre forms in which repressed contents of the psyche appeared to the conscious mind. It thus came to be taken for granted that a dream

meant something other than its obvious statement. I have already described my disagreement with this idea—a disagreement that led me to study the form as well as the content of dreams. Why should they mean some-



*A South American tribe's ritual boat burial. The dead man, placed in his own canoe, is given food and clothing for his journey.*

thing different from their contents? Is there anything in nature that is other than it is? The dream is a normal and natural phenomenon, and it does not mean something it is not. The Talmud even says: "The dream is its own interpretation." The confusion arises because the dream's contents are symbolic and thus have more than one meaning. The symbols point in different directions from those we apprehend with the conscious mind; and therefore they relate to something either unconscious or at least not entirely conscious.

To the scientific mind, such phenomena as symbolic ideas are a nuisance because they cannot be formulated in a way that is satisfactory to intellect and logic. They are by no means the only case of this kind in psychology. The trouble begins with the phenomenon of "affect" or emotion, which evades all the attempts of the psychologist to pin it down with a final definition. The cause of the difficulty is the same in both cases—the intervention of the unconscious.

I know enough of the scientific point of view to understand that it is most annoying to have to deal with facts that cannot be completely or adequately grasped. The trouble with these phenomena is that the facts are undeniable and yet cannot be formulated in intellectual terms. For this one would have to be able to comprehend life itself, for it is life that produces emotions and symbolic ideas.

The academic psychologist is perfectly free to dismiss the phenomenon of emotion or the concept of the unconscious (or both) from his consideration. Yet they remain facts to which the medical psychologist at least has to pay due attention; for emotional conflicts and the intervention of the unconscious are the classical features of his science. If he treats a patient at all, he comes up against these irrationalities as hard facts, irrespective of his ability to formulate them in intellectual terms. It is, therefore, quite natural that people who have not had the medical psychologist's experience find it difficult to follow what happens when psychology ceases to be a tranquil pursuit for the scientist in his laboratory and becomes an active part of the adventure of real life. Target practice on a shooting range is far from the battlefield; the doctor has to deal with casualties in a genuine war. He must concern himself with

psychic realities, even if he cannot embody them in scientific definitions. That is why no textbook can teach psychology; one learns only by actual experience.

We can see this point clearly when we examine certain well-known symbols:

The cross in the Christian religion, for instance, is a meaningful symbol that expresses a multitude of aspects, ideas, and emotions; but a cross after a name on a list simply indicates that the individual is dead. The phallus functions as an all-embracing symbol in the Hindu religion, but if a street urchin draws one on a wall, it just reflects an interest in his penis. Because infantile and adolescent fantasies often continue far into adult life, many dreams occur in which there are unmistakable sexual allusions. It would be absurd to understand them as anything else. But when a mason speaks of monks and nuns to be laid upon each other, or an electrician of male plugs and female sockets, it would be ludicrous to suppose that he is indulging in glowing adolescent fantasies. He is simply using colorful descriptive names for his materials. When an educated Hindu talks to you about the Lingam (the phallus that represents the god Siva in Hindu mythology), you will hear things we Westerners would never connect with the penis. The Lingam is certainly not an obscene allusion; nor is the cross merely a sign of death. Much depends upon the maturity of the dreamer who produces such an image.

The interpretation of dreams and symbols demands intelligence. It cannot be turned into a mechanical system and then crammed into unimaginative brains. It demands both an increasing knowledge of the dreamer's individuality and an increasing self-awareness on the part of the interpreter. No experienced worker in this field will deny that there are rules of thumb that can prove helpful, but they must be applied with prudence and intelligence. One may follow all the right rules and yet get bogged down in the most appalling nonsense, simply by overlooking a seemingly unimportant detail that a better intelligence would not have missed. Even a man of high intellect can go badly astray for lack of intuition or feeling.

When we attempt to understand symbols, we are not only confronted with the symbol itself, but we are brought up against the wholeness of the symbol-producing indi-



vidual. This includes a study of his cultural background, and in the process one fills in many gaps in one's own education. I have made it a rule myself to consider every case as an entirely new proposition about which I do not even know the ABC. Routine responses may be practical and useful while one is dealing with the surface, but as soon as one gets in touch with the vital problems, life itself takes over and even the most brilliant theoretical premises become ineffectual words.

