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Chapter One

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARCHETYPE

WHEN analytical psychology speaks of the primordial image or archetype of the Great Mother, it is referring, not to any concrete image existing in space and time, but to an inward image at work in the human psyche. The symbolic expression of this psychic phenomenon is to be found in the figures of the Great Goddess represented in the myths and artistic creations of mankind.

The effect of this archetype may be followed through the whole of history, for we can demonstrate its workings in the rites, myths, symbols of early man and also in the dreams, fantasies, and creative works of the sound as well as the sick man of our own day.

In order to explain what analytical psychology means by an “archetype,”¹ we must distinguish its emotional-dynamic components, its symbolism, its material component, and its structure.

The dynamic, the effect of the archetype, is manifested in energetic processes within the psyche, processes that take place both in the unconscious and between the unconscious and consciousness. This effect appears, for example, in positive and negative emotions, in fascinations and projections, and also in anxiety, in manic and depressive states, and in the feeling that the ego is being overpowered. Every

¹ Jolande Jacobi, *Complex, Archetype, Symbol*. [For full references, see the Bibliography.]

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mood that takes hold of the entire personality is an expression of the dynamic effect of an archetype, regardless whether this effect is accepted or rejected by the human consciousness; whether it remains unconscious or grips the consciousness.

The symbolism of the archetype is its manifestation in specific psychic images, which are perceived by consciousness and which are different for each archetype. The different aspects of an archetype are also manifested in different images. Thus, for example, the terrible aspect and the life-giving, “kindly” aspect of an archetype appear in diverging images. But on the other hand, the terribleness of one archetype, e.g., the Terrible Mother, is expressed in other symbols than that of another archetype, e.g., the Terrible Father.

By the material component of an archetype we mean the sense content that is apprehended by consciousness. When, however, we say that an archetypal content of the unconscious is assimilated, this assimilation—if we disregard the emotional character of the archetype—refers to the material component.

The structure of the archetype is the complex network of psychic organization, which includes dynamism, symbolism, and sense content, and whose center and intangible unifier is the archetype itself.

The archetype is manifested principally in the fact that it determines human behavior unconsciously but in accordance with laws and independently of the experience of the individual. “As *a priori* conditioning factors, [the archetypes] represent a special, psychological instance of the biological ‘pattern of behaviour,’ which gives all living creatures their specific qualities.”² This dynamic component of the unconscious has a compelling character for the individual who is directed by it, and it is always accompanied by a strong emotional component.

In other words, a state of biopsychical seizure is always connected with the constellation of an archetype. This latter may bring about a change in the instincts and drives as well as in the passion, affectivity, and, on a higher plane, in the feeling tone of the personality on which the archetype works. But the dynamic action of the archetype extends

² C. G. Jung, “Trinity,” p. 149 n.

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beyond unconscious instinct and continues to operate as an unconscious will that determines the personality, exerting a decisive influence on the mood, inclinations, and tendencies of the personality, and ultimately on its conceptions, intentions, interests, on consciousness and the specific direction of the mind.³

When the unconscious content is perceived, it confronts consciousness in the symbolic form of an image. For "A psychic entity can be a conscious content, that is, it can be represented, only if it has the quality of an image and is thus representable."⁴ For this reason, even the instincts, the psychic dominants, which of all unconscious contents are most important for the psychological totality, seem to be linked with representations of images. The function of the image symbol in the psyche is always to produce a compelling effect on consciousness. Thus, for example, a psychic image whose purpose it is to attract the attention of consciousness, in order, let us say, to provoke flight, must be so striking that it cannot possibly fail to make an impression. The archetypal image symbol corresponds, then, in its impressiveness, significance, energetic charge, and numinosity, to the original importance of instinct for man's existence. The term "numinous"⁵ applies to the action of beings and forces that the consciousness of primitive man experienced as fascinating, terrible, overpowering, and that it therefore attributed to an indefinite transpersonal and divine source.

The representation of the instincts in consciousness, that is to say, their manifestation in images, is one of the essential conditions of consciousness in general,⁶ and the genesis of consciousness as a vital psychic organ is decisively bound up with this reflection of the unconscious psychic process in it. This fundamental constellation is itself a *product* of the unconscious, which thus constellates consciousness, and not merely an "activity" of consciousness itself. For this reason Jung

³ Here we cannot concern ourselves with the fact that this dynamic effect of the archetype plays a crucial role in psychic disorder, particularly in psychosis, but also in neurosis. Jung, "On the Nature of the Psyche," section on "Patterns

of Behavior and the Archetypes," pp. 200 ff.

