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I

LEONARDO DA VINCI AND THE MOTHER ARCHETYPE

In any attempt to come closer to the personality of Leonardo da Vinci, it will be well to bear in mind the words of Jakob Burckhardt: "The colossal outlines of Leonardo's nature can never be more than dimly and distantly conceived." [1] And yet this towering figure, great artist and great scientist in one, will always represent a challenge: What was the mysterious force that made such a phenomenon possible?

Neither Leonardo's scientific interests nor his versatility were unique in the age of the Renaissance when the world was being newly discovered; but even next to the many-sided Leon Battista Alberti, as Burckhardt said, "Leonardo da Vinci was as the finisher to the beginner, as the master to the dilettante." [2] Yet although, in addition to his writings about art, Leonardo arrived at fundamental insights about the nature of science and experimentation; although he discovered important laws of mechanics and hydraulics, geology and paleontology; although

1. Jakob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy,* p. 87. [For full references, see the List of Works Cited.]
2. Ibid., p. 87.

as an engineer he may be said to have anticipated the discovery of the airplane and the submarine; although he not only studied the anatomy and physiology of the human body, but perhaps, through his comparative anatomy of man and animal, was the first of thinkers to grasp the unity of organic development—what fascinates us more than all these impressive individual achievements, each one of which has been surpassed in the course of the centuries, is the unsurpassable individuality of Leonardo the man, which extends into an area of human existence that is beyond time and in human measure eternal.

As a Western phenomenon, Leonardo fascinates us very much in the same way as Goethe, precisely because we here encounter a striving for a life of individuation, a life of wholeness, which seems to be in keeping with the intimate intention of Western humanity.

We owe the first basic attempt to understand Leonardo by means of depth psychology to Sigmund Freud, who in his essay *Leonardo da Vinci and A Memory of His Childhood,* which was written in 1910, took up certain essential problems of Leonardo's psychology. The present work will embody a different approach, based on the analytical psychology of C. G. Jung, which, unlike the personalistic psychology of Freud, starts from transpersonal, archetypal factors.

Whereas Freud attempts to derive Leonardo's psychology from the personal events of his childhood—i.e., from a mother complex created by his family circumstances—we find a fundamental, not a pathological, phenomenon in the dominance of the mother archetype, i.e., of a

suprapersonal mother image, in the creative man. It is revealing in this connection that Freud, unconsciously no doubt, distorted Leonardo's family circumstances in a manner consonant with his theory, but that on the other hand, precisely in this study, he penetrated to the transpersonal process underlying Leonardo's development, broadening "the basis of this analysis by a comparative study of the historical material."[3] But he drew no consequences from all this.

Leonardo was born in 1452, the illegitimate son of a notary, Ser Piero da Vinci, and of a peasant girl "of good family."[4] Freud's personalistic derivation of Leonardo's psychology is based on the assumption that Leonardo spent the first (and, in Freud's view, decisive) years of his life as a fatherless child with his mother Caterina.[5] The facts, however, were quite different. "After 1452 Piero made a marriage appropriate to his class, and shortly afterward Caterina did likewise."[6] The child Leonardo grew up with his father and stepmother in his grandfather's house, where the whole family was living together in 1457.[7] Since legitimate children were born to Leonardo's father only in 1472, in his third marriage, Leonardo lived as an only child with his grandmother

3. C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation,* par. 3.

4. Marie Herzfeld (ed.), *Leonardo da Vinci, der Denker, Forscher und Poet.*

5. Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci* (Standard Edn.), p. 91.

6. Herzfeld, introduction.

7. We happen to have documentary proof of this family life for the year 1457, but of course this does not mean that Leonardo was taken into the family only at this time, as Freud (p. 91) supposes.

and successively with two childless stepmothers. We know nothing of any meetings with his real mother. But in any event the family circumstances are very complicated, sufficiently so to provide a basis for all sorts of contradictory psychological constructions.

But even though all the psychological consequences that Freud drew from a false personalistic approach are thus annulled, he did not stop here; for in an extremely penetrating way he made Leonardo's childhood recollection, i.e., an unquestionable document of Leonardo's psychic reality, into a broader foundation of his work. This childhood recollection, the so-called "vulture fantasy," is to be found among Leonardo's notes on the flight of birds, particularly vultures. It runs as follows: "It seems that I was always destined to be so deeply concerned with vultures; for I recall as one of my very earliest memories that while I was in my cradle a vulture came down to me, and opened my mouth with its tail, and struck me many times with its tail against my lips." [8]

It is striking that so critical a man as Leonardo should have recorded this recollection as something perfectly self-evident; he did not make the reservation that Freud unhesitatingly adopts in speaking of the "vulture fantasy." The very fact that Leonardo, despite the critical "mi parea" ("it seemed to me"), speaks of this event as an actual childhood memory demonstrates the psychic