Imagination and intuition are vital to our understanding. And though the usual popular opinion is that they are chiefly valuable to poets and artists (that in "sensible" matters one should mistrust them), they are in fact equally vital in all the higher grades of science. Here they play an increasingly important role, which supplements that of the "rational" intellect and its application to a specific problem. Even physics, the strictest of all applied sciences, depends to an astonishing degree upon intuition, which works by way of the unconscious (although it is possible to demonstrate afterward the logical procedures that could have led one to the same result as intuition).

Intuition is almost indispensable in the interpretation of symbols, and it can often ensure that they are immediately understood by the dreamer. But while such a lucky hunch may be subjectively convincing, it can also be rather dangerous. It can so easily lead to a false feeling of security. It may, for instance, seduce both the interpreter and the dreamer into continuing a cosy and relatively easy relation, which may end in a sort of mutual dream. The safe basis of real intellectual knowledge and moral understanding gets lost if one is content with the vague satisfaction of having understood by "hunch." One can explain and know only if one has reduced intuitions to an exact knowledge of facts and their logical connections.

An honest investigator will have to admit that he cannot always do this, but it would be dishonest not to keep it always in mind. Even a scientist is a human being. So it is natural for him, like others, to hate the things he cannot explain. It is a common illusion to believe that what we know today is all we ever can know. Nothing is more vulnerable than scientific theory, which is an ephemeral attempt to explain facts and not an everlasting truth in itself.

## The role of symbols

When the medical psychologist takes an interest in symbols, he is primarily concerned with "natural" symbols, as distinct from "cultural" symbols. The former are derived from the unconscious contents of the psyche, and they therefore represent an enormous number of variations on the essential archetypal images. In many cases they can still be traced back to their archaic roots—i.e., to ideas and images that we meet in the most ancient records and in primitive societies. The cultural symbols on the other hand, are those that have been used to express "eternal truths," and that are still used in many religions. They have gone through many transformations and even a long process of more or less conscious development, and have thus become collective images accepted by civilized societies.

Such cultural symbols nevertheless retain much of their original numinosity or "spell." One is aware that they can evoke a deep emotional response in some individuals, and this psychic charge makes them function in much the same way as prejudices. They are a factor with which the psychologist must reckon; it is folly to dismiss them because, in rational terms, they seem to be absurd or irrelevant. They are important constituents of our mental makeup and vital forces in the building up of human society; and they cannot be eradicated without serious loss. Where they are repressed or neglected, their specific energy disappears into the unconscious with unaccountable consequences. The psychic energy that appears to have been lost in this way in fact serves to revive and intensify whatever is uppermost in the unconscious—tendencies, perhaps, that have hitherto had no chance to express themselves or at least have not been allowed an uninhibited existence in our consciousness.

Such tendencies form an ever-present and potentially destructive "shadow" to our conscious mind. Even tendencies that might in some circumstances be able to exert a beneficial influence are transformed into demons when they are repressed. This is why many well-meaning people are understandably afraid of the unconscious, and incidentally of psychology.

Our times have demonstrated what it means for the

gates of the underworld to be opened. Things whose enormity nobody could have imagined in the idyllic harmlessness of the first decade of our century have happened and have turned our world upside down. Ever since, the world has remained in a state of schizophrenia. Not only has civilized Germany disgorged its terrible primitivity, but Russia is also ruled by it, and Africa has been set on fire. No wonder that the Western world feels uneasy.

Modern man does not understand how much his "rationalism" (which has destroyed his capacity to respond to numinous symbols and ideas) has put him at the mercy of the psychic "underworld." He has freed himself from "superstition" (or so he believes), but in the process he has lost his spiritual values to a positively dangerous degree. His moral and spiritual tradition has disintegrated, and he is now paying the price for this break-up in worldwide disorientation and dissociation.

Anthropologists have often described what happens to a primitive society when its spiritual values are exposed to the impact of modern civilization. Its people lose the meaning of their lives, their social organization disintegrates, and they themselves morally decay. We are now in the same condition. But we have never really understood what we have lost, for our spiritual leaders unfortunately were more interested in protecting their institutions than in understanding the mystery that symbols present. In my opinion, faith does not exclude thought (which is man's strongest weapon), but unfortunately many believers seem to be so afraid of science (and incidentally of psychology) that they turn a blind eye to the numinous psychic powers that forever control man's fate. We have stripped all things of their mystery and numinosity; nothing is holy any longer.