⁴ Jung, "Spirit and Life," p. 322.

⁵ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*.

⁶ *My Origins and History of Consciousness*.

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says: "The primordial image might suitably be described as the *instinct's perception of itself*, or as the self-portrait of the instinct."⁷

Thus, despite the seeming contrast between them, the instinctual plane of the drive and the pictorial plane of consciousness belong together, for "man finds himself simultaneously driven to act and free to reflect."⁸ "As well as being an image in its own right, [the archetype] is at the same time a dynamism."⁹

But the pictorial plane, on which the archetype becomes visible to consciousness, is the plane of the symbol, and it is here that the activity of the unconscious manifests itself in so far as it is capable of reaching consciousness.¹⁰

Symbolic images, as archetypal representations, must be distinguished from the "archetype *an sich*."¹¹ "The archetype *an sich* is an 'irrepresentable' factor, a 'disposition' which starts functioning at a given moment in the development of the human mind and arranges the material of consciousness into definite patterns."¹²

For this reason Jung says that "the archetypes are there pre-consciously, and presumably they form the structural dominants of the psyche in general. They may be compared to the invisible presence of the crystal lattice in a saturated solution."¹³ In other words the "archetype *an sich*" is a nuclear phenomenon transcending consciousness, and its "eternal presence"¹⁴ is nonvisible. But not only does it act as a magnetic field, directing the unconscious behavior of the personality through the pattern of behavior set up by the instincts; it also operates as a pattern of vision in the consciousness, ordering the psychic material into symbolic images.

We designate the symbols belonging to an archetype as its symbol group or symbol canon. A difficulty arises, however, from the fact that this co-ordination is not unequivocal. For "the single archetypes are not

⁷ "Instinct and the Unconscious," p. 136.

⁸ Jung, "On the Nature of the Psyche," p. 206. [where tr. as "archetype as such"].

⁹ Ibid. p. 211.

¹⁰ Jung, *Psychological Types*, Def. "symbol"; Jacobi, *Complex*.

¹¹ Jung, "The Spirit of Psychology," p. 423

¹² Jung, "Trinity," p. 148 f.

¹³ Ibid., p. 149 n.

¹⁴ Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, p. 211.

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isolated from each other in the unconscious, but are in a state of contamination, of the most complete, mutual interpenetration and interfusion.”¹⁵ This contamination is proportionately greater as the differentiating consciousness is weaker; it diminishes as consciousness develops and—what amounts to the same thing—learns to make clearer differentiations.

Thus to the differentiation of consciousness corresponds a more differentiated manifestation of the unconscious, its archetypes and symbols.¹⁶ As consciousness unfolds, the unconscious manifests itself in a series of forms, ranging from the absolute numinosity of the “archetype *an sich*,” through the scarcely definable image paradox of its first emergence—in which images that would seem to be mutually exclusive appear side by side—to the primordial archetype.

The term “primordial archetype” is a seeming pleonasm and requires explanation. We employ the concept of the archetype as Jung has clearly defined it in his most recent writings¹⁷—as a structural concept signifying “eternal presence.” But since for an understanding of the history of consciousness and for psychotherapeutic practice it has proved essential to differentiate the archetype from the standpoint of its “development” within the psyche, we employ the term primordial archetype to stress the genetic aspect: by it we define the archetype as manifested in the early phase of human consciousness before differentiation into the particular archetypes. The process of the differentiation of archetypal phenomena, which I have designated in my *Origins and History of Consciousness* as the “fragmentation of archetypes,” leads to the emergence of individual archetypes from a great complex mass, and to the formation of coherent archetypal groups.

Parallel to this development, the symbols are differentiated and ordered. The symbols are the manifest visibility of the archetype, corresponding to its latent invisibility. While, for example, the primordial archetype may contain the most diverse and contradictory symbols,

¹⁵ Jung, “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious” (1939–40 edn.), p. 91.

¹⁶ My *Origins*, pp. 325 f.

¹⁷ Especially “On the Nature of Psyche.”

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which for consciousness are mutually exclusive—e.g., positive and negative, male and female—these symbols later split apart and order themselves according to the principle of opposites.

The symbols, like the archetype itself, possess a dynamic and a material component. They take hold of the human personality as a whole, arouse it and fascinate it, and attract consciousness, which strives to interpret them.

