

Women as Awakeners of Psychic Life¹

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The influence that women have in any area of life becomes hard to understand only after we have become discontented with the surface of life and have gone underneath this — where the essence of life is carefully hidden. Today, as in the time of Eve, women are veritable artists in camouflaging their weapons: they rarely see through their own game and play it all the more perfectly the less they are aware of what they are doing. Even when it seems perfectly clear what they are aiming at and what the goal is — when they express themselves and are able to recognize their own motives — something always remains unclear, and it is just this lack of clarity that is of decisive effect. If we therefore wish to speak of women, perhaps the roundabout way is the most direct way, for it is the most feminine way. But if we choose the detour, we proceed exactly in the opposite direction from the avenues of reason and toward the realm of fantasy, a realm that has always been especially familiar to women. For the woman, in the beginning was not the Word but the Image, the Scene. Hence, in this essay, too, the Beginning must be formed by a story, a myth of the Hopi Indians, whose creation myth runs as follows:

When the world was new, men and animals did not exist on the surface of the earth but lived underground. A black darkness reigned above as well as below. There were four worlds: the surface of the earth and three caves below, each lying underneath the other. At the beginning, men and animals lived in the bottom-most cave, where they multiplied until the cave became over-crowded.

Then the lords, the Two Brothers, went to look to see what could be done. These “Two” broke through the ceiling of the cave and climbed down to the people in the deepest-level cave. They planted all the plants that they grew and eventually found a cane plant that grew up through the ceiling and which could be used as a ladder. Many men and beasts scrambled up to the second cave, leaving the others behind, and pulled the ladder up with them. But after a time the second cave, too, became just as over-crowded as the first; so again they put the ladder up to the ceiling and escaped into the third cave. Here the Two found fire, whereupon they lit torches so that mankind could build huts and travel from place to place.

But again bad times came, and the women, especially, became completely crazy. Then, finally, the people climbed up to the fourth world above, which is this world. Here they found only one creature, the lord of the unpopulated world: the Corpse Demon, or Death. And this world was as dark as the others and was very damp, for it seemed to be surrounded by water.

¹ Translated by Robert Sherwood (www.herakleitos.net).

Then the people tried to make a light. First, the spider wove a mantle of pure white cotton. This gave off some light, but not enough. So the people made a shield-case, which they painted with turquoise paint. Its light was so brilliant that it illuminated the entire world. Then they sent the shield-case to the east, where it became the sun, and the mantle light to the west, where it became the moon. But a coyote had stolen a jar in one of the underground caves, and when it was opened; sparks flew out into the heavens and became the stars.

By the glow of these lights it became known that the world was very small and surrounded by water. Then the vulture fanned the waters so that they flowed westward and eastward until mountains appeared. Through these the Two dug canals, from which the valleys and canyons later came into being.

We can regard this Indian myth of the creation of the world as a primitive philosophy in images. In the magic-mirror of symbols the myth reflects a world-view based on an all-encompassing sense of life. Such an outlook, expressed through symbols, has validity far beyond the place of its origin; it is universally human, for it is the portrayal of the old, eternally repeated life-experience of the generations. The language of the Hopi myth is also familiar to the European. The image of blind creatures in dark caves, the long ascent from an original dark bondage up to an ever-brighter illumination depicts the original experience of the individual just as it does the primal experience of the world's peoples. Our own religious symbolic material is replete with the opposition of the primordial darkness and the ever-striving light. From their deepest experience our ancestors gave expression to the "dragon" or the "clod of dirt." We ourselves just spoke of an "enlightenment" to designate a sudden awareness. We bring "light into dark matters," understanding "dims" or "is upon us" like sunshine. Men who have lost their healthy reason we call "benighted," the unsocialized populations of a great city we call the "underworld," just as though they lived beneath us in a cave.

All these pictorial expressions, just like the myth of the Hopi Indians, do not refer to a literal illumination of a formerly dark outer world. The symbols of the sun's appearance and its ascent from the darkness of the earth's depths illustrate by analogy the subjective experience of the *origins of consciousness*. The light that we desire, which is won through lengthy and arduous development, is the light of consciousness — for the individual and for all peoples. Always and everywhere the conception of the *intercessio divina* is linked with it, as is portrayed in the Hopi myth by the figures of the Two.

Utterly unselfconsciously, in an original purity, like the symbol that appears before the inner eye, the myth of the primitive Indian tribe describes the awakening of consciousness as a rhythmic event, as an unfolding from stage to stage. At every stage of unfolding we find the trepidation and hardship that precede the change, the turning point that is so intermingled with compulsion and urge for the groping feel in the direction of consciousness, such that super-human aid seems to be the only possible help, until an unexpected way out leads to a new beginning and a new unfolding. We, too, know of this rhythm — we know from our own experience and from the experience of our time what is meant by the hardship of change.

Besides the generally clear symbolism, the myth of the Hopi Indians contains, however, certain peculiar characteristics that stir us to contemplation — mythical elements before which we stop short and for which we try to find corresponding life events. Concerning life in the two lowest caves there is nothing particularly noteworthy in the myth that calls for our attention. In the third cave, however, where the Two light the torches, men learn to build huts and travel from place to place. The consciousness with which this development is concerned finds a certain order and clarity of form, as with the huts in which mankind can reside. At the same time, the ability to travel also illustrates a certain freedom of movement, a circumstance in which not only the close at hand but also the far away can be grasped or recognized. Existence here is interesting in a new way, for beneath the glow of a divine torchlight man begins to understand something of life and is no longer just groping forward like a worm from birth to death. In this cave, however, we come across the odd phenomenon that, due to overcrowding, the women become mad.