In earlier ages, as instinctive concepts welled up in the mind of man, his conscious mind could no doubt integrate them into a coherent psychic pattern. But the "civilized" man is no longer able to do this. His "advanced" consciousness has deprived itself of the means by which the auxiliary contributions of the instincts and the unconscious can be assimilated. These organs of assimilation and integration were numinous symbols, held holy by common consent.

Today, for instance, we talk of "matter." We describe

its physical properties. We conduct laboratory experiments to demonstrate some of its aspects. But the word "matter" remains a dry, inhuman, and purely intellectual concept, without any psychic significance for us. How different was the former image of matter—the Great Mother—that could encompass and express the profound emotional meaning of Mother Earth. In the same way, what was the spirit is now identified with intellect and thus ceases to be the Father of All. It has degenerated to the limited ego-thoughts of man; the immense emotional energy expressed in the image of "our Father" vanishes into the sand of an intellectual desert.

These two archetypal principles lie at the foundation of the contrasting systems of East and West. The masses and their leaders do not realize, however, that there is no substantial difference between calling the world principle male and a father (spirit), as the West does, or female and a mother (matter), as the Communists do. Essentially, we know as little of the one as of the other. In earlier times, these principles were worshiped in all sorts of rituals, which at least showed the psychic significance they held for man. But now they have become mere abstract concepts.

As scientific understanding has grown, so our world has become dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos, because he is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional "unconscious identity" with natural phenomena. These have slowly lost their symbolic implications. Thunder is no longer the voice of an angry god, nor is lightning his avenging missile. No river contains a spirit, no tree is the life principle of a man, no snake the embodiment of wisdom, no mountain cave the home of a great demon. No voices now speak to man from stones, plants, and animals, nor does he speak to them believing they can hear. His contact with nature has gone, and with it has gone the profound emotional energy that this symbolic connection supplied.

This enormous loss is compensated for by the symbols of our dreams. They bring up our original nature—its instincts and peculiar thinking. Unfortunately, however, they express their contents in the language of nature, which is strange and incomprehensible to us. It therefore confronts us with the task of translating it into the rational words

and concepts of modern speech, which has liberated itself from its primitive encumbrances—notably from its mystical participation with the things it describes. Nowadays, when we talk of ghosts and other numinous figures, we are no longer conjuring them up. The power as well as the glory is drained out of such once-potent words. We have ceased to believe in magic formulas; not many taboos and similar restrictions are left; and our world seems to be disinfected of all such "superstitious" numina as "witches, warlocks, and worricows," to say nothing of werewolves, vampires, bush souls, and all the other bizarre beings that populated the primeval forest.

To be more accurate, the surface of our world seems to be cleansed of all superstitious and irrational elements. Whether, however, the real inner human world (not our wish-fulfilling fiction about it) is also freed from primitivity is another question. Is the number of 13 not still taboo for many people? Are there not still many individuals possessed by irrational prejudices, projections, and childish illusions? A realistic picture of the human mind reveals many such primitive traits and survivals, which are still playing their roles just as if nothing had happened during the last 500 years.

It is essential to appreciate this point. Modern man is in fact a curious mixture of characteristics acquired over the long ages of his mental development. This mixed-up being is the man and his symbols that we have to deal with, and we must scrutinize his mental products very carefully indeed. Skepticism and scientific conviction exist in him side by side with old-fashioned prejudices, outdated habits of thought and feeling, obstinate misinterpretations, and blind ignorance.

Such are the contemporary human beings who produce the symbols we psychologists investigate. In order to explain these symbols and their meaning, it is vital to learn whether their representations are related to purely personal experience, or whether they have been chosen by a dream for its particular purpose from a store of general conscious knowledge.

Take, for instance, a dream in which the number 13 occurs. The question is whether the dreamer himself habitually believes in the unlucky quality of the number, or whether the dream merely alludes to people who still in-

dulge in such superstitions. The answer makes a great difference to the interpretation. In the former case, you have to reckon with the fact that the individual is still under the spell of the unlucky 13, and therefore will feel most uncomfortable in Room 13 in a hotel or sitting at a table with 13 people. In the latter case, 13 may not mean any more than a discourteous or abusive remark. The "superstitious" dreamer still feels the "spell" of 13; the more "rational" dreamer has stripped 13 of its original emotional overtones.