The material component of the symbol sets consciousness in motion; aroused by the symbol, consciousness directs its interest toward it and seeks to understand it. That is to say, the symbol, aside from its dynamic effect as an “energy transformer,”¹⁸ is also a “molder of consciousness,” impelling the psyche to assimilate the unconscious content or contents contained in the symbol.¹⁹ This assimilation culminates in the formation of views, orientations, and concepts by consciousness; although these have their origin in the sense content of the symbol and hence in the collective unconscious, of which the archetype is a part, they now, independent of their origin, claim an existence and validity of their own.²⁰

Let us take as an example the archetype of the “way.” As far as we know, this archetype first appeared among the prehistoric men of the ice age. In a ritual that was still in large part unconscious, the way led these early men into mountain caves, in whose hidden and almost inaccessible recesses they established “temples” adorned with representations of animals on the killing of which their existence depended.

The magical and sacral significance of these paintings and of the caves in which they are found is today unquestioned. But it is also evident that the “hard and dangerous way,” by which alone these caves could often be reached, formed a part of the ritual reality of the mountain temples that we now see in them.²¹

At a later cultural stage, when consciousness was more highly developed, this archetype of the way became a conscious ritual. In the

¹⁸ Jung, “On Psychic Energy,” pp. 41 f.

¹⁹ My *Origins*, pp. 367 ff.

²⁰ Cassirer, *Die Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Vol. III: *Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*.

²¹ My “Zur psychologischen Bedeutung des Ritus,” in *Kulturentwicklung und Religion*, pp. 9 f.

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temple precinct, for example—from the temples of Egypt to the Borobudur of Java—the worshiper is compelled to follow a ritual way from the periphery to the center, the shrine. Christ's Calvary is another, more highly developed form of this archetype: here the way of destiny becomes the way of redemption; and with Christ's conscious utterance, "I am the way," this archetype attains to a new, wholly inward, and symbolic level, which has determined the attitudes of all the ensuing generations that have re-enacted this inward Christian way. Moreover, this symbol of the archetypal way has taken a universal place in the consciousness and orientation of modern man. We take for granted such expressions as "inner ways of development"; and the companion symbols of "orientation" and "disorientation," as well as references to philosophical, political, artistic "trends," belong to the same context. All these linguistic formulations are based on the archetype of the way, whose pattern determines the originally unconscious behavior of man moving toward a sacral goal.

The difficulty of describing the structure of an individual archetype arises in part from the fact that the archetype and the symbol erupt on a number of planes, often at the same time. The phenomenology of the workings of the archetype extends from the unconscious instinctive drive of the primitive individual, contained in the group, to the formulation of concepts and beliefs in the philosophical systems of the modern individual. In other words, a vast number of forms, symbols, and images, of views, aspects, and concepts, which exclude one another and overlap, which complement one another and apparently emerge independently of one another, but all of which are connected with *one* archetype, e.g., that of the Great Mother, pour in on the observer who takes it on himself to describe, or even to understand, what an archetype, or what this archetype, is. Although all these many forms are ultimately "variations on a ground theme,"²² their diversity is so great, the contradictory elements united in them so multifarious, that in addition to speaking of the "eternal presence" of the archetype, we must also speak of its symbolic polyvalence.

²² Jung, "On the Nature of the Psyche," p. 213.

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The manifestation of the archetype as a symbolic expression of the unconscious can, in its relation to man, be formulated from two points of view, which seem contradictory but actually complement one another. The archetype may manifest itself “spontaneously,” or else it may stand in a compensatory relation to the consciousness of the man in whom it appears. When the archetype appears as a spontaneous expression of the unconscious, it operates independently of the psychic situation of the individual and of the group, as an autonomous force that determines the actual situation. This is most evident in phenomena of irruption, e.g., psychosis, in which the archetypal phenomenon irrupts unpredictably and with the strangeness of something “totally other,” and in which it is impossible to establish adequate relations between whatever it is that irrupts and the victim of the irruption. But even here partly intelligible connections can be demonstrated between the type and content of the psychosis and the personality of the affected individual.

This means, however, that the archetypal manifestation is not isolated but—this must be said to round out the picture—is determined by the total constellation of the collective unconscious. It depends not only on the race, people, and group, the historical epoch and actual situation, but also on the situation of the individual in whom it appears.

