
An Introduction to Jung's Psychology: Jung on Himself

Contributed by Frieda Fordham

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Chapter 8: Jung on Himself: A Biographical Sketch

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TOWARDS the end of his life, at the suggestion of friends, Jung settled down to write his autobiography - or rather he talked freely about his past to his friend and secretary Aniela Jaffe, and she made notes which were eventually going to be worked into a book. After a time, however, Jung became really absorbed in his memories, which took hold of him in such a way that there was no more need for prompting. As he wrote he made it clear how much it meant to him to belong to Switzerland, a country so rich in tradition; to be living in the twentieth century with its ferment of new ideas and rapid growth of scientific knowledge; and to have been brought up in or near the historic town of Basel. He showed how he could feel himself to be almost mystically one with the countryside and how his isolated childhood and somewhat unhappy home had affected him in ways that were to last throughout life.

His psychology had, as he developed it, much to say about the opposites, spirit and matter, and it is clear that he had been sharply aware of these opposites as far back as his memory reached, for his father and mother instead of being together in at least tolerable harmony were divided, and Jung's loyalties were torn between the two. His mother was extraverted and earthy; his introverted father was a pious clergyman who struggled to live according to his Christian faith, but was continually racked by doubts about his beliefs. These two incompatible people preserved the outward form of their marriage as convention demanded, but their effort was a failure and Jung - a sensitive, intelligent child - was aware of this. Their lives represented those polarities, spirit and matter, which were to preoccupy him later in life, and the varying and conflicting influences absorbed by him early on showed in his personal struggles and were manifested in what he described as 'my number 1 and number 2 personalities'. Number 1 stood for the conscious, number 2 for the unconscious personality, but it is quite easy to see that they could also be described as maternal and paternal - symbolically mother nature and heavenly father.

Perhaps what Jung wrote about his mother may make this clearer:

My mother was a very good mother to me. She had a hearty animal warmth, cooked wonderfully, and was most companionable and pleasant. She was very stout, and a ready listener. She also liked to talk, and her chatter was like the gay plashing of a fountain. She had a decided literary gift, as well as taste and depth. But this quality never properly emerged; it remained hidden beneath the semblance of a kindly, fat old woman, extremely hospitable, and possessor of a great sense of humour. She held all the conventional opinions a person was obliged to have, but then her unconscious personality would suddenly put in an appearance. What she said (then) usually struck to the core of my being.⁽¹⁾ There is no comparable description of his father, who emerges as a man full of contradictions, who having lost his faith lacked the courage to re-think his position and clung to the formula 'One must not think ... one must believe'.

In spite of this ineffectiveness, his influence on his son was long lasting. Jung's childhood mission to restore his father's faith (which he tells us of) and his struggles to make sense of a doctrine with which his father could not help him, carried over his whole life and influenced significantly the development of his psychology. Probably one must also take into account the fact that eight of his uncles were clergymen too, so that the traditions and atmosphere of the Swiss church dominated his surroundings in an unusually pervasive manner. All important events in Jung's childhood were referred by him back to God, and he regarded even his dreams as sent by God - a belief which landed him at times in acute moral conflicts.

1. Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 58 (U.S. edn, pp. 48 f.). There were also disturbing contradictions in the religious picture presented to him. The family lived at Laufen above the Rhine Falls, where people it seemed were frequently drowned. This meant burials with Jung's father officiating, crowds of dark-clothed men and weeping women, and a hole in the ground into which a box was put. The explanation was given to little Carl Gustav 'that Jesus had taken someone to himself'. This 'taking', however, did not seem comforting as it was meant to be and presented the Lord Jesus in a dubious light, as did the prayer he was taught by his mother:

Spread out thy wings, Lord Jesus mild
And take to thee thy chick thy Child.
If Satan would devour it'
No harm shall overpower it

So let the angels sing! He did not feel he wanted to be taken by the Lord Jesus. There were other mysteries too; why did God arrange things so that inevitably Adam and Eve disobeyed him? Why did he command that a father should kill his son?(1) Much later in life Jung resolved these contradictions in Answer to Job; in his childhood they formed part of the stuff of his dreams, fantasies and solitary games, intermingled with the problems posed by his parents' unhappy marriage.

This unhappy marriage affected Jung as deeply and lastingly as did the religious background, and was responsible for the view that he held for many years that if only parents would attend to their own problems the children's would automatically be solved.

1. Abraham and Isaac. Although from the point of view of the onlooker Jung's father was ineffective and a failure and his death in 1896 was in many ways a relief to his family, he was a potent influence in his son's life. In the early days he often filled a motherly role, notably during a break in the marriage when Jung was about four years old and his mother was away in hospital. This temporary disappearance of his mother convinced Jung of her unreliability - an attitude towards women which he says he never entirely lost though no later experience confirmed it. Father on the other hand, though powerless, was completely reliable. They (father and son) shared a bedroom, he carried his little son round in his arms and sang to him, and he was generous and kind. On the other hand, he was also irritable, moody and hypochondriacal, and, particularly towards the end of his life, had long spells of depression.