This argument illustrates the way in which archetypes appear in practical experience: They are, at the same time, both images and emotions. One can speak of an archetype only when these two aspects are simultaneous. When there is merely the image, then there is simply a word-picture of little consequence. But by being charged with emotion, the image gains numinosity (or psychic energy); it becomes dynamic, and consequences of some kind must flow from it.

I am aware that it is difficult to grasp this concept, because I am trying to use words to describe something whose very nature makes it incapable of precise definition. But since so many people have chosen to treat archetypes as if they were part of a mechanical system that can be learned by rote, it is essential to insist that they are not mere names, or even philosophical concepts. They are pieces of life itself—images that are integrally connected to the living individual by the bridge of the emotions. That is why it is impossible to give an arbitrary (or universal) interpretation of any archetype. It must be explained in the manner indicated by the whole life-situation of the particular individual to whom it relates.

Thus, in the case of a devout Christian, the symbol of the cross can be interpreted only in its Christian context—unless the dream produces a very strong reason to look beyond it. Even then, the specific Christian meaning should be kept in mind. But one cannot say that, at all times and in all circumstances, the symbol of the cross has the same meaning. If that were so, it would be stripped of its numinosity, lose its vitality, and become a mere word.

Those who do not realize the special feeling tone of the archetype end with nothing more than a jumble of mythological concepts, which can be strung together to show that



everything means anything—or nothing at all. All the corpses in the world are chemically identical, but living individuals are not. Archetypes come to life only when one patiently tries to discover why and in what fashion they are meaningful to a living individual.

The mere use of words is futile when you do not know what they stand for. This is particularly true in psychology, where we speak of archetypes like the anima and animus, the wise man, the great mother, and so on. You can know all about the saints, sages, prophets, and other godly men, and all the great mothers of the world. But if they are mere images whose numinosity you have never experienced, it will be as if you were talking in a dream, for you will not know what you are talking about. The mere words you use will be empty and valueless. They gain life and meaning only when you try to take into account their numinosity—i.e., their relationship to the living individual. Only then do you begin to understand that their names mean very little, whereas the way they are related to you is all-important.

The symbol-producing function of our dreams is thus an attempt to bring the original mind of man into "advanced" or differentiated consciousness, where it has never been before and where, therefore, it has never been subjected to critical self-reflection. For, in ages long past, that original mind was the whole of man's personality. As he developed consciousness, so his conscious mind lost contact with some of that primitive psychic energy. And the conscious mind has never known that original mind; for it was discarded in the process of evolving the very differentiated consciousness that alone could be aware of it.

Yet it seems that what we call the unconscious has preserved primitive characteristics that formed part of the original mind. It is to these characteristics that the symbols of dreams constantly refer, as if the unconscious sought to bring back all the old things from which the mind freed itself as it evolved—illusions, fantasies, archaic thought forms, fundamental instincts, and so on.

This is what explains the resistance, even fear, that people often experience in approaching unconscious matters. These relict contents are not merely neutral or indifferent. On the contrary, they are so highly charged that they are often more than merely uncomfortable. They can cause

real fear. The more they are repressed, the more they spread through the whole personality in the form of a neurosis.

It is this psychic energy that gives them such vital importance. It is just as if a man who has lived through a period of unconsciousness should suddenly realize that there is a gap in his memory—that important events seem to have taken place that he cannot remember. In so far as he assumes that the psyche is an exclusively personal affair (and this is the usual assumption), he will try to retrieve the apparently lost infantile memories. But the gaps in his childhood memory are merely the symptoms of a much greater loss—the loss of the primitive psyche.

As the evolution of the embryonic body repeats its prehistory, so the mind also develops through a series of prehistoric stages. The main task of dreams is to bring back a sort of "recollection" of the prehistoric, as well as the infantile world, right down to the level of the most primitive instincts. Such recollections can have a remarkably healing effect in certain cases, as Freud saw long ago. This observation confirms the view that an infantile memory gap (a so-called amnesia) represents a positive loss and its recovery can bring a positive increase in life and wellbeing.

