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I

ONE constantly hears the objection that psychological art criticism, besides reducing the work of art to the personal psychology of the artist, is at most capable of grasping its material content, but is by nature unable to discuss the principle of form that constitutes the real essence of art and of artistic creation. For our attempt at a depth-psychological analysis of the art of Henry Moore, however, the interrelation of form and content is a problem of central importance; and it seems to us, therefore, that any approach which regards them as two separate "subjects" is untenable from the standpoint of depth psychology.

Analytical psychology sees the individual and his work not only as molded by his milieu and his childhood but also as part of a collective psychic situation. The transpersonal factors of the collective consciousness and of the collective unconscious are suprapersonal agencies that determine the life of every individual, and particularly of the creative individual, the artist.

What we call the *Zeitgeist* is the sum of all the psychic, spiritual, and social impressions that stamp an in-

dividual as belonging to classical antiquity, the Christian Middle Ages, the Romantic Age, or the Modern Age, and distinguish him from the men of all other ages. The cultural canon of highest values determining the culture of the particular age in which the creative individual lives is partly conscious and thus belongs to the collective consciousness of the time; it expresses itself in the religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, and social beliefs that are valid for that age. But these highest values are always based on unconscious premises, mostly of an archetypal nature, which are alive and operative in the unconscious of his contemporaries. Convictions and actions, whether they be those of religion, or of alleged knowledge, or of the collective *Weltanschauung*, are to a large extent "self-evident" for the person who has these convictions and performs the actions. That is to say, they are based on unconscious assumptions that determine his behavior, although he is completely ignorant of their existence. But the highest values in every culture are also symbolical values; and these, by their very nature, cannot be made wholly accessible to consciousness, let alone to rational thought. Thus in every culture and every age we find without exception that its cultural canon is determined by unconscious images, symbols, and archetypes. It is immaterial whether they express themselves as gods, as ideals and principles, as daemonic powers, or as the certainties of religious faith and superstitious belief.

Similarly, those contents which are lacking to the collective consciousness, and are often directly opposed to it and necessary for its compensation, are alive in the collective unconscious of the group. The dialectical law of Heraclitus, the law of enantiodromia, according to which any given position is always superseded by its negation, is grounded on the psychological fact that the one-sidedness of a conscious attitude which has been secured chiefly by repressing or suppressing all contents opposed to it leads to a piling up of such material in the unconscious. Since these contents are lacking to consciousness, its one-sidedness necessarily results in failure to adapt and other functional disturbances. In this sense the repressed and suppressed contents of the unconscious are not merely things that from the conscious standpoint are "forbidden" and tabooed; they are also compensatory with respect to the wholeness and completeness of the personality and of culture.

Now it is the function of the creative individual not only to represent the highest transpersonal values of his culture, thereby becoming the honored spokesman of his age, but also to give shape to the compensatory values and contents of which it is unconscious.[1] By representing the values that are compensatory but in opposition to the cultural canon of his time, he naturally becomes an outsider, who on that account has often enough to suffer the fate of a scapegoat.[2] For the historian, however, grasping the whole process in retrospect,

1. STANDING FIGURES WITH ROCK BACKGROUND. *Chalk, pen, and water color. 1946. 15 × 22″*

the revolutionary and heretic, whether it be a Hebrew prophet or Socrates, Joan of Arc or Galileo, is as much a part of his culture as the representatives of the cultural canon who condemned him.

When we try to grasp the role of the creative individual, as an artist, in relation to the cultural canon, we shall see that, apart from differences in the individualities of artists, a change in the *Zeitgeist* manifests itself most of all in the changing *content* of art. One has only to think, for instance, of the sacral content of medieval art and contrast it with the worldly tone of the art of

the last hundred and fifty years, when landscape, individuals, and things came so powerfully to the fore. But a change in the *Zeitgeist* can also express itself in a changed *conception of form*, though the content remains the same, as in the depiction of religious subjects during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Deeper psychological analysis will show, however, that a new principle of form is in reality always an expression of a new content. The new content may develop at first under the cloak of the old cultural canon and make use of it, but gradually breaks it down by force of the new formal principle and finally becomes tangible and conscious as a new content.

e.g., 1

Thus a new experience of reality progressively transformed the old religious contents at the beginning of the Renaissance. Artistic creation departed more and more from the medieval world of sacral, suprapersonal forms and discovered, under the symbol of earthly reality that governed the rise of the new cultural canon,[3] the individual uniqueness not only of things and landscape but of the national differences now becoming visible and of personality itself. Now for the first time there was a true Flemish and Italian art, a true French and German art, and only now does the portrait appear as something personal and unique, which is not—as in the Middle Ages—stamped only by a collective human situation, e.g., original sin, or by a collective attitude, e.g., prayer.