8. "Questo scriver si distintamente del nibio par che sia mio destino, perchè nella mia prima recordatione della mia infanta e' mi parea che, essendo io in culla, che un nibio venissi a me e mi aprissi la bocca colla sua coda e molte volte mi percuotesse con tal coda dentro alle labbra." Codex Atlanticus, fol. 65^{r}; Freud, p. 82.

reality of his experience. The child—and the smaller he is, the more intensely so—lives in a prepersonal world, i.e., a world essentially conditioned by the archetypes, a world whose unity is not yet, as in a developed consciousness, split into an outward physical reality and an inward psychic reality. Consequently, everything that happens to his still undeveloped personality has a numinous, mythical character, a fateful significance like the intervention of the divine.[9] In this sense Leonardo's "naïve," unreflecting record shows that his recollection deals with a fundamental event, a central motif in his existence, and that if we can understand it we shall have arrived at a hidden but decisive aspect of his life.

But before we go into the interpretation of this fantasy and its significance for Leonardo in Freud's view and our own, we must say a few words about Freud's so-called "mistake." It was pointed out recently [10] that the bird mentioned by Leonardo, the *nibio* or *nibbio,* is not a vulture but a kite. And the question rises: to what extent does this destroy the foundations of Freud's study and of our own that is partly based on it?

Freud's "mistake" in taking the bird for a vulture led him to the mother-significance of the vulture in Egypt, and the symbolic equation *vulture* = *mother* provided

9. Cf. Rudolf Otto, "Spontanes Erwachen des sensus numinis," and Ernst Barlach's childhood memories in *Ein selbsterzähltes Leben.*

10. Irma A. Richter (ed.), in a footnote to her *Selections from the Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (1952), p. 286; Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud,* Vol. II (1955), p. 390; James Strachey, editorial note to Freud, Vol. XI (1957), pp. 59 ff.

the basis for his understanding of Leonardo's childhood fantasy, for his unsubstantiated theory about Leonardo's relation to his personal mother, and for the mother fixation by which he explained Leonardo's development. "The phantasy and the myth," writes Strachey, the able editor of Freud's works, "seem to have no immediate connection with each other." [11] Nevertheless he argues against the reader's possible impulse "to dismiss the whole study as worthless." [12]

As we shall see, Freud's "mistake" is by no means so damaging to his study, much less to our own, as one might at first suppose. On the contrary, our critique of Freud's study and our attempt to substitute a transpersonal interpretation for his personalistic derivation of the fantasy from Leonardo's relation to his personal mother are actually confirmed by the discovery of this error. Even if the bird is not a vulture, i.e., a bird whose mother-significance is mythologically established, but some other bird, the basic element of the fantasy is preserved, namely the movement of the bird's tail between the infant's lips.

Birds in general are symbols of the spirit and soul. The bird symbol may be male as well as female; when it makes its appearance, we know nothing of its sex, except in the case of birds of definite symbolic sexuality, such as the eagle—male—or the vulture—female.

But the real basis of any interpretation is the bird's action in Leonardo's childhood fantasy. In connection with the infant lying in his cradle, the bird's tail is primarily

11. Ibid., p. 62. 12. Ibid., p. 61.

a symbol of the maternal breast; but at the same time Freud correctly interpreted it as the male genital organ. From this basic constellation emerging in the childhood memory, he attempted to derive both the personal mother complex of the fatherless Leonardo and a passively homosexual tendency in his love life. Both derivations are false and require a correction, since the "vulture fantasy" is a transpersonal, archetypal constellation, and not one that may be derived personalistically from Leonardo's family romance.

In the situation of the babe drinking at the maternal breast, the mother always represents also the uroboric, i.e., male-female, greatness of the mother in relation to the child she bears, nourishes, and protects. In this function, her lifegiving breasts—as may be demonstrated in primitive sculpture, for example—often become phallic symbols, in relation to which the child takes the attitude of receiving and conceiving. This is a fundamental human situation with nothing perverse or abnormal about it; and in this situation the child, whether male or female, is feminine and conceiving, while the maternal is male and fecundating. The suprapersonal character of this experience for Leonardo is made clear by the fact that in his recollection the personal mother is meaningfully replaced by the bird symbol.

We call a unity of this sort "uroboric," because the uroboros, the circular snake eating its tail, is the symbol of the "Great Round," which, circling round itself, begetting and bearing, is male and female at once.[13]

13. See my *Origins and History of Consciousness,* pp. 8–13.

This uroboros, whose hieroglyph in Egypt is interpreted as universe,[14] embraces heaven, water, earth, and stars, i.e., all the elements as well as old age and renewal; in alchemy it is still the symbol of the primordial unity that contains the opposites. This is what makes the uroboros so eminently appropriate a symbol by which to represent the early psychic state in which consciousness is not yet separate from the unconscious, with all the decisive psychic consequences that this situation embraces for the relation of the ego to the unconscious and of man to the world.

Therefore, even if the bird in Leonardo's childhood fantasy is not a vulture but some other bird, it remains a symbol of the uroboric Great Mother, with whom we must associate not only the feminine symbolism of the nurturing breasts, but also the male symbolism of the fecundating phallus. Thus the image of the uroboric mother does not result from a mistaken notion of the little boy concerning his mother's genitals, but is a symbolic representation of the Archetypal Feminine as the creative source of life, which is alive in the unconscious of every human being regardless of sex.