When we say that the archetype and the symbol are spontaneous and independent of consciousness, we mean that the ego as the center of consciousness does not actively and knowingly participate in the genesis and emergence of the symbol or the archetype, or, in other words, that consciousness cannot “make”²³ a symbol or “choose” to experience an archetype. This by no means precludes a relation of the archetype or the symbol to the totality of the personality and consciousness; for the manifestations of the unconscious are not only a spontaneous expression of unconscious processes but also reactions to the conscious situation of the individual, and these reactions, as we see

²³ Even in such exceptional cases as the genesis of the “uniting symbol” (Jung, *Psychological Types*, Def. 51), there is, to be sure, an activity of the ego and consciousness; yet

here again the ego “makes” nothing, but merely plays a part in the constellation of the unconscious.

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most commonly in connection with dreams, are of a compensatory nature. This means that the appearance of archetypal images and symbols is in part determined by a man's individual typological structure, by the situation of the individual, his conscious attitude, his age, and so on.

As man becomes individualized, we must, for an understanding of the archetypal reaction, bear in mind the uniqueness of the individual situation, e.g., the relation of such an artist as Leonardo da Vinci to the archetype;²⁴ but the more we have to do with a spontaneous expression of the collective unconscious, and the more collective the constellation of the unconscious is—as, for example, in early mankind—the more we can dispense with a knowledge of the situation of the individual in seeking an understanding of an archetypal structure.

Because certain constant relations are demonstrable in the depth psychology of mankind, and because to a certain extent a co-ordination is possible between psychic phenomena and the historical stages in the development of the human consciousness, the structural analysis of a particular archetype is not impossible.

The term Great Mother, as a partial aspect of the Archetypal Feminine, is a late abstraction, presupposing a highly developed speculative consciousness. And indeed, it is only relatively late in the history of mankind that we find the Archetypal Feminine designated as Magna Mater. But it was worshiped and portrayed many thousands of years before the appearance of the term. Yet even in this relatively late term it is evident that the combination of the words "mother" and "great" is not a combination of concepts but of emotionally colored symbols. "Mother" in this connection does not refer merely to a relationship of filiation but also to a complex psychic situation of the ego, and similarly the term "Great" expresses the symbolic character of superiority that the archetypal figure possesses in comparison with everything human and with created nature in general. If in Egypt the Goddess Ta-urt is called "The Great," this is consequently a symbolic expression for the impersonal anonymity of the archetype, analogous to the plural form of Goethe's "Mothers."

²⁴ Cf. my "Leonardo da Vinci and the Mother Archetype."

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Before the comprehensive human *figure* of the Great Mother appeared, innumerable symbols belonging to her still-unformed image arose spontaneously. These symbols—particularly nature symbols from every realm of nature—are in a sense signed with the image of the Great Mother, which, whether they be stone or tree, pool, fruit, or animal, lives in them and is identified with them. Gradually, they become linked with the figure of the Great Mother as attributes and form the wreath of symbols that surrounds the archetypal figure and manifests itself in rite and myth.

This wreath of symbolic images, however, surrounds not only *one* figure but a great number of figures, of Great Mothers who, as goddesses and fairies, female demons and nymphs, friendly and unfriendly, manifest the one Great Unknown, the Great Mother as the central aspect of the Archetypal Feminine, in the rites and myths, the religions and legends, of mankind.

It is an essential feature of the primordial archetype that it combines positive and negative attributes and groups of attributes. This union of opposites in the primordial archetype, its ambivalence, is characteristic of the original situation of the unconscious, which consciousness has not yet dissected into its antitheses. Early man experienced this paradoxical simultaneity of good and evil, friendly and terrible, in the godhead as a unity; while as consciousness developed, the good goddess and the bad goddess, for example, usually came to be worshiped as different beings.

The primordial archetype belongs to a consciousness and an ego that are still incapable of differentiation. The more contradictions that are combined in it, the more confounding and overwhelming are its actions and manifestation. Because so many contradictory motifs and symbols are joined in the archetype, its nature is paradoxical: it can neither be visualized nor represented.

In the early phase of consciousness, the numinosity of the archetype consequently exceeds man's power of representation, so much so that at first no form can be given to it. And when later the primordial archetype takes form in the imagination of man, its representations are

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often monstrous and inhuman. This is the phase of the chimerical creatures composed of different animals or of animal and man—the griffins, sphinxes, harpies, for example—and also of such monstrosities as phallic and bearded mothers. It is only when consciousness learns to look at phenomena from a certain distance, to react more subtly, to differentiate and distinguish, that the mixture of symbols prevailing in the primordial archetype separates into the groups of symbols characteristic of a single archetype or of a group of related archetypes; in short, that they became recognizable.

In the course of a long period of development, the inward and outward forces of tradition become so strong that the archetypal images attain a degree of form that enables man to fashion sacral images.

