INTRODUCTION

The following attempt to outline the archetypal stages in the development of consciousness is based on modern depth psychology. It is an application of the analytical psychology of C. G. Jung, even where we endeavor to amplify this psychology, and even though we may speculatively overstep its boundaries.

Unlike other possible and necessary methods of inquiry which consider the development of consciousness in relation to external environmental factors, our inquiry is more concerned with the internal, psychic, and archetypal factors which determine the course of that development.

The structural elements of the collective unconscious are named by Jung “archetypes” or “primordial images.” They are the pictorial forms of the instincts, for the unconscious reveals itself to the conscious mind in images which, as in dreams and fantasies, initiate the process of conscious reaction and assimilation.

These fantasy-images undoubtedly have their closest analogues in mythological types. We must therefore assume that they correspond to certain collective (and not personal) structural elements of the human psyche in general, and, like the morphological elements of the human body, are inherited.¹

The archetypal structural elements of the psyche are psychic organs upon whose functioning the well-being of the individual depends, and whose injury has disastrous consequences:

Moreover, they are the unfailing causes of neurotic and even psychotic dis-

orders, behaving exactly like neglected or maltreated physical organs or organic functional systems.\(^2\)

It is the task of this book to show that a series of archetypes is a main constituent of mythology, that they stand in an organic relation to one another, and that their stadial \(^3\) succession determines the growth of consciousness. In the course of its ontogenetic development, the individual ego consciousness has to pass through the same archetypal stages which determined the evolution of consciousness in the life of humanity. The individual has in his own life to follow the road that humanity has trod before him, leaving traces of its journey in the archetypal sequence of the mythological images we are now about to examine. Normally the archetypal stages are lived through without disturbance, and the development of consciousness proceeds in them just as naturally as physical development proceeds in the stages of bodily maturation. As organs of the psyche's structure the archetypes articulate with one another autonomously, like the physical organs, and determine the maturation of the personality in a manner analogous to the biological hormone-components of the physical constitution.

Besides possessing an “eternal” significance, the archetype also has an equally legitimate historical aspect. Ego consciousness evolves by passing through a series of “eternal images,” and the ego, transformed in the passage, is constantly experiencing a new relation to the archetypes. Its relation to the eternality of the archetypal images is a process of succession in time—that is to say, it takes place in stages. The ability to perceive, to understand, and to interpret these images changes as ego consciousness changes in the course of man's phylogenetic and ontogenetic history; consequently the relativity of the eternal image to the evolving ego consciousness becomes more and more pronounced.

The archetypes that determine the stages of conscious devel-

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 157.

\(^3\) [An adjective derived from Lat. stadium in the biological sense of “stage of development.”—TRANS.]
opment form only a segment of archetypal reality as a whole. But by availing ourselves of the evolutionary or synoptic view we can make out a kind of guiding line running through limitless symbolism of the collective unconscious which helps us to orient ourselves in the theory and practice of depth psychology.

An investigation of the archetypal stages also affords a better psychological orientation in a number of ancillary subjects, e.g., the history of religion, anthropology, folk psychology, and the like. All these can then be brought together on a psycho-evolutionary basis which would promote a deeper understanding.

Surprisingly enough, these specialized sciences have not so far allowed themselves to be sufficiently enriched by depth psychology, and least of all by Jungian psychology. In spite of that, the psychological starting point of these disciplines emerges more and more plainly, and it is beginning to become obvious that the human psyche is the source of all cultural and religious phenomena. Hence a final reckoning with depth psychology cannot be evaded much longer.

We must emphasize that our exposition of myth is not based on any specialized branch of science, whether archaeology, comparative religion, or theology, but simply and solely on the practical work of the psychotherapist, whose concern is the psychic background of modern man. The connection between his psychology and the deeper layers of humanity still alive in him is therefore the real starting point and subject of this work. The deductive and systematic method of exposition here adopted may at first obscure the topical and therapeutic significance of our findings, but anyone familiar with psychic events at the deepest level will recognize the importance and relevance of these connections, whose detailed illustration by modern empirical material is reserved for later examination.