Here we must go into some detail regarding the archetype of the maternal kite-vulture. As Jung has shown, such archetypes can also emerge spontaneously, i.e., independently of any historical or archaeological knowledge, in the dreams and fantasies of modern men.[15] In

14. George Boas (tr. and ed.), *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo*, p. 57.

15. Cf. the works of Jung and his followers on the spontaneous emergence of the archetypes in children, normal persons, psychopaths, and sufferers from mental disorders.

original, primitive mankind, to whom the connection between sexuality and childbearing was still unknown, the feminine—as is still shown by totemism, with its descent from animals, plants, elements—was fecundated by a transpersonal male principle that appeared as spirit or godhead, as ancestor or wind, but never in the form of a concrete personal man. In this sense, the woman was "autonomous," i.e., a virgin dependent on no earthly male. She was the numinous conceiver, the numinous author of life, father and mother in one.

But the outstanding representatives of this archetype of the Great Mother are the Great Goddesses of Egypt, whose chief symbol is the vulture which Freud, "by mistake," substituted for the "more innocuous" bird of Leonardo's fantasy. Yet in all likelihood this "blunder" on the part of a man so conscientious as Freud is explained by his preoccupation with Leonardo's fantasy, which, despite his personalistic view and interpretation, seems to have activated the archetypal image of the Great Mother within him.[16] In support of this contention it might be remarked that in this study, which he first, oddly enough, published anonymously, Freud drew on mythological, archetypal material in a way quite unusual for him. He pointed out that the vulture goddess Mut, identical with Nekhbet, was often represented phallically in Egypt.[17] The androgynous Great Mother

16. There is no contradiction between this possibility and Strachey's explanation that Freud found *"nibio"* translated as *"Geier"* (vulture) in many of his German sources.

17. Lanzone, *Dizionario di mitologia egizia,* Pls. CXXXVI–CXXXVIII.

Goddess, i.e., equipped with a phallus and sometimes a beard, is a universally distributed archetype symbolizing the unity of the creative in the primordial creatrix, the "parthenogenetic" matriarchal Mother Goddess of the beginning. This fundamental view of matriarchal psychology, the importance of which we have repeatedly stressed,[18] expressed itself in Egypt in the belief that vultures, which were all thought to be female, conceived by the wind.

The vulture goddess Nekhbet with the white crown, the reigning goddess of Upper Egypt, is the representative of an ancient matriarchal stratum. She was the mother of the king, and even in late times hovered protectively over his head, while the queen's vulture hood indicated her ancient rank. In Egypt the word "mother" was written with the sign of the vulture, which is the symbol of the goddess Mut, the original "Great Mother." As a devourer of corpses, the vulture is also the Terrible Mother, who takes the dead back into herself; as "she with the outspread wings," the vulture was the sheltering symbol of heaven, of the generative and food-giving Goddess, who generates the lights, the sun, moon, and stars, out of her motherly nocturnal darkness. For this reason the vulture goddess was called Eileithyia by the Greeks, i.e., equated with the Mother Goddess who helped in childbirth—a figure encompassing the pre-Hellenic Cretan Mother Goddess, the many-breasted Artemis of Asia Minor, as well as Hera and the Demeter of the Eleusinian mysteries. The Goddess

18. Cf. my *Zur Psychologie des Weiblichen,* a volume of essays devoted to that theme.

and the queen representing her ruled over life, fertility, heaven, and earth. The Egyptian king, her son, says characteristically of himself: I am descended "from those my two mothers, the vulture with long hair and exuberant breasts, up on Mount Sehseh; may she set her breast to my mouth and never wean me." [19] "Never weaned": the grown king is represented sitting in the lap of the Mother Goddess—Mut, Hathor, or Isis—drinking from her breasts. And this symbolism is of decisive importance for our context.

The vulture goddess of the rain, from whose fruitful breasts, in the case of the Egyptian Nut, for example, the fecundating moisture flows, gives the masculine earth to drink—as Isis suckles King Horus. As Great Goddess she is male-female, fecundating and childbearing, in one.

For this reason the vulture goddess Nekhbet was worshiped as a "form of the primeval abyss which brought forth the light," [20] and her name was "The father of fathers, the mother of mothers, who hath existed from the beginning and is the creatrix of the world."

Against the background of these archetypal relations, the bird of Leonardo's childhood fantasy, considered in its creative-uroboric unity of breast-mother and phallus-father, is symbolically a "vulture" even if Leonardo called it a *"nibio."* For only if we penetrate the symbolic, archetypal significance of the fantasy can we understand

19. Kurt Heinrich Sethe (ed.), *Die alt-aegyptischen Pyramidentexte,* Pyr. 1116/19.

20. E. A. W. Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians,* Vol. I, p. 440. This watery abyss is the heavenly water of the night sea in its unity of upper and lower world, as will be discussed elsewhere.

this bird and what it does. Whether with Freud we take Leonardo's "reminiscence" as a "fantasy" or with others term it a "dream," we are referring to symbolic action in a psychic area, not to the physical action of a zoological specimen in a geographically definable locality.

