

The Meaning of Individuation

Contributed by C.G. Jung
Sunday, 18 January 2004

The chapters in this volume were originally written as lectures given at the Eranos Meeting at Ascona, Switzerland. A number of scholars from different fields of knowledge meet there annually to discuss certain topics of human interest. My contributions represent the psychological aspect of the problems under discussion, and turn upon a question of peculiar interest-the-so-called process of individuation.

The chapters in this volume were originally written as lectures given at the Eranos Meeting at Ascona, Switzerland. A number of scholars from different fields of knowledge meet there annually to discuss certain topics of human interest. My contributions represent the psychological aspect of the problems under discussion, and turn upon a question of peculiar interest-the-so-called process of individuation.

{viewonly=registered,special}

I will try to explain the term "individuation" as simply as possible. By it I mean the psychological process that makes of a human being an "individual"-a unique, indivisible unit or "whole man." In the past, it has been generally assumed that consciousness-or the sum total of representations, ideas, emotions, perceptions, and other mental contents which the ego acknowledges-is equal to the psychological "whole" of an individual. But nowadays the rapidly increasing knowledge of phenomena that can be explained only on the hypothesis of unconscious mental processes has made us doubt whether the ego and its contents are really identical with the "whole." If unconscious processes exist at all, they must surely belong to the totality of the individual, even though they form no part of the conscious ego. If they were a part of the ego, they would be conscious, because anything directly connected with the ego is conscious; consciousness is by definition the relationship between the ego and the various mental contents. So-called unconscious phenomena are those that have no connection with the ego. For this reason the ego usually denies their existence, and yet they reveal themselves in an individual's behaviour. A careful observer can easily see evidence of them, although the individual himself is blissfully unaware of the fact that he is exhibiting his most secret thoughts, or even something he has never consciously thought. Only prejudice could lead anyone to suppose that, because he has never entertained a certain thought, it cannot be a content of his psyche. This might be the case if, as I said before, the psychic totality were identical with consciousness. But there is plenty of evidence to show that consciousness is far from covering the whole of the psyche. Many things happen semi-consciously, and an incalculable number of occurrences may even be entirely unconscious. The careful investigation of dual-or multiple-personality, of dissociation in nervous and mental diseases, and of approximately similar phenomena in normal people has yielded a wealth of data. I cannot imagine how one would set about explaining such phenomena without the hypothesis of the unconscious, a concept which acknowledges the fact that things live and function in the psyche just as if they were conscious and while the ego is unaware of their existence. For further information on this point the reader may wish to consult the works of Pierre Janet, Theodore Flournoy, Sigmund Freud, Morton Prince, and others.

At all events, medical psychology has been profoundly impressed with the number and importance of the unconscious processes that give rise to functional symptoms and even organic disturbances. These facts have undermined the view that the ego expresses the psychic totality. It has become obvious that the "whole" must needs include, besides consciousness, the field of unconscious events, and must constitute a sum total embracing both. The ego, once the monarch of this totality, is dethroned. It remains merely the centre of consciousness.

We may well ask whether the unconscious part of the psyche itself has a centre or not. I should hardly dare to assume that there is such a thing in the unconscious as a ruling principle analogous to the ego. Actually, everything points to the contrary. If there were such a centre, we should expect almost regular signs of its existence-for instance, intentional and purposeful opposition. Cases of dual personality would be frequent occurrences, and not rare curiosities.

Unconscious phenomena usually appear chaotic and unsystematic. For instance, reams-one of the most frequent manifestations of the unconscious-show no apparent order, nor any tendency to systematization such as might be expected from a personal entity endowed with consciousness of itself.

Neither the philosophers nor the more modern explorers of the unconscious have ventured to assume the existence of an unconscious equivalent to the conscious ego. On the contrary, such philosophers as C. G. Carus and Eduard von Hartmann treat the unconscious as a cosmic principle, something like a universal mind without any trace of personality or of ego-consciousness. Modern scientists regard the unconscious as a psychic function below the threshold of consciousness, too feeble and too dim to be perceived. In opposition to the philosophers, they are inclined to derive all

subliminal phenomena from consciousness and its contents. Janet speaks of consciousness as occasionally being too feeble to maintain the connection between certain processes and the ego. Freud, on the other hand, rather prefers the idea that there exist conscious factors that repress certain tendencies on account of their painful, or otherwise incompatible, character. There is much to be said in favour of both theories, for there are plenty of cases where a debility of consciousness causes distinct functions or contents to drop below the threshold and become subliminal; or where disagreeable contents are obviously repressed or forgotten; or where debility and repression together account for losses to the personality.

It is obvious that such careful observers as Janet and Freud would not have formed theories in which the unconscious is mainly derived from conscious sources had they discovered a trace of independent personality or autonomous volition. According to both theories, the unconscious is little else than psychic material that happens to lack the quality of consciousness, though it need not do so, and that differs in no other way from conscious contents.

If it were true that the unconscious consists of nothing but contents incidentally deprived of consciousness, then it would be preposterous-or at least unnecessarily meticulous -to worry about the question of whether the ego represents the whole of the Psychical individual, or not. A normal ego could, and would, adequately embody the "whole," since its losses through unconsciousness would be trifles, and of significance only in cases of neuroses.

The situation, however, is not so simple. Both theories are based chiefly upon experience with cases of neurosis. Neither of the authors had any psychiatric experience.' If they had, they would certainly have been impressed with the fact that the unconscious displays certain contents that are utterly different from those of consciousness; such strange ones, indeed, that nobody can understand them, neither the patient himself nor his doctors. The doctors agree that he is crazy, and he agrees too, if his consciousness be still capable of realizing the uncanny incomprehensibility of the phenomena that invade his mind. He is clearly engulfed by a flood of thoughts and experiences that have never before been in his mind, nor in those of his doctors, nor in any other normal mind. That is why we call him crazy: we cannot understand his ideas. We understand something only when we already possess the necessary premises. But the premises of the patient's ideas are just as remote from our consciousness as from the patient's mind before he became crazy.

As a matter of fact, there are certain insane ideas which cannot be derived from the contents of any conscious mind. Certainly they are not normal Contents incidentally deprived of consciousness, like something forgotten, repressed, or habitually neglected. They are quite obviously the products of an autonomous, independent mental functioning never before known or experienced. They are thoroughly different from the products of a neurotic mind, which no responsible observer would judge to be crazy. The neurotic complex is always within the reach of consciousness and is, therefore, capable of reintegration into consciousness. Except in the case of a psychosis that is an indirect expression of a latent psychosis, the revelation of the unconscious neurotic contents will never produce a psychosis, simply because they are humanly understandable. The unconscious material of a psychosis is not understandable.

No matter what the causality (aetiology) of a psychosis, its very existence implies a condition in which certain mental activities appear spontaneously out of the unconscious. They cannot be derived from consciousness) for consciousness offers no premises that can explain or assimilate the utterly strange and abnormal ideas. Neurotic contents can be integrated with no fatal injury to the ego. Insane ideas, on the contrary, cannot be assimilated. They remain inaccessible and more or less overgrow the ego-consciousness. They even show a marked tendency to draw the ego into their own "system," thus treating the ego as the latter is supposed to treat the unconscious.

The existence of such cases is not infrequent, and proves irrefutably that, under certain conditions, the unconscious is capable of taking over the role of the ego. The result of this exchange is chaos and destruction because the unconscious is not a second personality with an organised and centralized functioning, but on the contrary an apparently irrational and paradoxical coexistence of mental processes. So, while the psychosis demonstrates the possible existence of an autonomous unconscious mind, one should not be satisfied with the verdict that any form of unconscious autonomy is nothing but insanity.

We have known for a long time that the mentality of the neurotic is basically normal, though marred on the surface by exaggeration and disproportion. In other words, a neurotic is normal apart from certain anomalies. Normal psychology has gleaned a wealth of information from the study and analysis of neuroses, for they exhibit certain normal traits in such exaggeration that one cannot fail to notice them.

In spite of the utter strangeness of mental behaviour in psychoses, we may venture the same assertion as to the study of

the insane. 'Nothing produced by the human mind is completely outside our psychic range. Even the craziest idea must derive from something within the human mind, from some hidden root or premise. Without definitive evidence to the contrary, we cannot suppose certain minds to contain elements that other minds do not contain at all. We cannot assume that the unconscious has the faculty of becoming autonomous only in certain minds predestined later to become insane. It is very much more likely that the autonomy peculiar to the unconscious is a more or less general possibility. Insanity is merely the manifestation of a hidden, yet generally existent, condition.

Of course, the lunatic is an individual completely overcome by the unconscious. The same condition may exist to a less degree in the case of a person whom we cannot characterize as lunatic. 'We then have to deal with a man who is only partially overcome by his unconscious. He is not entirely "beside himself," but only partially or metaphorically.

Or, the condition may be temporary. Such a case can be a matter of ordinary panic or some other emotional upset. In such a state of violent emotion one says or does things out of proportion, things one regrets afterward when reason is restored. Even the most normal individual is not proof against this danger.

Under suitable conditions he will "jump out of his skin" and temporarily imitate the insane, with more or less success. Not much is needed; love, hatred, joy, or sadness is often strong enough to reverse the relation between the ego and the unconscious.

On such occasions, strange ideas may seize upon otherwise sound individuals. Groups and societies, even whole peoples, may have seizures of a similar kind; these are mental epidemics. In such a case only malevolent critics speak of a psychosis, while others speak of an "ism." The ordinary lunatic is generally a harmless, isolated case; since everyone sees that something is wrong with him, he is quickly taken care of. But the unconscious infections of groups of so-called normal people are more subtle and far more dangerous, although they derive from the autonomy of unconscious processes just as much as does insanity.

Ordinary common sense always imagines itself to be anywhere but in the immediate vicinity of the lunatic asylum-Yet common sense consists of the minds of average People, who have no idea that their consciousness may easily be invaded, in parts at least, by a strange and dangerous unconscious activity. It is one of the most ridiculous illusions of civilized man that the "perils of the soul" have entirely disappeared along with primitive superstitions. Even the superstitions have not disappeared from any civilized nation as a whole. They have only changed their names, and often not even that. The clan of uprooted intellectual highbrows Usually goes on believing in permanent and universal enlightenment. That technical progress and social improvements do not mean psychological differentiation or a higher level of consciousness is a lesson that we are unwilling to learn. The enormous increase of technical facilities only serves to occupy the mind with all sorts of sensations and impressions that lure the attention and interest from the inner world. The relentless flood of newspapers, radio programs, and movies may widen or fill the external mind, while at the same time, and in the same measure, consciousness of the inner world becomes darkened and may eventually disappear altogether. But "forgetting" is not identical with "getting rid of." On the contrary, the situation has become worse: instead of facing the enemy, we risk being attacked from the rear, where we are unaware and defenseless.

"Normal insanity" begins when the emotions are aroused. In these days we have ample opportunity to observe this process on a grand scale. We can see every form of mental contagion, from the crudest sentimentalism to the most subtle, secret poisoning of reason, and this among the so-called normal people-the average individuals who largely make up a nation or a state. Their amazing defenselessness against suggestions, even against the wildest social and political ideas and ideals, is not exactly a proof of the strength of consciousness and reason. But since there must be strength somewhere, it is presumably in that which overcomes reason -in the irrational and emotional factors. Emotions are instinctive, involuntary reactions that upset the rational order of consciousness by their elementary outbursts. Emotions are not "made," or willfully produced, in and by consciousness. Instead, they appear suddenly, leaping up from an unconscious region. As long as the unconscious is in a dormant condition, it is just as if there were nothing at all in that hidden region. We are really and most thoroughly unconscious of the existence of the unconscious. We are therefore always surprised afresh to discover that something can jump upon our back or fall upon our head out of mere nothingness, radically altering the pattern of our individual or social lives.

Afterward the historian, or the psychologist, steps in and shows us convincingly that things happened as they did because for such and such reasons it had to be so. But who could have told us this before? The public mind was long ago ' in possession of the main pieces of evidence for the subsequent trial in the court of historical reason. But nobody was conscious of it at the time. When John Huss and Wycliffe preached, the age of the Reformation had begun-but nobody knew it. It was there in Potentia, but no one could see it with the eyes or touch it with the hands, and thus '

not in consciousness. But it existed below the threshold of awareness. It was still unconscious, like a sun below the horizon, of which a savage might say, "There is no sun." We are like those primitives who believe that every evening the sun dies and vanishes, and that if anything rises next morning, it is a new sun. We are always surprised by the fact that something comes out of what we call "nothing."

That is our attitude toward the unconscious. We call it nothing, and yet it is a whole reality in Potentia: the sun that rises tomorrow, the thought we are going to think, the deed we are going to do, even the fate we are going to lament-tomorrow. Since we now know that, from the beginning, it has always been the same sun that sets in the evening and rises in the morning, we could, or should, afford to be less surprised at the sempiternal nature of the unconscious. But, whereas we think in terms of years, the unconscious thinks and behaves in terms of thousands of years. When something happens which we call an unheard-of innovation, it is really a very old story. Like little children, we still forget what we were yesterday. We still live in a miraculously new world, in which man imagines himself to be astonishingly new, or "modern."

Such a state of affairs is an unmistakable symptom of the youth of human consciousness, which is still unaware of its origins.

"Normal" man convinces me, even more than the lunatic, of the powerful autonomy of the unconscious. The psychological theory of the psychoses can take refuge behind real or imaginary organic disturbances of the brain and thus invalidate the importance of the unconscious. But such a device -not applicable to normal humanity. What is actually happening in the world is due not merely to "dim remnants of formerly conscious activities," but to volcanic outbursts from the very bottom of things. Otherwise, nobody could be astonished. Yet the very people who give the least credit to the autonomy of the unconscious are the most surprised.

Our consciousness, being still young and frail, has a tendency to make little of the unconscious. This is understandable enough, for a young boy should not be too deeply impressed by the majesty of his parents if he wants to accomplish something in his own right and way. Our consciousness has developed cumulatively, as well as individually, from the darkness and the twilight of the primordial unconscious. There were Psychical processes and functions long before there was an ego-consciousness. Thinking existed long before any human voice said, "I am conscious of thinking."

The primitive "perils of the soul" consist mainly of dangers to consciousness. Fascination, bewitchment, loss of soul, possession, and so on are clearly phenomena of dissociation, regression, and suppression of consciousness by unconscious contents. As we have seen, even civilized man is not yet out of the woods. The unconscious is the mother of consciousness. Where there is a mother there should also be a father, but he seems to be unknown. Consciousness, the frail youngster, may deny his father, but he cannot deny his mother. That would be too preposterous, since one can see in every child how hesitatingly and haltingly the ego-consciousness develops from a fragmentary consciousness of the moment, and how it slowly appears out of the complete darkness of mere instinctivity.

The careful analysis of human personality has accumulated a vast amount of evidence affording definite proof of the existence of an autonomous, instinctive activity, beginning conscious layer of the mind and ending in activities that strongly influence conscious behaviour. I omit a discussion of this evidence here, as the reader will find plenty of such material in the following essays.

The conscious mind is based upon, and results from, an unconscious psyche which is prior to consciousness and continues to function together with, or despite, consciousness. Although there are many cases of conscious contents that become unconscious again-through repression, for instance-the unconscious as a whole is far from being a relic of consciousness. (Are the psychic functions of animals remnants of consciousness?) The unconscious is prior to conscious mind, and it is autonomous; it has a law unto itself.

As I pointed out earlier, there is little hope of finding in the unconscious an order similar to that of the ego-consciousness. Superficially studied, at least, the unconscious is not encouraging in this respect. So far as research has gone, it does not look as if we were likely to discover an unconscious ego-personality, something like a Pythagorean "countersun." Yet we cannot overlook the fact that, just as consciousness arises from unconsciousness, the ego-centre also emerges from a dark depth in which it was somehow contained in Potentia. As a human mother can only produce a child potentially human, whose nature was concealed in her during gestation, so we are almost forced to believe that the unconscious cannot be an altogether chaotic accumulation of instincts and images. Something must hold it together. Its centre cannot be the ego, since the ego was born in the conscious mind and turns its back on the unconscious, seeking to deny it as

best it can. Or can it be that the unconscious lost its centre when the ego was born? If this is so, we should expect the ego to be far superior to the unconscious in strength of influence and of purpose. The unconscious would follow meekly in the wake of ego-consciousness. This, however, is only how we wish things to be. I admit that it is possible to base a manly and healthy ideal upon this view; it is good for youthful illusions, but its truth is questionable. The facts unfortunately point quite the other way: consciousness all too easily succumbs to unconscious influences, and these are often enough more to the point or more intelligent than the conscious judgments. It is also true that -unconscious motives often overrule conscious decisions in the main issues of life. Even individual fate largely hangs upon the fact that unconscious factors are often predominant.

A close examination of the conscious functions shows how much they depend upon an undisturbed use of memory. But memory often suffers from interference by unconscious processes. Moreover, it generally functions in an automatic way. It ordinarily uses the bridges of association, but frequently in such an extraordinary way that we must attentively reconsider the whole process of remembering if we wish to discover how certain memories managed to appear in consciousness. And not rarely the bridges remain altogether undiscoverable. In such cases it is impossible to refute the hypothesis of unconscious spontaneity. Another case is the function of intuition, which largely depends upon unconscious operations of a complex nature. Because of this peculiarity, I have defined it as "perception of relations via the unconscious."

Normally, the unconscious collaborates with consciousness in a smooth and unobtrusive way, so that one does not even realize its existence. But if an individual deviates too much from the original instinctive pattern, then he realizes the full impact of the unconscious forces. What is true of the individual holds also for the social group. The collaboration of the unconscious is intelligible and purposive. Even when it is in opposition to consciousness, it acts in a compensatory or complementary way, as if it were trying to reestablish the lost balance. The more serious the mental difficulty, however, the more incomprehensible are 'the manifestations of the unconscious. This is particularly the case in neuroses and psychoses.

There are dreams and visions of such an informative kind that the people who have them refuse to believe that they derive from an unconscious psyche. They prefer to suppose that they issue from a sort of superconsciousness. Such people usually distinguish between a quasi-physiological, or instinctive, unconscious and a psychic sphere, or layer, "above" consciousness which they style the superconsciousness. As a matter of fact, the psyche called the superior or the universal mind in Hindu philosophy corresponds to what the West calls the unconscious. Certain dreams, visions, and mystical experiences, however, suggest the existence of a consciousness in the unconscious. But, if we assume a consciousness in the unconscious, we are at once faced with the difficulty that consciousness cannot exist unless there is a subject-an ego-to which mental contents are related. Consciousness needs a centre, an ego to whom something is conscious. We know of no other kind of consciousness, nor can we imagine a consciousness without an ego. Consciousness cannot exist when there is no one to say, "I am conscious."

I must admit that there are experiences that give plausibility to the hypothesis of an ego in the unconscious realm. Still, for the reasons already mentioned, I feel rather hesitant to adopt it, the more so as I should not know what or whom to call the ego of that consciousness. Moreover, I am unable to separate an unconscious below from an unconscious above, since I find intelligence and purposiveness below as well as above. It is obvious that the centre of a transcendental consciousness cannot be the human ego, since the ego has neither a hand in producing such experiences nor the necessary intelligence to understand them. It can only be their victim or the receiver of divine grace.

There is not much merit in speculating about things we cannot know. It is best to refrain from venturesome statements that go beyond the boundaries of science. This is neither malevolent criticism nor scepticism; I simply hold that honesty demands that we remain within the narrow confines of our knowledge. It is not only immodest, it is intellectually immoral to make assertions that go beyond the reach of human cognition. The matters we have just considered are partial manifestations of processes that in their entirety are inaccessible to our cognition. As I said before, they may have, and occasionally they seem to have, qualities that we might refer to a consciousness not identical with our own. But as long as we have no other means of ascertaining the existence of a transcendental consciousness we have to admit our uncertainty.

As far, then, as my observations go, I have not discovered in the unconscious anything like a personality comparable to the conscious ego. But, although a definite alter ego seems not to exist (except in the rare cases of dual personality), there are at least traces of personalities in the manifestations of the unconscious. A simple example is the dream, in which a variety of real and imaginary people enact the dream thoughts. In nearly all important cases of dissociation the manifestations of the unconscious assume a distinctive character. The unconscious personates. This phenomenon has supported and renewed the belief in spirits. But a careful examination of the behaviour and psychic make-up of such

personations reveals their fragmentary character. They seem to represent complexes split off from a greater whole; splinters chipped from the main block.

I have constantly been impressed by the peculiarly organized character of dissociated fragments. They resemble whole or partial personalities. Often I have asked myself whether we are not justified in assuming that, if the splinters have personality, then the block from which they were separated must have personality to a still higher degree. The conclusion seems logical, and the case is the same whether the fragments are big or small. Why, then, should not the whole have personality too? This personality, of course, would be a completely concealed and inaccessible entity. Personality does not necessarily include consciousness. It can be dormant or, at most, dreaming.

Nevertheless, the general aspect of unconscious manifestations is in the main chaotic and irrational, in spite of many symptoms of intelligence and purposiveness. The unconscious produces dreams, irrational fantasies, peculiar visions, primitive emotions, grotesque or fabulous ideas, and the like exactly what one would expect of a dreaming person stirring in his sleep. The unconscious seems to have a personality that has never been awake or conscious either of a continuity in itself or of a life lived. The only question is whether the hypothesis of such a dormant and deeply concealed personality is tenable. It may be that all of the personality to be found in the unconscious is contained in the personations mentioned before. If this is the case, all my guesswork would be futile. On the other hand, there possibly exist concealed personalities that are far less fragmentary which is to say, more complete.

I am convinced that there is evidence for this view, although unfortunately it belongs to the intricacies and subtleties of psychological analysis.

It is the accepted theory that sex is determined by a preponderance of male-or female-producing genes in the combined chromosomes of sperm and ovum after fertilization has taken place. Biologically, therefore, a man contains female-producing elements, a woman male-producing elements, a fact of which each, as a rule, is quite unaware. Certainly there are few men who could or would care to tell us what they would be like if they were females. Yet all men must have more or less latent female components if it is true that the female-forming elements continue to live and perpetuate themselves throughout the body cells of the entire male organism. How these sex-determining elements function in the body is not known, but there can be no doubt that they are at least indirectly responsible for the existence of the male and female sex hormones which in turn govern the secondary sex characters, that is, the traits we associate with "masculineness" or "feminineness" in the individual.

It is easy to observe that women at a more advanced age develop masculine qualities, grow a moustache, acquire a rather acute and sometimes obstinate mind, and often develop a deeper voice. Men of advanced age, on the contrary, become mellow, "lovely" old men-soft, kind to children, sentimental, and rather emotional; their anatomical forms become rounded, they take interest in the family and home life, in genealogy, gossip, and so on. It is by no means rare for the wife to take over business responsibilities in later life, while the husband plays a merely helpful role. If you study the photographs of a primitive tribe, and if you compare the old people with the young, you will see what becomes at a more advanced age of lovely young girls and of animalistic, brutal young men. A completely hidden character of the opposite sex comes into the foreground.

The observer who has sharpened his eyes and acquired a good deal of practical experience begins to discover symptoms (often astonishing ones) of the man in the woman, and of the woman in the man. When people are at their best, there is not much chance of seeing anything of their other side. But if you observe a man when he is caught in a mood, you find him to be a different person. Sometimes the change is quite remarkable: a man who is ordinarily altruistic, generous, amiable, and intelligent becomes, when a certain mood seizes upon him, a slightly mean, nastily egotistical, and illogically prejudiced character. A woman of a usually kind and peaceable disposition becomes an argumentative, obstinate, narrow-minded shrew if it should come into her head to use a half-understood idea heard in a conversation six weeks or months ago. (If the man is the woman's husband, they will soon have learned the art of picking out irritating topics that inevitably bring out the "other side!")

Should you study this world-wide experience with due attention, and regard the 'other side' as a trait of character, you will produce a picture that shows what I mean by the anima, the woman in a man, and the animus, the man in a woman. By putting together all the cases in which a man has reacted to the influence of a mood (which is an emotion or affect without sufficient cause), you can build up a definite personality. We avoid doing this, as a rule, because when we are fond of people we bate to put them in an unfavourable light. For the psychologist, however, to do so is a professional task. The analysis is not simple for most of us to make, because we are not used to dividing an intimate friend into two separate characters. We are merely irritated by the contradictions in the one person. 'We do habitually sketch out the

presumable character of a man, whom we have never met, from the contents of the letters he has written us; and in a similar way we can sum up all of a man's traits that become visible under the stress of emotion, which affords the ideal condition for the manifestation of unconscious contents. Under its possession one is "beside one's self," and the unconscious gets a chance to occupy the foreground.

As a matter of fact, an emotion is the intrusion of an unconscious personality. The unconscious contents it brings to light have a personal character, and it is merely because we never sum them up that we have not discovered this other character long ago. To the primitive mind, a man who is seized by strong emotion is possessed by a devil or a spirit; and our language still expresses the same idea, at least metaphorically. There is much to be said in favour of this point of view.

The character that summarizes a person's uncontrolled emotional manifestations consists, in the first place, of his inferior qualities or peculiarities. Even people we like and appreciate suffer from certain imperfections of character that have to be taken into the bargain. When people are not at their best, such flaws become clearly visible. I have called the inferior and less commendable part of a person the shadow. We have met with this figure in literature; for instance, Faust and his shadow Mephistopheles. There is an excellent description of this figure in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *The Elixirs of the Devil*.

But the shadow is not all that becomes manifest in emotional disturbance; and it is not sufficient to explain why a man has the rather definite feeling that "he is not himself" or that "he is beside himself." There is at such times a peculiar strangeness about a man, which we positively dislike to attribute to him in our ordinary thought of him. Therefore, we say, "I did not recognize him any more," "he forgot himself," or "he did not know himself any longer." Such colloquial expressions clearly formulate a peculiar strangeness or alienation. "Alien" is the French word for insane, and we freely use the word "mad" or angry. As a matter of fact, emotions are coupled with a greater or smaller loss of consciousness, and with a narrowing down of the mind to a remarkable single-mindedness, not to say imbecility. When the storm has blown over, and the former self has appeared again, we prefer to think that the strange presence has disappeared altogether, we hope that the whole thing has not been true.

Yet nothing of this kind really disappears. It merely returns to the unconscious, where it awaits its next opportunity. For a keen eye, even, it does not disappear completely. Its influence is still there, less obvious, yet more subtle and cunning.

The strangeness is due to the emergence of a different character—one that we hesitate to ascribe to the ego personality. This formulation of the matter sounds as if it pretended to be new or unexpected. But there is actually nothing new about it. Practically everybody knows it. Do we not always expect something different behind our first impressions of people? Do we not say, "Wait, until you know him better"? Or a wife says, "You have not been married to him for twenty years." Are we quite sure of ourselves? Are we absolutely certain about our own character, should we find ourselves in a tight corner?

If people are honest with themselves they must admit a certain fear of something that may overcome them. Even saints, or rather just the saints, have their specific devils, and even if they fight them successfully, it is often a close call. Otherwise saintliness would be cheap.

"Strangeness" is, of course, a relative term. One should probably say "relatively strange," since it usually depends upon circumstances whether we can draw a favourable picture of ourselves or not. Certain people may never have an inkling of another side, either because circumstances prevented their seeing it or because they themselves were too unconscious and too unreflective to realize it.

This rather cursory description of two groups of contents that make up personalities in the unconscious—the anima (or animus) and the shadow—would be inadequate, if I did not emphasize the fact that, in a man's case, the anima has a definitely feminine and the shadow an equally definite masculine character. It may strike the reader that my description of the shadow does not markedly differ from my picture of the anima. This is due to the fact that I have spoken only of the immediate and superficial aspects of these figures. Particularly the description of the anima is most incomplete. In the following essays, the reader will find a fuller demonstration of the anima's nature.

If we compare a number of emotional events, we can easily see that the same character reappears in every one of them. For this reason we can attribute continuity to the unconscious personality, and ascribe to it the emotional intrusions. This point of view is at bottom nothing but an imitation, or repetition, of the way in which primitive man comes to the

conclusion that there are such things as witches and ghosts. But he is satisfied with the general assertion that witches and ghosts exist, and does not try to specify their nature. The psychological procedure of which I speak is an attempt to reconstruct an individual character. It is not only of theoretical interest, in certain cases, but of great practical importance. Patients often suffer so much from intrusions of the unconscious that it helps them considerably to know their opponent "personally."

It is not always a laborious process to reconstruct the anima. Sometimes she appears already personified in dreams and other products of unconscious activity. We also find her as a classical figure in prose fiction; for instance, in books by Haggard, Benoit, Sloane, and others. These authors have fully succeeded in reconstructing the collective picture of the anima. They are clearly dealing with one and the same mythological and transcendental figure, yet with individual variations. An element of the supernatural always adheres to the anima. This must be so, since she is an entity living almost entirely in the "other world" of the unconscious.

Although the anima is a reconstruction and a hypothesis, the idea explains for us many tragic or puzzling love affairs and their amazing reversals. As long as a man is unconscious of his anima she is frequently projected upon a real woman, and the man's fantasy equips her with all the fascinating qualities peculiar to the anima. Her moral range is rather wide: she embraces the degraded woman and the femme inspiratrice, Faust's Gretchen, and the Virgin. Edouard Schure has given us an almost schematic description of the anima, but he had to present her as two figures, since he could not fit all the paradoxes into one person. Charles Kingsley's Hypatia describes a similar case.

The figure of the animus, the man in the woman, is equally paradoxical. The best literary description I have come across is that by Ronald Frazer. It is a curious fact that no woman of talent has succeeded in producing an adequate picture. It may be that a woman's animus writes her novels for her, and thus escapes portrayal. But Frazer has produced a clever and accurate picture of the animus, running the whole gamut from utter banality to supreme mystery.

Animus and anima are natural "archetypes," primordial figures of the unconscious, and have given rise to the mythological gods and goddesses. It is, therefore, rather a futile undertaking to disinfect Olympus with rational enlightenment. The gods are not there; they are ensconced in the shadows of the unconscious, where we cannot uproot them. Whenever a projection of these archetypes is destroyed by rational criticism, the disembodied image returns to its origin, the archetype. There it awaits a new opportunity to project itself. Rationalism is certainly called for in many pursuits, but as soon as it leaves the scientific laboratory to trespass in the domains of life it always expects the things that never happen. Reason has never ruled life, and presumably it never will. The questions of life and fate are too often—and perhaps for the largest part—decided by the powers of the unconscious.

To the psychological beginner, animus and anima are certainly nothing but elusive wraiths. It needs a good deal of specific experience to recognize and understand their subtle but powerful activity. But when the student has acquired the necessary powers of psychological criticism, he can derive a fairly accurate picture of their nature. They appear as strange, unconscious entities, which he would like to endow with ego-consciousness. They seem almost capable of it.

But the facts do not support this idea. There is nothing in their behaviour that bespeaks an ego-consciousness, as we know it. On the contrary, they show every sign of being fragmentary personalities. They are masklike, wraithlike, without problems of their own or any self-reflection, with no conflict, no doubt, no suffering; something like the gods, who have no philosophy; like the Brahma-gods of the Buddhist Samyutta-nikiya whose erroneous views need Gautama Buddha's correction. They seem to be functions or instincts which appear in a personal form when aroused from their dormant condition. But contrary to the functions attached to consciousness, they are always strangers in the conscious world. Because they permeate the atmosphere with a feeling of uncanny foreboding, or even with the fear of mental derangement, they are unwelcome intruders.

In studying their psychic constituents—that is, the imaginative material manifested through them—we find any number of archaic and "historical" connections, contents, archetypal images that we call mythological themes. The reader will find many such parallels in the following chapters." This peculiarity allows one to locate the anima and animus: they obviously live or function in the deeper layers of the unconscious mind, in the phylogenetic substructures of the modern mind, the so-called collective unconscious.

This localization explains a good deal of their strange they bring into our ephemeral consciousness an unpsychic life belonging to a remote past. This psychic life is the mind of our ancient ancestors, the way in which they thought and felt, the way in which they conceived of life and the world, of gods and human beings. The existence of these historical layers

is presumably the source of the belief in reincarnation and in memories of past lives. As the body is a sort of museum of its phylogenetic history, is the mind. There is no reason for believing that the psyche, with its peculiar structure, is the only thing in the world that has no history beyond its individual manifestation. Even the conscious mind cannot be denied a history extending over at least five thousand years. It is only individual ego-consciousness that has forever a new beginning and an early end. But the unconscious psyche is not only immensely old, it is also able to grow unceasingly into an equally remote future. It forms, and is part of, the human species just as much as the body, which is also individually ephemeral, yet collectively of immeasurable duration.

The anima and animus live in a world quite different from our own; in a world where the pulse of time beats ever so slowly; where the birth and death of individuals count little, and where ten thousand years ago is yesterday. No wonder that their aspect is strange so strange that their intrusion into consciousness of ten blasts into fragments the all-too-feeble brainpans of unfortunate mortals. Anima and animus contain the greater part of the material which appears in insanity, more especially in schizophrenia.

The anima and animus are not the only figures discernible in the unconscious. I could mention others with aspects of their own that can be distinguished from the animus and anima. But as they are just as baffling to the ego-consciousness, I shall not discuss them here.

What I have said about the unconscious may give an approximate idea of what is meant by that term. Coming now to the problem of individuation, we see that we are confronted with a rather extraordinary task: the psyche consists of two incongruous halves that should properly make "whole" together. One is inclined to think that the ego-consciousness is capable of assimilating and integrating the unconscious; one hopes, at least, that such a solution is possible. But, unfortunately, the unconscious is really unconscious; it is unknown. And how can you assimilate something unknown? Even if one has a pretty complete idea of his anima and of other such figures, he has not yet sounded the depths of the unconscious. One hopes to dominate the unconscious, but the past masters of this art of domination the yogis wind up with samadhi, an ecstatic condition that seems to be equivalent to an unconscious state. The fact that they call our unconscious the universal consciousness, does not change things in the least: in their case the unconscious has devoured the ego-consciousness. They do not realize that a "universal" consciousness is a contradiction in terms, since exclusiveness, selection, and discrimination are the root and essence of all that can claim the name of consciousness.

A "universal" consciousness is logically identical with unconsciousness. It is true that an accurate application of the methods of the Pali-canon, or of the Yogasutra, produces a remarkable extension of consciousness. But the contents of consciousness lose in clearness of detail with increasing extension. In the end, consciousness becomes vast but dim, with an infinite multitude of objects merging into an indistinct totality—a state in which the subjective and objective are almost completely identical. This is all very well, but scarcely to be recommended anywhere north of the Tropic of Cancer.

We must attempt a different solution. We believe in ego-consciousness and in what we call reality. The realities of a northern climate are somehow so convincing that we are better off if we do not forget them. It makes sense to deal with reality: "My ego-consciousness is, therefore, inclined to swallow the unconscious, and if that should not be feasible, I will try to repress it." That is how we look at the question. But if we understand anything about the unconscious we know that it cannot be swallowed. We know also that it is dangerous to repress it, for we have learned that the unconscious is life, and that if life is repressed it will live against us, as is the case in neuroses.

Consciousness and the unconscious do not make a whole when either is suppressed or damaged by the other. If they must contend, let it be a fair fight with equal right on both sides. Both are aspects of life. Let consciousness defend its reason and its self-protective ways, and let the chaotic life of the unconscious be given a fair chance to have its own way, as much of it as we can stand. This means at once open conflict and open collaboration. Yet, paradoxically, this is presumably what human life should be. It is the old play of hammer and anvil: the suffering iron between them will in the end be shaped into an unbreakable whole, the individual. This experience is what is called, in the later sections of this book, the process of individuation.

Particularly in one of the following chapters I try to show how the psyche behaves under the strain of the conflict, what it produces in the individual, and how it has been exemplified in the history of the human mind. In this second connection, the reader will perhaps be astonished at the emphasis I lay on alchemy, which is discussed in the fifth chapter. Alchemy is not an old hobby of mine; I began a thorough study of the subject only within the last few years. My reason for making a fairly extensive use of alchemistic parallels is that in my Psychological practice I have observed quite a number of actual patients' cases which show unmistakable similarities to alchemistic symbolism. In my next chapter I deal with one

of those cases. Because a psychologist must be particularly careful not to suggest his own theories to a patient, I wish to point out that none of the cases mentioned were under my care after I had begun the study of alchemy. If the process of individuation is an empirical fact, rather than a theory, one must expect the problem to have its history. It must have played a more or less important role in former centuries. And that historic background does, indeed, exist. I have known for twenty-five years that Gnosticism contains striking parallels to the symbolism of the process of individuation. But a gap of almost 1,600 years separates us from that peculiar religious philosophy. For a long time I was unable to find the mediaeval parallel to this problem. Even Silberer's book ' did not convince me that alchemy was the missing link.

The reason it took me so long to bridge the gulf between Gnosticism and modern psychology was my profound ignorance of Greek and Latin alchemy and its symbolism. The little I knew of German alchemistic treatises did not do much to enlighten me about their abstruse symbolism. At all events, I was unable to make the connection with what I knew of psychological individuation. That the parallel dawned upon me at all is due to the visionary dreams contained in the next chapter. I must confess that it cost me quite a struggle to overcome the prejudice, which I shared with many others, against the seeming absurdity of alchemy. There is no hope of an approach to the subject if it is considered from the standpoint of modern chemistry, and it appears hopeless when one first tries to understand it psychologically. But my patience has been richly rewarded. I am now satisfied that alchemy is the requisite mediaeval exemplar of this concept of individuation. There is a real continuity in the unremitting attempts of human minds to deal with the problem from the first century of our era on to the middle of the eighteenth. Goethe's Faust is the last magnificent link in "Homer's golden chain," and at the same time the introduction of the problem to a new, psychologically minded age. The fifth chapter gives a psychological explanation of alchemy, and also presents the idea of individuation as a fundamental alchemistic symbol. The problem necessarily involves the question of religion. if the reader is particularly interested in the relation of religion to psychology, I call his attention to my Terry Lectures on "Psychology and Religion."

{/viewonly}