To understand these peculiar images, we must attempt to interpret them, that is, we must seek real, familiar facts that correspond to them. Life in the third cave stands in clear opposition to the life in the caves that went before. In the second-lowest cave, darkness alone rules, the stillness of unconsciousness. We can think of the many expressions that we use to speak of the Middle Ages. We say, “the dark Middle Ages,” we speak of their “blind superstitions,” of their “stifling ignorance” — every bit as though the Middle Ages had been a time of sojourn in a cave, in which the torchlight of the Two was not yet burning. Jakob Burckhardt, in *The Culture of the Renaissance in Italy*, expresses himself in this sense when he says:

In the Middle Ages the two aspects of consciousness — toward the world and toward the inner life of man himself — lay as it were under a common veil, dreaming or half awake. The veil was woven from belief, childish prejudice, and delusion; through the veil the world and history appeared wondrously colorful, but the human being knew himself only as race, people, faction, corporation, family, or in some other form of generality. First in Italy, this veil blew away in the wind; there was awakened an *objective* view and treatment of the state and of collective things of this world generally. Then, alongside, the *subjective* rose up; the human being became mentally an individual² and recognized himself as such.

With these words Jakob Burckhardt describes very finely a change in historical epoch, inasmuch as in Europe a new torchlight of consciousness had been lit. In fact, the Renaissance brought to light all the seeds of a development for whose realization Europe needed a few more centuries — the centuries up to the Enlightenment. In this sense we can view *the Renaissance as the vibrant program for the development of modern Europe*. A trans-valuation of the tenets of the Middle Ages, up to the breaking asunder of the Christian dogma, is anticipated in the Renaissance. The ingenious historian that Jakob

² J. Burckhardt refers here to the expressions *uomo singolare* and *uomo unico*, which at that time signified the higher and highest stages of individual development.

Burckhardt was felt this intensively, and inspired him to do his best work precisely on the Renaissance.

The program of the Renaissance, as Jakob Burckhardt has formulated it, was nevertheless in the following epoch only half fulfilled — it was fulfilled only insofar as the “objective consideration and treatment of collective things” was concerned. The subjective, in contrast, was neglected; the individual in the modern age has not yet recognized himself as an individual. Just these individualistic tendencies of the recent past cannot be hidden; they merely emphasize fundamentally an unfulfilled and in many cases falsely understood postulate. The subjective has up to our time slumbered under the “common veil” of Christian forms that express our inner life in a way that is valid in a general sense. Modern people, like people in the Middle Ages, were, with respect to their inner life, conditioned by the Church. Whether they adapted to the Church positively or negatively, whether they loved God or hated Him, saw evidence of Him or not, made no fundamental difference. The subjective — we could also say, the collective things of the *inner* world — remained projected outwards, the individual was preformed dogmatically and subjected to Christian morality. These facts were easily overlooked or forgotten, for the general interest altogether turned more and more away from it to the outer world.

The torchlight, by which the Europe of later times taught men to understand their environment, is the light of the *intellect*. Our insight since the time of the Renaissance has more and more clearly been regarded as an experience of conceptual thinking. More and more clearly in the course of the centuries the claim has been made that everything that cannot be grasped by this thinking can have no validity as understanding or as something that can be understood. Ever more clear, too, has been the tendency to control every area of life through intellectual methods of thought. These methods, as our currently fashionable means of arriving at conscious insight, were, in the end, completely identified with consciousness — little by little, consciousness and intellect became one.

This was possible because no area of life seemed closed to an intellectual form of understanding. Even nature herself, the contradictory and richly secretive creation of animals and plants, seemed to be nestled in a seamless fabric of definite causes and effects. It was as if the inanimate and the living organism were only waiting to be unlocked and subjugated by the ordering mind of man.

The 19th century, which as the climax of all previous efforts had assumed the great task of understanding creation from the standpoint of causality, saw all its strivings rewarded thousand-fold in an almost magical way. Human understanding really did learn how to build huts and undertake journeys — indeed, its huts developed into extraordinarily intricate constructs, such as those of mathematics and physics, and its journeys did not stop short of forays into outer space.

Whereas in the Middle Ages, and even in the beginnings of our own time, people proceeded from a basis of doubt, of uncertainty and the deepest mistrust of their own being and knowledge of themselves, the 19th century was firm and thorough in its confidence in all human possibilities. The optimism that formerly was connected with the idea of the divine was transferred to the idea of man himself. Men became the gods of a completely secular, intra-mundane world.

If we want to find a reflection of the feeling of triumphant life-certainty that fulfilled most Europeans around the middle of the 19th century, we must read the writings of those researchers who at that time did not fear to say out loud everything that their contemporaries, even with some measure of anxious reservations, thought in silence.³

Ludwig Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff*⁴ is, in its dithyrambic exuberance, a brilliant example of this attitude. He says there, e.g., "One step at a time the Enlightenment won for investigative science its stances against the ancient childish faith of the peoples. It wrenched from the hands of the gods thunder and lightning, eclipsed the luminaries, and bent the powerful forces of the ancient titans, forging them under the commanding fingers of mankind." Or, "Nowhere in this spatial reality (the reality of the world) is there a hidden nook for fantasy within which it can spawn fantastic monstrosities and, emancipated from its usual hidden closet, could dream for itself a fantabulous existence. It is not necessary to possess the means to prove for every natural force its generality and irreversibility in every individual case. The fact that this has been done for a few such forces with certainty is completely sufficient and protects us from every error." Büchner identifies soul life completely with thinking and therefore assesses the act of sleep in the following way: "Due to bodily events, the function of the organ of thought is suspended for a time during sleep; the soul is thereby annihilated in the true sense of the word. Upon awakening, the soul again finds itself in existence in the place in which during sleep it had been forgotten. During the long interval it was not present; it was in a state of mental death." The dream is for him merely a transition between sleep and awakesness, a half-awakesness. But, "Completely healthy people have never noticed this transition — you know, they do not dream at all."