The archetypal content and the form in which it manifests itself belong essentially together. The heaven-aspiring quality of Gothic art is, as a formal element, determined by the archetype of an all-dominating heaven, just as the closed, self-contained forms of Egyptian sculpture are a reflection of the closed archetypal world picture of the ancient Egyptians.[4]

An archetype, a primordial image, is always polyvalent; it can express itself and be looked at in any number of ways. It possesses a great diversity of aspects—one has only to think of the infinite variety of forms in which the image of the Father God is reflected in the religions of mankind. Apart from that, every archetype is "two-faced," ambivalent, and has a "good" and a "bad" side according to the attitude the conscious mind adopts toward it. So if we speak of a correlation of artistic form and archetypal content, such a correlation always presents a complicated psychological problem. The aspect of the archetype—whether God or devil, demon or angel—can only be viewed in relation to the *Zeitgeist,* to the attitude of the cultural canon toward it, and of the creative individual toward the cultural canon.

So although no archetype has a definite form that belongs to it for all time, and in which it manifests itself and has its being, a correspondence between the archetypal form and its content can nevertheless be demonstrated in the art of civilized artists, as well as in the art

of primitives, lunatics, children, dilettante adults, and in the drawings and paintings produced under analysis. Without some such correlation it would not be possible either to understand these products or to interpret them psychologically. That is to say, an "earthy" subject will not appear in "airy" forms and colors, nor will a "fiery" subject appear in "watery" ones. It is no accident that in this example we have employed symbols whose qualitative meaning is self-evident to everybody. A "dead" sun in a painting by a lunatic can be experienced as directly as can the emotional chaos of churned-up earth in a picture by van Gogh; our experience of the picture stamps the artistic impression it makes on us, the mood it creates, and the associations that attach themselves to this mood. But an interpretation of these symbols, the conveying of their meaning to consciousness, is possible only with the help of the comparative method, which views the symbols of all cultures and epochs within their cultural context and as parts of a transpersonal archetypal structure.

In pursuing the archetypal element in art, we at once come upon a very characteristic difference in the idiosyncrasies of artists. That is, one artist will circle round one and the same center in his work and thus, despite possible variations of expression, remains "uniform," as for instance a Madonna painter, a landscape painter, or Henry Moore. Another type of artist, such as Picasso, will be gripped in the course of his development by

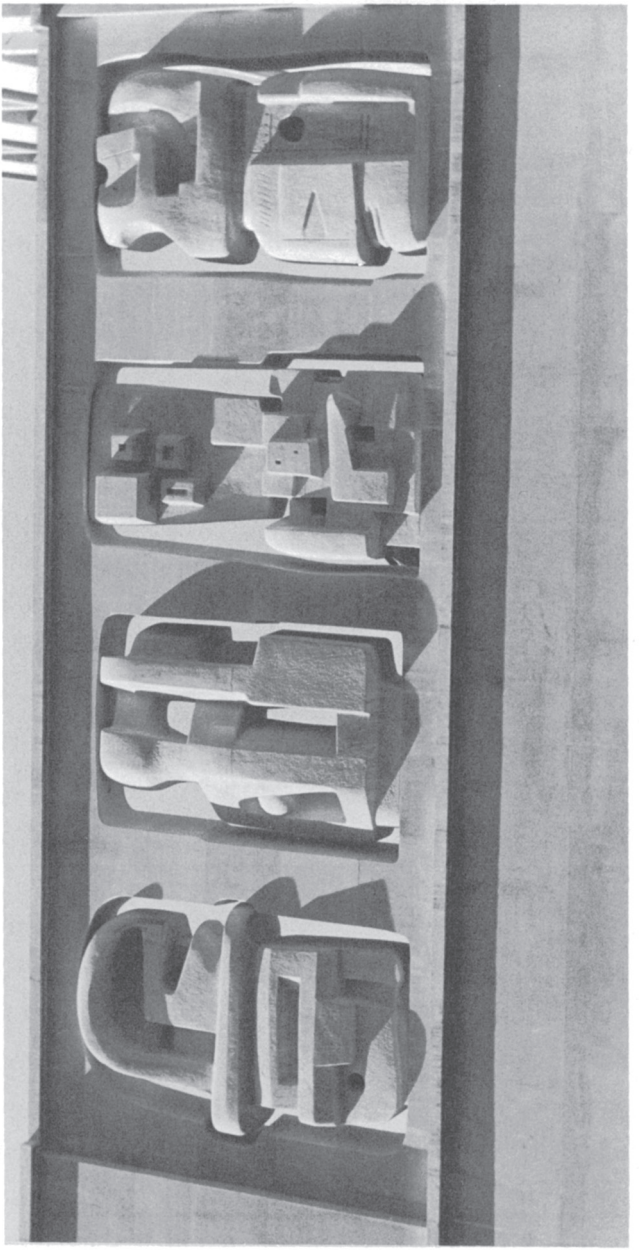
ever new contents and compelled to ever new forms of expression.

Yet, as we shall try to show in the case of Henry Moore, in this fascination by one archetype and in the artist's concentration upon it, it is quite possible for the whole of life to be grasped in its transformations; for every archetype is an aspect of the whole world and not just a fragment of it. On the other hand—and this is not to be taken as referring to the peculiar idiosyncrasy of Picasso—it is equally possible for an artist's work to touch on a wealth of archetypal contents without his psyche ever being profoundly and uniformly gripped by an archetype. We then have, as with Böcklin or Klinger, an art that is full of archetypal contents but whose formal quality fails to do justice to them.