As is well known, the “comparative” method of analytical psychology collates the symbolic and collective material found in individuals with the corresponding products from the history of religion, primitive psychology, and so on, and in this way arrives at an interpretation by establishing the “context.” This
INTRODUCTION

method we now supplement by the evolutionary approach, which considers the material from the standpoint of the stage reached by the developing consciousness, and hence by the ego in its relations with the unconscious. Our work therefore links up with that fundamental early work of Jung’s, *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, even though we may be obliged to make certain emendations. Whereas in Freudian psychoanalysis the evolutionary approach led only to a concretistic and narrowly personalistic theory of libido, analytical psychology has so far failed to pursue this line of inquiry any further.

The emergence of the collective human background as a transpersonal reality has forced us to recognize the relativity of our own position. The multiplicity of forms and phenomena in which the infinite diversity of the human psyche is expressed, the wealth of cultures, values, patterns of behavior, and world views produced by the vitality of man’s psychic structure, must make any attempt at a general orientation seem, at the outset, a perilous venture. Yet such an attempt has to be made, even with the knowledge that our specifically Western orientation is only one among many. The evolution of consciousness as a form of creative evolution is the peculiar achievement of Western man. Creative evolution of ego consciousness means that, through a continuous process stretching over thousands of years, the conscious system has absorbed more and more unconscious contents and progressively extended its frontiers. Although from antiquity right down to recent times we see a new and differently patterned canon of culture continually superseding the previous one, the West has nevertheless succeeded in achieving an historical and cultural continuity in which each canon gradually came to be integrated. The structure of modern consciousness rests on this integration, and at each period of its development the ego has to absorb essential portions of the cultural past transmitted to it by the canon of values embodied in its own culture and system of education.

The creative character of consciousness is a central feature of the cultural canon of the West. In Western culture, and partly
INTRODUCTION

also in the Far East, we can follow the continuous, though often fitful, development of consciousness over the last ten thousand years. Here alone has the canon of stadal development, collectively embodied in mythological projections, become a model for the development of the individual human being; here alone have the creative beginnings of individuality been taken over by the collective and held up as the ideal of all individual development. Wherever this type of creative ego consciousness has developed, or is still developing, the archetypal stages of conscious evolution are in force. In stationary cultures, or in primitive societies where the original features of human culture are still preserved, the earliest stages of man’s psychology predominate to such a degree that individual and creative traits are not assimilated by the collective. Indeed, creative individuals possessed of a stronger consciousness are even branded by the collective as antisocial.\(^4\)

The creativity of consciousness may be jeopardized by religious or political totalitarianism, for any authoritarian fixation of the canon leads to sterility of consciousness. Such fixations, however, can only be provisional. So far as Western man is concerned, the assimilative vitality of his ego consciousness is more or less assured. The progress of science and the increasingly obvious threat to humanity from unconscious forces impel his consciousness, from within and without, to continual self-analysis and expansion. The individual is the bearer of this creative activity of the mind and therefore remains the decisive factor in all future Western developments. This holds true regardless of the fact that individuals co-operate and mutually determine the spiritual democracy in which they live.

Any attempt to outline the archetypal stages from the standpoint of analytical psychology must begin by drawing a fundamental distinction between personal and transpersonal psychic factors. Personal factors are those which belong to one individual personality and are not shared by any other individual, regardless of whether they are conscious or unconscious. Transper-

\(^4\) Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, pp. 228 f.
sonal factors, on the other hand, are collective, supra- or extrapersonal, and are to be regarded not as external conditions of society, but as internal structural elements. The transpersona represents a factor that is largely independent of the personal, for the personal, both collectively and individually, is a late product of evolution.