The main representative of the thinking of this epoch, however, is Ernst Haeckel, the knight without fear or reproach, who himself did not shy before the dragon of nonsense when it was necessary to think the thought of his time all the way through to the end. This is the merit of his work, the fact that with unflagging zeal he drew the logical consequences that otherwise no one dared to draw, which nevertheless lay immediately to hand. For we may not forget that the material of his scientific materialism was provided to him as it were ready-made by researchers and thinkers in Germany, England, and France. (I mention here only Lamarck, Geoffrey de St. Hilaire, Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer.) To appreciate his boldness we should not read his *Welträtsel*, in which he betrays a certain resignation, having been jolted back into a defensive position by

³ Certainly at that time — even among scientists — there were a not inconsiderable number of men who refused to join unconditionally in the dominant stream of their time, and there were those who sought to include unapproved-of results in their research. They were for the most part derided as pessimists or as preposterous codgers who were to be condescended to. They were so limited by the imperious constraints of the spirit of the age that they could express themselves only with difficulty, and so themselves gave cause for misunderstandings. To them belong, e.g., the physician Carl Ludwig Schleich, from whose work a selection of essays was recently reprinted (Berlin: S. Fischer 1934). I should also like to mention in this connection a very stimulating essay by Prof. G. E. Erdmann (Halle): *Das Träumen* (Berlin: Wilh. Hertz 1861).

⁴ Leipzig: Theodor Thomas (10th edition).

intellectual reversals in his time. His *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte*,⁵ which appeared in 1868 and which was translated into twelve languages, is more characteristic of that epoch, as the book was written entirely unselfconsciously. In the introduction Haeckel says, “The obscure nebulosity of mythological poetry (in which he includes the Christian religion) cannot hold out any longer against the clear sunlight of scientific knowledge.” The clear sunlight — we note the symbolic form of expression — is the intellect, causal thinking: “Scientific materialism maintains nothing more than the fact that everything that exists in the world is a matter of natural things, that every effect has its cause and every cause its effect. Over and above the totality of all known phenomena is the law of causality, the law of the necessary connection between cause and effect. This law peremptorily rejects every superstition and every notion of any kind of supernatural event.

Seen from this standpoint, life events are ordered and understood as having a developmental history, the causal nexus is concrete and chronological. Darwin’s theory of evolution and selection (Lamarck formulated the same principle as inheritance and adaptation) is, as Haeckel says, “The magic word, through which we solve all the riddles around us or at least are able to get on the road toward their solution.”

With the solution of as many riddles as possible, he and many of his contemporaries performed this task so diligently that they appear not to have noticed the strange and curious results that sometimes can be the result of applying this methodical style of thought. To be sure, the old Kant had already given a nice example of this in his delightful *Observations on the Feeling of Beauty and the Sublime*. He says there, concerning the Negroes in Africa, that they had “no feeling of nature, which goes beyond the ridiculous” (while the concept of ridiculous is defined precisely). Kant proceeds to write a very intelligent sentence about such a Negro, then continues, “It is as if there were something here that perhaps was worthy of consideration, but in short this chap was completely black from head to toe, clear proof that what he said was stupid.” Kant’s great mind could probably afford one such “freedom of thought”; in the context of this mind such a highly subjective conclusion was clearly a matter of making fun. But in the mouths of his less brilliant descendants similar methods lead to less favorable results. In this regard we see in Haeckel’s *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* such an apt example that I cannot fail to mention it. (In addition to Haeckel there are three other researchers participating in the history: Darwin founded it, K. Vogt and Huxley expanded it.) It has to do with a certain red clover that is often found in England and which serves as fodder for cattle. Since the English are very keen meat eaters, a fact to which Haeckel attributes the “superiority of their brains and spirit over all other nations,” this clover has a special importance for them. But the clover is pollinated by bumblebees; its existence, then, is dependent on the bumblebee. The bumblebees, however, are eaten by field mice, so the red clover is in danger when there are no cats, who in their turn eat the field mice. The cats, for their part, depend for their existence on the spinsters who keep them. So in the last analysis, the spinsters are the ultimate reason for the existence of the red clover in England, or, as Haeckel says, “the spinsters are of the greatest importance for the pollination of the red clover and the welfare of England.”

⁵ Edition Bonn: Emil Straus.

Through such arguments, which to be sure are not always so ungainly and clownish, yet on the cusp of the 20th century were extraordinarily frequent in many circles, all of human life was in the end reduced to banality. Whereas earlier generations felt a devout shudder in being surrounded all their lives by wondrous things, now every mystery was banished from view. Büchner relocated the sole mystery to the greatest distance possible, namely to the sun (!), of which he spoke as a *deus ex machina*. Haeckel banished his mystery to a conceptual remoteness, to the idea of “primal creativeness”; to this magical idea Haeckel gave a whole host of magical names: primal genesis, or the spontaneous, or primal creation, or *archigonia*, or *generatio sponatanea*, or *aequivoca*, or *primaria*.