For this reason we are perfectly justified in retaining the term "vulture" which Freud chose "by mistake," for it was through this very "blunder" that his keen intuition penetrated to the core of the matter, even though he did not fully understand and interpret it. For no zoologically definable bird, no "kite" or "vulture," is uroboric and behaves like Leonardo's bird. But such behavior is perfectly plausible for the "vulture" as symbol of the uroboric Mother, which lived in the psyche of the Egyptians as of Leonardo [21]—and of Freud.

The symbolism of the bird and its male-phallic components accent the spirit aspect of this archetype in contrast to its earth aspect. In Egypt we know the nutritive cow of heaven also as a symbol of the nurturing Great Mother. Yet in the paradoxical symbolism of the "vulture with the exuberant breasts," the accent is on the heavenly nature of this bird, which shelters the earth with its wings. But bird–heaven–wind are archetypal spirit symbols that are also characteristic of the father archetype. Above and below, heaven and earth, are contained in the father-mother unity of the uroboros and the uroboric Mother. The spirit character of this Mother is

21. Possibly this phenomenon provides the answer to another "riddle" with which we shall be concerned below, namely the "picture-puzzle" of a vulture discovered by Pfister in one of Leonardo's paintings. See below, pp. 63 f.

expressed by the bird—just as her earth character is expressed by the snake symbol.

If we know that the bird in Leonardo's childhood fantasy relates not to the father but to the uroboric Great Mother, it is only because it appeared in the earliest phase of human life, to an infant lying in his cradle, for this is the phase of the Mother with her nourishing or phallic breasts. In an older child, a similar experience of a bird, e.g., the rape of Ganymede by the eagle of Zeus, would have an entirely different meaning.

The "kite," to be sure, calls for a new correction of Freud's study. But this correction consists in still stronger emphasis on the impossibility of a personalistic interpretation, i.e., an interpretation on the basis of Leonardo's family history and relation to his actual mother. Not only has the transpersonal, archetypal interpretation of Leonardo and the creative process in general been confirmed, but we see that it must be carried to new depths. Another shift of accent necessitated by the discovery of Freud's error (in which we had partly followed him) is to lend new emphasis to the uroboric character of Leonardo's "vulture mother."

Here we cannot take up the whole scope of what the Archetypal Feminine means to mankind,[22] but we must give at least some idea of it. It appears both as the all-generative aspect of nature and as the creative source of the unconscious, from which consciousness was born in the course of human history, and out of which unceasingly, in all times and in every man, there arise

22. Cf. my *Great Mother.*

new psychic contents that broaden, intensify, and enrich the life of the individual and of the community. In this sense the prayer to the Mother Goddess, "May she set her breast to my mouth and never wean me," is valid for all men, but most particularly for the creative man.

Nevertheless the question remains: In cases where this archetypal image is dominant, when are we dealing with a mother complex—i.e., a pathological, "infantile" mother fixation that makes healthy life impossible, especially for a male—and when with a legitimate and genuine archetypal situation? In this sketch devoted specially to Leonardo, we have space only to suggest certain contexts that will be discussed elsewhere in detail.

With the development of consciousness the male-female uroborus becomes differentiated into the First Parents. In the matriarchal phase of human history, and in child development, where the unconscious is preponderant, the First Parents are constellated as the uroboric Virgin Mother in union with the invisible Spirit Father, who is the paternal uroboros, an anonymous transpersonal spiritual being.[23] In normal development a "secondary personalization" takes place, i.e., a process of demythicization, in which the archetypally mythological images are projected upon the persons of the family or the immediate environment and experienced through them. This process leads to the formation of a normal personality and of a "normal" relation to the outside world. The archetypes are gradually transferred to the "cultural canon" recognized by the community in ques-

23. See my *Origins and History,* p. 18.

tion and in this way the individual is adapted to normal life. The archetypal tension between Spirit Father and Virgin Mother is reduced in this development to a tension between consciousness, which by way of the patriarchal world comes into the inheritance of the Spirit Father, and the unconscious, which becomes the living representative of the Great Mother. Normal Western development, which for this reason we call patriarchal, leads to a dominance of consciousness or of the father archetype, and to an extensive repression and inhibition of the unconscious and the related mother archetype. But in the creative man—and to a considerable degree in the neurotic—this reduction of the archetypal tension between the First Parents is impossible or incomplete.

In the creative man we find a preponderance of the archetypal in keeping with his creative nature; in the sick man we find a disturbance of the normal development of consciousness, caused in part by the constellations of the family and in part by genuine childhood experiences—or else the factors making for sickness may arise at later stages of development.