Because a child is physically small and its conscious thoughts are scarce and simple, we do not realize the far-reaching complications of the infantile mind that are based on its original identity with the prehistoric psyche. That "original mind" is just as much present and still functioning in the child as the evolutionary stages of mankind are in its embryonic body. If the reader remembers what I said earlier about the remarkable dreams of the child who made a present of her dreams to her father, he will get a good idea of what I mean.

In infantile amnesia, one finds strange mythological fragments that also often appear in later psychoses. Images of this kind are highly numinous and therefore very important. If such recollections reappear in adult life, they may in some cases cause profound psychological disturbance, while in other people they can produce miracles of healing or religious conversions. Often they bring back a piece of life, missing for a long time, that gives purpose to and thus enriches human life.

The recollection of infantile memories and the reproduction of archetypal ways of psychic behavior can create a wider horizon and a greater extension of consciousness—on condition that one succeeds in assimilating and integrating in the conscious mind the lost and regained contents. Since they are not neutral, their assimilation will modify the personality, just as they themselves will have to undergo certain alterations. In this part of what is called "the individuation process" (which Dr. M.-L. von Franz describes in a later section of this book), the interpretation of symbols plays an important practical role. For the symbols are natural attempts to reconcile and reunite opposites within the psyche.

Naturally, just seeing and then brushing aside the symbols would have no such effect and would merely re-establish the old neurotic condition and destroy the attempt at a synthesis. But, unfortunately, those rare people who do not deny the very existence of the archetypes almost invariably treat them as mere words and forget their living reality. When their numinosity has thus (illegitimately) been banished, the process of limitless substitution begins—in other words, one glides easily from archetype to archetype, with everything meaning everything. It is true enough that the forms of archetypes are to a considerable extent exchangeable. But their numinosity is and remains a fact, and represents the *value* of an archetypal event.

This emotional value must be kept in mind and allowed for throughout the whole intellectual process of dream interpretation. It is only too easy to lose this value, because thinking and feeling are so diametrically opposed that thinking almost automatically throws out feeling values and vice versa. Psychology is the only science that has to take the factor of value (i.e., feeling) into account, because it is the link between physical events and life. Psychology is often accused of not being scientific on this account; but its critics fail to understand the scientific and practical necessity of giving due consideration to feeling.

## Healing the split

Our intellect has created a new world that dominates nature, and has populated it with monstrous machines. The

latter are so indubitably useful that we cannot see even a possibility of getting rid of them or our subservience to them. Man is bound to follow the adventurous promptings of his scientific and inventive mind and to admire himself for his splendid achievements. At the same time, his genius shows the uncanny tendency to invent things that become more and more dangerous, because they represent better and better means for wholesale suicide.

In view of the rapidly increasing avalanche of world population, man has already begun to seek ways and means of keeping the rising flood at bay. But nature may anticipate all our attempts by turning against man his own creative mind. The H-bomb, for instance, would put an effective stop to overpopulation. In spite of our proud domination of nature, we are still her victims, for we have not even learned to control our own nature. Slowly but, it appears, inevitably, we are courting disaster.

There are no longer any gods whom we can invoke to help us. The great religions of the world suffer from increasing anemia, because the helpful numina have fled from the woods, rivers, and mountains, and from animals, and the god-men have disappeared underground into the unconscious. There we fool ourselves that they lead an ignominious existence among the relics of our past. Our present lives are dominated by the goddess Reason, who is our greatest and most tragic illusion. By the aid of reason, so we assure ourselves, we have "conquered nature."

But this is a mere slogan, for the so-called conquest of nature overwhelms us with the natural fact of overpopulation and adds to our troubles by our psychological incapacity to make the necessary political arrangements. It remains quite natural for men to quarrel and to struggle for superiority over one another. How then have we "conquered nature"?

As any change must begin somewhere, it is the single individual who will experience it and carry it through. The change must indeed begin with an individual; it might be any one of us. Nobody can afford to look round and to wait for somebody else to do what he is loath to do himself. But since nobody seems to know what to do, it might be worth while for each of us to ask himself whether by any chance his or her unconscious may know

something that will help us. Certainly the conscious mind seems unable to do anything useful in this respect. Man today is painfully aware of the fact that neither his great religions nor his various philosophies seem to provide him with those powerful animating ideas that would give him the security he needs in face of the present condition of the world.