Every historical inquiry—and every evolutionary approach is in this sense historical—must therefore begin with the transpersonal. In the history of mankind as in the development of the individual there is an initial preponderance of transpersonal factors, and only in the course of development does the personal realm come into view and achieve independence. The individualized conscious man of our era is a late man, whose structure is built on early, pre-individual human stages from which individual consciousness has only detached itself step by step.

The evolution of consciousness by stages is as much a collective human phenomenon as a particular individual phenomenon. Ontogenetic development may therefore be regarded as a modified recapitulation of phylogenetic development.

This interdependence of collective and individual has two psychic concomitants. On the one hand, the early history of the collective is determined by inner primordial images whose projections appear outside as powerful factors—gods, spirits, or demons—which become objects of worship. On the other hand, man’s collective symbolisms also appear in the individual, and the psychic development, or misdevelopment, of each individual is governed by the same primordial images which determine man’s collective history.

Since we have undertaken to expound the whole canon of mythological stages, their sequence, their interconnections, and their symbolism, it is not only permissible but imperative to draw the relevant material from different spheres of culture and different mythologies, irrespective of whether or not all stages are present in any one culture.\footnote{A thorough investigation of the archetypal stages in individual spheres of culture and mythology would be exceedingly interesting, because the absence or...}
INTRODUCTION

We do not therefore maintain that all the stages of conscious development are to be found always, everywhere, and in every mythology, any more than the theory of evolution maintains that the evolutionary stages of every animal species are repeated in man’s evolution. What we do maintain is that these developmental stages arrange themselves in an orderly sequence and thus determine all psychic development. Equally we maintain that these archetypal stages are unconscious determinants and can be found in mythology, and that only by viewing the collective stratification of human development together with the individual stratification of conscious development can we arrive at an understanding of psychic development in general, and individual development in particular.

Again, the relation between the transpersonal and the personal—which plays a decisive role in every human life—is prefigured in human history. But the collective aspect of this relationship does not mean that unique or recurrent historical events are inherited, for up to the present there has been no scientific proof of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. For this reason analytical psychology considers the structure of the psyche to be determined by a priori transpersonal dominants—archetypes—which, being essential components and organs of the psyche from the beginning, mold the course of human history.

The castration motif, for instance, is not the result of the inheritance of an endlessly repeated threat of castration by a primordial father, or rather by an infinity of primordial fathers. Science has discovered nothing that could possibly support such a theory, which moreover presupposes the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Any reduction of the castration threat, parricide, the “primal scene” of parental intercourse, and so on, to historical and personalistic data, which presumes to paint the early overemphasis of individual stages would enable us to draw important conclusions about the cultures concerned. Such an inquiry will doubtless be undertaken at a later date.
INTRODUCTION

history of humanity in the likeness of a patriarchal bourgeois family of the nineteenth century, is scientifically impossible.\(^6\)

It is one of the tasks of this book to show that, in regard to these and similar “complexes,” we are really dealing with symbols, ideal forms, psychic categories, and basic structural patterns whose infinitely varied modes of operation govern the history of mankind and the individual.\(^7\)

The development of consciousness in archetypal stages is a transpersonal fact, a dynamic self-revelation of the psychic structure, which dominates the history of mankind and the individual. Even deviations from the path of evolution, their symbology and symptomatology, must be understood in relation to the prior archetypal pattern.

In the first part of our exposition—The Mythological Stages in the Evolution of Consciousness—the accent lies on the wide distribution of the mythological material, and on demonstrating the connections between the symbols and the various strata of conscious development. Only against this background can we understand the normal developments of the psyche, as well as the pathological phenomena in which collective problems constantly appear as the basic problems of human existence and so must be understood in that light.

Besides uncovering the evolutionary stages and their archetypal connections, our inquiry also has a therapeutic aim, which is both individual and collective. The integration of personal psychic phenomena with the corresponding transpersonal sym-

---

\(^6\) See infra, p. 53, note 16.