In our attempt to describe the structure of the archetype of the Great Mother or the Feminine on the basis of numerous reproductions of art works, we shall have to take a very broad view of the scope of our undertaking. For only through “amplification”—the method of comparative morphological psychology, which interprets analogous material from the most varied spheres of religious history, archaeology, pre-historic studies, ethnology, and so on—can we reach an understanding of the archetypes and the individual symbols. However, the true object of our inquiry is the symbolic self-representation of the archetype that has passed through the medium of man, and that speaks to us from images fashioned sometimes unconsciously and sometimes consciously.

The archetypes of the collective unconscious are manifested, as Jung discovered many years ago,²⁵ in the “mythological motifs” that appear among all peoples at all times in identical or analogous manner and can arise just as spontaneously—i.e., without any conscious knowledge—from the unconscious of modern man.

Since we cannot presuppose a knowledge of this basic discovery, crucial for modern depth psychology, we shall illustrate it by one example, and otherwise refer the reader to Jung’s extensive work, in which the discovery of the collective unconscious assumes a central position.

²⁵ *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1911–12; tr. 1916 as *Psychology of the Unconscious*).

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For the sake of simplicity, we shall quote our example directly from him.²⁶

Jung relates how one day in an insane asylum he saw a patient standing in the corridor, peering out the window at the sun and moving his head strangely from side to side:

He took me by the arm and said he wanted to show me something. He said I must look at the sun with eyes half shut, and then I could see the sun's phallus. If I moved my head from side to side the sun-phallus would move too, and that was the origin of the wind.

I made this observation about 1906. In the course of the year 1910, when I was engrossed in mythological studies, a book of Dieterich's came into my hands. It was part of the so-called Paris magic papyrus and was thought by Dieterich to be a liturgy of the Mithraic cult.* It consisted of a series of instructions, invocations, and visions. One of these visions is described in the following words: "And likewise the so-called tube, the origin of the ministering wind. For you will see hanging down from the disc of the sun something that looks like a tube. And towards the regions westward it is as though there were an infinite east wind. But if the other wind should prevail towards the regions of the east, you will in like manner see the vision veering in that direction." The Greek word for 'tube,' αὐλός, means a wind-instrument, and the combination αὐλός παχὺς in Homer means 'a thick jet of blood.' So evidently a stream of wind is blowing through the tube of the sun.

The vision of my patient in 1906, and the Greek text first edited in 1910, should be sufficiently far apart to rule out the possibility of cryptomnesia on his side and of thought-transference on mine. The obvious parallelism of the two visions cannot be disputed, though one might object that the similarity is purely fortuitous. In that case we should expect the vision to have no connections with analogous ideas, nor any inner meaning. But this expectation is not fulfilled, for in certain medieval paintings this tube is actually depicted as a sort of hose-pipe reaching down from heaven under the robe of Mary. In it the Holy Ghost flies down in the form of a dove to impregnate the Virgin. As we know from the miracle of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was originally conceived as a mighty rushing wind, the πνεῦμα, "the wind that bloweth where it listeth." In a Latin text we read: "Animo descensus per orbem solis tribuitur" (They say

²⁶ "The Structure of the Psyche," pp. 150 f.

* Ed. Note in 1960 edn.: "*Eine Mithrasliturgie*, pp. 6-7. As the author subsequently learned, the 1910 edition was

actually the second, there having been a first edition in 1903. The patient had, however, been committed some years before 1903."

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that the spirit descends through the disc of the sun). This conception is common to the whole of late classical and medieval philosophy.²⁷

This example may suffice to show that the archetype is a mythological motif and that, as an “eternally present” content of the collective—i.e., universal human—unconscious, it can appear equally well in the theology of Egypt or the Hellenistic mysteries of Mithras, in the Christian symbolism of the Middle Ages or the visions of a modern psychotic.

The archetype is not only a *dynamis*, a directing force, which influences the human psyche, as in religion, for example, but corresponds to an unconscious “conception,” a content. In the symbol, i.e., image of the archetype, a meaning is communicated that can be apprehended conceptually only by a highly developed consciousness, and then only with great pains. For this reason the following remark of Jung’s is still applicable to the modern consciousness: “Myth is the primordial language natural to these psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery. Such processes deal with the primordial images, and these are best and most succinctly reproduced by figurative speech.”²⁸ This “figurative speech” is the language of the symbol, the original language of the unconscious and of mankind.