As Jung grew, his restless inquiring mind turned to his father for the answers to the many questions about God and human life that presented themselves, but he got no help. Sometimes he succeeded in provoking an argument, but mostly he was met by the statement 'You think too much!' The education that was offered outside the home did not help either. Jung began at the village school, where he was happy enough and enjoyed the company of the other boys and the country pursuits they followed together, but at ten he was sent to Basel gymnasium (roughly the equivalent of a grammar school), where he spent the most boring and unhappy years of his life.

The teachers were mostly unperceptive, the teaching pedestrian, and Jung - passed over by them as ordinary and rather troublesome - was regarded as an oddity by the boys, who nicknamed him 'Father Abraham'.

Jung had been following up his own researches in his father's modest library, so he was informed on subjects which were quite outside their sphere of interest; they however knew about the sophisticated world, for they came from rich or at least comfortable homes and made Jung painfully aware of his own shabbiness and his parents' poverty, for which he felt personally responsible.

An occasion of particular bitterness occurred when a master accused him of cheating in an essay which had interested him and into which he had really put a lot of work; the master insisted he had copied it and remained deaf to all protests. Jung's grief and rage, he tells us, threatened to get out of control, and then suddenly 'it was as if a soundproof door had closed on a noisy room.... It was as though a breath of the great world of stars and endless space had touched me.' He could not have expressed it this way at the time he says, but this is how it felt.(1)

Between his seventeenth and nineteenth years Jung discovered the philosophers and 'the fog of [his] dilemma lifted'. He found that the questions which had tormented him about the nature of the world and about God and life had been asked and wrestled with before and that 'many of my intuitions had historical analogues'. He was attracted to Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Plato, and when he reached the nineteenth-century philosophers he found that Schopenhauer's ideas had his 'undivided approval'. He continued to ponder on the nature of God and why the World, His 'creation, was so imperfect, so corrupt, so pitiable, but he also felt that God was for him I one of the most certain and immediate of experiences',(2) a conviction based on various inner events of his childhood.

Jung had been an only child for nine years, and the sister born then never played much of a part in his life; she was delicate and died young. He played alone in the outbuildings and meadows round the vicarage and lived a rich imaginative life which found expression in vivid dreams, ritualistic games and the carving of a totem which was hidden in the attic beams.

1. Memories. Dreams, Reflections, p. 73 (U.S. edn, pp. 65-6).

2. Ibid., p. 70 (U.S. edn, p. 6-2). One of these early dreams was remembered in greatest detail and preoccupied Jung all his life. He was between three and four years old when he dreamt it:

The vicarage stood quite alone near Laufen castle, and there was a big meadow stretching back from the sexton's farm. In the dream I was in this meadow. Suddenly I discovered a dark, rectangular, stone-lined hole in the ground. I had never seen it before. I ran forward curiously and peered down into it. Then I saw a stone stairway leading down. Hesitantly and fearfully, I descended. At the bottom was a doorway with a round arch, closed off by a green curtain. It was a big, heavy

curtain of worked silk-like brocade, and it looked very sumptuous. Curious to see what might be hidden behind, I pushed it aside. I saw before me in the dim light a rectangular chamber about thirty feet long. The ceiling was arched and of hewn stone. The floor was laid with flagstones, and in the centre a red carpet ran from the entrance to a low platform. On this platform stood a wonderfully rich golden throne. I am not certain, but perhaps a red cushion lay on the seat. It was a magnificent throne, a real King's throne in a fairy tale. Something was standing on it which I thought at first was a Wehrhahn twelve to fifteen feet high and about one and a half to two feet thick. It was a huge thing, reaching almost to the ceiling. But it was of a curious composition. It was made of skin and naked flesh, and on top there was something like a rounded head with no face and no hair. On the very top of the head was a single eye, gazing motionlessly upwards. It was fairly light in the room, although there were no windows and no apparent source of light. Above the head, however, was an aura of brightness. The thing did not move, yet I had the feeling that it might at any moment crawl off the throne like a worm and creep towards me. I was paralysed with terror. At that moment I heard from outside and above me my mother's voice. She called out. 'Yes, just look at him. That is the man-eater!' That intensified my terror still more, and I awoke sweating and scared to death. For many nights afterwards I was afraid to go to sleep, because I feared I might have another dream like that.⁽¹⁾ It is more than likely that the dream acquired some of its elaborate detail in the course of time, but while allowing for this it is still striking and shows that Jung dreamt unusual dreams even in his early days.

1. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 25-6 (U.S. edn, pp. 11 - 12). It was not till many years later that he recognized the object as a phallus, and what then impressed him most was the god-like character bestowed upon it. Why, he asked himself, should a little boy have similar intuitions to ancient peoples who set up the phallus as an object of worship and endowed it with extraordinary characteristics? His answer to this question was contained in the concept of archetypes and the collective unconscious. He also gives us a clue to the imagery when he tells us that he could read quite early and was learning Latin at six, but long before this he was intensely interested in the pictures his mother used to show him in an old book called *Orbis Pictus*. This book, an account of exotic religions, was richly illustrated with pictures of oriental gods, especially Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, and he says 'I had obscure feelings of their affinity with my original revelation',⁽¹⁾ i.e. the dream phallus.

Two experiences of Jung's schooldays show in a striking way the lines his future development was to take. The first relates to a neurotic episode: when he was about twelve years old he was knocked down when coming out of school and hit his head on the pavement. This started a series of fainting attacks, which happily for him exempted him from school for months. It was not only that he hated school and felt bored and frustrated there but also that he enjoyed solitude and immersing himself in nature. His 'small village bathed in sunlight with the winds and the clouds moving over it' was to him 'God's world, so ordered by him and filled with secret meaning'.⁽²⁾ Most people, he felt, were alienated from this world and only looked for the use they could make of it, and because he could not communicate his own feelings to them people made him feel lonely.

But one day he overheard his father talking about the dim prospects for his son's future because of this breakdown of health. The reality startled Jung sufficiently to initiate a struggle against the attacks, which he soon cured, and he returned to school with new earnestness, getting up regularly at 5 a.m. to study before going there.

The second experience concerns an acute conflict which occurred in his twelfth year; he became aware of what amounted to a compulsion to allow an evil and terrifying thought. This 'thought', which turned into a fantasy of God defecating on the glittering new roof of Basel Cathedral and shattering it to pieces, would scarcely have caused so much agonizing to an ordinary schoolboy, but it gave Jung sleepless nights and tormented days before he could at last allow himself to become conscious of it. Until then he only knew that a forbidden thought was trying to force itself on him.

1. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 31 (U.S. edn, p. 17).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 74 (p. 66). The chain of reasoning which eventually led him to its conscious realization was curious but typical. He invoked the Bible and especially the story of Adam and Eve. God, he decided, wished him to have the thought just as he must have wished them to sin in spite of having commanded them not to. In allowing his fantasy he was fulfilling God's will and this conclusion brought instant peace. He was convinced he had had a direct experience of the deity and of God's grace and he longed to share this with his father but never dared to do so. Later he was to write:

The symbolism of my childhood experiences and the violence of the imagery upset me terribly.... Who makes me think that God destroys His church in this abominable manner. At last I asked myself whether it was not the devil's doing. For that it must have been God or the devil who spoke and acted in this way I never doubted. I felt sure that it was not myself who had invented these thoughts and images.

These were the crucial experiences of my life ... I knew that I had to find the answer out of my deepest self, that I was alone before God, and that God alone asked me these terrible things.⁽¹⁾ Towards the end of his schooldays Jung's scientific interests began to develop. The question of his future career also loomed on the horizon. His uncles thought theology the obvious choice, but his father did not want him to go into the church. His own interests at this time inclined him towards the natural sciences, but he had to make a living and the only future that science offered him was teaching, which did not appeal to him at all.

1. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 57 (U.S. edn, p. 47). Eventually his choice fell on medicine, and in 1895 he commenced his studies at Basel University. He was rather humiliated by his father having to obtain a grant for him which still left him poorer than most students, but this does not seem to have weighed too heavily. After his father's death he

actually had to take some outside work to help pay for his studies - an unusual thing at that time - but it did not hinder him or interfere with his enjoyment of university life. He even gave some lectures on theology and psychology to undergraduate societies, made friends and read and argued as much as he liked. His intellectual liberation, he felt, was complete.

Jung worked hard and was a successful student. His attitude grew more scientific and less speculative, that is to say he realized that he must pay more attention to facts, and he became for the time being somewhat impatient of his 'friends', the philosophers. However, he found time for a curious sideline, namely spiritualism, and actually write his doctoral thesis on this theme. Jung's interest in the occult was a life-long one, and fantastic coincidences and poltergeist phenomena seem to have clustered round him in an astonishing way. His monograph *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*,⁽¹⁾ published in English in 1955, was an attempt at a scientific explanation of such phenomena.

The doctoral thesis (2) was a study of a young medium known to some relatives of his, whose s6ances and table turnings he joined for a time. The young girl in her trances was apparently possessed by the personality of a much older and more cultured man, and Jung's eventual theory was that this represented an aspect of the girl's own personality that was struggling for recognition, an idea that he developed in his later work.

Jung found the psyche neglected in his medical textbooks and lectures, and this seemed a significant loss to him, nor did the psychiatric lectures help. However, when he finally opened Krafft-Ebing's psychiatric studies it burst on him like a revelation and he knew that he must become a psychiatrist. His friends and professors were disappointed by this apparently inexplicable choice. He had been a successful student and there were good openings already offered to him, while psychiatry was still something of a Cinderella. But he had made his choice with an inner conviction that it was right, and in December i goo he went to the Burgh6lzli Mental Hospital, Zurich, as an assistant.