The consequences of this accentuation of the archetype in the creative man, who by his very nature is dependent on his receptivity toward the creative unconscious, manifest themselves partly in deviations from the development of the so-called normal man; here we need not deal with the somewhat similar condition of the neurotic. In the life of the creative man the emphasis always lies on the transpersonal factors; i.e., in his experience the archetypal factor is so predominant that in extreme cases he becomes almost incapable of personal

relations. But even where he retains his capacity for human contact and human relations, it is always at the price of an essential conflict that he assimilates the archetypal projections and does justice to the human limitations of his counterpart. And this is why many artists, even among the most gifted, have such intense anima relations with the "distant loved one," epistolary relations, relations to the unknown, the dead, etc.

In normal development, the man's "feminine component" is largely repressed and contributes to the constellation of the anima [24] in the unconscious, which, projected upon the woman, makes contact with her possible. But in the creative man this process is incomplete. By his very nature he remains in high degree bisexual, and the retained feminine component is manifested by his increased "receptivity," by his sensibility and a greater emphasis in his life on the "matriarchal consciousness," [25] expressed in inward processes of parturition and formation that essentially condition his creativeness.

Nor does the anima develop in the same way as in the normal man. As we have elsewhere shown, it is the patriarchal, masculine development of consciousness that conditions the constellation of the anima figure and its differentiation from the mother archetype.[26] In the creative man this differentiation cannot be fully effected; the creative man lacks the requisite one-sidedness that

24. Jung, "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious," pars. 296 ff.

25. See my *Psychologie des Weiblichen.*

26. See my *Origins and History,* p. 198.

marks ego-identification with the purely masculine consciousness, for he remains both more childlike and more womanly than the normal man. The preponderance of the archetypal world of the Great Mother, his dependence on her "exuberant breasts," are so strong that he is never capable of the "matricide" necessary for the liberation of the anima. For this reason the creative man—except in his supreme representatives—is usually less a man than a creator. Precisely in the measure of his ability to assimilate and give form to the contents of the unconscious that are lacking in the community in which he lives, he is incapable of developing himself as an individual in relation to the community.[27] Whereas the normal man to a great extent pays for his adaptation to life in Western civilization with a loss of creativity, the creative man, who is adapted to the requirements of the unconscious world, pays for his creativity with loneliness, which is the expression of his relative lack of adaptation to the life of the community. Of course this characterization applies only to the extreme positions, between which an endless number of transitions and shadings are possible.

In any event the creative man is very largely fixated in the matriarchal stage of the psyche, and, like the Egyptian king, he experiences himself as the archetypal hero-son of the Virgin Mother, who "never weans" him. Thus Leonardo as "vulture child" is a typical hero-son and fulfills the archetypal canon of the hero's birth, which we have elsewhere discussed at length.

27. See the next essay in this volume.

"The fact that the hero has two fathers and two mothers is a central feature in the canon of the hero myth. Besides his personal father there is a 'higher,' that is to say an archetypal, father figure, and similarly an archetypal mother figure appears beside the personal mother. . . .

"As A. Jeremias [28] has pointed out and amply proved, the essence of the mythological canon of the hero-redeemer is that he is fatherless or motherless, that one of the parents is often divine, and that the hero's mother is frequently the Mother Goddess herself or else betrothed to a god." [29]

Leonardo's bird mother is the Mother Goddess herself; she is the "god's betrothed," impregnated by the "wind," one of the archetypal symbols of the Spirit Father, but at the same time she is the phallic, uroboric Mother who begets and gives birth to herself. In this sense Leonardo, like all heroes, had "two" mothers, and experienced himself as the son not of a personal but of an "unknown" father, or else was "fatherless." [30]

The relation to the Great Mother determines the childhood and youth of the hero; in this period he lives as her son-lover, favored by the fullness of her devotion and endangered by her dominance. Psychologically speaking, this means that the development and unfolding of his ego consciousness and his personality are largely gov-

28. *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur,* pp. 205 ff.

29. See my *Origins and History,* pp. 132–33.

30. As we know, the childlike notion of being a "stepchild," i.e., not the real child of the father or mother, is found in many neurotics, but not only in neurotics.

erned by processes in which the unconscious plays a more important part than the ego.

In the course of the patriarchal development of consciousness, the bond with the Great Mother is broken, and after the dragon fight the hero is reborn into a relation with the Spirit Father; he fulfills his mythological task as one twice born.

Dragon fight and "slaying of the parents" mean the surpassing of the "mother" as the symbol of an unconscious that holds the son fast in the collective world of drives; and they signify also the surpassing of the "father," symbol of the collective values and traditions of his time. Only after this victory does the hero achieve his own new world, the world of his individual mission, in which the figures of the uroboric parents, of the mother and father archetype, assume a new aspect. They are no longer hostile, confining powers, but companions, bestowing their blessings on the life and work of the victorious hero-son.

The Great Individual, the creative man, must travel this archetypally determined way in the manner appropriate to his individuality, his time, and his mission. But although the terms "hero" and "dragon fight" apply to this type of career, another form of the Great Individual's development may take a different course.