Linked at that time with the idea of development (for unfathomable reasons) was the idea of progress, which, above all, made it possible to relocate all human qualities that were deemed morally and spiritually negative to the beginning of mankind’s development, and on an individual basis to early childhood, a relegation that made the mature, awakened European the apex of creation. Along with his spiritual consummation an ethical perfection went hand in hand; as Haeckel emphasized again and again, scientific materialism, whose sublime goddess he called the true, the good, and the beautiful,⁶ would exert the healthiest influence on morality. Büchner also says, “The higher the culture (he of course meant our culture), the greater morality is increased and the more wrong-doing is decreased. The era of the moral society was in complete agreement with such statements.

The over-valuation of the intellect and of the special position of consciousness generally, which was characteristic of Europe at just that time, dominated the epoch even outside the realm of scientific materialism. Those aspects of Christian church life that were still in common observance became confined to Sunday and holidays, or expressed themselves during the week in circumspect acts of charity or in a less discrete heathen mission. The prevailing religion in educated circles frequently was atheism, a religion with a wholly negative content, to be sure, but one that was inviolable and championed with fanaticism. Alongside these outlooks was a socially pervasive aesthetic attitude toward life. This was intellectually grounded in ideas like those mentioned, the true, the good, and the beautiful, for which, however, there was no longer a God in the beyond but instead an idealized conception of the Creative in man himself. Behind such flexible and malleable notions subjective ideas could hide; but for that they were strongly felt and laden with affect and often accorded an opportunity for tensions and explosions whose causes were difficult to penetrate.

Through such outlooks, in addition to the scientists, it was principally the artists who were made into custodians of the highest qualities; they were intermediaries with a half-divine character. The art of that time, which stamped Goethe as an Olympian or Beethoven as a Titan, is a familiar example of the prevailing outlook, which no longer understood the irrational.

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⁶ See Haeckel’s *Schreibkarte*, reproduced in Duisberg: *Meine Lebenserrinerungen*. Leipzig: Ph. Reclam.

When we feel dismay at the wanton hubris that expresses itself in such an attitude to life, we must not forget the great, positive achievement of the 19th century. Through the intensity with which rational thought conquered the external world and conducted all the intellectual research, objective phenomena became widely differentiated from subjective mental contents. This meant a clarification of consciousness that was necessary for the future path of the European peoples. The capacity for intellectual ordering, for the comprehending insight into the nature of things, is a most distinguished characteristic of European culture. We may not squint at the sun with half-closed eyes while dreaming or guessing — the “Faustian urge” is a European reality. Even the 19th century destruction of Christian symbolism has its positive side. For a great many people of our time, the expressive mode of the Christian church has forfeited its validity; the intellectual iconoclasm of the prior epoch has created a new, emerging position.

The real sacrilege of the resulting Enlightenment was its one-sidedness, which neglected and repudiated all psychic life. That this was so we can see perhaps most clearly in the place of women in the 19th century, an assignment that was completely unnatural and wrong-headed.⁷ I felt this for the first time as a girl at about the age of 14, when I heard Schumann’s “Frauenliebe und Leben” sung. “When I looked at him, I believed myself to be blind . . .”, “He, the most glorious of all . . .”, etc. I think I need not recall the well-known song to mind. When, further on in the song, I heard, “You sweet little angel you . . .”, that must have had to do with the birth of a child, and immediately afterwards, “For the first time you have brought me pain”— it is the death of the beloved man — this gave me an eerie sense of the creeps. I had to think: What did she do in the meantime? Did the man die right after the birth of the child? Or did nothing further happen to her? A feeling of enormous emptiness arose in me, and in the end I consoled myself with the fact that such a woman most certainly could not exist. But it is just this collection of songs that gives us the image of ideal womanhood at that time.

It is as though the old dispute, whether woman has a soul or not, had slowly reached its conclusion through the *consensus omnium*: no, she does not. Woman has no soul, for she *is* soul, and in fact the soul of a man. People spoke so often of soul-connection between man and woman, when in reality the man and woman had only one soul — *his*. So says Jakob Burckhardt in *The Culture of the Renaissance*: “Because the educated woman (of the Renaissance) stood equal to the man, what was called spiritual- or soul-connection, or ‘higher completion,’ could not come to flower, as it could later on in the civilized world of the North.”

The woman of the modern age could become the *higher* completion of the man because she presented no real soul of her own but only soul as she should represent it — the ideal of his soul. Inasmuch as the psychic was largely preformed by moral ideals, such as the true, the good, and the beautiful, women became the embodiments of very particular qualities, or even, that their qualities had to effectuate themselves in a pre-

⁷ Romanticism, in whose circles women played a great role, is not subject to this criticism. In the critical view taken here Romanticism cannot be included, for it is not *its* worldview but that of materialism that prevailed in everyday life in the second half of the 19th century. The fact that this was true, and why, is made clear, for example, in the fine essay by Ricarda Huch on “Romantic Marriage” (in *Das Ehebuch*. Celle: Niels Kampmann, 1925).