1. C.W., 8.

2. On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena: A Psychiatric Study (C.W., 1). Jung, in his memoirs, paints a rather dreary picture of the Burgholzli, which was a small understaffed clinic, but its chief, Eugen Bleuler, was interested in human relationships and in the interaction between doctor and patient and was sympathetic to studies which furthered understanding. There was a lively intellectual atmosphere, and other independent-minded men as well as Jung were on the staff at one time or another.

Jung's work developed in two ways. On the one hand, he developed and used association tests with the aim of discovering something about his patients; this was in line with what was regarded as correct scientific procedure. On the other hand, he became interested in the bizarre fantasies that his patients produced. He was convinced that they were meaningful and searched for analogies which would provide a key; this was the method that he developed later and which finally came to be known as the synthetic method. His direct approach, his respect for the patients as fellow human beings, and his quick intuition produced interesting results, and he had some striking successes.

A fresh wind was blowing into psychiatry at this time from the direction of Vienna. Freud had published his studies on hysteria and on dreams, and Jung found that they also threw light on 'schizophrenic forms of expression'.⁽¹⁾ In 1907 Jung himself published a book, *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox*; it interested Freud, who invited him to Vienna. The meeting was highly stimulating; the two men talked for hours and Jung felt that at last he had met someone of real importance. Freud was twenty years older and Jung felt like a son, but he was (as he had always been) a son with strong convictions of his own that he was unlikely to give up. He tells us that he had reservations from the start about Freud's views, but he said little or nothing of these, and for the time being a strong emotional friendship developed between the two.

1. Schizophrenia is the modern term for *Dementia Praecox*. It means, in popular terms, split personality. For seven years Jung was closely involved in the psychoanalytic movement, and for four years was President of the International Psychoanalytical Association. Freud thought for a time that he would become the next leader, but there was too fundamental a difference between the two men and their backgrounds for this to come about. At this distance in time it is easy to see that Freud's main preoccupation was with the neurotic character structure, while Jung's real interest was in the psychoses, or psychotic trends in otherwise normal people. These are the more archaic elements in the psyche; in mental breakdown they have overwhelmed the later more conscious or developed ways of thinking and behaving, but they can also be a source of creative energy, as Jung was to show.

Jung found mythology to be a rich source of archaic material - he was not the only psychoanalyst to be interested in it at that time, and Freud himself was well aware of 'the archaic vestiges' of the psyche, which, like Jung, he thought might be inherited. This line, however, fitted in specially well with Jung's interest in religion, while Freud's interests led him to concentrate on infantile sexuality. Of prime importance to Freud at this time was the development of the Oedipus complex, i.e. the small boy's incestuous love for his mother and its correlate for the girl, the Electra complex. The fate of

this unrealizable love and the effect that this had on the maturation of personality, on behaviour, and indeed on every aspect of existence was indeed the keystone of Freud's psychology.

Freud had come to understand about unconscious motivation through studying the personal history of his patients. Jung decided one must go further and examine history in general. He considered that the study of the way our race and our society had developed illuminated individual history; in fact, he went so far as to say that without history there can be no psychology of the unconscious.

I had grown up in the intensely historical atmosphere of Basel at the end of the nineteenth century [he says] and had acquired, thanks to reading the old philosophers, some knowledge of the history of psychology. When I thought about dreams and the contents of the unconscious, I never did so without making historical comparisons.⁽¹⁾ He was most interested in the long slow changes that went on over the centuries in people's attitudes and ways of thinking, the tidal waves of civilization that rose and fell, and he felt himself to be caught up in one of these waves. The general attitude was changing towards the Christian religion, whose beliefs had dominated the scene for so long. His father was a victim of this change, and he and his family suffered as a result. Jung's reaction to this was not like that of the many who revolted, discarding Christian beliefs; he tried instead to find a new attitude towards them, one compatible with the scientific knowledge that was flooding in and changing men's outlook. His own attitude included the other great change that was stirring, namely, the attitude towards sexuality, which was to a remarkable extent initiated by Freud; but Jung turned away from this to what he felt was a more burning problem, namely, that of religion.

After his break with Freud he looked for historical and literary parallels to his own dream and fantasy experience and then asked himself whether other men in other times had thought or felt as he was doing, since it ran counter to all that was conventionally acceptable. It was vitally important to him to find 'the historical prefiguration of my inner experience' ² to prove to himself that he was not merely indulging in a private fantasy world, but to make some links with other human beings even if they belonged to the past. He had already experienced in his discovery of the philosophes the importance and satisfaction of this. There was also the ordinary human need 'to substantiate my ideas',⁽³⁾ i.e. to communicate effectively with contemporaries. He did not find his answer for a long time, and when he did it came from an unexpected and out-of-the-way quarter, namely, the study of old alchemical texts.

1. Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 156 (U.S. edn, p. 160).

2. Ibid., p. 92 (p. 200).

3. Ibid., p. 92. Jung in his researches had noticed the recurrence of the sexual motif in mythology and religion and the fact that 'the incest theme plays a decisive part in almost all cosmogonies and in numerous myths', and he drew conclusions from this which he eventually developed in the work known in English as Psychology of the Unconscious, which was originally published in 1912 as Wandlungen und Symbole des Libido.

In this he propounded the view that the son's incestuous desires for his mother were spiritual rather than biological, 'that the longing to return to the womb was stimulated by a re-birth and the re-creation of a new self; i.e. the desire for incest was not meant to be put into practice but to lead the way towards spiritual development.'⁽¹⁾ This view ran so contrary to everything that Freud had taught that a break was inevitable, and Jung withdrew from the psychoanalytic movement.

He now found himself in a very lonely position, which was increased by the outbreak of World War I. He had resigned from the Burgholzli and gone into private practice some years earlier. It had been both an advantage and a disadvantage to be connected with psychoanalysis; on the one hand, there was the stimulating atmosphere of involvement in a revolutionary movement, the interchange with more or less like-minded colleagues, and on the other, the extreme coolness of most of the academic world to psychoanalysis and the narrow-minded criticism of its sexual theories, particularly noticeable in a small country like Switzerland, and a hindrance therefore in building up a private practice. At this time, as later, there were probably far more people from other countries consulting Jung than there were Swiss citizens.

1. The difference in viewpoint can be explained by the fact that Freud was studying the incest fantasies as relating to the early years, i.e. before six or thereabouts. Jung was dealing with the incestuous wishes of adulthood. After the publication of Psychology of the Unconscious, Jung says his former friends and colleagues deserted him, declaring that he was a mystic and his book was rubbish. Late in 1913 he had several overpowering visions of mighty floods sweeping over northern Europe and destroying everything in their path. As a psychiatrist he interpreted this in personal terms and was afraid that he was threatened by a flood of unconscious material which might overwhelm him. However, war broke out the next year and he began to think that his visions might have had a prophetic element and were more than a personal threat. All through the war years he experienced continual dreams and visions of this vivid kind, bringing with them violent emotions and frightful tensions.

The inner experience of these years and the ways of dealing with them that Jung evolved are of particular interest, for they laid the groundwork of all his later psychological theories and methods. He was more or less isolated in Switzerland and found, moreover, that what he had learnt from Freud could not help him in this new crisis. He knew he was taking a risk, but he resolved to spare himself 'nothing of' the irrational experiences that were breaking through; indeed it was doubtful if he could have done so in any case.

Briefly, the method he evolved depended on the acceptance of irrational impulses and the careful observation and recording of every fantasy, vision, dream, and thought, however odd.⁽¹⁾ This was carried a stage further by painting pictures of the visions and dream images and working on the content of the emotions until they too could be crystallized in the form of imagery. Jung also played with children's bricks and stones he collected, building houses, churches, bridges, and eventually, small towns; this 'building' later evolved into carving in stone, an activity he found very satisfying and one which usually opened the door to new ideas and intellectual discoveries. Many of the dream figures recurred; Jung gave them names and talked to them even when awake, because he thought that a new aspect of his personality was trying to form itself and become part of his conscious life and he tried to assist the process in this way.

1. Actually Jung seems to have diverged from this in one particular instance: *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 179 (U.S. edn, p. 187). The dreams of this period were often vivid and curious, full of odd historical details and set in lovely places: he sat on a golden Renaissance chair in front of an emerald table; a dove turned into a child and spoke; the images of crusader knights stirred on their tombstones and began to come alive; winged bat-like beings flew across the sky; he descended into subterranean caves and found a dead hero and a newborn sun rising out of the waters. To read these dreams is to recall 'Kubla Khan', for they have a poetic quality. No wonder that he was for a time tempted to look on them as art.

There was a woman in his dreams who tried to persuade him that this was so; she was seductive and cunning, and Jung argued fiercely with her that it was science not art that he was after. It was true that what he was producing at this time could scarcely be considered science, so Jung compromised by calling it nature. This other aspect of himself (represented by the dream women) argued with the illogicality that he found typical of women, and he was puzzled as to why a female personality should be trying to force itself upon him. However, he accepted this as a way that his unconscious psyche was presenting itself, i.e. personifying itself and later called this kind of experience 'anima'.

Talking to the dream images was a method Jung evolved for dealing with them: in this way he tried to link them up with his conscious viewpoint; at the same time he took them seriously enough to allow them to modify or alter this if it seemed necessary. He also made conscious efforts to evoke imagery, especially when he found himself in an inexplicably disturbed state; he found that if he could crystallize an image, i.e. find a psychic representation for his emotion, he was immediately relieved and calmed. The image also gave him some means of understanding what gave rise to the emotion or what it meant.

