

Chapter Title: COMMENTARY ON “THE SECRET OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER”

Book Title: *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 13*

Book Subtitle: *Alchemical Studies*

Book Author(s): C. G. JUNG

Book Editor(s): GERHARD ADLER and R. F. C. HULL

Published by: Princeton University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hhqv1.5>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



Princeton University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Volume 13*

JSTOR

# I

## COMMENTARY ON "THE SECRET OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER"

[In late 1929, in Munich, Jung and the sinologist Richard Wilhelm published *Das Geheimnis der goldenen Blüte: Ein chinesisches Lebensbuch*, consisting of Wilhelm's translation of an ancient Chinese text, *T'ai I Chin Hua Tsung Chih* (Secret of the Golden Flower), with his notes and discussion of the text, and a "European commentary" by Jung. Earlier the same year, the two authors had published in the *Europäische Revue* (Berlin), V: 2/8 (Nov.), 530-42, a much abbreviated version entitled "Tschang Scheng Schu; Die Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern" (i.e., "Ch'ang Sheng Shu; The Art of Prolonging Life"), an alternative title of the "Golden Flower."

[In 1931, Jung's and Wilhelm's joint work appeared in English as *The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life*, translated by Cary F. Baynes (London and New York), containing as an appendix Jung's memorial address for Wilhelm, who had died in 1930. (For "In Memory of Richard Wilhelm," see Vol. 15 of the *Collected Works*.)

[A second, revised edition of the German original was published in 1938 (Zurich), with a special foreword by Jung and his Wilhelm memorial address. Two more (essentially unaltered) editions followed, and in 1957 appeared a fifth, entirely reset edition (Zurich), which added a related text, the *Hui Ming Ching*, and a new foreword by Salome Wilhelm, the translator's widow.

[Mrs. Baynes prepared a revision of her translation, and this appeared in 1962 (New York and London), including Jung's foreword and the additional Wilhelm material. (Her revised translation of Jung's commentary alone had appeared in an anthology, *Psyche and Symbol*, edited by Violet S. de Laszlo, Anchor Books, New York, 1958.)

[The following translation of Jung's commentary and his foreword is based closely on Mrs. Baynes' version, from which some of the editorial

---

notes have also been taken over. Four pictures of the stages of meditation, from the *Hui Ming Ching*, which accompanied the "Golden Flower" text, have been reproduced because of their pertinence to Jung's commentary; and the examples of European mandalas have been retained, though most of them were published, in a different context, in "Concerning Mandala Symbolism," Vol. 9, part i, of the *Collected Works*. The chapters have been given numbers.

—EDITORS.]

## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND GERMAN EDITION

My deceased friend, Richard Wilhelm, co-author of this book, sent me the text of *The Secret of the Golden Flower* at a time that was crucial for my own work. This was in 1928. I had been investigating the processes of the collective unconscious since the year 1913, and had obtained results that seemed to me questionable in more than one respect. They not only lay far beyond everything known to “academic” psychology, but they also overstepped the bounds of any medical, purely personal, psychology. They confronted me with an extensive phenomenology to which hitherto known categories and methods could no longer be applied. My results, based on fifteen years of effort, seemed inconclusive, because no possibility of comparison offered itself. I knew of no realm of human experience with which I might have backed up my findings with some degree of assurance. The only analogies—and these, I must say, were far removed in time—I found scattered among the reports of the heresiologists. This connection did not in any way ease my task; on the contrary, it made it more difficult, because the Gnostic systems consist only in small part of immediate psychic experiences, the greater part being speculative and systematizing recensions. Since we possess only very few complete texts, and since most of what is known comes from the reports of Christian opponents, we have, to say the least, an inadequate knowledge of the history as well as the content of this strange and confused literature, which is so difficult to evaluate. Moreover, considering the fact that a period of not less than seventeen to eighteen hundred years separates us from that age, support from that quarter seemed to me extraordinarily risky. Again, the connections were for the most part of a subsidiary nature and left gaps at just the most important points, so that I found it impossible to make use of the Gnostic material.

The text that Wilhelm sent me helped me out of this difficulty. It contained exactly those items I had long sought for in vain among the Gnostics. Thus the text afforded me a welcome opportunity to publish, at least in provisional form, some of the essential results of my investigations.

At that time it seemed to me a matter of no importance that *The Secret of the Golden Flower* is not only a Taoist text concerned with Chinese yoga, but is also an alchemical treatise. A deeper study of the Latin treatises has taught me better and has shown me that the alchemical character of the text is of prime significance, though I shall not go into this point more closely here. I would only like to emphasize that it was the text of the *Golden Flower* that first put me on the right track. For in medieval alchemy we have the long-sought connecting link between Gnosis and the processes of the collective unconscious that can be observed in modern man.<sup>1</sup>

I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to certain misunderstandings to which even well-informed readers of this book have succumbed. Not infrequently people thought that my purpose in publishing it was to put into the hands of the public a recipe for achieving happiness. In total misapprehension of all that I say in my commentary, these readers tried to imitate the "method" described in the Chinese text. Let us hope these representatives of spiritual profundity were few in number!

Another misunderstanding gave rise to the opinion that, in my commentary, I was to some extent describing my own therapeutic method, which, it was said, consisted in my instilling Eastern ideas into my patients for therapeutic purposes. I do not believe there is anything in my commentary that lends itself to that sort of superstition. In any case such an opinion is altogether erroneous, and is based on the widespread view that psychology was invented for a specific purpose and is not an empirical science. To this category belongs the superficial as well as unintelligent opinion that the idea of the collective unconscious is "metaphysical." On the contrary, it is an *empirical* concept to

<sup>1</sup>The reader will find more about this in two essays published by me in the *Eranos Jahrbuch 1936* and *1937*. [This material is now contained in *Psychology and Alchemy*, Parts II and III.—EDITORS.]

be put alongside the concept of instinct, as is obvious to anyone who will read with some attention.

C. G. J.

*Küsnacht/Zurich, 1938*

## 1. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY A EUROPEAN IN TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE EAST

- 1 A thorough Westerner in feeling, I cannot but be profoundly impressed by the strangeness of this Chinese text. It is true that some knowledge of Eastern religions and philosophies helps my intellect and my intuition to understand these things up to a point, just as I can understand the paradoxes of primitive beliefs in terms of "ethnology" or "comparative religion." This is of course the Western way of hiding one's heart under the cloak of so-called scientific understanding. We do it partly because the *misérable vanité des savants* fears and rejects with horror any sign of living sympathy, and partly because sympathetic understanding might transform contact with an alien spirit into an experience that has to be taken seriously. Our so-called scientific objectivity would have reserved this text for the philological acumen of sinologists, and would have guarded it jealously from any other interpretation. But Richard Wilhelm penetrated too deeply into the secret and mysterious vitality of Chinese wisdom to allow such a pearl of intuitive insight to disappear into the pigeon-holes of specialists. I am greatly honoured that his choice of a psychological commentator has fallen upon me.
- 2 This, however, involves the risk that this precious example of more-than-specialist insight will be swallowed by still another specialism. Nevertheless, anyone who belittles the merits of Western science is undermining the foundations of the Western mind. Science is not indeed a perfect instrument, but it is a superb and invaluable tool that works harm only when it is taken as an end in itself. Science must serve; it errs when it usurps the throne. It must be ready to serve all its branches, for each, because of its insufficiency, has need of support from the others. Science is the tool of the Western mind, and with it one can open more doors than with bare hands. It is part and parcel of

our understanding, and it obscures our insight only when it claims that the understanding it conveys is the only kind there is. The East teaches us another, broader, more profound, and higher understanding—understanding through life. We know this only by hearsay, as a shadowy sentiment expressing a vague religiosity, and we are fond of putting "Oriental wisdom" in quotation marks and banishing it to the dim region of faith and superstition. But that is wholly to misunderstand the realism of the East. Texts of this kind do not consist of the sentimental, overwrought mystical intuitions of pathological cranks and recluses, but are based on the practical insights of highly evolved Chinese minds, which we have not the slightest justification for undervaluing.

3 This assertion may seem bold, perhaps, and is likely to cause a good deal of head-shaking. Nor is that surprising, considering how little people know about the material. Its strangeness is indeed so arresting that our puzzlement as to how and where the Chinese world of thought might be joined to ours is quite understandable. The usual mistake of Western man when faced with this problem of grasping the ideas of the East is like that of the student in *Faust*. Misled by the devil, he contemptuously turns his back on science and, carried away by Eastern occultism, takes over yoga practices word for word and becomes a pitiable imitator. (Theosophy is our best example of this.) Thus he abandons the one sure foundation of the Western mind and loses himself in a mist of words and ideas that could never have originated in European brains and can never be profitably grafted upon them.

4 An ancient adept has said: "If the wrong man uses the right means, the right means work in the wrong way."<sup>1</sup> This Chinese saying, unfortunately only too true, stands in sharp contrast to our belief in the "right" method irrespective of the man who applies it. In reality, everything depends on the man and little or nothing on the method. The method is merely the path, the direction taken by a man; the way he acts is the true expression of his nature. If it ceases to be this, the method is nothing more than an affectation, something artificially pieced on, rootless and sapless, serving only the illegitimate goal of self-deception. It becomes a means of fooling oneself and of evading what may

<sup>1</sup> [*The Secret of the Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), p. 63.]



perhaps be the implacable law of one's being. This is far removed from the earthiness and self-reliance of Chinese thought. It is a denial of one's own nature, a self-betrayal to strange and unclean gods, a cowardly trick for the purpose of feigning mental superiority, everything in fact that is profoundly contrary to the spirit of the Chinese "method." For these insights spring from a way of life that is complete, genuine, and true to itself; from that ancient, cultural life of China which grew logically and organically from the deepest instincts, and which, for us, is forever inaccessible and impossible to imitate.

- 5 Western imitation is a tragic misunderstanding of the psychology of the East, every bit as sterile as the modern escapades to New Mexico, the blissful South Sea islands, and central Africa, where "the primitive life" is played at in deadly earnest while Western man secretly evades his menacing duties, his *Hic Rhodus hic salta*. It is not for us to imitate what is foreign to our organism or to play the missionary; our task is to build up our Western civilization, which sickens with a thousand ills. This has to be done on the spot, and by the European just as he is, with all his Western ordinariness, his marriage problems, his neuroses, his social and political delusions, and his whole philosophical disorientation.
- 6 We should do well to confess at once that, fundamentally, we do not understand the utter unworldliness of a text like this—that actually we do not want to understand it. Have we, perhaps, a dim suspicion that a mental attitude which can direct the glance inward to that extent is detached from the world only because these people have so completely fulfilled the instinctive demands of their natures that there is nothing to prevent them from glimpsing the invisible essence of things? Can it be that the precondition for such a vision is liberation from the ambitions and passions that bind us to the visible world, and does not this liberation come from the sensible fulfilment of instinctive demands rather than from the premature and fear-ridden repression of them? Are our eyes opened to the spirit only when the laws of the earth are obeyed? Anyone who knows the history of Chinese culture and has carefully studied the *I Ching*, that book of wisdom which for thousands of years has permeated all Chinese thought, will not lightly wave these doubts aside. He will be aware that the views set forth in our text are nothing extraor-

dinary to the Chinese, but are actually inescapable psychological conclusions.

7 For a long time the spirit, and the sufferings of the spirit, were positive values and the things most worth striving for in our peculiar Christian culture. Only in the course of the nineteenth century, when spirit began to degenerate into intellect, did a reaction set in against the unbearable dominance of intellectualism, and this led to the unpardonable mistake of confusing intellect with spirit and blaming the latter for the misdeeds of the former. The intellect does indeed do harm to the soul when it dares to possess itself of the heritage of the spirit. It is in no way fitted to do this, for spirit is something higher than intellect since it embraces the latter and includes the feelings as well. It is a guiding principle of life that strives towards superhuman, shining heights. Opposed to this *yang* principle is the dark, feminine, earthbound *yin*, whose emotionality and instinctuality reach back into the depths of time and down into the labyrinth of the physiological continuum. No doubt these are purely intuitive ideas, but one can hardly dispense with them if one is trying to understand the nature of the human psyche. The Chinese could not do without them because, as the history of Chinese philosophy shows, they never strayed so far from the central psychic facts as to lose themselves in a one-sided over-development and over-valuation of a single psychic function. They never failed to acknowledge the paradoxicality and polarity of all life. The opposites always balanced one another—a sign of high culture. One-sidedness, though it lends momentum, is a mark of barbarism. The reaction that is now beginning in the West against the intellect in favour of feeling, or in favour of intuition, seems to me a sign of cultural advance, a widening of consciousness beyond the narrow confines of a tyrannical intellect.

8 I have no wish to depreciate the tremendous differentiation of the Western intellect; compared with it the Eastern intellect must be described as childish. (Naturally this has nothing to do with intelligence.) If we should succeed in elevating another, and possibly even a third psychic function to the dignified position accorded to the intellect, then the West might expect to surpass the East by a very great margin. Therefore it is sad indeed when the European departs from his own nature and

imitates the East or "affects" it in any way. The possibilities open to him would be so much greater if he would remain true to himself and evolve out of his own nature all that the East has brought forth in the course of the millennia.

- 9 In general, and looked at from the incurably externalistic standpoint of the intellect, it would seem as if the things the East values so highly were not worth striving for. Certainly the intellect alone cannot comprehend the practical importance Eastern ideas might have for us, and that is why it can classify them as philosophical and ethnological curiosities and nothing more. The lack of comprehension goes so far that even learned sinologists have not understood the practical use of the *I Ching*, and consider the book to be no more than a collection of abstruse magic spells.

## 2. MODERN PSYCHOLOGY OFFERS A POSSIBILITY OF UNDERSTANDING

<sup>10</sup> Observations made in my practical work have opened out to me a quite new and unexpected approach to Eastern wisdom. In saying this I should like to emphasize that I did not have any knowledge, however inadequate, of Chinese philosophy as a starting point. On the contrary, when I began my career as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, I was completely ignorant of Chinese philosophy, and only later did my professional experience show me that in my technique I had been unconsciously following that secret way which for centuries had been the pre-occupation of the best minds of the East. This could be taken for a subjective fancy—which was one reason for my previous reluctance to publish anything on the subject—but Richard Wilhelm, that great interpreter of the soul of China, enthusiastically confirmed the parallel and thus gave me the courage to write about a Chinese text that belongs entirely to the mysterious shadow-land of the Eastern mind. At the same time—and this is the extraordinary thing—its content forms a living parallel to what takes place in the psychic development of my patients, none of whom is Chinese.

<sup>11</sup> In order to make this strange fact more intelligible to the reader, it must be pointed out that just as the human body shows a common anatomy over and above all racial differences, so, too, the human psyche possesses a common substratum transcending all differences in culture and consciousness. I have called this substratum the collective unconscious. This unconscious psyche, common to all mankind, does not consist merely of contents capable of becoming conscious, but of latent predispositions towards identical reactions. The collective unconscious is simply the psychic expression of the identity of brain structure irrespective of all racial differences. This explains the analogy, sometimes even identity, between the various myth motifs and

symbols, and the possibility of human communication in general. The various lines of psychic development start from one common stock whose roots reach back into the most distant past. This also accounts for the psychological parallelisms with animals.

- <sup>12</sup> In purely psychological terms this means that mankind has common instincts of ideation and action. All conscious ideation and action have developed on the basis of these unconscious archetypal patterns and always remain dependent on them. This is especially the case when consciousness has not attained any high degree of clarity, when in all its functions it is more dependent on the instincts than on the conscious will, more governed by affect than by rational judgment. This ensures a primitive state of psychic health, but it immediately becomes lack of adaptation when circumstances arise that call for a higher moral effort. Instincts suffice only for a nature that remains more or less constant. An individual who is guided more by the unconscious than by conscious choice therefore tends towards marked psychic conservatism. This is the reason why the primitive does not change in the course of thousands of years, and also why he fears anything strange and unusual. It might easily lead to maladaptation, and thus to the greatest psychic dangers—to a kind of neurosis, in fact. A higher and wider consciousness resulting from the assimilation of the unfamiliar tends, on the other hand, towards autonomy, and rebels against the old gods who are nothing other than those mighty, primordial images that hitherto have held our consciousness in thrall.
- <sup>13</sup> The stronger and more independent our consciousness becomes, and with it the conscious will, the more the unconscious is thrust into the background, and the easier it is for the evolving consciousness to emancipate itself from the unconscious, archetypal pattern. Gaining in freedom, it bursts the bonds of mere instinctuality and finally reaches a condition of instinctual atrophy. This uprooted consciousness can no longer appeal to the authority of the primordial images; it has Promethean freedom, but it also suffers from godless hybris. It soars above the earth and above mankind, but the danger of its sudden collapse is there, not of course in the case of every individual, but for the weaker members of the community, who then, again like Prometheus, are chained to the Caucasus of the unconscious. The

wise Chinese would say in the words of the *I Ching*: When *yang* has reached its greatest strength, the dark power of *yin* is born within its depths, for night begins at midday when *yang* breaks up and begins to change into *yin*.

14 The doctor is in a position to see this cycle of changes translated literally into life. He sees, for instance, a successful businessman attaining all his desires regardless of death and the devil, and then, having retired at the height of his success, speedily falling into a neurosis, which turns him into a querulous old woman, fastens him to his bed, and finally destroys him. The picture is complete even to the change from masculine to feminine. An exact parallel to this is the story of Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel, and Caesarean madness in general. Similar cases of one-sided exaggeration of the conscious standpoint, and the resultant *yin*-reaction from the unconscious, form no small part of the psychiatrist's clientele in our time, which so overvalues the conscious will as to believe that "where there's a will there's a way." Not that I wish to detract in the least from the high moral value of the will. Consciousness and the will may well continue to be considered the highest cultural achievements of humanity. But of what use is a morality that destroys the man? To bring the will and the capacity to achieve it into harmony seems to me to require more than morality. Morality *à tout prix* can be a sign of barbarism—more often wisdom is better. But perhaps I look at this with the eyes of a physician who has to mend the ills following in the wake of one-sided cultural achievements.

15 Be that as it may, the fact remains that a consciousness heightened by an inevitable one-sidedness gets so far out of touch with the primordial images that a breakdown ensues. Long before the actual catastrophe, the signs of error announce themselves in atrophy of instinct, nervousness, disorientation, entanglement in impossible situations and problems. Medical investigation then discovers an unconscious that is in full revolt against the conscious values, and that therefore cannot possibly be assimilated to consciousness, while the reverse is altogether out of the question. We are confronted with an apparently irreconcilable conflict before which human reason stands helpless, with nothing to offer except sham solutions or dubious compromises. If these evasions are rejected, we are faced with the

question as to what has become of the much needed unity of the personality, and with the necessity of seeking it. At this point begins the path travelled by the East since the beginning of things. Quite obviously, the Chinese were able to follow this path because they never succeeded in forcing the opposites in man's nature so far apart that all conscious connection between them was lost. The Chinese owe this all-inclusive consciousness to the fact that, as in the case of the primitive mentality, the yea and the nay have remained in their original proximity. Nonetheless, it was impossible not to feel the clash of opposites, so they sought a way of life in which they would be what the Indians call *nirvāṇa*, free of opposites.

16 Our text is concerned with this way, and the same problem comes up with my patients also. There could be no greater mistake than for a Westerner to take up the direct practice of Chinese yoga, for that would merely strengthen his will and consciousness against the unconscious and bring about the very effect to be avoided. The neurosis would then simply be intensified. It cannot be emphasized enough that we are not Orientals, and that we have an entirely different point of departure in these matters. It would also be a great mistake to suppose that this is the path every neurotic must travel, or that it is the solution at every stage of the neurotic problem. It is appropriate only in those cases where consciousness has reached an abnormal degree of development and has diverged too far from the unconscious. This is the *sine qua non* of the process. Nothing would be more wrong than to open this way to neurotics who are ill on account of an excessive predominance of the unconscious. For the same reason, this way of development has scarcely any meaning before the middle of life (normally between the ages of thirty-five and forty), and if entered upon too soon can be decidedly injurious.

17 As I have said, the essential reason which prompted me to look for a new way was the fact that the fundamental problem of the patient seemed to me insoluble unless violence was done to one or the other side of his nature. I had always worked with the temperamental conviction that at bottom there are no insoluble problems, and experience justified me in so far as I have often seen patients simply outgrow a problem that had destroyed others. This "outgrowing," as I formerly called it, proved on

further investigation to be a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the patient's horizon, and through this broadening of his outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms, but faded out when confronted with a new and stronger life urge. It was not repressed and made unconscious, but merely appeared in a different light, and so really did become different. What, on a lower level, had led to the wildest conflicts and to panicky outbursts of emotion, from the higher level of personality now looked like a storm in the valley seen from the mountain top. This does not mean that the storm is robbed of its reality, but instead of being in it one is above it. But since, in a psychic sense, we are both valley and mountain, it might seem a vain illusion to deem oneself beyond what is human. One certainly does feel the affect and is shaken and tormented by it, yet at the same time one is aware of a higher consciousness looking on which prevents one from becoming identical with the affect, a consciousness which regards the affect as an object, and can say, "I *know* that I suffer." What our text says of indolence, "Indolence of which a man is conscious, and indolence of which he is unconscious, are a thousand miles apart,"<sup>1</sup> holds true in the highest degree of affect.

<sup>18</sup> Now and then it happened in my practice that a patient grew beyond himself because of unknown potentialities, and this became an experience of prime importance to me. In the meantime, I had learned that all the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble. They must be so, for they express the necessary polarity inherent in every self-regulating system. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. I therefore asked myself whether this outgrowing, this possibility of further psychic development, was not the normal thing, and whether getting stuck in a conflict was pathological. Everyone must possess that higher level, at least in embryonic form, and must under favourable circumstances be able to develop this potentiality. When I examined the course of development in patients who quietly, and as if unconsciously, outgrew themselves, I saw that their fates had something in common. The new thing came to them from obscure possibilities either outside or inside themselves; they accepted it and grew with its

<sup>1</sup> [*The Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), p. 42.]



help. It seemed to me typical that some took the new thing from outside themselves, others from inside; or rather, that it grew into some persons from without, and into others from within. But the new thing never came exclusively either from within or from without. If it came from outside, it became a profound inner experience; if it came from inside, it became an outer happening. In no case was it conjured into existence intentionally or by conscious willing, but rather seemed to be borne along on the stream of time.

19 We are so greatly tempted to turn everything into a purpose and a method that I deliberately express myself in very abstract terms in order to avoid prejudicing the reader in one way or the other. The new thing must not be pigeon-holed under any heading, for then it becomes a recipe to be used mechanically, and it would again be a case of the "right means in the hands of the wrong man." I have been deeply impressed by the fact that the new thing prepared by fate seldom or never comes up to conscious expectations. And still more remarkable, though the new thing goes against deeply rooted instincts as we have known them, it is a strangely appropriate expression of the total personality, an expression which one could not imagine in a more complete form.

20 What did these people do in order to bring about the development that set them free? As far as I could see they did nothing (*wu wei*<sup>2</sup>) but let things happen. As Master Lü-tsu teaches in our text, the light circulates according to its own law if one does not give up one's ordinary occupation. The art of letting things happen, action through non-action, letting go of oneself as taught by Meister Eckhart, became for me the key that opens the door to the way. We must be able to let things happen in the psyche. For us, this is an art of which most people know nothing. Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating, never leaving the psychic processes to grow in peace. It would be simple enough, if only simplicity were not the most difficult of all things. To begin with, the task consists solely in observing objectively how a fragment of fantasy develops. Nothing could be simpler, and yet right here the difficulties begin. Apparently one has no fantasy fragments—or yes, there's one, but it is too stupid! Dozens of good reasons are brought against

2 [The Taoist idea of action through non-action.—C.F.B.]

it. One cannot concentrate on it—it is too boring—what would come of it anyway—it is “nothing but” this or that, and so on. The conscious mind raises innumerable objections, in fact it often seems bent on blotting out the spontaneous fantasy activity in spite of real insight and in spite of the firm determination to allow the psychic process to go forward without interference. Occasionally there is a veritable cramp of consciousness.

- <sup>21</sup> If one is successful in overcoming the initial difficulties, criticism is still likely to start in afterwards in the attempt to interpret the fantasy, to classify it, to aestheticize it, or to devalue it. The temptation to do this is almost irresistible. After it has been faithfully observed, free rein can be given to the impatience of the conscious mind; in fact it must be given, or obstructive resistances will develop. But each time the fantasy material is to be produced, the activity of consciousness must be switched off again.
- <sup>22</sup> In most cases the results of these efforts are not very encouraging at first. Usually they consist of tenuous webs of fantasy that give no clear indication of their origin or their goal. Also, the way of getting at the fantasies varies with individuals. For many people, it is easiest to write them down; others visualize them, and others again draw or paint them with or without visualization. If there is a high degree of conscious cramp, often only the hands are capable of fantasy; they model or draw figures that are sometimes quite foreign to the conscious mind.
- <sup>23</sup> These exercises must be continued until the cramp in the conscious mind is relaxed, in other words, until one can let things happen, which is the next goal of the exercise. In this way a new attitude is created, an attitude that accepts the irrational and the incomprehensible simply because it is happening. This attitude would be poison for a person who is already overwhelmed by the things that happen to him, but it is of the greatest value for one who selects, from among the things that happen, only those that are acceptable to his conscious judgment, and is gradually drawn out of the stream of life into a stagnant backwater.
- <sup>24</sup> At this point, the way travelled by the two types mentioned earlier seems to divide. Both have learned to accept what comes to them. (As Master Lü-tsu teaches: “When occupations come to us, we must accept them; when things come to us, we must un-

derstand them from the ground up." 3) One man will now take chiefly what comes to him from outside, and the other what comes from inside. Moreover, the law of life demands that what they take from outside and inside will be the very things that were always excluded before. This reversal of one's nature brings an enlargement, a heightening and enrichment of the personality, if the previous values are retained alongside the change—provided that these values are not mere illusions. If they are not held fast, the individual will swing too far to the other side, slipping from fitness into unfitness, from adaptedness into unadaptedness, and even from rationality into insanity. The way is not without danger. Everything good is costly, and the development of personality is one of the most costly of all things. It is a matter of saying yea to oneself, of taking oneself as the most serious of tasks, of being conscious of everything one does, and keeping it constantly before one's eyes in all its dubious aspects—truly a task that taxes us to the utmost.

25 A Chinese can always fall back on the authority of his whole civilization. If he starts on the long way, he is doing what is recognized as being the best thing he could possibly do. But the Westerner who wishes to set out on this way, if he is really serious about it, has all authority against him—intellectual, moral, and religious. That is why it is infinitely easier for him to imitate the Chinese way and leave the troublesome European behind him, or else to seek the way back to the medievalism of the Christian Church and barricade himself behind the wall separating true Christians from the poor heathen and other ethnographic curiosities encamped outside. Aesthetic or intellectual flirtations with life and fate come to an abrupt halt here: the step to higher consciousness leaves us without a rearguard and without shelter. The individual must devote himself to the way with all his energy, for it is only by means of his integrity that he can go further, and his integrity alone can guarantee that his way will not turn out to be an absurd misadventure.

26 Whether his fate comes to him from without or from within, the experiences and happenings on the way remain the same. Therefore I need say nothing about the manifold outer and inner events, the endless variety of which I could never exhaust in any case. Nor would this be relevant to the text under discus-

<sup>3</sup> [*The Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), p. 51.]

sion. On the other hand, there is much to be said about the psychic states that accompany the process of development. These states are expressed symbolically in our text, and in the very same symbols that for many years have been familiar to me from my practice.

### 3. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

#### A. TAO

<sup>27</sup> The great difficulty in interpreting this and similar texts<sup>1</sup> for the European is that the author always starts from the central point, from the point we would call the goal, the highest and ultimate insight he has attained. Thus our Chinese author begins with ideas that demand such a comprehensive understanding that a person of discriminating mind has the feeling he would be guilty of ridiculous pretension, or even of talking utter nonsense, if he should embark on an intellectual discourse on the subtle psychic experiences of the greatest minds of the East. Our text, for example, begins: "That which exists through itself is called the Way." The *Hui Ming Ching* begins with the words: "The subtlest secret of the Tao is human nature and life."

<sup>28</sup> It is characteristic of the Western mind that it has no word for Tao. The Chinese character is made up of the sign for "head" and the sign for "going." Wilhelm translates Tao by *Sinn* (Meaning). Others translate it as "way," "providence," or even as "God," as the Jesuits do. This illustrates our difficulty. "Head" can be taken as consciousness,<sup>2</sup> and "going" as travelling a way, and the idea would then be: to go consciously, or the conscious way. This is borne out by the fact that the "light of heaven" which "dwells between the eyes" as the "heart of heaven" is used synonymously with Tao. Human nature and life are contained in the "light of heaven" and, according to the *Hui Ming Ching*, are the most important secrets of the Tao. "Light" is the symbolical equivalent of consciousness, and the nature of consciousness is expressed by analogies with light. The *Hui Ming Ching* is introduced with the verses:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the *Hui Ming Ching* (Book of Consciousness and Life) in *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), pp. 69ff.

<sup>2</sup> The head is also the "seat of heavenly light."

If thou wouldst complete the diamond body with no outflowing,  
 Diligently heat the roots of consciousness<sup>3</sup> and life.  
 Kindle light in the blessed country ever close at hand,  
 And there hidden, let thy true self always dwell.

29 These verses contain a sort of alchemical instruction as to the method or way of producing the "diamond body," which is also mentioned in our text. "Heating" is necessary; that is, there must be an intensification of consciousness in order that light may be kindled in the dwelling place of the true self. Not only consciousness, but life itself must be intensified: the union of these two produces conscious life. According to the *Hui Ming Ching*, the ancient sages knew how to bridge the gap between consciousness and life because they cultivated both. In this way the *sheli*, the immortal body, is "melted out" and the "great Tao is completed."<sup>4</sup>

30 If we take the Tao to be the method or conscious way by which to unite what is separated, we have probably come close to the psychological meaning of the concept. At all events, the separation of consciousness and life cannot very well be understood as anything else than what I described earlier as an aberration or uprooting of consciousness. There can be no doubt, either, that the realization of the opposite hidden in the unconscious—the process of "reversal"—signifies reunion with the unconscious laws of our being, and the purpose of this reunion is the attainment of conscious life or, expressed in Chinese terms, the realization of the Tao.

#### B. THE CIRCULAR MOVEMENT AND THE CENTRE

31 As I have pointed out, the union of opposites<sup>5</sup> on a higher level of consciousness is not a rational thing, nor is it a matter of will; it is a process of psychic development that expresses itself in symbols. Historically, this process has always been represented in symbols, and today the development of personality is still depicted in symbolic form. I discovered this fact in the following way. The spontaneous fantasy products I discussed earlier

<sup>3</sup> In the *Hui Ming Ching*, "human nature" (*hsing*) and "consciousness" (*hui*) are used interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup> *The Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Psychological Types*, ch. V.

become more profound and gradually concentrate into abstract structures that apparently represent "principles" in the sense of Gnostic *archai*. When the fantasies take the form chiefly of thoughts, intuitive formulations of dimly felt laws or principles emerge, which at first tend to be dramatized or personified. (We shall come back to these again later.) If the fantasies are drawn, symbols appear that are chiefly of the *mandala*<sup>6</sup> type. *Mandala* means "circle," more especially a magic circle. Mandalas are found not only throughout the East but also among us. The early Middle Ages are especially rich in Christian mandalas; most of them show Christ in the centre, with the four evangelists, or their symbols, at the cardinal points. This conception must be a very ancient one, because Horus and his four sons were represented in the same way by the Egyptians.<sup>7</sup> It is known that Horus with his four sons has close connections with Christ and the four evangelists. An unmistakable and very interesting mandala can be found in Jakob Böhme's book *XL Questions concerning the Soule*.<sup>8</sup> It is clear that this mandala represents a psychocosmic system strongly coloured by Christian ideas. Böhme calls it the "Philosophical Eye"<sup>9</sup> or the "Mirror of Wisdom," by which is obviously meant a *summa* of secret knowledge. Most mandalas take the form of a flower, cross, or wheel, and show a distinct tendency towards a quaternary structure reminiscent of the Pythagorean *tetraktys*, the basic number. Mandalas of this sort also occur as sand paintings in the religious ceremonies of the Pueblo and Navaho Indians.<sup>10</sup> But the most beautiful mandalas are, of course, those of the East, especially the ones found in Tibetan Buddhism, which also contain the symbols mentioned in our text. Mandala drawings are often produced by the mentally ill, among them persons who certainly

<sup>6</sup> [For a fuller discussion of the *mandala*, see "A Study in the Process of Individuation" and "Concerning Mandala Symbolism" in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. For examples of European mandalas, see below, after p. 56.—EDITORS.]

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*.

<sup>8</sup> [The mandala is reproduced in "A Study in the Process of Individuation," p. 297.]

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the Chinese concept of the heavenly light between the eyes.

<sup>10</sup> Matthews, "The Mountain Chant: A Navajo Ceremony" (1887), and Stevenson, "Ceremonial of Hasjelti Dailjis" (1891).

did not have the least idea of any of the connections we have discussed.<sup>11</sup>

32 Among my patients I have come across cases of women who did not draw mandalas but danced them instead. In India there is a special name for this: *mandala nrithya*, the mandala dance. The dance figures express the same meanings as the drawings. My patients can say very little about the meaning of the symbols but are fascinated by them and find that they somehow express and have an effect on their subjective psychic state.

33 Our text promises to "reveal the secret of the Golden Flower of the great *One*." The golden flower is the light, and the light of heaven is the Tao. The golden flower is a mandala symbol I have often met with in the material brought me by my patients. It is drawn either seen from above as a regular geometric pattern, or in profile as a blossom growing from a plant. The plant is frequently a structure in brilliant fiery colours growing out of a bed of darkness, and carrying the blossom of light at the top, a symbol recalling the Christmas tree. Such drawings also suggest the origin of the golden flower, for according to the *Hui Ming Ching* the "germinal vesicle" is the "dragon castle at the bottom of the sea."<sup>12</sup> Other synonyms are the "yellow castle," the "heavenly heart," the "terrace of living," the "square inch field of the square foot house," the "purple hall of the city of jade," the "dark pass," the "space of former heaven."<sup>13</sup> It is also called the "boundary region of the snow mountains," the "primordial pass," the "kingdom of greatest joy," the "boundless country," the "altar upon which consciousness and life are made." "If a dying man does not know this germinal vesicle," says the *Hui Ming Ching*, "he will not find the unity of consciousness and life in a thousand births, nor in ten thousand aeons."<sup>14</sup>

34 The beginning, where everything is still one, and which therefore appears as the highest goal, lies at the bottom of the sea, in the darkness of the unconscious. In the germinal vesicle, consciousness and life (or human nature and life, *hsing-ming*) are still a "unity, inseparably mixed like the sparks in the

<sup>11</sup> The mandala of a somnambulist is reproduced in *Psychiatric Studies*, p. 40.

<sup>12</sup> *The Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> [*Ibid.*, p. 22.]

<sup>14</sup> [*Ibid.*, p. 70.]



refining furnace." "Within the germinal vesicle is the fire of the ruler." "All the sages began their work at the germinal vesicle." <sup>15</sup> Note the fire analogies. I know a series of European mandala drawings in which something like a plant seed surrounded by membranes is shown floating in the water. Then, from the depths below, fire penetrates the seed and makes it grow, causing a great golden flower to unfold from the germinal vesicle.

<sup>35</sup> This symbolism refers to a quasi-chemical process of refining and ennobling. Darkness gives birth to light; out of the "lead of the water region" grows the noble gold; what is unconscious becomes conscious in the form of a living process of growth. (Indian Kundalini yoga offers a perfect analogy.<sup>16</sup>) In this way the union of consciousness and life takes place.

<sup>36</sup> When my patients produce these mandala pictures, it is naturally not the result of suggestion; similar pictures were being made long before I knew their meaning or their connection with the practices of the East, which, at that time, were wholly unknown to me. The pictures arise quite spontaneously, and from two sources. One source is the unconscious, which spontaneously produces fantasies of this kind; the other is life, which, if lived with utter devotion, brings an intuition of the self, of one's own individual being. When the self finds expression in such drawings, the unconscious reacts by enforcing an attitude of devotion to life. For in complete agreement with the Eastern view, the mandala is not only a means of expression but also produces an effect. It reacts upon its maker. Age-old magical effects lie hidden in this symbol, for it is derived from the "protective circle" or "charmed circle," whose magic has been preserved in countless folk customs.<sup>17</sup> It has the obvious purpose of drawing a *sulcus primigenius*, a magical furrow around the centre, the temple or *temenos* (sacred precinct), of the innermost personality, in order to prevent an "outflowing" or to guard by apotropaic means against distracting influences from outside. Magical practices are nothing but projections of psychic events, which then exert a counter-influence on the psyche and put a

<sup>15</sup> [Ibid., p. 71.]

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Avalon, *The Serpent Power*.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the excellent collection in Knuchel, *Die Umwandlung in Kult, Magie und Rechtsbrauch*.

kind of spell upon the personality. Through the ritual action, attention and interest are led back to the inner, sacred precinct, which is the source and goal of the psyche and contains the unity of life and consciousness. The unity once possessed has been lost, and must now be found again.

37 The unity of the two, life and consciousness, is the Tao, whose symbol would be the central white light, also mentioned in the *Bardo Thödol*.<sup>18</sup> This light dwells in the "square inch" or in the "face," that is, between the eyes. It is a visualization of the "creative point," of that which has intensity without extension, in conjunction with the "field of the square inch," the symbol for that which has extension. The two together make the Tao. Human nature (*hsing*) and consciousness (*hui*) are expressed in light symbolism, and therefore have the quality of intensity, while life (*ming*) would coincide with extensity. The one is *yang*-like, the other *yin*-like. The afore-mentioned mandala of a somnambulist girl, aged fifteen and a half, whom I had under observation some thirty years ago, shows in its centre a spring of "Primary Force," or life energy without extension, whose emanations clash with a contrary spatial principle—in complete analogy with the basic idea of our Chinese text.

38 The "enclosure," or *circumambulatio*, is expressed in our text by the idea of "circulation." The circulation is not merely movement in a circle, but means, on the one hand, the marking off of the sacred precinct and, on the other, fixation and concentration. The sun-wheel begins to turn; the sun is activated and begins its course—in other words, the Tao begins to work and takes the lead. Action is reversed into non-action; everything peripheral is subordinated to the command of the centre. Therefore it is said: "Movement is only another name for mastery." Psychologically, this circulation would be the "movement in a circle around oneself," so that all sides of the personality become involved. "The poles of light and darkness are made to rotate," that is, there is an alternation of day and night.

39 The circular movement thus has the moral significance of activating the light and dark forces of human nature, and together with them all psychological opposites of whatever kind they may be. It is nothing less than self-knowledge by means of self-

<sup>18</sup> Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

brooding (Sanskrit *tapas*). A similar archetypal concept of a perfect being is that of the Platonic man, round on all sides and uniting within himself the two sexes.

- 40 One of the best modern parallels is the description which Edward Maitland, the biographer of Anna Kingsford,<sup>10</sup> gave of his central experience. He had discovered that when reflecting on an idea, related ideas became visible, so to speak, in a long series apparently reaching back to their source, which to him was the divine spirit. By concentrating on this series, he tried to penetrate to their origin. He writes:

I was absolutely without knowledge or expectation when I yielded to the impulse to make the attempt. I simply experimented on a faculty . . . being seated at my writing-table the while in order to record the results as they came, and resolved to retain my hold on my outer and circumferential consciousness, no matter how far towards my inner and central consciousness I might go. For I knew not whether I should be able to regain the former if I once quitted my hold of it, or to recollect the facts of the experience. At length I achieved my object, though only by a strong effort, the tension occasioned by the endeavour to keep both extremes of the consciousness in view at once being very great.

Once well started on my quest, I found myself traversing a succession of spheres or belts . . . the impression produced being that of mounting a vast ladder stretching from the circumference towards the centre of a system, which was at once my own system, the solar system, the universal system, the three systems being at once diverse and identical. . . . Presently, by a supreme, and what I felt must be a final effort . . . I succeeded in polarizing the whole of the convergent rays of my consciousness into the desired focus. And at the same instant, as if through the sudden ignition of the rays thus fused into a unity, I found myself confronted with a glory of unspeakable whiteness and brightness, and of a lustre so intense as well-nigh to beat me back. . . . But though feeling that I had to explore further, I resolved to make assurance doubly sure by piercing if I could the almost blinding lustre, and seeing what it enshrined. With a great effort I succeeded, and the glance revealed to me that which I had felt must be there. . . . It was the dual form of the Son . . . the unmanifest made manifest, the unformulate formulate, the unindividuate individuate, God as the Lord, proving through His duality that God is Substance as well as Force, Love

<sup>10</sup> *Anna Kingsford, Her Life, Letters, Diary, and Work*, pp. 129f. I am indebted for this reference to my colleague, Dr. Beatrice Hinkle, New York.

as well as Will, Feminine as well as Masculine, Mother as well as Father.

- 41 He found that God is two in one, like man. Besides this he noticed something that our text also emphasizes, namely "suspension of breathing." He says ordinary breathing stopped and was replaced by an internal respiration, "as if by breathing of a distinct personality within and other than the physical organism." He took this being to be the "entelechy" of Aristotle and the "inner Christ" of the apostle Paul, the "spiritual and substantial individuality engendered within the physical and phenomenal personality, and representing, therefore, the rebirth of man on a plane transcending the material."
- 42 This genuine<sup>20</sup> experience contains all the essential symbols of our text. The phenomenon itself, the vision of light, is an experience common to many mystics, and one that is undoubtedly of the greatest significance, because at all times and places it proves to be something unconditioned and absolute, a combination of supreme power and profound meaning. Hildegard of Bingen, an outstanding personality quite apart from her mysticism, writes in much the same way about her central vision:

Since my childhood I have always seen a light in my soul, but not with the outer eyes, nor through the thoughts of my heart; neither do the five outer senses take part in this vision. . . . The light I perceive is not of a local kind, but is much brighter than the cloud which supports the sun. I cannot distinguish height, breadth, or length in it. . . . What I see or learn in such a vision stays long in my memory. I see, hear, and know in the same moment. . . . I cannot recognize any sort of form in this light, although I sometimes see in it another light that is known to me as the living light. . . . While I am enjoying the spectacle of this light, all sadness and sorrow vanish from my memory.<sup>21</sup>

- 43 I myself know a few individuals who have had personal experience of this phenomenon. So far as I have been able to understand it, it seems to have to do with an acute state of consciousness, as intense as it is abstract, a "detached" consciousness

<sup>20</sup> Such experiences are genuine, but their genuineness does not prove that all the conclusions or convictions forming their content are necessarily sound. Even in cases of lunacy one comes across perfectly valid psychic experiences. [Author's note added in the first (1931) English edition.]

<sup>21</sup> [*Acta S. Hildegardis*, in Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 197, col. 18.]

(see *infra*, pars. 64ff.), which, as Hildegard implies, brings into awareness areas of psychic happenings ordinarily covered in darkness. The fact that the general bodily sensations disappear during the experience suggests that their specific energy has been withdrawn and has apparently gone towards heightening the clarity of consciousness. As a rule, the phenomenon is spontaneous, coming and going on its own initiative. Its effect is astonishing in that it almost always brings about a solution of psychic complications and frees the inner personality from emotional and intellectual entanglements, thus creating a unity of being which is universally felt as "liberation."

- 44 Such a symbolic unity cannot be attained by the conscious will because consciousness is always partisan. Its opponent is the collective unconscious, which does not understand the language of the conscious mind. Therefore it is necessary to have the magic of the symbol which contains those primitive analogies that speak to the unconscious. The unconscious can be reached and expressed only by symbols, and for this reason the process of individuation can never do without the symbol. The symbol is the primitive exponent of the unconscious, but at the same time an idea that corresponds to the highest intuitions of the conscious mind.
- 45 The oldest mandala drawing known to me is a palaeolithic "sun-wheel," recently discovered in Rhodesia. It, too, is based on the quaternary principle. Things reaching so far back into human history naturally touch upon the deepest layers of the unconscious, and can have a powerful effect on it even when our conscious language proves itself to be quite impotent. Such things cannot be thought up but must grow again from the forgotten depths if they are to express the supreme insights of consciousness and the loftiest intuitions of the spirit, and in this way fuse the uniqueness of present-day consciousness with the age-old past of life.

## 4. PHENOMENA OF THE WAY

### A. THE DISINTEGRATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

46 The meeting between the narrowly delimited, but intensely clear, individual consciousness and the vast expanse of the collective unconscious is dangerous, because the unconscious has a decidedly disintegrating effect on consciousness. According to the *Hui Ming Ching*, this effect belongs to the peculiar phenomena of Chinese yoga. It says: "Every separate thought takes shape and becomes visible in colour and form. The total spiritual power unfolds its traces. . . ." <sup>1</sup> The relevant illustration in the text [stage 4] shows a sage sunk in contemplation, his head surrounded by tongues of fire, out of which five human figures emerge; these five again split up into twenty-five smaller figures. <sup>2</sup> This would be a schizophrenic process if it were to become a permanent state. Therefore the *Hui Ming Ching*, as though warning the adept, continues: "The shapes formed by the spirit-fire are only empty colours and forms. The light of human nature (*hsing*) shines back on the primordial, the true."

47 So we can understand why the figure of the protecting circle was seized upon. It is intended to prevent the "outflowing" and to protect the unity of consciousness from being burst asunder by the unconscious. The text seeks to mitigate the disintegrating effect of the unconscious by describing the thought-figures as "empty colours and forms," thus depotentiating them as much as possible. This idea runs through the whole of Buddhism (especially the Mahayana form) and, in the instructions to the dead in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, it is even pushed to the point of explaining the favourable as well as the unfavourable gods as illusions still to be overcome. It is certainly not within the com-

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), pp. 76f. [For elucidation of the four pictures from the *Hui Ming Ching* reproduced here, see *ibid.*, pp. 75-77.—EDITORS.]

<sup>2</sup> These are recollections of earlier incarnations that arise during contemplation.

坐 禪 圖

唐 玄奘  
大 三 藏  
卷 之 七  
禮 佛 三 拜  
經 之 五

坐久忘所知忽覺月在地  
冷冷天風來凜然到肝肺  
俯視一泓水澄澄無物藏  
中有纖鱗逆然黑白相笑

無事此靜坐一日如兩日  
若活七十年便是百四十  
靜坐少思寡欲真心養氣存神  
此是脩真要訣學者可以青神



Stage 1: Gathering the light

Pages 30-33:  
Four stages of meditation,  
with inspirational texts,  
from the *Hui Ming Ching*

# 嬰兒現形圖

此時丹熟更須慈母惜嬰兒

氣穴法名無盡歲

歲包於寂寂包空

我問空中誰氏子

龜云是你主人翁

衍化生財

抱璞守雌

編籍若存

念氣在茲

夫媾暗之真  
孕媿胎之子  
傳其精交並  
轉滋其氣和  
此神隨如大  
小無得其真

潛龍今已化飛龍

身現神通不可窮

一朝跳出珠光外

一身直到紫微宮

神水沆液

馳瀆根株

內外無塵

長養聖胎



他日雲飛方見真人朝上帝

Stage 2: Origin of a new being in the place of power



端拱真心理圖

未到彼岸不能無法  
既至彼岸又焉用法  
頂中常放白毫光  
痴人猶待問菩薩

遺照於外  
宅神於內  
真心至趣  
而與言會

元君端拱坐玄都  
三疊胎仙舞八閩  
變化純陽天地合  
長生因此水工夫

無心於事  
無事於心  
超出萬劫  
漚然一云



Stage 3: Separation of the spirit-body for independent existence



Stage 4: The centre in the midst of conditions

petence of the psychologist to establish the metaphysical truth or untruth of this idea; he must be content to determine so far as possible its psychic effect. He need not bother himself whether the shape in question is a transcendental illusion or not, since faith, not science, has to decide this point. In any case we are moving on ground that for a long time has seemed to be outside the domain of science and was looked upon as wholly illusory. But there is no scientific justification for such an assumption; the substantiality of these things is not a scientific problem since it lies beyond the range of human perception and judgment and thus beyond any possibility of proof. The psychologist is concerned not with the substantiality of these complexes but with psychic experience. Without a doubt they are psychic contents that can be experienced, and their autonomy is equally indubitable. They are fragmentary psychic systems that either appear spontaneously in ecstatic states and evoke powerful impressions and effects, or else, in mental disturbances, become fixed in the form of delusions and hallucinations and consequently destroy the unity of the personality.

- 48 Psychiatrists are always ready to believe in toxins and the like, and even to explain schizophrenia in these terms, putting next to no emphasis on the psychic contents as such. On the other hand, in psychogenic disturbances (hysteria, obsessional neurosis, etc.), where toxic effects and cell degeneration are out of the question, split-off complexes are to be found similar to those occurring in somnambulistic states. Freud would like to explain these spontaneous split-offs as due to unconscious repression of sexuality, but this explanation is by no means valid in all cases, because contents that the conscious mind cannot assimilate can emerge just as spontaneously out of the unconscious, and in these cases the repression theory is inadequate. Moreover, their autonomy can be observed in daily life, in affects that obstinately obtrude themselves against our will and, in spite of the most strenuous efforts to repress them, overwhelm the ego and force it under their control. No wonder the primitive sees in these moods a state of possession or sets them down to a loss of soul. Our colloquial speech reflects the same thing when we say: "I don't know what has got into him today," "he is possessed of the devil," "he is beside himself," etc. Even legal practice recognizes a degree of diminished responsibility in a state of affect.

Autonomous psychic contents are thus quite common experiences for us. Such contents have a disintegrating effect upon consciousness.

49 But besides the ordinary, familiar affects there are subtler, more complex emotional states that can no longer be described as affects pure and simple but are fragmentary psychic systems. The more complicated they are, the more they have the character of personalities. As constituents of the psychic personality, they necessarily have the character of "persons." Such fragmentary systems are to be found especially in mental diseases, in cases of psychogenic splitting of the personality (double personality), and of course in mediumistic phenomena. They are also encountered in the phenomenology of religion. Many of the earlier gods developed from "persons" into personified ideas, and finally into abstract ideas. Activated unconscious contents always appear at first as projections upon the outside world, but in the course of mental development they are gradually assimilated by consciousness and reshaped into conscious ideas that then forfeit their originally autonomous and personal character. As we know, some of the old gods have become, via astrology, nothing more than descriptive attributes (martial, jovial, saturnine, erotic, logical, lunatic, and so on).

50 The instructions of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* in particular help us to see how great is the danger that consciousness will be disintegrated by these figures. Again and again the dead are instructed not to take these shapes for truth, not to confuse their murky appearance with the pure white light of *Dharma-kaya* (the divine body of truth). That is to say, they are not to project the *one* light of highest consciousness into concretized figures and dissolve it into a plurality of autonomous fragmentary systems. If there were no danger of this, and if these systems did not represent menacingly autonomous and disintegrative tendencies, such urgent instructions would not be necessary. Allowing for the simpler, polytheistic attitude of the Eastern mind, these instructions would be almost the equivalent of warning a Christian not to let himself be blinded by the illusion of a personal God, let alone by the Trinity and the host of angels and saints.

51 If tendencies towards dissociation were not inherent in the human psyche, fragmentary psychic systems would never have

been split off; in other words, neither spirits nor gods would ever have come into existence. That is also the reason why our time has become so utterly godless and profane: we lack all knowledge of the unconscious psyche and pursue the cult of consciousness to the exclusion of all else. Our true religion is a monotheism of consciousness, a possession by it, coupled with a fanatical denial of the existence of fragmentary autonomous systems. But we differ from the Buddhist yoga doctrines in that we even deny that these systems are experienceable. This entails a great psychic danger, because the autonomous systems then behave like any other repressed contents: they necessarily induce wrong attitudes since the repressed material reappears in consciousness in a spurious form. This is strikingly evident in every case of neurosis and also holds true for the collective psychic phenomena. Our time has committed a fatal error; we believe we can criticize the facts of religion intellectually. Like Laplace, we think God is a hypothesis that can be subjected to intellectual treatment, to be affirmed or denied. We completely forget that the reason mankind believes in the "daemon" has nothing whatever to do with external factors, but is simply due to a naïve awareness of the tremendous inner effect of autonomous fragmentary systems. This effect is not abolished by criticizing it—or rather, the name we have given it—or by describing the name as false. The effect is collectively present all the time; the autonomous systems are always at work, for the fundamental structure of the unconscious is not affected by the deviations of our ephemeral consciousness.

52 If we deny the existence of the autonomous systems, imagining that we have got rid of them by a mere critique of the name, then the effect which they still continue to exert can no longer be understood, nor can they be assimilated to consciousness. They become an inexplicable source of disturbance which we finally assume must exist somewhere outside ourselves. The resultant projection creates a dangerous situation in that the disturbing effects are now attributed to a wicked will outside ourselves, which is naturally not to be found anywhere but with our neighbour *de l'autre côté de la rivière*. This leads to collective delusions, "incidents," revolutions, war—in a word, to destructive mass psychoses.

53 Insanity is possession by an unconscious content that, as

such, is not assimilated to consciousness, nor can it be assimilated since the very existence of such contents is denied. This attitude is equivalent to saying: "We no longer have any fear of God and believe that everything is to be judged by human standards." This hybris or narrowness of consciousness is always the shortest way to the insane asylum. I recommend the excellent account of this problem in H. G. Wells's novel *Christina Alberta's Father*, and Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*.

54 It must stir a sympathetic chord in the enlightened European when it is said in the *Hui Ming Ching* that the "shapes formed by the spirit-fire are only empty colours and forms." That sounds thoroughly European and seems to suit our reason to a T. We think we can congratulate ourselves on having already reached such a pinnacle of clarity, imagining that we have left all these phantasmal gods far behind. But what we have left behind are only verbal spectres, not the psychic facts that were responsible for the birth of the gods. We are still as much possessed by autonomous psychic contents as if they were Olympians. Today they are called phobias, obsessions, and so forth; in a word, neurotic symptoms. The gods have become diseases; Zeus no longer rules Olympus but rather the solar plexus, and produces curious specimens for the doctor's consulting room, or disorders the brains of politicians and journalists who unwittingly let loose psychic epidemics on the world.

55 So it is better for Western man if he does not know too much about the secret insights of the Oriental sages to begin with, for, as I have said, it would be a case of the "right means in the hands of the wrong man." Instead of allowing himself to be convinced once more that the daemon is an illusion, he ought to experience once more the reality of this illusion. He should learn to acknowledge these psychic forces anew, and not wait until his moods, nervous states, and delusions make it clear in the most painful way that he is not the only master in his house. His dissociative tendencies are actual psychic personalities possessing a differential reality. They are "real" when they are not recognized as real and consequently projected; they are relatively real when they are brought into relationship with consciousness (in religious terms, when a cult exists); but they are unreal to the extent that consciousness detaches itself from its contents. This last stage, however, is reached only when life has been lived so

exhaustively and with such devotion that no obligations remain unfulfilled, when no desires that cannot safely be sacrificed stand in the way of inner detachment from the world. It is futile to lie to ourselves about this. Wherever we are still attached, we are still possessed; and when we are possessed, there is one stronger than us who possesses us. ("Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.") It is not a matter of indifference whether one calls something a "mania" or a "god." To serve a mania is detestable and undignified, but to serve a god is full of meaning and promise because it is an act of submission to a higher, invisible, and spiritual being. The personification enables us to see the relative reality of the autonomous system, and not only makes its assimilation possible but also depotentiates the daemonic forces of life. When the god is not acknowledged, egomania develops, and out of this mania comes sickness.

- 56 Yoga takes acknowledgment of the gods as something self-evident. Its secret instruction is intended only for those whose consciousness is struggling to disentangle itself from the daemonic forces of life in order to enter into the ultimate undivided unity, the "centre of emptiness," where "dwells the god of utmost emptiness and life," as our text says.<sup>3</sup> "To hear such a teaching is difficult to attain in thousands of aeons." Evidently the veil of Maya cannot be lifted by a merely rational resolve; it requires a most thoroughgoing and persevering preparation consisting in the full payment of all debts to life. For as long as unconditional attachment through *cupiditas* exists, the veil is not lifted and the heights of a consciousness free of contents and free of illusion are not attained; nor can any trick nor any deceit bring this about. It is an ideal that can ultimately be realized only in death. Until then there are the real and relatively real figures of the unconscious.

#### B. ANIMUS AND ANIMA

- 57 According to our text, among the figures of the unconscious there are not only the gods but also the animus and anima. The word *hun* is translated by Wilhelm as animus. And indeed, the term "animus" seems appropriate for *hun*, the character for  
<sup>3</sup> [*The Golden Flower*, p. 22.]

which is made up of the sign for "clouds" and that for "demon." Thus *hun* means "cloud-demon," a higher breath-soul belonging to the *yang* principle and therefore masculine. After death, *hun* rises upward and becomes *shen*, the "expanding and self-revealing" spirit or god. "Anima," called *p'o*, and written with the characters for "white" and "demon," that is, "white ghost," belongs to the lower, earthbound, bodily soul, the *yin* principle, and is therefore feminine. After death, it sinks downward and becomes *huei* (demon), often explained as "the one who returns" (i.e., to earth), a revenant, a ghost. The fact that the animus and anima part after death and go their ways independently shows that, for the Chinese consciousness, they are distinguishable psychic factors; originally they were united in "the one effective, true human nature," but in the "house of the Creative" they are two. "The animus is in the heavenly heart." "By day it lives in the eyes [i.e., in consciousness]; at night it houses in the liver." It is "that which we have received from the great emptiness, that which is identical in form with the primal beginning." The anima, on the other hand, is the "energy of the heavy and the turbid"; it clings to the bodily, fleshly heart. Its effects are "sensuous desires and impulses to anger." "Whoever is sombre and moody on waking . . . is fettered to the anima." <sup>4</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Many years ago, before Wilhelm acquainted me with this text, I used the term "anima" <sup>5</sup> in a way quite analogous to the Chinese definition of *p'o*, and of course entirely apart from any metaphysical premise. To the psychologist, the anima is not a transcendental being but something quite within the range of experience, as the Chinese definition makes clear: affective states are immediate experiences. Why, then, speak of the anima and not simply of moods? The reason is that affects have an autonomous character, and therefore most people are under their power. But affects are delimitable contents of consciousness, parts of the personality. As such, they partake of its character and can easily be personified—a process that still continues today, as I have shown. The personification is not an idle invention, since a person roused by affect does not show a neutral character but a quite distinct one, entirely different from his ordinary character. Careful investigation has shown that the

<sup>4</sup> [*The Golden Flower*, pp. 26 and 28.]

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, pars. 296ff.



affective character of a man has feminine traits. From this psychological fact derives the Chinese doctrine of the *p'o* soul as well as my own concept of the anima. Deeper introspection or ecstatic experience reveals the existence of a feminine figure in the unconscious, hence the feminine name: anima, psyche, *Seele*. The anima can be defined as the image or archetype or deposit of all the experiences of man with woman. As we know, the poets have often sung the anima's praises.<sup>6</sup> The connection of anima with ghost in the Chinese concept is of interest to parapsychologists inasmuch as mediumistic "controls" are very often of the opposite sex.

59 Although Wilhelm's translation of *hun* as "animus" seems justified to me, nonetheless I had important reasons for choosing the term "Logos" for a man's "spirit," for his clarity of consciousness and his rationality, rather than the otherwise appropriate expression "animus." Chinese philosophers are spared certain difficulties that aggravate the task of the Western psychologist. Like all mental and spiritual activity in ancient times, Chinese philosophy was exclusively a component of the masculine world. Its concepts were never understood psychologically, and therefore were never examined as to how far they also apply to the feminine psyche. But the psychologist cannot possibly ignore the existence of woman and her special psychology. For these reasons I would prefer to translate *hun* as it appears in man by "Logos." Wilhelm in his translation uses Logos for *hsing*, which can also be translated as "essence of human nature" or "creative consciousness." After death, *hun* becomes *shen*, "spirit," which is very close, in the philosophical sense, to *hsing*. Since the Chinese concepts are not logical in our sense of the word, but are intuitive ideas, their meanings can only be elicited from the ways in which they are used and from the constitution of the written characters, or from such relationships as obtain between *hun* and *shen*. *Hun*, then, would be the light of consciousness and reason in man, originally coming from the *logos spermatikos* of *hsing*, and returning after death through *shen* to the Tao. Used in this sense the expression "Logos" would be especially appropriate, since it includes the idea of a universal being, and thus covers the fact that man's clarity of consciousness and rationality are something universal rather than indi-

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Psychological Types*, ch. V.

vidually unique. The Logos principle is nothing personal, but is in the deepest sense impersonal, and thus in sharp contrast to the anima, which is a personal demon expressing itself in thoroughly personal moods ("animosity"!).

60 In view of these psychological facts, I have reserved the term "animus" strictly for women, because, to answer a famous question, *mulier non habet animam, sed animum*. Feminine psychology exhibits an element that is the counterpart of a man's anima. Primarily, it is not of an affective nature but is a quasi-intellectual factor best described by the word "prejudice." The conscious side of woman corresponds to the emotional side of man, not to his "mind." Mind makes up the "soul," or better, the "animus" of woman, and just as the anima of a man consists of inferior relatedness, full of affect, so the animus of woman consists of inferior judgments, or better, opinions. As it is made up of a plurality of preconceived opinions, the animus is far less susceptible of personification by a single figure, but appears more often as a group or crowd. (A good example of this from parapsychology is the "Imperator" group in the case of Mrs. Piper.<sup>7</sup>) On a low level the animus is an inferior Logos, a caricature of the differentiated masculine mind, just as on a low level the anima is a caricature of the feminine Eros. To pursue the parallel further, we could say that just as *hun* corresponds to *hsing*, translated by Wilhelm as Logos, so the Eros of woman corresponds to *ming*, "fate" or "destiny," interpreted by Wilhelm as Eros. Eros is an interweaving; Logos is differentiating knowledge, clarifying light. Eros is relatedness, Logos is discrimination and detachment. Hence the inferior Logos of woman's animus appears as something quite unrelated, as an inaccessible prejudice, or as an opinion which, irritatingly enough, has nothing to do with the essential nature of the object.

61 I have often been accused of personifying the anima and animus as mythology does, but this accusation would be justified only if it could be proved that I concretize these concepts in a mythological manner for psychological use. I must declare once and for all that the personification is not an invention of mine,

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Hyslop, *Science and a Future Life*, pp. 113ff. [Mrs. Leonora Piper, an American psychic medium active about 1890-1910 in the U.S. and England, was studied by William James, Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, Hyslop, and others. A group of five of her psychic controls had the collective name "Imperator."—EDITORS.]

but is inherent in the nature of the phenomena. It would be unscientific to overlook the fact that the anima is a psychic, and therefore a personal, autonomous system. None of the people who make the charge against me would hesitate for a second to say, "I dreamed of Mr. X," whereas, strictly speaking, he dreamed only of a representation of Mr. X. The anima is nothing but a representation of the personal nature of the autonomous system in question. What the nature of this system is in a transcendental sense, that is, beyond the bounds of experience, we cannot know.

62 I have defined the anima as a personification of the unconscious in general, and have taken it as a bridge to the unconscious, in other words, as a function of relationship to the unconscious. There is an interesting point in our text in this connection. The text says that consciousness (that is, the personal consciousness) comes from the anima. Since the Western mind is based wholly on the standpoint of consciousness, it must define the anima in the way I have done. But the East, based as it is on the standpoint of the unconscious, sees consciousness as an effect of the anima. And there can be no doubt that consciousness does originate in the unconscious. This is something we are apt to forget, and therefore we are always attempting to identify the psyche with consciousness, or at least to represent the unconscious as a derivative or an effect of consciousness (as in the Freudian repression theory). But, for the reasons given above, it is essential that we do not detract from the reality of the unconscious, and that the figures of the unconscious be understood as real and effective factors. The person who has understood what is meant by psychic reality need have no fear that he has fallen back into primitive demonology. If the unconscious figures are not acknowledged as spontaneous agents, we become victims of a one-sided belief in the power of consciousness, leading finally to acute tension. A catastrophe is then bound to happen because, for all our consciousness, the dark powers of the psyche have been overlooked. It is not we who personify them; they have a personal nature from the very beginning. Only when this is thoroughly recognized can we think of depersonalizing them, of "subjugating the anima," as our text expresses it.

63 Here again we find an enormous difference between Buddhism and the Western attitude of mind, and again there is a

dangerous semblance of agreement. Yoga teaching rejects all fantasy products and we do the same, but the East does so for entirely different reasons. In the East there is an abundance of conceptions and teachings that give full expression to the creative fantasy; in fact, protection is needed against an excess of it. We, on the other hand, regard fantasy as worthless subjective day-dreaming. Naturally the figures of the unconscious do not appear in the form of abstractions stripped of all imaginative trappings; on the contrary, they are embedded in a web of fantasies of extraordinary variety and bewildering profusion. The East can reject these fantasies because it has long since extracted their essence and condensed it in profound teachings. But we have never even experienced these fantasies, much less extracted their quintessence. We still have a large stretch of experience to catch up with, and only when we have found the sense in apparent nonsense can we separate the valuable from the worthless. We can be sure that the essence we extract from our experience will be quite different from what the East offers us today. The East came to its knowledge of inner things in childlike ignorance of the external world. We, on the other hand, shall explore the psyche and its depths supported by an immense knowledge of history and science. At present our knowledge of the external world is the greatest obstacle to introspection, but the psychological need will overcome all obstructions. We are already building up a psychology, a science that gives us the key to the very things that the East discovered—and discovered only through abnormal psychic states.

## 5. THE DETACHMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS FROM THE OBJECT

64 By understanding the unconscious we free ourselves from its domination. That is really also the purpose of the instructions in our text. The pupil is taught to concentrate on the light of the innermost region and, at the same time, to free himself from all outer and inner entanglements. His vital impulses are guided towards a consciousness void of content, which nevertheless permits all contents to exist. The *Hui Ming Ching*<sup>1</sup> says of this detachment:

A halo of light surrounds the world of the law.  
We forget one another, quiet and pure, all-powerful and empty.  
The emptiness is irradiated by the light of the heart of heaven.  
The water of the sea is smooth and mirrors the moon in its surface.  
The clouds disappear in blue space; the mountains shine clear.  
Consciousness reverts to contemplation; the moon-disk rests alone.

65 This description of fulfilment depicts a psychic state that can best be characterized as a detachment of consciousness from the world and a withdrawal to a point outside it, so to speak. Thus consciousness is at the same time empty and not empty. It is no longer preoccupied with the images of things but merely contains them. The fullness of the world which hitherto pressed upon it has lost none of its richness and beauty, but it no longer dominates. The magical claim of things has ceased because the interweaving of consciousness with world has come to an end. The unconscious is not projected any more, and so the primordial *participation mystique* with things is abolished. Consciousness is no longer preoccupied with compulsive plans but dissolves in contemplative vision.

66 How did this effect come about? (We assume, of course, that the Chinese author was first of all not a liar; secondly, that he was of sound mind; and thirdly, that he was an unusually intellectual.) [The *Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), pp. 77f.]

ligent man.) To understand and explain this detachment, we must proceed by a roundabout way. It is an effect that cannot be simulated; nothing would be more childish than to make such a psychic state an object of aesthetic experiment. I know this effect very well from my practice; it is the therapeutic effect *par excellence*, for which I labour with my students and patients, and it consists in the dissolution of *participation mystique*. By a stroke of genius, Lévy-Bruhl singled out what he called *participation mystique* as being the hallmark of the primitive mentality.<sup>2</sup> What he meant by it is simply the indefinitely large remnant of non-differentiation between subject and object, which is still so great among primitives that it cannot fail to strike our European consciousness very forcibly. When there is no consciousness of the difference between subject and object, an unconscious identity prevails. The unconscious is then projected into the object, and the object is introjected into the subject, becoming part of his psychology. Then plants and animals behave like human beings, human beings are at the same time animals, and everything is alive with ghosts and gods. Civilized man naturally thinks he is miles above these things. Instead of that, he is often identified with his parents throughout his life, or with his affects and prejudices, and shamelessly accuses others of the things he will not see in himself. He too has a remnant of primitive unconsciousness, of non-differentiation between subject and object. Because of this, he is magically affected by all manner of people, things, and circumstances, he is beset by disturbing influences nearly as much as the primitive and therefore needs just as many apotropaic charms. He no longer works magic with medicine bags, amulets, and animal sacrifices, but with tranquilizers, neuroses, rationalism, cult of the will, etc.

67 But if the unconscious can be recognized as a co-determining factor along with consciousness, and if we can live in such a way that conscious and unconscious demands are taken into account as far as possible, then the centre of gravity of the total personality shifts its position. It is then no longer in the ego, which is merely the centre of consciousness, but in the hypothetical point between conscious and unconscious. This new centre might be called the self. If the transposition is successful, it does away with the *participation mystique* and results in a personality that

<sup>2</sup> Lévy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality*.

suffers only in the lower storeys, as it were, but in its upper storeys is singularly detached from painful as well as from joyful happenings.

68 The production and birth of this superior personality is what is meant when our text speaks of the "holy fruit," the "diamond body," or any other kind of incorruptible body. Psychologically, these expressions symbolize an attitude that is beyond the reach of emotional entanglements and violent shocks—a consciousness detached from the world. I have reasons for believing that this attitude sets in after middle life and is a natural preparation for death. Death is psychologically as important as birth and, like it, is an integral part of life. What happens to the detached consciousness in the end is a question the psychologist cannot be expected to answer. Whatever his theoretical position he would hopelessly overstep the bounds of his scientific competence. He can only point out that the views of our text in regard to the timelessness of the detached consciousness are in harmony with the religious thought of all ages and with that of the overwhelming majority of mankind. Anyone who thought differently would be standing outside the human order and would, therefore, be suffering from a disturbed psychic equilibrium. As a doctor, I make every effort to strengthen the belief in immortality, especially with older patients when such questions come threateningly close. For, seen in correct psychological perspective, death is not an end but a goal, and life's inclination towards death begins as soon as the meridian is passed.

69 Chinese yoga philosophy is based upon this instinctive preparation for death as a goal. In analogy with the goal of the first half of life—procreation and reproduction, the means of perpetuating one's physical existence—it takes as the goal of spiritual existence the symbolic begetting and birth of a "spirit-body," or "breath-body," which ensures the continuity of detached consciousness. It is the birth of the pneumatic man, known to the European from antiquity, but which he seeks to produce by quite other symbols and magical practices, by faith and a Christian way of life. Here again we stand on a foundation quite different from that of the East. Again the text sounds as though it were not so very far from Christian ascetic morality, but nothing could be more mistaken than to assume that it actually means the same thing. Behind our text is a civilization thou-

sands of years old, one which is built up organically on primitive instincts and knows nothing of that brutal morality so suited to us as recently civilized Teutonic barbarians. For this reason the Chinese are without the impulse towards violent repression of the instincts that poisons our spirituality and makes it hysterically exaggerated. The man who lives with his instincts can also detach from them, and in just as natural a way as he lived with them. Any idea of heroic self-conquest would be entirely foreign to the spirit of our text, but that is what it would infallibly amount to if we followed the instructions literally.

70 We must never forget our historical antecedents. Only a little more than a thousand years ago we stumbled out of the crudest beginnings of polytheism into a highly developed Oriental religion which lifted the imaginative minds of half-savages to a height that in no way corresponded to their spiritual development. In order to keep to this height in some fashion or other, it was inevitable that the instinctual sphere should be largely repressed. Thus religious practice and morality took on a decidedly brutal, almost malignant, character. The repressed elements naturally did not develop, but went on vegetating in the unconscious, in their original barbarism. We would like to scale the heights of a philosophical religion, but in fact are incapable of it. To grow up to it is the most we can hope for. The Amfortas wound and the Faustian split in the Germanic man are still not healed; his unconscious is still loaded with contents that must first be made conscious before he can be free of them. Recently I received a letter from a former patient which describes the necessary transformation in simple but trenchant words. She writes:

Out of evil, much good has come to me. By keeping quiet, repressing nothing, remaining attentive, and by accepting reality—taking things as they are, and not as I wanted them to be—by doing all this, unusual knowledge has come to me, and unusual powers as well, such as I could never have imagined before. I always thought that when we accepted things they overpowered us in some way or other. This turns out not to be true at all, and it is only by accepting them that one can assume an attitude towards them.<sup>3</sup> So now I intend to play the game of life, being receptive to whatever comes to me, good and bad, sun and shadow forever alternating, and, in

<sup>3</sup> Dissolution of *participation mystique*.



this way, also accepting my own nature with its positive and negative sides. Thus everything becomes more alive to me. What a fool I was! How I tried to force everything to go according to the way I thought it ought to!

- 7<sup>1</sup> Only on the basis of such an attitude, which renounces none of the Christian values won in the course of Christian development, but which, on the contrary, tries with Christian charity and forbearance to accept even the humblest things in one's own nature, will a higher level of consciousness and culture become possible. This attitude is religious in the truest sense, and therefore therapeutic, for all religions are therapies for the sorrows and disorders of the soul. The development of the Western intellect and will has given us an almost fiendish capacity for aping such an attitude, with apparent success, despite the protests of the unconscious. But it is only a matter of time before the counterposition asserts itself all the more harshly. Aping an attitude always produces an unstable situation that can be overthrown by the unconscious at any time. A safe foundation is found only when the instinctive premises of the unconscious win the same respect as the views of the conscious mind. No one should blind himself to the fact that this necessity of giving due consideration to the unconscious runs violently counter to our Western, and in particular the Protestant, cult of consciousness. Yet, though the new always seems to be the enemy of the old, anyone with a more than superficial desire to understand cannot fail to discover that without the most serious application of the Christian values we have acquired, the new integration can never take place.

## 6. THE FULFILMENT

72 A growing familiarity with the spirit of the East should be taken merely as a sign that we are beginning to relate to the alien elements within ourselves. Denial of our historical foundations would be sheer folly and would be the best way to bring about another uprooting of consciousness. Only by standing firmly on our own soil can we assimilate the spirit of the East.

73 Speaking of those who do not know where the true springs of secret power lie, an ancient adept says, "Worldly people lose their roots and cling to the treetops." The spirit of the East has grown out of the yellow earth, and our spirit can, and should, grow only out of our own earth. That is why I approach these problems in a way that has often been charged with "psychologism." If "psychology" were meant, I should indeed be flattered, for my aim as a psychologist is to dismiss without mercy the metaphysical claims of all esoteric teachings. The unavowed purpose of gaining power through words, inherent in all secret doctrines, ill accords with our profound ignorance, which we should have the modesty to admit. I quite deliberately bring everything that purports to be metaphysical into the daylight of psychological understanding, and do my best to prevent people from believing in nebulous power-words. Let the convinced Christian believe, by all means, for that is the duty he has taken upon himself; but whoever is not a Christian has forfeited the charisma of faith. (Perhaps he was cursed from birth with not being able to believe, but merely to know.) Therefore, he has no right to put his faith elsewhere. One cannot grasp anything metaphysically, one only can do so psychologically. Therefore I strip things of their metaphysical wrappings in order to make them objects of psychology. In that way I can at least extract something understandable from them and avail myself of it, and I also discover psychological facts and processes that before were veiled in symbols and beyond my comprehension. In doing so I

may perhaps be following in the footsteps of the faithful, and may possibly have similar experiences; and if in the end there should be something ineffably metaphysical behind it all, it would then have the best opportunity of showing itself.

74 My admiration for the great philosophers of the East is as genuine as my attitude towards their metaphysics is irreverent.<sup>1</sup> I suspect them of being symbolical psychologists, to whom no greater wrong could be done than to take them literally. If it were really metaphysics that they mean, it would be useless to try to understand them. But if it is psychology, we can not only understand them but can profit greatly by them, for then the so-called "metaphysical" comes within the range of experience. If I assume that God is absolute and beyond all human experience, he leaves me cold. I do not affect him, nor does he affect me. But if I know that he is a powerful impulse of my soul, at once I must concern myself with him, for then he can become important, even unpleasantly so, and can affect me in practical ways—which sounds horribly banal, like everything else that is real.

75 The epithet "psychologism" applies only to a fool who thinks he has his soul in his pocket. There are certainly more than enough such fools, for although we know how to talk big about the "soul," the depreciation of everything psychic is a typically Western prejudice. If I make use of the concept "autonomous psychic complex," my reader immediately comes up with the ready-made prejudice that it is "nothing but a psychic complex." How can we be so sure that the soul is "nothing but"? It is as if we did not know, or else continually forgot, that everything of which we are conscious is an image, and that image is psyche. The same people who think that God is depreciated if he is understood as something moved in the psyche, as well as the moving force of the psyche—i.e., as an autonomous complex—can be so plagued by uncontrollable affects and neurotic states that their wills and their whole philosophy of life fail them miserably. Is that a proof of the impotence of the psyche? Should Meister Eckhart be accused of "psychologism" when he says, "God must be born in the soul again and again"? I think the accusation of "psychologism" can be levelled only at an intellect

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese philosophers—in contrast to the dogmatists of the West—are only grateful for such an attitude, because they also are masters of their gods. [Note by Richard Wilhelm in original edn.]

that denies the genuine nature of the autonomous complex and seeks to explain it rationalistically as the consequence of known causes, i.e., as something secondary and unreal. This is just as arrogant as the metaphysical assertion that seeks to make a God outside the range of our experience responsible for our psychic states. Psychologism is simply the counterpart of this metaphysical presumption, and is just as childish. Therefore it seems to me far more reasonable to accord the psyche the same validity as the empirical world, and to admit that the former has just as much "reality" as the latter. As I see it, the psyche is a world in which the ego is contained. Maybe there are fishes who believe that they contain the sea. We must rid ourselves of this habitual illusion of ours if we wish to consider metaphysical assertions from the standpoint of psychology.

76 A metaphysical assertion of this kind is the idea of the "diamond body," the incorruptible breath-body which grows in the golden flower or in the "field of the square inch."<sup>2</sup> This body is

<sup>2</sup> Our text is somewhat unclear as to whether by "continuation of life" a survival after death or a prolongation of physical existence is meant. Expressions such as "elixir of life" and the like are exceedingly ambiguous. In the later additions to the text it is evident that the yoga instructions were also understood in a purely physical sense. To a primitive mind, there is nothing disturbing in this odd mixture of the physical and the spiritual, because life and death are by no means the complete opposites they are for us. (Particularly interesting in this connection, apart from the ethnological material, are the communications of the English "rescue circles" with their thoroughly archaic ideas.) The same ambiguity with regard to survival after death is found in early Christianity, where immortality depends on very similar assumptions, i.e., on the idea of a breath-body as the carrier of life. (Geley's parapsychological theory would be the latest incarnation of this ancient idea.) But since in our text there are warnings about the superstitious use of it—warnings, for example, against the making of gold—we can safely insist on the spiritual purport of the instructions without contradicting their meaning. In the states which the instructions seek to induce the physical body plays an increasingly unimportant part anyway, since it is replaced by the breath-body (hence the importance of breath control in all yoga exercises). The breath-body is not something "spiritual" in our sense of the word. It is characteristic of Western man that he has split apart the physical and the spiritual for epistemological purposes. But these opposites exist together in the psyche and psychology must recognize this fact. "Psychic" means physical *and* spiritual. The ideas in our text all deal with this "intermediate" world which seems unclear and confused because the concept of psychic reality is not yet current among us, although it expresses life as it actually is. Without soul, spirit is as dead as matter, because both are artificial abstractions; whereas man originally regarded spirit as a volatile body, and matter as not lacking in soul.

a symbol for a remarkable psychological fact which, precisely because it is objective, first appears in forms dictated by the experience of biological life—that is, as fruit, embryo, child, living body, and so on. This fact could be best expressed by the words “It is not I who live, it lives me.” The illusion of the supremacy of consciousness makes us say, “I live.” Once this illusion is shattered by a recognition of the unconscious, the unconscious will appear as something objective in which the ego is included. The attitude towards the unconscious is then analogous to the feeling of the primitive to whom the existence of a son guarantees continuation of life—a feeling that can assume grotesque forms, as when the old Negro, angered at his son’s disobedience, cried out, “There he stands with my body, but does not even obey me!”

77 It is, in fact, a change of feeling similar to that experienced by a father to whom a son has been born, a change known to us from the testimony of St. Paul: “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The symbol “Christ” as “son of man” is an analogous psychic experience of a higher spiritual being who is invisibly born in the individual, a pneumatic body which is to serve us as a future dwelling, a body which, as Paul says, is put on like a garment (“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”). It is always a difficult thing to express, in intellectual terms, subtle feelings that are nevertheless infinitely important for the individual’s life and well-being. It is, in a sense, the feeling that we have been “replaced,” but without the connotation of having been “deposed.” It is as if the guidance of life had passed over to an invisible centre. Nietzsche’s metaphor, “in most loving bondage, free,” would be appropriate here. Religious language is full of imagery depicting this feeling of free dependence, of calm acceptance.

78 This remarkable experience seems to me a consequence of the detachment of consciousness, thanks to which the subjective “I live” becomes the objective “It lives me.” This state is felt to be higher than the previous one; it is really like a sort of release from the compulsion and impossible responsibility that are the inevitable results of *participation mystique*. This feeling of liberation fills Paul completely; the consciousness of being a child of God delivers one from the bondage of the blood. It is also a feeling of reconciliation with all that happens, for which

reason, according to the *Hui Ming Ching*, the gaze of one who has attained fulfilment turns back to the beauty of nature.

79 In the Pauline Christ symbol the supreme religious experiences of West and East confront one another: Christ the sorrow-laden hero, and the Golden Flower that blooms in the purple hall of the city of jade. What a contrast, what an unfathomable difference, what an abyss of history! A problem fit for the crowning work of a future psychologist!

80 Among the great religious problems of the present is one which has received scant attention, but which is in fact the main problem of our day: the evolution of the religious spirit. If we are to discuss it, we must emphasize the difference between East and West in their treatment of the "jewel," the central symbol. The West lays stress on the human incarnation, and even on the personality and historicity of Christ, whereas the East says: "Without beginning, without end, without past, without future."<sup>3</sup> The Christian subordinates himself to the superior divine person in expectation of his grace; but the Oriental knows that redemption depends on the work he does on himself. The Tao grows out of the individual. The *imitatio Christi* has this disadvantage: in the long run we worship as a divine example a man who embodied the deepest meaning of life, and then, out of sheer imitation, we forget to make real our own deepest meaning—self-realization. As a matter of fact, it is not altogether inconvenient to renounce one's own meaning. Had Jesus done so, he would probably have become a respectable carpenter and not a religious rebel to whom the same thing would naturally happen today as happened then.

81 The imitation of Christ might well be understood in a deeper sense. It could be taken as the duty to realize one's deepest conviction with the same courage and the same self-sacrifice shown by Jesus. Happily not everyone has the task of being a leader of humanity, or a great rebel; and so, after all, it might be possible for each to realize himself in his own way. This honesty might even become an ideal. Since great innovations always begin in the most unlikely places, the fact that people today are not nearly as ashamed of their nakedness as they used to be might be the beginning of a recognition of themselves as they really are. Hard upon this will follow an increasing recognition

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Flower* (1962 edn.), p. 77.

of many things that formerly were strictly taboo, for the reality of the earth will not forever remain veiled like the *virgines velandae* of Tertullian. Moral unmasking is but a step further in the same direction, and behold, there stands man as he is, and admits to himself that he is as he is. If he does this in a meaningless way he is just a muddled fool; but if he knows the significance of what he is doing he could belong to a higher order of man who makes real the Christ symbol, regardless of the suffering involved. It has often been observed that purely concrete taboos or magical rites in an early stage of a religion become in the next stage something psychic, or even purely spiritual symbols. An outward law becomes in the course of time an inward conviction. Thus it might easily happen to contemporary man, especially Protestants, that the person Jesus, now existing outside in the realm of history, might become the higher man within himself. Then we would have attained, in a European way, the psychological state corresponding to Eastern enlightenment.

82 All this is a step in the evolution of a higher consciousness on its way to unknown goals, and is not metaphysics as ordinarily understood. To that extent it is only "psychology," but to that extent, too, it is experienceable, understandable and—thank God—real, a reality we can do something with, a living reality full of possibilities. The fact that I am content with what can be experienced psychically, and reject the metaphysical, does not amount, as any intelligent person can see, to a gesture of scepticism or agnosticism aimed at faith and trust in higher powers, but means approximately the same as what Kant meant when he called the thing-in-itself a "merely negative borderline concept." Every statement about the transcendental is to be avoided because it is only a laughable presumption on the part of a human mind unconscious of its limitations. Therefore, when God or the Tao is named an impulse of the soul, or a psychic state, something has been said about the knowable only, but nothing about the unknowable, about which nothing can be determined.

## 7. CONCLUSION

<sup>83</sup> The purpose of my commentary is to attempt to build a bridge of psychological understanding between East and West. The basis of every real understanding is man, and therefore I had to speak of human beings. This must be my excuse for having dealt only with general aspects, and for not having entered into technical details. Technical directions are valuable for those who know, for example, what a camera is, or a combustion engine, but they are useless for anyone who has no idea of such apparatus. Western man for whom I write is in an analogous position. Therefore it seemed to me important above all to emphasize the agreement between the psychic states and symbolisms of East and West. These analogies open a way to the inner chambers of the Eastern mind, a way that does not require the sacrifice of our own nature and does not confront us with the threat of being torn from our roots. Nor is it an intellectual telescope or microscope offering a view of no fundamental concern to us because it does not touch us. It is the way of suffering, seeking, and striving common to all civilized peoples; it is the tremendous experiment of becoming conscious, which nature has laid upon mankind, and which unites the most diverse cultures in a common task.

<sup>84</sup> Western consciousness is by no means the only kind of consciousness there is; it is historically conditioned and geographically limited, and representative of only one part of mankind. The widening of our consciousness ought not to proceed at the expense of other kinds of consciousness; it should come about through the development of those elements of our psyche which are analogous to those of the alien psyche, just as the East cannot do without our technology, science, and industry. The European invasion of the East was an act of violence on a grand scale, and it has left us with the duty—*noblesse oblige*—of understanding the mind of the East. This is perhaps more necessary than we realize at present.



## EXAMPLES OF EUROPEAN MANDALAS

The pictures that now follow were produced in the way described in the text, by patients during the course of treatment.<sup>1</sup> The earliest picture dates from 1916. All the pictures were done independently of any Eastern influence. The *I Ching* hexagrams in picture No. 4 come from Legge's translation in the Sacred Books of the East series, but they were put into the picture only because their content seemed, to the university-trained patient, especially meaningful for her life. No European mandalas known to me (I have a fairly large collection) achieve the conventionally and traditionally established harmony and perfection of the Eastern mandala. I have made a choice of ten pictures from among an infinite variety of European mandalas, and they ought, as a whole, to illustrate clearly the parallelism between Eastern philosophy and the unconscious mental processes in the West.

<sup>1</sup> [The following mandalas are also published, with more detailed comments, in "Concerning Mandala Symbolism": A<sub>1</sub> (fig. 9), A<sub>3</sub> (fig. 6), A<sub>5</sub> (fig. 25), A<sub>6</sub> (fig. 28), A<sub>7</sub> (fig. 38), A<sub>8</sub> (fig. 37), A<sub>9</sub> (fig. 26), A<sub>10</sub> (fig. 36); in "A Study of the Process of Individuation": A<sub>4</sub> (Picture 9). A<sub>2</sub> is not republished. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung tells of painting the pictures reproduced in A<sub>3</sub> and A<sub>10</sub> (see the N.Y. edn., p. 197 and Pl. XI; London edn., pp. 188f. and facing p. 241). Cross reference in "Concerning Mandala Symbolism" indicates that he also painted the picture in A<sub>6</sub>.—EDITORS.]