determined direction. Since, however, even for women, for example, the true or the beautiful was not easy to embody, there were until the 20th century endless good women — women who, as in Schumann's song, married a beloved man, bore him children, then were good and remained good, even after he died. The pre-eminent embodiment of such an ideal soul of the man in the past century was of course Queen Victoria of England. In this role she attained perfection. All her actions were determined by the views and strivings of her husband. Hence, as long as she lived *his* soul, he could not be dead to her. She did not really acknowledge his death, and until the end of her own life she held his room in readiness, as she would for someone living and present. The faithfulness and diligence with which she did all this rightly inspired the admiration of her contemporaries. Moreover, she acted as a model far beyond the boundaries of her country, for she fulfilled completely those demands which at that time were placed on the woman — not only by men but also by women themselves, for the women of this light-filled period did not know any better. Just like their husbands they had no inkling that they were not living at all in accordance with their own souls, or were doing so only in part. Insofar as women lived through relatedness — relatedness to men or children — it is an authentic expression of her own self when she lives with another and represents what the relationship to him awakens in both of them. So women of course must (among other things) *live the soul of a man* and give birth in everyday reality to what exists in him as an essential inner demand. But she may not *be the soul of the man*, may not become one with the other — the man or the child — and may not *possess* him, only because she, as the soul of this other, manifestly knows and feels what he does not know or feels. Then her true relatedness degenerates into a contest of wills, as happened for so many women of the past century, who, with sincere feeling, resorted to tyrannical domination. Or they in some unfathomable way became alienated from themselves as dolls, toys, and puppets, which men couldn't take seriously, as Ibsen described in his *Nora*. The consequence was a grueling dissatisfaction, for the woman's soul had its own authentic claims, about which every woman knew in her depths, for every woman's inner nature was closely linked with the psychic life. Her inner norms do not in the first place refer to spirit but to Soul, and the alienation of her true nature therefore means for her a chaotic lack of direction.

The identification with a one-sided, limited consciousness, which prevailed in the 19th century, was therefore exceedingly difficult for women to bear and was very damaging to her. Everything natural, irrational — everything that flowed from the hinterground of the soul — was banned with altogether negative expressions about the woman's nature that stemmed from a merely personal point of view. The woman's soul life had to scrape out a sham existence from the theater, the cabaret, and satirical magazines. The lack of fantasy and humor characteristic of a life determined by the intellect was replaced by an enormous consumption of printed material — sentimentality substituting for the lack of feeling. With the help of scientific or aesthetic observation, people held their own or others' emotions and conflicts at bay; they mostly preferred the attitude of an understanding onlooker. But when in families or between nations something unforeseen occurred, it was either glossed over in intellectual terms or was felt to be an utterly undeserved stroke of fate.

It was as though people had forgotten that where there is so much light, there is also much shadow. They didn't see the shadow they themselves had cast. So they didn't

notice that the shadow from which they had been separated, like the man in the fairy tale, was leading a life of its own. This strange life, which is peculiar to the shadow side, especially takes hold of the woman — hence the 19th century was richly endowed with women who offered to crack the greatest riddles of their time. These were the “crazy women” spoken of in the Hopi myth.

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In the 19th century, a movement stood in opposition to the scientific materialism, a current that compensated for it as a shadow side and which originated with a woman who never made a secret of her “craziness.” This was the movement of theosophy. Its founder was Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891). Even this woman’s external life, which wandered tirelessly back and forth between east and west, had a completely irrational character, and in my view it is very difficult to make out what she really lived and what she dreamed. Everything she concerned herself with was enmeshed in a wealth of arabesques, until her life became a matter of impenetrable confusion. Inspector Hodgson, who in India was charged by the English Society for Psychical Research to investigate her case, made short work of convicting her of fraud. She certainly had been deceptive on many occasions, the way a primitive or child deceives: for personally she was both — primitive and infantile. Only, her deceptions were of a strange sort, for she was unavoidably clogged up by the manifestations of her great medial capabilities. The mediality of Blavatsky was authentic and honest, otherwise she would not have been in a position to carry on her life’s work and to acquire such an extraordinary following in so many lands. Her voluminous writing activities, too, can be grasped only if she is understood as a parapsychological phenomenon: Blavatsky had no knowledge of what her hand was automatically writing. Hence she was entirely honest when she regarded her writings as revelations that had been supplied to her by leaders (they were called, with secret names, “Masters” or “The Brotherhood of the Adepts in Tibet”) who were known only to her. At this point she functioned just like other well-known mediums. Too, she felt in her own body how much she was a sacrifice to her inspiration: she was incapable of a normal life in the ordinary sense and was physically sick, ever tormented by her “craziness.” The place to which her experience removed her seems to me to be the dark side of that conscious attitude that we call scientific materialism. Blavatsky was drawn completely to the hinterground, to the unconscious of her epoch. She saw nothing but the background that gaped open to her, filling her with the life found in the depths, a background behind the consciousness of the 19th century.

Because everything subjective in the people of that time had been so thoroughly repressed, all psychic contents that compensated for the rational consciousness, and all the natural spirituality that represented itself in symbols, regressively sank into this background and presented themselves as undifferentiated, primeval chaos.

Blavatsky perceived correctly enough this primeval aspect of the completely split-off contents. It seemed to her that she represented “the common religion of the pre-historic and ancient world” or “the accumulated wisdom of the ages.”⁸ She speaks of the

⁸ The citations I mentioned stem collectively from Blavatsky’s main work, *The Secret Doctrine (Die Geheimlehre)*. Leipzig: Theosophisches Verlagshaus). Other writings, such as *Isis Unveiled*,

“Secret Teaching” as originating from “an archaic science,” from facts communicated from the dimmest prehistory, “from antediluvian and postdiluvian masters.” The sayings on which she bases the rambling commentaries of her *Secret Doctrine* she would have us believe were taken from an “ancient manuscript,” “a collection of palm leaves made impervious to water, fire, and air through a special, unknown process.” What she saw before her in this imaginal way seems to me to be a symbol of the human soul, which, impervious to all external influences, preserves the totality of inner experience in archetypal form, but which lies so far from the consciousness of contemporary persons that it is as though it had been excavated in a far-off land in a remote antiquity. Further, she says, “Is theosophy a new religion? we ask ourselves. By no means — it is neither a religion nor is its philosophy ‘new’, for, as already said, it is as old as the thinking human being.” The thinking human being — that is, precisely the person of the Enlightenment, who grasps his world by thinking. Only for him the “accumulated wisdom of the ages” is interred in the unconscious.