From the descriptions of his dreams and fantasies, and the paintings that Jung has left us, it is clear that he had an unusual capacity for image making which is usually locked up or lost in unconsciousness or only appears in dreams. It is the stuff of art and poetry, and with a larger talent Jung might easily have become an artist or a poet; indeed, some of his writing, especially that about nature, does reach poetic levels. However, his background and training drove him instead to create a psychology, which recognized that these same unconscious and elemental drives are contained and expressed in religious forms, so long as religion is alive. A religion which has become meaningless to most people is one which has become divorced from unconscious contents one in which forms which should express this have become rigid.

After 1917 the flood of dreams and visions gradually drained away, and Jung had time and energy to follow up the associations they had evoked and create some kind of order in the chaos. He recognized the material as similar in character to what is produced by the insane, but it was also 'the matrix of a mythopoeic imagination which has vanished from our rational age',⁽¹⁾ i.e. is no longer valued. In order to relate his experiences in a way meaningful to current thought they had somehow to be presented scientifically. It was for this reason that he had kept his careful records of every image and classified them as far as possible.

He spent, he says, forty-five years in studying his own and his patients' unconscious material and evolving his theory. He also tried to 'realize the images in actual life'. By this he meant that he was not merely looking at the images in the half-curious, half-fascinated way in which we tend to treat dreams and visions, nor even that he was resting content with studying and classifying them. He regarded them as representing and carrying creative potential, and he tried to find appropriate ways of using it.

1. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. x81 (U.S. edn, p. 188). The story of 'the realization of the images in life' is still, apart from his work, a private one. When Jung's autobiography was published it was criticized for its lack of personal

material, for giving little or nothing about his personal relationships and the many interesting people he met and knew in the course of his long life, but this omission (though it is to be regretted) was largely deliberate, and was meant to spare the feelings of people still alive and to shield his family from the glare of an unwelcome publicity. It is also true that the psyche was of overriding importance to him. 'You are only interested in the collective unconscious,' said his wife on one occasion, but it was said with a smile - though time was when she could not have regarded it with such equanimity.

Emma Jung was a remarkable woman who had succeeded in adapting herself to her husband's personality without losing her own individuality. She was a beautiful young woman and had a wonderful sense of humour, which served her well in the variety of situations in which she found herself. In the early days of their marriage she devoted herself in a thoroughly Swiss fashion to being a good wife and mother - they had five children. She confessed that it had been an effort for her to develop her intellect and share in her husband's work as she did later on, but it was an effort that was well worth while and widely valued not only by her husband but also by many others. She took patients and gave lectures and seminars at the Jungian Institute in Zürich as well as entertaining visitors from all over the world. It is worth remembering that she did this long before the Second World War; nowadays it is not unusual for a woman to change the pattern of her life in this way and it is made comparatively easy for her, but then it was much more difficult especially in Switzerland, where even now women do not have the right to vote.

In addition she carried out some extensive research work on the legend of the Grail which was unfortunately left incomplete when she died in 1955. Her death was a loss, not only to her husband and large family, which by now included grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but to friends and ex-patients all over the world.

The 'shaping of the images' and their realization gave us the books and papers from 1916 onwards. The first, *The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious* (1916),(1)

1. Titles in English, as in the C.W., with dates of original publication in Switzerland.came in answer to the question 'What does one do with the unconscious?' The second, *Psychological Types* (1921), grew from Jung's need to understand and define his difference with Freud. In *On Psychic Energy* (1928), which he regarded as specially important, he formulated his theory regarding the libido; he wanted to get away from the instinct theories of sex, aggression, hunger, etc., or rather to unify them under the concept of one drive. Then came Jung's friendship with the sinologist Richard Wilhelm, which introduced him to Chinese ways of thought and Chinese mysticism and alchemy in which he found a parallel to his own experiences. The collaboration with Wilhelm produced *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (1929), in which Jung developed his own experience of producing 'mandala' forms and related it to a Chinese system of spiritual development.

This book lay at the other end of the spectrum from *On Psychic Energy*, but both were attempts to find unifying principles, to unite in an orderly way the chaotic experience that Jung had been through.

In 1928 Jung had a vivid dream which puzzled him greatly.(1) It ended with his being shut up in the courtyard of a medieval building something like the palace of a northern Italian duke. A peasant who was with him exclaimed as the heavy main gates clanged to 'Now we are caught in the seventeenth century!' Jung's immediate thought was 'Now we shall be here for years!' but he consoled himself with the reflection that they would get out again even if it took years. 1. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 193 ff. (U.S. edn, pp. 202 ff.). After this he 'ploughed through ponderous tomes on the history of the world, of religion, and of philosophy' without finding anything that would help him with the dream. Much later he says he realized that it referred to alchemy, which was at its height in the seventeenth century. He had indeed read Silberer's book *Problems of Mysticism and Its Symbolism*, which was published in 1917, but 'had forgotten it' - a somewhat naive comment from one who understood that nothing is really ever forgotten. However, after becoming fascinated by the glimpse of Chinese alchemy to which Wilhelm introduced him, Jung plunged headlong into the study of alchemy in general, ordering a Munich bookseller to send him all the available books.(1)

Perhaps 'plunged headlong' is scarcely the right expression, for alchemical treatises are obscure and involved in expression, because it is thought the alchemists wished to disguise their knowledge so that it could only be conveyed to the initiated. If Jung is right, however, the obscurity and peculiarity of the texts is explicable on other grounds; his view is that the texts are the expression of unconscious fantasies, i.e. the matrix of the mythopoeic imagination already referred to.

Jung studied the alchemical texts along philological lines, as if they were in an unknown language, and in so doing he discovered that:

The experience of the alchemists were, in a sense, my experience, and their world was my world. ... I had stumbled upon the historical counterpart of my psychology of the unconscious. The possibility of a comparison with alchemy, and the uninterrupted intellectual chain back to Gnosticism, gave substance to my psychology. (2)Here we have the key not only

to Jung's absorption in this peculiar subject but also to his concept of the collective unconscious, namely, that the unconscious fantasies are universal and can appear in any age and in more or less similar form. They are, moreover, the basis of religious expression. This theme Jung developed later in *Psychology and Religion* (1938) and *Paracelsica* (1942).

1. See Chapter 4, pp. 80-3.

2. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 196 (U.S. edn, p. 205). In demonstrating the role of the unconscious in religious expression Jung's aim was to show meaning in what, in the light of modern knowledge, had become meaningless to so many. The dogma of the Trinity, the symbolism of the Mass, and the figure of Christ himself can be understood in this light as expressing essential aspects of the human psyche essential because, if allowed to remain unconscious, man is not really whole. The process of becoming whole, i.e. conscious of the unconscious, Jung regarded as the central concept of his psychology and called it the individuation process. (1) *Psychology and Alchemy*, *Answer to Job*, *Aion*, and *Mysterium Coniunctionis* were the main books in which Jung worked out these ideas and which he regarded as his really important contributions. He felt that a reevaluation of Christianity was essential to Western man, but his view of it as a projection of the human psyche is not easy to assimilate. He himself often referred to Freud's views on sexuality as 'nothing but sex'; it is all too easy to think of religion in these terms as 'nothing but a projection'. Jung did not mean this, for he was aware of the reality and vitality of the psyche and its continuing mystery in spite of the light that dynamic psychology has thrown on it.

During his lifetime Jung travelled quite extensively. He was a good linguist and gave lectures in other European countries, in England and in America. His first lecture trip to the U.S.A. was with Freud in 1909, and later he made several visits on his own. (2)

On one of these visits (following up his interest in other cultures) he visited New Mexico to study the Pueblo Indians. He appears to have had the gift of communicating with primitive men in a way that reached quite a deep level of understanding, and of losing himself in the atmosphere of a foreign place. He said of the Pueblos:

It was astonishing to me to see how the Indian's emotions change when he speaks of his religious ideas. In ordinary life he shows a degree of self-control and dignity that borders on fatalistic equanimity. But when he speaks of things pertaining to his mysteries, he is in the grip of a surprising emotion which he cannot conceal. (3) Of North Africa, which he visited in 1920, he wrote 'My encounter with [that] culture struck me with overwhelming force'. (4)

1. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 200 (U.S. edn, p. 209).

2. Jung was invited independently of Freud to lecture at Clark University on his association experiments. Both received an honorary degree.

3. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 235 (U.S. edn, p. 250).

4. *Ibid.*, p. 230 (U.S. edn, p. 244). He noticed that behind the apparent apathy and Oriental calm of the people there was a restlessness and agitation he could not explain. This was in 1920, and later events have confirmed this perception. He gives a lively description of a journey into the interior, reminiscent of Andre Gide, yet quite individual in style; he observed from an unusual viewpoint and was able to convey the vividness of his impressions.

Of Kenya and Uganda which he visited later (1925) and where his intention had been to 'study the European's reaction to primitive conditions' he wrote that it 'touched every possible sore spot in my own psychology'. (1) He realized that he secretly wanted to escape from Europe and that he was looking for an aspect of himself which he had lost. He does not say that he actually found it, but he did find a sense of 'the stillness of the eternal beginning, the world as it had always been, in the state of non-being'. (2) He enjoyed the people and found Mount Elgon blissful, and he remarked later with sadness on the development of the Mau-Mau movement among them. (3)

In 1938 the British Government of India invited him to take part in the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the University of Calcutta, and Jung gladly accepted this opportunity to see at first hand something of a country in whose culture and religions he had been interested for so long. He had previously been impressed with the way in which the psychological nature of evil had been integrated into Indian spiritual life and was deeply convinced of the value of Oriental wisdom, so that the possibility of getting some direct experience of this was not to be missed.

1. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 255-6 (U.S. edn, p. 274).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 240 (U.S. edn, p. 255).

3. Jung talks of his travelling companions on this journey without, however, naming them: one was Dr H. Godwin Baynes, who later founded Jungian psychology in England, and the other was Miss Ruth Bailey, who became a lifelong family friend and looked after Jung in his old age. Nevertheless he was cautious in his approach to this alien, highly differentiated culture, and determined to find his own truth for himself, so that he studiously avoided 'holy men' except for the guru of his host the Maharajah of Mysore; with this man he had long talks. The Indians, in Jung's view, had integrated so called 'evil' without 'losing face', (1) in contrast to the 'Christian [who] strives for good and succumbs to evil', (2) but in doing so had lost the energy which comes through conflict and tension.

He seems to have been more impressed with Buddhism, than with the Hindu religion. The Buddhist temples and rituals affected him emotionally, and he reflected at some length on the similarities and differences between Buddha and Christ, which he summed up in the comment: 'Buddha is the more complete human being. He is a historical personality, and therefore easier for men to understand, Christ is at once a historical man and God, and therefore more difficult to comprehend'. (3) He has little to say of the Indian scene, but the continent affected him profoundly, so that he was thankful to retreat for ten days to a hospital with dysentery and described this as 'a blessed island in that wild sea of new impressions' 4 and on the return voyage home he did not even go on shore to visit Bombay, though he found Ceylon to be of great charm. He seems to have returned to the study of alchemy (which was occupying him at this time) with great relief, and only assimilated the effects of his Indian visit much later.

Like most cultured Europeans, Jung visited other neighbouring countries. He came to know Britain quite well through visiting friends as well as by giving lectures and seminars. One year these were held in Cornwall, and he was greatly impressed by the Atlantic coast, the dark cliffs, and the sea that lashed them continuously.

1. Memories, Dreams, Reflections, pp. 257-8 (U.S. edn, p. 276).

2. Ibid., p. 258 (U.S. edn, p. 278).

3. Ibid., p. 261 (U.S. edn, p. 279)

4. Ibid., p. 262 (U.S. edn, p. 280). It is rather interesting that in spite of his intense interest in history and the development of Christianity he never went to Rome. The omission was deliberate; he felt that he was so strongly affected by the atmosphere of a place that he would simply not be able to stand the associations that Rome would evoke. How could people visit such a place in the same way that they went to Paris or London? For him it would be impossible, he would be affected to the depths of his being at every step. All he could do was look at where Rome lay from the rail of a ship he was sailing on to Naples and see it as 'the still smoking and fiery hearth from which ancient cultures had spread, enclosed in the tangled rootwork of the Christian and Occidental Middle Ages'. (1) Years later, when buying tickets in order to go there at last, he fainted. This was the end; he never tried to visit Rome again.

All this gives the picture of a rather odd man, but this was not apparent to an ordinary observer; true, Jung had moods, but then he would usually retire to his library or to his country retreat at Bollingen, a tiny village at the eastern end of the Lake of Zürich. He would refuse to see people, or treat them in a very off-hand fashion, talking about something that was interesting him at the moment regardless of the problem because of which they had come; this was the opposite of the friendliness and patient interest he would show at other times, especially with young students or humble folk. He could also be very genial and a good companion. Late in life visitors, even those with no special interest in his psychology, were struck by the sense he conveyed of being a truly great man.

1. Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 268 (U.S. edn, p. 288). He was tall and proportionately broad, tolerably good-looking and, as he matured, striking in appearance, many people found him very attractive, both men and women, and he gathered some devoted friends, though he never succeeded in having a body of disciples in the way that Freud did. This was in part deliberate and in part due to a difficulty in getting on with men, which could probably be traced back to the complexities of his relationship with his father. He said of 'himself that he needed other people both more and less than most, and he was sometimes troubled by the ruthlessness that he experienced in himself, the daemon which drove him on in pursuit of knowledge or towards some creative activity regardless of the feelings of others. He could only live as he was driven to live, he could not really adapt himself to other people, and he hurt them at times without wishing to, and so made enemies.

Nevertheless, his old age was on the whole satisfactory; there were times when he was sure that no one understood what he had spent his life trying to say, times when criticism was intolerable and others when he was overcome by loneliness, in spite of being loved and admired by a host of friends. Yet he could truly write of himself: I am satisfied with the course my life has taken. ... I am astonished, disappointed, pleased with myself. I am distressed, depressed, rapturous. I am all these things at once, and cannot add up the sum.... [Yet] In spite of all uncertainties, I feel a solidity underlying all existence and a continuity in my mode of being.... Life is - or has - meaning and meaninglessness. I cherish the anxious hope that meaning will preponderate and win the battle.(1) He died in 1961 at the age of eighty-five having created not only a psychology but also his own version of the Christian myth.

1. Memories, Dreams, Reflections, pp. 329-30 (U.S. edn, pp. 358-9)

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