\(^7\) It is in this sense that we use the terms “masculine” and “feminine” throughout the book, not as personal sex-linked characteristics, but as symbolic expressions. When we say masculine or feminine dominants obtrude themselves at certain stages, or in certain cultures or types of person, this is a psychological statement which must not be reduced to biological or sociological terms. The symbolism of “masculine” and “feminine” is archetypal and therefore transpersonal; in the various cultures concerned, it is erroneously projected upon persons as though they carried its qualities. In reality every individual is a psychological hybrid. Even sexual symbolism cannot be derived from the person, because it is prior to the person. Conversely, it is one of the complications of individual psychology that in all cultures the integrity of the personality is violated when it is identified with either the masculine or the feminine side of the symbolic principle of opposites.
INTRODUCTION

Symbols is of paramount importance for the further development of consciousness and for the synthesis of the personality.  

The rediscovery of the human and cultural strata from which these symbols derive is in the original sense of the word “bildend”—“informing.” Consciousness thus acquires images (Bilder) and education (Bildung), widens its horizon, and charges itself with contents which constellate a new psychic potential. New problems appear, but also new solutions. As the purely personal data enter into association with the transpersonal, and the collective human aspect is rediscovered and begins to come alive, new insights, new possibilities of life, add themselves to the narrowly personalistic and rigid personality of the sick-souled modern man.

Our aim is not confined to pointing out the correct relation of the ego to the unconscious, and of the personal to the transpersonal. We have also to realize that the false, personalistic interpretation of everything psychic is the expression of an unconscious law which has everywhere constrained modern man to misinterpret his true role and significance. Only when we have made it clear to what degree the reduction of the transpersonal to the personal springs from a tendency which once had a very deep meaning, but which the crisis of modern consciousness has rendered wholly meaningless and nonsensical, will our task be fulfilled. Only when we have recognized how the personal develops out of the transpersonal, detaches itself from it but, despite the crucial role of ego consciousness, always remains rooted in it, can we restore to the transpersonal factors their original weight and meaning, lacking which a healthy collective and individual life is impossible.

This brings us to a psychological phenomenon which will be fully discussed in Part II, under the “law of secondary personalization.” This maintains that contents which are primarily transpersonal and originally appeared as such are, in the course of de-

---

8 Here we would only emphasize the material content of the symbols. The healing and “whole-making” effect of the emotional components of the collective unconscious is discussed in Part II.

xxiii
INTRODUCTION

dvelopment, taken to be personal. The secondary personalization of primary transpersonal contents is in a certain sense an evolutionary necessity, but it constellates dangers which for modern man are altogether excessive. It is necessary for the structure of personality that contents originally taking the form of transpersonal deities should finally come to be experienced as contents of the human psyche. But this process ceases to be a danger to psychic health only when the psyche is itself regarded suprapersonally, as a numinous world of transpersonal happenings. If, on the other hand, transpersonal contents are reduced to the data of a purely personalistic psychology, the result is not only an appalling impoverishment of individual life—that might remain merely a private concern—but also a congestion of the collective unconscious which has disastrous consequences for humanity at large.

Psychology, having penetrated to the collective layer in its investigation of the lower levels of the individual psyche, is faced with the task of evolving a collective and cultural therapy adequate to cope with the mass phenomena that are now devastating mankind. One of the most important objectives of any depth psychology in the future is its application to the collective. It has to correct and prevent the dislocation of collective life, of the group, by applying its specific points of view.⁹

The relation of the ego to the unconscious and of the personal to the transpersonal decides the fate not only of the individual, but of humanity. The theater of this encounter is the human mind. In the present work, a substantial part of mythology is seen as the unconscious self-delineation of the growth of consciousness in man. The dialectic between consciousness and the unconscious, its transformation, its self-liberation, and the birth of human personality from this dialectic form the theme of Part I.

⁹ Cf. my Depth Psychology and a New Ethic.

xxiv

For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu