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Lecture 1

20 APRIL 1934

IN MY EXPERIENCE,²⁴ it was in general the basic terms that caused difficulty. I have therefore decided to discuss simpler matters this semester—namely basic terms and methods—with the help of which I hope to explain to you how the notions with which I work came into being.

In psychology, we enter an incredibly vast and controversial field. It thus differs from other sciences, whose boundaries are more or less sharply delineated. The field known as psychology is completely unbounded, and one might even call it vague and nebulous. One very significant fact in this respect is that each year an American university publishes a thick volume entitled *Psychologies of the Year so-and-so*, for instance of 1932 or of 1933. Each year there is an array of “psychologies.”²⁵ If one has traveled about the world a bit, and has seen various people, nations, and universities, one gains the impression that psychology consists of the sum of individual declarations of faith rather than of a system. Now each such declaration wants to exclude the others and to be the only one to tell the universally valid truth. As understandable as such a wish is, sometimes, however, such convictions are exaggerated.

In psychology, after all, very many personal views exist, precisely because there is an infinite number of aspects. For instance, people usually tend to consider psychology a personal matter. One *has* a certain psychology, a certain disposition, that is to say one loves this or hates that, and so on. Psychology is, however, first of all about what is valid in general. It deals with what is known as the psyche or soul. Everything that is made and done by man ultimately goes back to this. *Everything* was once

²⁴ That is, in the previous semester (Jung, 2018).

²⁵ Jung here repeats a point he had also made at the start of the first semester (see 2018, p. 1 and note 58). The series was edited by Carl Murchison and published by Clark University Press, Worcester, MA. The first traceable volume is from 1925 (Murchison, 1925).

psychic, there is nothing that had not been psychic before, such as the fantasy of an artist or an engineer. Take a railway bridge, or a work of art—or indeed this lectern.

Everything that we learn and experience is at first psychic. The only thing that is immediately given and perceptible is something psychic, that is, a psychic image. This is the first and only basis of experience. “I sense [*empfinde*]” is the first truth. Reality—that is, what we call real—is the reality of our sensation. In the very first instance, sensation is what is real and what conveys to us the character of reality in the first place.

There is, of course, an outer world, that is to say, things that exist beyond the psyche. I would obviously not go so far as to claim a solipsism that looks upon everything as psychic.²⁶ And yet everything we experience is psychic. If, for instance, you see light, then this is something psychic, for there is no light “in itself,” nor is there sound. They exist merely in the brain, and what they look like there we do not know. We only have knowledge of a complicated process of which we are unconscious. In fact, we need complex apparatuses to determine what that thing is which has sounded in our head or blinded our eyes.

Psychology is thus the science of that which occurs directly. Everything else is given to us only indirectly. When you burn yourself, for instance, by touching a hot iron, this process is by no means simple but highly complicated. Our nerves must be affected, etc., for an impression to register in our brain that we call pain. What this pain looks like one level further down, that is, when it is still located in the nerve, eludes us completely. Little wonder, then, that psychology touches upon a range of other sciences: pedagogics, medicine, philosophy, history, ethnology, mysticism, art, the philosophy of religion, and so on, and also parapsychology.

Consequently, misunderstandings and prejudices are not only possible but happen all the time. Since the psyche is an immediate given, we all believe that it is the given *per se*. We must work a great deal on ourselves to realize that our own experience of the psyche is not *the* general experience.

Some attempt to restrict psychology, because such a broadness of the concept strikes them as uncanny. Sometimes psychology is therefore confined to the theory of attention, volition, consciousness, or affects—serving to explain, for instance, why people love and hate each other, why they are abnormal or normal, or how one might be successful, and so on. Medical

²⁶ Solipsism: a theory in philosophy that one’s own existence is the only thing that is real or that can be known with certainty.

psychology, too, is as a rule limited to the psychology of neuroses, and consequently its validity is also limited. But psychology is first and foremost a general phenomenon, because the psyche is first and foremost a general, given fact.

Here, however, I must at once draw your attention to a paradoxical fact. Although the psyche is in the first instance a general phenomenon, it is, on the other hand, a most personal matter. The individual is the living unity, for there is no other life than individual life. So it would of course be possible to also posit: Psychology is what is given individually. This is an antinomy, but in psychology we cannot advance unless we learn the very difficult art of paradoxical thinking.

First and foremost, psychology finds expression in language, in social and religious convictions, and in institutions. We are highly dependent on the language in which we speak. One could almost identify language with the psyche. We thus depend on language as much as on moral or religious preconditions—and not merely on those that we share. There are unspoken preconditions we are not at all conscious of, which we might even oppose, and which nonetheless influence us, above all our milieu and our psychic heredity; in addition, there are social, political, geographical, and ethnological preconditions. Indeed, the soil and the climate influence not only the psyche but even our anatomy, or, to say the least, our behavior.

This can be seen primarily by observing the children of Europeans born on foreign soil, for instance, in the colonies. This is such a universal fact that English children born in the colonies are called “colonials,” meaning that something is “not right” with them. Under some circumstances, these influences can utterly dominate an individual. This, of course, is an imponderability.

I remember, for instance, a family with seven children in New York. One of these children was born in Frankfurt am Main,²⁷ a true German girl who could be spotted as such fifty meters off. Four children had been born in New York and were undoubtedly American. Should you ask me, however, how I could detect the difference, I could not tell you what “an American ought to look like.” Another example: a picture published in a German newspaper, depicting American politicians who had been appointed Indian chieftains. “Now who is the Indian?” Or, one evening, I came past a large factory in Buffalo. I had no idea, I said, that there were really so many Indians in this area! No way, I was told by an American

²⁷ Thus in Sidler. Hannah: “seven children four of whom had been born in Hamburg [*sic*]” (p. 94). This anecdote is missing in Schärf.

doctor, not a drop of native American Indian blood in them, they are all descendants of Czechs, Poles, Germans, Italians, etc. But the *habitus* has a very distinct character, which is quite unmistakable. If this escapes a psychologist, I would suggest appointing a sales assistant of a large department store as chair of psychology, for such matters are of course those that matter. Imagine treating an Englishman as if he were French! Vice versa, would you greet a Frenchman with “Hello boy”?²⁸

Professor Boas has measured the skulls of immigrants and of their children at Columbia University in New York. He found out that the shapes of their skulls had changed in the direction of the Yankee type.²⁹ Now if even the body changes, you can imagine that naturally the soul does, too, as I observed in the case of colonials.³⁰ All immigrants to the colonies are as a rule in a very strange state, known as “going black,” that is, they have turned black under the skin. When I was in Central Africa, I observed myself and my dreams very closely in order to discover when the first black mark appeared on me, other than those I already had. . . .³¹ With some experience you can tell when someone has turned black. When you enter the house of such a man you will immediately notice that the tablecloth has marks, the crockery is chipped and broken, pictures are hanging askew, and that he feels quite palpably uncomfortable—like a lion walking to and fro in his cage. Nor will the man be able to look you straight in the eye; he will squint, look around nervously, and he will

²⁸ This expression in English in the notes.

²⁹ Slightly different versions of the anecdotes about the workers in Buffalo and the family of German immigrants in New York, as well as a report on Boas’s investigations, can also be found in Jung’s “The complications of American psychology” (1930b, §§ 948–949).—Jung had met Franz Boas (1858–1942), one of the fathers of modern anthropology, in 1909 at the twentieth anniversary of Clark University in Worcester, where Boas, together with Jung and Freud, had been among the invited lecturers (cf. Skues, 2012). From his investigations between 1908 and 1910 on the bodily form of descendants of immigrants, he concluded that “American-born descendants of immigrants differ in type from their foreign-born parents” (Boas, 1912, p. 60). On Boas and Jung, see Shamdasani (2003, pp. 276–278).

³⁰ Sidler has the following quote here, obviously something Jung said he was told: “Why for God’s sake do you want to study the psychology of these Niggers [*sic*], because they haven’t any. Study ours, that’s much more interesting.”

³¹ At the end of his stay in North Africa in 1920, Jung had a dream that was, to him, “the first hint of ‘going black under the skin,’ a spiritual peril which threatens the uprooted European in Africa to an extent not fully appreciated,” an “archetypal experience.” The dream expressed the conflict between Jung’s “feeling superior because I was reminded at every step of my European nature” and “the existence of unconscious forces within myself which would take the part of these strangers” (Jung, 1962, pp. 273–274). Cf. Jung, 1930b, §§ 962, 967; 1931 [1927], § 97.

already have that same strange rolling motion of the eyes as the Negroes. Negroes can't look you in the face, probably for fear of the evil eye. We are giving them the evil eye because *we* are able to stare at somebody, and that is why the Europeans are of ill repute, because it is only their medicine men who can do this.

I waited for a long time,³² without noticing a thing, until I was in the bush for the first time, in complete wilderness, "1,000 miles from anywhere."³³ Two of us Europeans went for a walk. I was carrying a new elephant gun and my companion was armed with a heavy Colt, and thus we went "botanizing." I soon had a strange feeling that something was amiss with my eyes, so I cleaned the lenses of my spectacles. I observed myself closely and concluded that my eyes were blinking. I could not find any organic cause, but every time my eyes looked around the blinking set in again. I then established the theory that my eyes were evidently looking for something. I somewhat doubted this theory, however, until someone else confirmed it. Another friend, an American, went out to shoot guinea fowl. The area was covered in termite hills. As he was walking along, he overlooked a seven-foot green mamba, a kind of cobra, one of the few snakes that attacks human beings at night, and was almost killed by it.³⁴ The snake had been lying in the sun on top of a termite hill. The sun was beating down, which is when they get particularly vicious. It had actually intended to go for the Negro, but he had noticed. Now if the American's eyes had also flickered then he, too, would have taken note of the snake. This has to do with prevailing local conditions in this strange country, where one must have one's eyes everywhere at all times. Thus, characteristic influences arise from such conditions. There are, of course, also other things that can prompt these effects.

One of the most common prejudices against psychology is that it is a kind of cookery book providing recipes for how one should do things. There's a picture in an American magazine, showing a mother who took

³² That is, for signs in himself of "going black."

³³ This expression in English in the notes.

³⁴ This happened to George Beckwith, who had accompanied Jung, together with Helton Godwin "Peter" Baynes and Ruth Bailey, on the so-called Bugishu Psychological Expedition. In "Archaic man," Jung related the events of that day: "I nearly stepped on a puff-adder, and only managed to jump away just in time. That afternoon my companion returned from a hunt, deathly pale and trembling in every limb. He had narrowly escaped being bitten by a seven-foot mamba which darted at him from behind a termite hill. He would undoubtedly have been killed had he not been able to wound the brute with a shot at the last moment. At nine o'clock that night our camp was attacked by a pack of ravenous hyenas. . . . Such a day gave our Negroes food for thought" (1931 [1930], § 125).

her child on her knee in order to punish it and had to hold it there while she found the right place in her book on education in order to see what to do next! Psychology is not an arbitrary matter, however, but a phenomenology, a symptomatology, dealing with a great number of facts. But it is extremely difficult to accept these facts as they really are, because so many facts in psychology are outright tantalizing, so that we think, “This shouldn’t be like this! This should be different!” because we ourselves are directly affected, and most often arrive at a quite incorrect judgment. Thus, immediately at our first encounter with such matters we form certain judgments.

A further difficulty in psychology is the representation of its material. Often we have to describe certain facts or events and must resort to ordinary, everyday language to do so. The resulting picture may satisfy ourselves, but not the person to whom we are telling it. In fact, one should actually tell everyone certain facts in *his own language*.³⁵ Otherwise one can never be certain that one has been correctly understood. As it is, things appear differently to each and every person.

Our language is incredibly deficient in describing psychological nuances. French, for example, is not suited for psychology, since it has very clear terms and concepts, but it is ideally suited for jurisprudence, since it leaves no holes unplugged. In psychology, however, many holes remain open, indeed, must remain open so that the necessary understanding can be reached. English is better suited, particularly those words deriving from Anglo-Saxon. The German language is very good; it is still so little developed and unspecific, even though the Germans are said to be the nation of poets and thinkers. So German is not a good language for philosophy, but it is excellent for psychology, even though the Germans are very poor psychologists, as their political history proves. The Chinese written language is probably best suited to our purpose because it still has signs and hieroglyphs, and because you can attribute your special meaning to each sign. This can be seen best in the translations of Laotse King;³⁶ the

³⁵ Again, Hannah differs slightly: “One should really describe every single one of these facts in its *own language*” (p. 95).

³⁶ *Sic* in Sidler, missing in Hannah; obviously a condensation of the name of Lao Tze, an ancient Chinese sage whose identity has not been securely established, and the *Tao te Ching*, of which he is traditionally regarded as the author or compiler and which describes the *Tao* as the source and ideal of all existence and advocates the state of *wu wei*, literally “non-action” or “not acting.” Jung described the latter as “the non-action of the Chinese, which is not a non-action” (1972, p. 305).

hieroglyphs are so versatile that any number of things can be discerned from them.

I mention this since in psychology we encounter a difficulty that recently also struck an Englishman.³⁷ The fundamental psychological truths can never be couched in sharply delineated terms. A fitting psychological term is entirely indeterminate, but it is just capable of conveying something important. The sharper a psychological term, the less it designates; consequently, it is also much more off the mark since nothing in the psyche is simple. Every psychological entity is always a highly complicated, very complex matter. Nothing psychic can be isolated. If you seem to have been able to isolate a psychic process, rest assured that you have killed the psychic life in that process.