One group of Great Individuals with their dramatic careers pursues the way of the hero; we have only to think of Michelangelo or Beethoven. But there are other careers that rather take the form of a slow development, of a gradual inner growth. Although dramatic crises and phases are not lacking in these developments, in the life

of Goethe, for example, here one has more the impression of a steady, almost imperceptible being-led than of conscious heroic action.[31] The first development corresponds to a patriarchal development in opposition to the Great Mother, and the heroes reborn in the dragon fight prove themselves sons of the Spirit Father. The other type of heroic development is clearly more matriarchal, i.e., closer to the mother archetype.

In both cases the mythological constellation of the hero's birth and childlike, youthlike relation to the Great Mother Goddess stands at the beginning of the development. But whereas the patriarchal heroes leave the Great Mother and in opposition to her must prove themselves sons of the Spirit Father, the life of the matriarchal heroes is continuously dominated by the Mother and never wholly departs from the shelter of her spirit wings.

Although a preponderance of the transpersonal archetypal world may be demonstrated in all Great Individuals, it makes a great difference in their life development whether, when the First Parents separate, it is the archetype of the Virgin Mother or of the Spirit Father that remains dominant.[32]

A one-sided development, in which the one or the other archetype is exclusively dominant and there is no compensation by its complement, represents an extreme

31. Here one is involuntarily reminded of Schiller's distinction between "naïve" and "sentimental" writing in "Über naive und sentimentale Dichtung," though in this connection it cannot be reduced to the opposing types of attitude developed in Jung's *Psychological Types*.

32. Here we need not discuss the different meanings that these constellations may assume in masculine and feminine psychology.

psychic danger.[33] But in the Great Individuals we always find that although one of the First Parents, either the Great Mother or the Great Father, sets his stamp on their destiny, the other member also exerts an important influence on the course of their development.

In the career of the patriarchal hero, the hero reborn as son of the Spirit Father ultimately returns to a relationship with the archetype of the Great Mother. His heroic career begins with his conquest of her, but ultimately—as in the case of Herakles and Hera—the original conflict is resolved in his reconciliation with her. Similarly, the Great Individual whose life is stamped by the dominance of the Archetypal Feminine must, in the course of his development, come to grips with the Spirit Father. Only in the tension between the archetypal worlds of the Great Mother and the Great Father is the wholeness of a truly creative existence fulfilled. But the individual mode of development, of life and work, will be determined by whether the hero-son takes a predominantly patriarchal or matriarchal, solar or lunar, course; by whether the patriarchal and matriarchal aspects of his consciousness are relatively balanced or in a relation of tension to one another.

It can be demonstrated in many cases that these decisive constellations of the archetypal world are often manifested in the dreams, fantasies, or memories of early

33. This danger is manifested in neurosis and psychosis. It takes the form of matriarchal or patriarchal "castration," the overpowering of the individual by the maternally uroboric nature of the unconscious, or by the equally menacing paternally uroboric nature of the spirit. (Cf. my *Origins and History,* index, s. vv.)

childhood. Precisely because the child, with its undeveloped consciousness, still lives in the mythical world of the primordial images and like early man has a "mythological apperception" of the world, the impressions of this period, in which the profoundest strata can be expressed or rather "imagined" without falsification, seem to anticipate the whole life.

Such "image-inations" take the form of childhood memories or fantasies.[34] In this sense Leonardo's childhood memory strikes the dominant chord of his life; it is a meaningful symbol of the fact that his life would be dominated by the vulture goddess, the Great Mother.

It is hard to judge to what extent Leonardo's actual family situation favored the projection of his archetypal hero situation. We may safely assume that there was little intimacy between him and his father. The notary was an extremely worldly and active man; aside from the illegitimate relation to Leonardo's mother he contracted no less than four legitimate marriages. But by his third and fourth marriages—when he married for the third time he was already forty-five years of age—he had nine sons and two daughters. If to this biography we compare the life of Leonardo—who, except perhaps in his youth,[35] had no known physical relations with any woman—and if we consider that Leonardo, despite his fame, was treated by his father as an "illegitimate son"

34. In his seminars on the dreams of children at the Technische Hochschule in Zurich, Jung expressed decisive insights regarding the life-determining character of childhood dreams. (Unpublished.)

35. Cf. his attitude toward sexuality and the "desires," pp. 28 ff.

and not even mentioned in his will, it does not seem far-fetched to assume that there was a basic antagonism between father and son. Besides this alienation from his personal father, this man so arrogant in his worldliness as to disinherit his "illegitimate son," we must consider the problematic relation of the child Leonardo to women, to his grandmother, his two stepmothers, and to his own mother, whom he may or may not have known.

Even in the average child such abnormal family situations usually lead to disorders: as a result of a compensatory excitation of the unconscious, the parent archetypes are not "abolished," as in normal development, and the great suprapersonal parents compensate in a sense for the absence or insufficiency of the personal parents.[36]

When we take into account Leonardo's creative predisposition, with its "natural" preponderance of the archetypal, his childhood fantasy becomes understandable as a symbol of his detachment from the normal human environment and of his relation to the transpersonal powers with all their fateful meaning. And what makes Leonardo's "vulture fantasy" so significant a document is precisely that the same archetypal constellations and symbols that were related concerning the mythical heroes of prehistory should appear in a man of the Western Renaissance.