In accordance with this fact, the writings of Blavatsky pile up in a heap all possible snippets from all the esoteric teachings of all eras, and further the mythologies of the various peoples, a chaos of overthrown gods and of all imaginable symbols generally. From her portentous feeling, Blavatsky seeks to passionately re-introduce these symbols in all their former value and make their meaning understandable to the public. Her symbolic interpretations are sometimes of astonishing accuracy; but for Blavatsky herself this is of no avail, as she has no conscious standpoint at all that could help her discern them. Wholly identified with the hinterground of the soul, she and her followers are overwhelmed by the fiery lava stream of an uncomprehended and completely incomprehensible revelation. I am convinced that it is impossible to comprehend her writings. In them, one can only swim around as in a turbulent sea and let one’s belly be tickled by the large fish. This is what her followers are probably still doing even today. Blavatsky’s writings appeal at those places where they are authentically and deeply felt, appealing to an emotional element in people. When they agitate the diaphragm, as they often do, they as it were go to the nerves, that is, they awaken the consciousness of the sympathetic nervous system that stands in opposition to the knowledge located in the head and express themselves in symbols. Hence the whole worldview of Blavatsky is a profound mystery, every yes is at the same time a no, and it is constantly contradicting itself.

The fact that scientific materialism and theosophy belong together, forming a pair, as the front and back of the same coin, arises incidentally from the similarity of their fundamental attitude. Both have in common what I would like to call a “pseudo-monism,” that is, each represents a perspective in which everything originates from a single, solitary, impersonal principle. But each is illogical, hence pseudo-monist, because it fails to include the personal life in its system. So the “higher morality” that materialism stresses as a postulate in every way is not really lived but is merely pretended. Theosophy, too, in an analogous way, excludes life from its system. The followers of the secret science have not put it to work in their everyday lives but live distinctly

contained fundamentally the same theme for its content, but were understood in a still more confused way. On her life, see Hans Freimark, *Helena Pretrovna Blavatsky*. Leipzig: Th. Griebens Verlag.

materialistically — including Blavatsky, who, through the founding of her newspapers and her large-scale public activities, has shown herself to be an astute pupil of the spirit of the age.

Further, both movements have in common the idea of progressive development toward the highest perfection. Materialism moves toward a collective consciousness that finds its certainty either through a moral ideal, which finds practical realization through liberal democracy, or, through the surrender of the ideal, finds its end in Bolshevism. For theosophy, the path goes into the collective unconscious, to the theosophical astral light, which, as Blavatsky writes, is “the wisdom of chaos.” Both movements are characterized by an inherent optimism, and accordingly are in the highest degree polemic against those who think differently. Characteristic of both, further, is their hatred of the over-bearing Christian church, which Blavatsky by the way expresses in an especially droll manner in her rage against the “uneducated” and “ignorant” Church fathers. But theosophy, too, goes a long way in its de-divinization of man, above all in regard to the person of Blavatsky herself. And we know that one of the communities that derive from theosophy practices a cultural style quite similar to that of Goethe, as materialists.

The fact that Blavatsky did not succeed in getting across her announcement, that the consciousness of the age had arrived, is probably due to the fact that this great seer did not remain true to her transmission. She herself fell into being a sacrifice to the intellect that she fought against, and her work was distorted in its development by the fact that she glossed over it from the outside, exclusively mentally. Her slavish dependence on Indian philosophy distorted her objectives to a significant degree. When she opposed eastern wisdom to western science, she certainly did so out of an intuitive recognition that the Indian philosophy possessed a knowledge of the reality of the psychic that is lacking in us for the most part. But the Indian philosophy as such lacks a deeply penetrating analytical and comparative way of working aided by our own empirical knowledge; it is a foreign element grasped only by the intellect, and which does not correspond to the unique character of the European psyche.

Certainly just this use of Indian philosophy added many followers to Blavatsky’s movement. There were and are many Europeans who have especially liked being in the role of the understanding and sympathetic viewer of the doings in the Far East and who have confused knowledge with experience. Blavatsky unfortunately abetted this tendency with the Indian mask she put on. We might ask, why did she do this? It seems to me that it was because, due to a childish personal vanity, she didn’t want to see that the path she was pointing to leads not upward to a spiritual magnificence but downward to an experience of the depths. He who wants to tap the wisdom hidden in the depths of the unconscious must not look in the direction of the stars or the aether and intoxicate himself with beautiful illusions of a divine perfection; for nothing will be gained by projecting the contents of the psyche onto the heavens or onto the spirit (instead of onto an archaic prehistory). The way toward an experience of the unconscious for the contemporary European goes beyond a knowledge of his own mundane reality; it is the path of the earth. The one-sidedness of the intellect cannot be overcome through “spiritual” growth in an alien hothouse, but only through a new, firm rootedness in one’s own soil. Since theosophy lacks this, the movement continues to stand as an

unceremonious false god alongside the materialism but is unable to effect the latter's needed transformation.