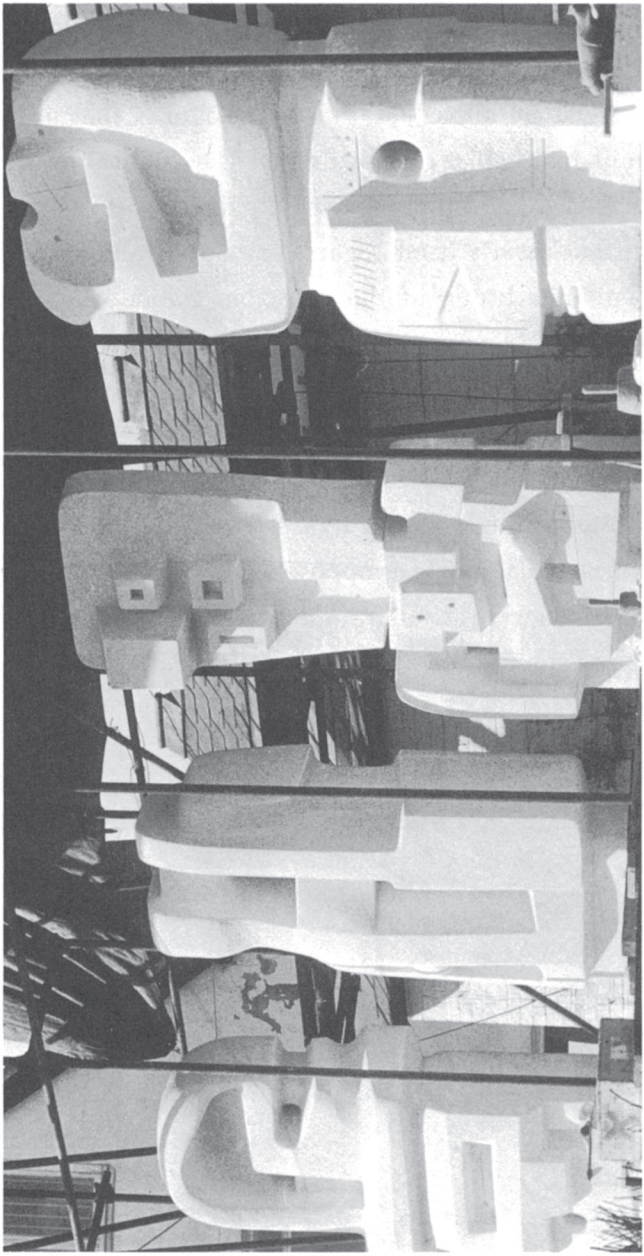
The incongruity between content and form thus becomes an essential criterion for any depth-psychological approach to art, since the intensity with which the artist is gripped must also express itself in the intensity and quality of the forms he creates. An archetypally adequate Madonna differs from a picture-postcard Madonna, not because of any difference of content, but only because of the form, which looks "cheap" in the hands of an artist not gripped by the archetype. That is to say, the quality of the artist and the depth to which he is gripped have nothing to do with the content of his picture. Consider, for example, the pre-Raphaelites in contrast to Rembrandt. With the pre-Raphaelites the

"large" content shows itself to be essential only to the large scale of the pictures, whereas in quality of form and coloring the figures are on the smallest scale. With Rembrandt, on the other hand, the object represented is quite unimportant, but even in the smallest sketch—of a beggar, for instance—he formulates the problems of the whole world and its need of redemption, and at the same time bathes it in a mysterious redeeming light that plays over all.

Although the adequacy of form to content is a problem that can be successfully solved regardless of technical perfection—as is proved by the drawings of children and, for instance, van Gogh—in the highest form of art, profundity of vision and absolute control of technique go hand in hand. But the adequacy of form to content does not depend on the conscious discernment and comprehension of the artist, who need not "know" anything about the content to which his work is dedicated. The realization of the archetype that has such a transformative effect on his personality, for good or ill, is not bound up with any conscious recognition of its contents. This means, conversely, that the conscious motivation of the artist need not be identical with the real unconscious motive or content that actuates him; the two may correspond with one another, but they may also be divergent. For instance, the hellish torments depicted in the work of Hieronymus Bosch are quite consistent with a pious mentality that finds itself



2. "TIME-LIFE" SCREEN IN SITU. *Portland stone.* 1952/53. H. 10′



3. "TIME-LIFE" SCREEN IN PROGRESS

in full agreement with the cultural canon of the Middle Ages. Today, however, no depth psychologist, or any psychologist at all, could fail to recognize that this choice of motif, like the tortures of the Inquisition of which it is a reflection, springs from an unconscious sadism that asserts itself regardless of the religious or antireligious attitude of the conscious mind.

e.g., 2, 3

In the same way we find in the development of modern art a distinct tendency toward abstraction, for which there are various conscious motivations. But a large part of this will for abstraction is unconscious, and subserves the tendency to seek out and give shape to the primordial image as opposed to the delusory phenomenal image. It arises from a time trend in the collective unconscious of which only a few individual artists are aware.