Even as a young man—insofar as we are able to form a picture of him—Leonardo was characterized by the inability to tie himself down to any one preoccupation

36. The disturbances in normal adaptation brought about by this compensation need not concern us here.

that distinguished him throughout his lifetime. Even for a period when versatility was almost the rule, his many-sidedness is amazing. For in addition to his genius as a painter, which stood out so clearly when he was a boy studying under Verocchio that his master is said to have given up painting on his account,[37] the youthful Leonardo seems to have fascinated all those about him by the abundance of his talents.

Up to his old age Leonardo was uncommonly beautiful, combining charm and elegance with extraordinary physical strength; he could bend a horseshoe with his bare hands. He was a playful child of the Muses, known for his ability to sing, write poetry, play musical instruments, and improvise music. His outstanding mathematical and technical gifts made him famous in his time as a hydraulic and military engineer, a builder of fortresses, and an inventor; and these gifts too he employed in a characteristically playful way.[38] He was called to the court of Milan, for example, not as a famous painter but because he had invented an odd musical instrument shaped like a horse's head. Even as an old man he continued to devise strange toys and enlivened the court festivities of many princes with all sorts of technical

37. Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters,* Vol. III, p. 222.

38. Two hundred of his inventions were constructed in the twentieth century by the Italian government and shown in an exhibition. (See *Life* magazine, July 17, 1939.) Machine gun, parachute, fire ladder, steam engine, telescope, printing press, roll press, drill, windmill, propeller, steering gear, and many other inventions, as well as instruments such as a step counter, a wind measurer, and innumerable others (F. M. Feldhaus, *Leonardo der Techniker und Erfinder*) are among the products of his technical genius.

games and inventions that strike us as unworthy of his genius. From the very start he was more preoccupied with the inventiveness and inexhaustible fertility of his own nature than with the shaping of a reality which in a sense he never in all his lifetime took quite seriously. He moved through his time and world—painting, sculpturing, experimenting, discovering, and inventing, profoundly interested in all these pursuits—yet always uncommitted, always independent, always an outsider, never giving himself entirely to anything or anyone, except to his own nature, whose dictates he obeyed as though in a dream, but at the same time with the sharpened alertness of a scientific observer.

"To devise," he writes, "is the work of the master, to execute the act of the servant." [39] One might be tempted to regard this as the motto of his fragmentary work and of his life. But unjustly so. In his youth, perhaps, his unwillingness to tie himself down may at times have involved him in the arrogance that merely plans but never executes. In reality he was a stupendous worker, except that, for reasons the investigation of which is one of our main tasks, he never strove to build up an "opus" such as that of Michelangelo, who in his hard one-sidedness despised him for this.

The fragmentary tendency in his art was not based on indifference regarding execution, nor did it spring wholly from the vastness of his inward image. It was

39. MS. C.A., fol. 109. See Herzfeld, p. 139; for the abbreviations etc., see p. clxvi, or Richter, *Selections,* p. 393. English version in Edward MacCurdy, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci,* Vol. I, p. 95.

also an expression of the fact that the work of art, and art itself, were not for him an end in themselves but only —though perhaps he himself was not aware of it—an instrument and expression of his inner situation. In this, as in his fascination with the problem of flying, to which he devoted so much energy and passion, Leonardo showed himself to be a "vulture child." At heart he despised reality and its tasks; he despised money and fame, the opus, the establishment of a school, for in his unconscious devotion to the Spirit Mother he was profoundly alien to everything material and matter of fact. This was also the reason for his aversion to the instinctual urges and his rejection of sexuality. "The ermine will die rather than besmirch itself," [40] runs one of his aphorisms. And another: "The man who does not restrain wantonness allies himself with beasts." [41] And, concluding a banal allegory about a butterfly that comes to grief after being attracted by the radiant beauty of the light, he moralizes in true medieval style: "This applies to those who, when they see before them carnal and worldly delights, hasten to them like the butterfly without ever taking thought as to their nature, which they will learn to know to their shame and loss." [42] The in-

40. MS. H. I, fol. 48^{v}. See Herzfeld, p. 143; Richter, *Selections,* p. 319. [The quotations and ms. citations are mainly from the latter volume, though page citations are given to both presentations of the *Notebooks.*—Ed.]

41. MS. H. III, fol. 119^{r}. See Herzfeld, p. 140; *Selections,* p. 280.

42. MS. C.A., fol. 257^{r}. See Herzfeld, pp. 270–71; *Selections,* p. 243.

volved translation does justice to Leonardo's own suddenly halting and stammering expression.