I know what the Buddhists would say: Things would go right if people would only follow the "noble eightfold path" of the *Dharma* (doctrine, law) and had true insight into the Self. The Christian tells us that if only people had faith in God, we should have a better world. The rationalist insists that if people were intelligent and reasonable, all our problems would be manageable. The trouble is that none of them manages to solve these problems himself.

Christians often ask why God does not speak to them, as he is believed to have done in former days. When I hear such questions, it always makes me think of the rabbi who was asked how it could be that God often showed himself to people in the olden days while nowadays nobody ever sees him. The rabbi replied: "Nowadays there is no longer anybody who can bow low enough."

This answer hits the nail on the head. We are so captivated by and entangled in our subjective consciousness that we have forgotten the age-old fact that God speaks chiefly through dreams and visions. The Buddhist discards the world of unconscious fantasies as useless illusions; the Christian puts his Church and his Bible between himself and his unconscious; and the rational intellectual does not yet know that his consciousness is not his total psyche. This ignorance persists today in spite of the fact that for more than 70 years the unconscious has been a basic scientific concept that is indispensable to any serious psychological investigation.

We can no longer afford to be so God-Almighty-like as to set ourselves up as judges of the merits or demerits of natural phenomena. We do not base our botany upon the old-fashioned division into useful and useless plants, or our zoology upon the naïve distinction between harmless and dangerous animals. But we still complacently assume that consciousness is sense and the unconscious is nonsense. In science such an assumption would be laughed out of court. Do microbes, for instance, make sense or nonsense?

Whatever the unconscious may be, it is a natural phenomenon producing symbols that prove to be meaningful. We cannot expect someone who has never looked through a microscope to be an authority on microbes; in the same way, no one who has not made a serious study of natural symbols can be considered a competent judge in this matter. But the general undervaluation of the human soul is so great that neither the great religions nor the philosophies nor scientific rationalism have been willing to look at it twice.

In spite of the fact that the Catholic Church admits the occurrence of *somnia a Deo missa* (dreams sent by God), most of its thinkers make no serious attempt to understand dreams. I doubt whether there is a Protestant treatise or doctrine that would stoop so low as to admit the possibility that the *vox Dei* might be perceived in a dream. But if a theologian really believes in God, by what authority does he suggest that God is unable to speak through dreams?

I have spent more than half a century in investigating natural symbols, and I have come to the conclusion that dreams and their symbols are not stupid and meaningless. On the contrary, dreams provide the most interesting information for those who take the trouble to understand their symbols. The results, it is true, have little to do with such worldly concerns as buying and selling. But the meaning of life is not exhaustively explained by one's business life, nor is the deep desire of the human heart answered by a bank account.

In a period of human history when all available energy is spent in the investigation of nature, very little attention is paid to the essence of man, which is his psyche, although many researches are made into its conscious functions. But the really complex and unfamiliar part of the mind, from which symbols are produced, is still virtually unexplored. It seems almost incredible that though we receive signals from it every night, deciphering these communications seems too tedious for any but a very few people to be bothered with it. Man's greatest instrument, his psyche, is little thought of, and it is often directly mistrusted and despised. "It's only psychological" too often means: It is nothing.

Where, exactly, does this immense prejudice come from?



We have obviously been so busy with the question of what we think that we entirely forget to ask what the unconscious psyche thinks about us. The ideas of Sigmund Freud confirmed for most people the existing contempt for the psyche. Before him it had been merely overlooked and neglected; it has now become a dump for moral refuse.

This modern standpoint is surely one-sided and unjust. It does not even accord with the known facts. Our actual knowledge of the unconscious shows that it is a natural phenomenon and that, like Nature herself, it is at least *neutral*. It contains all aspects of human nature—light and dark, beautiful and ugly, good and evil, profound and silly. The study of individual, as well as of collective, symbolism is an enormous task, and one that has not yet been mastered. But a beginning has been made at last. The early results are encouraging, and they seem to indicate an answer to many so far unanswered questions of present-day mankind.

PART 2

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ANCIENT MYTHS AND MODERN MAN

Joseph L. Henderson