As we have elsewhere shown,²⁹ early man—like the child—perceives the world “mythologically.” That is, he experiences the world predominantly by forming archetypal images that he projects upon it. The child, for example, first experiences in his mother the archetype of the Great Mother, that is, the reality of an all-powerful numinous woman, on whom he is dependent in all things, and not the objective reality of his personal mother, this particular historical woman which his mother becomes for him later when his ego and consciousness are more developed. Similarly, early man does not, like modern man,

²⁷ The earliest form of this archetypal conception known to us is found—as so often—in Egypt, in the union of the sun god Ra, who here appears as a creator figure par excellence,

with Ammon, the “breath of life,” to form the divine figure “Ammon-Ra.” Cf. especially Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, pp. 160 f.

²⁸ *Psychology and Alchemy*, p. 25.

²⁹ *My Origins*, pp. 40 ff.

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experience states of weather, but divine or godlike powers on whom his fate depends, and whose behavior is connected with his own in a magical or religious-ethical way. We need only consider, for example, the rain and its significance for fertility, often carrying a decision as to life and death. Prayers for rain, processions for rain, are even today an expression of this mythologically apperceptive mentality, which guided early cultural life almost exclusively. Human life in the beginning is determined to a far higher degree by the unconscious than by consciousness; it is directed more by archetypal images than by concepts, by instincts than by the voluntary decisions of the ego; and man is more a part of his group than an individual. And similarly, his world is not a world seen by consciousness, but one experienced by the unconscious.³⁰ In other words, he perceives the world not through the functions of consciousness, as an objective world presupposing the separation of subject and object, but experiences it mythologically, in archetypal images, in symbols that are a spontaneous expression of the unconscious, that help the psyche orient itself in the world, and that, as mythological motifs, configure the mythologies of all peoples.

This means that the symbols do not, like the functions of consciousness, relate to the individual ego, but to the whole of the psychic system, which embraces consciousness and the unconscious. For this reason, the symbol contains both conscious and unconscious elements, and, in addition to symbols and symbolic elements that consciousness can assimilate relatively quickly, we find others that can only be assimilated in the course of long developments or not at all, which remain irrational and beyond the scope of consciousness.³¹

Another indication of the natural symbol's independence of consciousness is that its very structure represents the character of the unconscious from which it arises. Whereas the division into I and thou, subject and object, is a characteristic of consciousness, the fundamental characteristics of the "original situation" of the unconscious recur in the symbol. Not only are rational and irrational, conscious and unconscious, elements—elements arising from both inner and outward worlds—

³⁰ All this still applies, in somewhat attenuated form, to modern man, in whom this manner of functioning, though less prominent

than before, has not ceased to exist.

³¹ Jung, *Psychological Types*, Def. 51.

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joined in the symbol, as the term “symbol” indicates; in it, moreover, they appear as an original and natural unity.

The symbolic imagery of the unconscious is the creative source of the human spirit in all its realizations. Not only have consciousness and the concepts of its philosophical understanding of the world arisen from the symbol but also religion, rite and cult, art and customs. And because the symbol-forming process of the unconscious is the source of the human spirit, language, whose history is almost identical with the genesis and development of human consciousness, always starts out as a symbolic language. Thus Jung writes: “What an archetypal content is always expressing is first and foremost a *figure of speech*. If it speaks of the sun and identifies with it the lion, the king, the hoard of gold guarded by the dragon, or the force that makes for the life and health of man, it is neither the one thing nor the other, but the unknown third thing that finds more or less adequate expression in all these similes, yet—to the perpetual vexation of the intellect—remains unknown and not to be fitted into a formula.”³²

This example shows once again what we mean by mythological apperception, but it also illustrates the tendency of the symbol to combine contradictory elements, to bring the most diverse provinces of life into contact with one another, by crossing, blending, and weaving them together. The symbol intimates, suggests, excites. Consciousness is set in motion and must employ all its functions to assimilate the symbol, for a merely conceptual assimilation proves totally inadequate. The symbol also acts with greater or less force upon feeling, intuition, and sensation.

The action of the symbol takes a different direction in primitive man and in the man of today. In modern Western man, it compensates for overemphasis on consciousness; in early man, however, it not only strengthens, but positively forms consciousness. Through the symbol, mankind rises from the early phase of formlessness, from a blind, purely unconscious psyche without images, to the formative phase whose image making is an essential premise for the genesis and development of consciousness.³³

³² “The Psychology of the Child Archetype,” p. 157. ³³ *My Origins*, p. 366.

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