Unquestionably there was in Leonardo a strong sexual block, a kind of sexual anxiety, but this rejection extended to the whole material side of reality and life. As we have seen, the uroboric Great Mother has also phallic, procreative, masculine, paternal features, in relation to which—to the phallic breasts, for example—the child is receptive and "feminine." In the same sense, the creative man is "feminine" in his passive openness to the creative flow. Accordingly, we have termed this attitude of the personality and consciousness "matriarchal." Here we need not decide whether the predominance of passive-feminine or active-masculine traits in the creative life of the individual is brought about by constitutional factors or by the events of his life. It seems likely that such constellations affect the relationship between activity and passivity, between masculine and feminine elements, not only in the individual's psychic life but also in his relation to his own and the opposite sex. In any event the ultimate sexual attitude of the personality is determined not by a single factor but by many, not by a single developmental constellation, such as an orientation toward the "Great Mother," but by a number of such constellations and phases. Thus the bond with the uroboric Great Mother is characteristic of many creative men who show no sign of homosexuality.

Another typical constellation of symbolic homosexual attachment is that of the young lovers—in whom the

accent is precisely not on openness toward the masculine aspect of the Great Mother, but on resistance to it. We often find such a resistance in the "young sons" of the Great Mother, who in their hypersensitive budlikeness reject life; supposing life to be "meaningless," they are actually for the most part unequal to it. His by no means proved homosexuality—in any case, his homoeroticism—fits into this context. As in many young lovers of the Great Mother, compensatory resistance to her aspect as Earth Mother, as matter, favored a tendency toward male association and toward a rejection of the beauty of the feminine, which fetters the passions and binds one to the commonplace reality of matter. If Leonardo, as alleged, selected his pupils more for their beauty than for their talent, this is quite in keeping with his nature, in which Eros played so crucial a role, and with his devotion to the purposeless beauty of living things, which meant more to him than any opus or school. The actual aim and motive of his central actions can always be shown to lie in something "transcending the real."

There is no doubt that in studying the flight of birds and the mechanics of their wings, in his tireless efforts to build a flying machine, Leonardo was striving very concretely to acquire the technique of flight for mankind. "The great bird will take its first flight from the back of a giant swan," he wrote. "It will fill the universe with wonder; all writings will be full of its fame, bringing eternal glory to the place of its origin."[43] This famous sentence is usually taken quite concretely to mean that

43. MS. Trn. O., inside cover 2. See Herzfeld, p. 32; *Selections,* p. 357.

"Leonardo already sees his 'bird' rising up into the air from the 'Cecero' [Swan], a hill in Florence." And this interpretation is probably correct. But at the same time Leonardo's case offers unique proof that the "technological invention" so characteristic of the West originally sprang from a still unconscious inward reality. Up to the end Leonardo remained a childlike, playful dreamer; everything he did was the symbolic expression of an inward reality. In the last analysis nothing was what it purported to be, or what he himself took it to be. The earnestness of his interest in science, the precision of his work, the technical clarity of his will, and the brilliance of his reasoning in no way alter the fact that—as he himself obscurely felt—everything that he did actually meant something quite different. Only in this way can we explain the continuity of his development, the indefatigable, insatiable course of his life work. And likewise, his desire to fly was in reality more than a technique to be learned, a machine to be built.

How can one prove oneself as a son of the bird mother, of the Great Goddess; what does it mean to "fly" and lift oneself above the earth? These are the symbolically real questions that live in his scientific work.

But Leonardo's flight from the earth, if in this concept we wish to epitomize his rejection of matter, the Earth Mother as lower aspect of the Great Mother, could not, in a nature so vast and so oriented toward wholeness, remain without its inner dialectical countermove. Where the life base is narrower, this constellation of flight from the earth gives rise to delicately lyrical, psychically and intellectually hypersensitive artists, in whom the aesthetic

predominates; but with Leonardo's all-encompassing vitality there was bound to be an essential though unconscious countermovement, tending to compensate for his one-sidedness. Herein again he proved to be an authentic son of the Great Mother, who in her wholeness as the Great Round combines the heavenly and the earthly aspect.

Whereas the Middle Ages—and particularly the Gothic period—were dominated by the archetype of the Heavenly Father, the development begun in the Renaissance was based on a revival of the feminine earth archetype. In the course of the last centuries it has led to a revolution of mankind "from below," taking hold of every layer of Western existence. Today the human world as a whole and man as an individual—no longer the celestial world and the nature of the angels—stand at the center of our picture of the world, and man no longer experiences himself as a Lucifer expelled from the celestial paradise, but as an authentic son of the earth. This striking of roots made possible the discovery of the body and natural science, and also of the soul and the unconscious; but underlying all this was the "materialistic" foundation of human existence, which as nature and earth became the foundation of our view of the world as manifested in astronomy and geology, physics and chemistry, biology, sociology, and psychology.[44]

This reversal of the Middle Ages began with the towering figure of Leonardo, who anticipated all these developments, gathered them all in himself, and projected them into the future. But he did not stop here; in

44. Cf. my "Die Bedeutung des Erdarchetyps für die Neuzeit."

(continued...)

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