Now we could simply strike our colors and say that nothing can be done about psychology anyway. But this is not the case; it's just that the task is especially difficult. We need to learn the art of coming up with terms that are quite general and indeterminate, and yet can still convey something. This peculiar complexity of psychic matters can be seen in language itself, in words such as "courage"; "water"; or "good, better, best." You have no idea of the manifold connotations these words carry. "Good, better, best"³⁸—this seems so simple, and yet each of these words looks back on a long, possibly millennia-old history. They contain the primordial words that continue to resonate. There is so much that resonates in this comparative: "good"—"better." "Better" derives from "bad," Old High German *bat* or *bass*, meaning "good" (as in *fürbass gehen*, to stride, to advance vigorously). In Anglo-Saxon, its meaning keeled over into the opposite. And this still resonates, so that when we utter the word "good" and also sincerely mean it, the word still comes tinged with a slight doubt. Very often the history of a word secretly contains its opposite meaning, and if this fails to somehow resonate, the term or concept is incomplete, just like a muscle that acts in opposition to the specific movement generated by the agonistic muscle: When you stretch or bend your arm, you must at the same time innervate the opposite muscle. The same applies to

³⁷ Sidler then notes, in quotation marks, the beginning of a passage that Jung obviously quoted from that unnamed source, but the notes then break off in the middle of the second phrase, obviously because he could no longer follow what Jung said. Here, the essence of the quote is given without quotation marks. The source of the reference could not be identified.

³⁸ The second time Jung quotes this comparative and superlative, he does so in English.

the notion of a given word, which also secretly contains its contrary meaning.³⁹

For instance, no educated Frenchman can speak of *Pucelle d'Orléans*⁴⁰ without thinking that *pucelle* also means “whore.” He cannot, however, recall that *pucelle*, from Italian *pucella*, originally meant “small flea.” These are *enantiodromatic* transformations. The term *enantiodromia* comes from our old friend Heraclitus⁴¹ and means “to run counter to one another,” “to run into one’s opposite”: thus, cold into hot, hot into cold, high into low, low into high. This law of *enantiodromia* plays a particularly significant role in psychology.

The German *Seele* and the English “soul” have a strange etymology. They derive from Proto-Germanic *seivalo* and Gothic *seivala*. These are etymologically linked to the related Greek word *aios*, “to shine in glaring colors.” Aiolos, or Aeolus in Latin, the mighty mover, is the Greek God of the winds. Now this word has all but vanished in the word “soul,” and only Old Slavonic still has a related word.⁴²

The Greek word for wind in the New Testament is *pneuma*. In Arabic, the wind also has the meaning of spirit. German *Geist* derives from *ufgeistia*, Swiss-German *ufgeisten*, to be aroused or moved, to be bewildered, utterly fascinated, thus in a highly aroused emotional state. It is similar in the miracle of Pentecost:⁴³ There came a rushing mighty wind, like a geyser, and people believed the disciples were inebriated because they spoke in foreign tongues; hence, a geyser-like violent eruption of wind.

In the ancient legend, Aiolos is described as a God who sits on a mountain-like island and holds an instrument shaped like a lance. There

³⁹ Jung does not mention it here, but in 1910—at the height of their collaboration and friendship—Freud had published an article, “The antithetical meaning of primal words,” in which he had drawn attention precisely to this “existence of contradictory primal meanings” of words (1910, p. 159), partly using the same examples as Jung, e.g., “Our ‘bös’ (‘bad’) is matched by a word ‘bass’ (‘good’)” (ibid.).

⁴⁰ The Maid or Virgin of Orléans: that is, Joan of Arc.

⁴¹ Jung repeatedly credited Heraclitus with coining this term. Although the concept is in fact in accordance with the latter’s philosophy, the term itself was not used by Heraclitus in the extant texts but first turned up in a later summary of his philosophy by Diogenes Laërtius.

⁴² The authoritative *Deutsches Wörterbuch* by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (1854–1960) states that neither the word’s origin nor its relatedness to other words is clear (*von noch nicht aufgeklärter Herkunft und Verwandtschaft*). Contemporary etymology links *Seele*, Old High German *se(u)la*, Gothic *saiwala*, English “soul,” with *See* (lake), meaning “the one who belongs to the lake.” In Germanic mythology, the souls of the unborn and the dead dwelt in the water (*Duden, Herkunftswörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*).

⁴³ Acts 2.

is a cave in the mountain, in which the winds are captured. From time to time he pokes the mountain with his lance, and so releases an evil wind. Precisely this is *ufgeisten*, that is, to cast into a state of enthusiasm and excitement. The God who rules this state is Aiolos, the God of the soul. The soul is the phenomenon that arises from keeping these evil wind powers within.

If you ever travel to Verona and visit the cathedral, you will see a saying in Latin that reads: *In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras*—“In your patience you will possess your souls.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Luke 21, 19 (KJV).—Jung had visited Verona in October 1910 during a bicycle trip through Northern Italy with his friend Wolfgang Stockmayer (see Freud & Jung, 1974, p. 359).

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