A similar fate was shared by another movement, one that began in the west and which penetrated the European cultural sphere — and one that originated with another “crazy” woman. This is the Church of Christ, Scientist of Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910). This woman, too, struggled, as though afflicted by great pain, with the shadow of the materialistic world (more in the form of so-called capitalism). What she discovered through her visionary experience also was a primeval wisdom, this time as an incarnation, as it was still being lived in the present day in the villages of primitive tribes: namely, the medicine man. She was completely attuned to the unfathomable world of magic, which her contemporaries manifestly did not want to know about, but which she bore, unconsciously, within herself. Hence Mrs. Eddy had throughout her entire life to fight the demons of the night with the commitment of her full, tenacious powers — she, as the only intermediary between a strange, hidden god and a suffering humanity. What she represented, living such a life, seems to me to be the psychological fact that in the soul of modern man there exists as a subjective mental image a figure corresponding to the medicine man, a figure that embodies a natural wisdom and which, when made conscious, leads to a sound and correct attitude toward general human life and to conflicts. Mrs. Eddy did not live her femininity (even though she had several men and even a son), rather she was a medicine *man*, that is, she was completely identified with a personification that corresponded to Blavatsky's “masters” or “brothers.” But Mrs. Eddy's message also died away without lasting effect, for she too was not faithful to her inspiration. Just as she painted and made up her face until her death, so too she adulterated her “bible” (*Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures*) over the decades with the very shoddy intellectual “make-up” of her distorted Christianity.

I should like here to interpolate a comment of a fundamental nature. I know, of course, that not all the followers of theosophy or Christian Science have been women. The fact that, from the beginning and later on, very many men have participated in these movements does not vitiate my point of view, for in every man there is a hidden feminine element, through which he has access to that side of life that in the main is counter to his masculinity. This side shows itself precisely in those men who participated in the peculiar mystical movements of the 19th century. For instance, the collaborator of Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, displays in his photographs a striking comeliness behind his beard, soft, somewhat feminine lineaments. Also, Rudolf Steiner's picture has a decidedly feminine look. In saying this I do not wish to convey any disparagement. There have always been men who with a greater or lesser emphasis have manifested in their lives the feminine soul-image that they carry within themselves. An eminent graphologist recently assured me that men whom he knows who are gifted in the medial arts are mostly inclined toward “bisexuality.” Because of this, the pure psychological fact is brought to expression that in such men the feminine element is stronger than is normally the case. This can of course express itself in a spiritual disposition and in such cases is most clearly visible when the man is very unconscious and is therefore prey to his psychic constitution. His manner of thinking in such a case, as with a woman, tends to be undifferentiated or bound up purely intellectually with existing traditions. His attitude toward life is conditioned by feeling, or can also be characterized by a spasmodic emphasis on his masculinity, which a man living from a masculine center does not need to display. Such men we can see taking part

in movements that originate entirely from the feminine principle, the irrational, for example theosophy and Christian Science or other background currents that remain to be discussed.

These are the phenomena of *parapsychology*, that is, events connected with the presence of a medium, and those of *hypnosis*.

The first mediums, whose emergence founded Spiritism, were, again, women, namely the two Fox sisters, who first came to public attention in the year 1847, in Hydesville, USA. In 1852, according to a report out of St. Louis of the “*Courier of the United States*,” more than 10,000 mediums were counted, a fact that disturbed the populace so much that a petition of 14,000 signatures was filed with the legislative authorities asking that they undertake an investigation of occult phenomena. At the same time, in Europe, table turning reached utterly epidemic proportions, and mediums were invited to séances even in the courts.

To the extent that the medial phenomena were accepted, they certainly were not suitable to be received by the consciousness of their time. Spiritism, as a movement analogous to theosophy, is just as inaccessible to objective review as is theosophy, for its idiosyncratic interpretations of occult phenomena in any case claim the status of absolute truth. Among those persons gifted with medial ability, there are not a few who have submitted themselves to precise scientific observation and who have thereby assisted in providing a comprehensive collection of empirical data. With admiration and sympathy we must pay tribute to these researchers who, amid the scorn and contempt of a world completely oriented to “sound human understanding,” impartially and consciously turned to this shadow side and impartially investigated the dynamics of the spirits behind the backdrop of consciousness.

The objective reports⁹ that have been recorded on the facts about mediumship all agree that what we are concerned with here (tapping sounds, moving objects, telepathy, messages, and appearances of the living and dead) is the operation of a psychic element that in some strange way appears to function independently of consciousness. Maxwell¹⁰ calls this a “common” or “impersonal consciousness”; he says, “Today it seems certain that this impersonal consciousness is in a position to receive precise impressions independently of meaning. Osty¹¹ writes, “Mediums who are capable of an extra-normal cognitive faculty demonstrate a kind of perception that is different from the customary use of the five senses” Their perception seems to originate from two sources: 1) “From the psyche of modern persons — a rich source, from which they prefer to take in

⁹ These are based in part in the reports of the European and American societies for psychical research. Lucid, comparatively simple books on the subject are: James H. Hyslop, *Science and a Future Life* (Boston: Turner & Co.) and *Probleme der Deelenforschung* (Stuttgart: J. Hoffmann); Th. Flournoy, *Des Indes à la Planete Mars* (Geneve: Ed. Atar); J. Maxwell, *Les phénomènes psychiques* (Paris: Ed. Alcan); E. Osty, *La connaissance supranormale de la réalité* (Etampes: Imprimerie Ferrier Freres). Further, there is the very revealing autobiography of the medium E. d’Espérance, *Im Reiche der Schatten, Licht aus dem Jenseits* (Berlin: K. Sigismund).

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹¹ Loc. cit.

all mental contents, which are more diverse and abundant than the limited assumptions of classic psychology are prepared to believe. When a personality encounters an object of extra-normal perception, the personality is usually gripped by everything it touches, through an intricate spiritual substitution of great subtlety.” 2) From a source that Osty provisionally calls Source X (inasmuch as the researchers can scarcely gain any familiarity with it) and which is designated as existing on a transcendental plane (*plan transcendent*) in the world-soul.¹² Hyslop, too (*Science and a Future Life*), concludes in his investigations that the “normal consciousness does not exhaust the capabilities and achievements of the spirit or of the organism.” He is clearly of the opinion that all medial phenomena “can be explained through one and the same hypothesis.” But: “What this hypothesis is, I don’t know.” It is to the credit of parapsychological research that in many instances it is content with such an “I don’t know,” and that it presents us with their collections of irreproachable material. By doing so, an important experience on our part becomes ever more clear, that the concept of a consistently normal and rational consciousness is essentially an illusion. The prevailing 19th-century belief in the normal man, which, at bottom, everyone understood himself to be, was in this way broken through. Maxwell writes, “I cannot contain my smile when I read the essays of certain contemporary scholars, who regard every deviation from the normal as a flaw. The normal man is merely an average: there are individuals beneath the mean, and others who surpass it. It is merely the illusory unity of our personality that induces us to unify and categorize natural phenomena and man himself. The nervous character of an imagined average person is nothing more than an abstraction — in reality, the nervous sensibilities of the various human individualities vary between very wide limits.”

Unfortunately, however, most researchers involved with the field of parapsychology are not so careful in their treatment of the matter and should keep themselves from drawing rash conclusions. On the one hand, they should not let themselves be led astray in regarding the extra-normal, whose existence they confirm, as “supra-normal,” as though the so-called normal would have to be subordinated to it, a view for which there is no evidence whatever. On the other hand, they gladly term the medial phenomena “spiritual,” and thereby are to an extent complicit in errors of understanding and worthiness that have already been made in this field by theosophy and Spiritism. Many of the medial phenomena — so often the utterly insipid messages of the “masters,” tapping, or the flying-around of objects — are so flagrantly unspiritual that we can only falsify the actual situation when we try to attribute some sort of spiritual meaning to them.

In addition to the investigations into occult phenomena, the parapsychologists have turned their attentions to the persons of the mediums themselves; through these investigations they have often been able to uncover a number of frauds. Moreover, it was established that the state of the medium during her work, or as we would say, in a trance, is for the most part similar to the conditions found in hypnotic states.

The term ‘hypnosis’ originates with the English physician Dr. James Braid, who defined the phenomenon as a nervous sleep that is accompanied by a loss of consciousness and will, through which changes in the organism, sensory illusions, hallucinations, and alterations in thought and feeling are induced. Braid was the first of

¹² German: *Seelenganze*.

the series of doctors who, proceeding from the fantastical intuitions of Mesmer and supported by the studies of hypnotic states, later founded the science of the neuroses.

In my view it is a significant fact that for the people of the 19th century the psychic had to be accepted as a medical condition, as an illness. The interest that circles far and wide showed in the phenomena of hysteria was only too well founded, for hysteria, that is, a pathological splitting of the personality, was the secret suffering of the “normal man,” an affliction that, existing outside their ego-consciousness, was accorded no reality. The upshot of this attitude — a latent neurosis at work in the psyche due to the splitting of consciousness — was again convincingly brought to expression predominantly by women. How many of them thronged, for example, to Charcot, to display at his famous lectures at the Salpêtrière all phases of the grand hysteria amid the humming of huge tuning forks and under the most garish lights! These women lived his teachings before he ever spoke of them, and on many occasions they misled their leader in showing with uncanny certainty just those symptoms (which in truth they had) that he needed for the confirmation of his theories. They were able to be what he and the public wanted to see, for they — and also he — experienced the invisible pathological substance coming from the psyche of the collective, for hysteria was in the atmosphere of that all-too-understanding period. Charcot sometimes had to appear like the sorcerer’s apprentice in Goethe’s poem, who could not again be free of the spirits he called forth.

And his student, Sigmund Freud, was, at the beginning, at least, demonstrably influenced by a woman. The patient of his older colleague, Breuer, Anna O., a girl of “overflowing mental vitality,” discovered during her treatment what she herself called the “talking cure” or “chimney-sweeping.” In a creative way, and in an original form, she fell back on the old means of healing and salvation practiced by the Church — on the whole-hearted confession before the ear of a higher understanding. The nice, naïve expression “chimney-sweeping” shows that she indeed felt what kind of mental contents should reach the light of consciousness in the presence of the doctor: the black residue that remained behind after a cleansing fire, that is, unacceptable, negative aspects of life and existence that have been discarded by the mind. Freud apprehended this course of the talking cure and based his psychoanalytic method on it.¹³ By this means he freed his treatment of neurosis to a large extent from the perilous method of hypnosis, and helped the psychologically ill move away from an unhealthy passivity and dependency on the conscious will of the doctor and toward an active, participatory stance in relation to their own sufferings. On this methodological foundation there arose in him the awareness, in contrast to earlier views, that hysteria was not to be traced back, as P. Janet¹⁴ had said, to a “psychic under-performance.” Already in his first case Freud pointed out that “hysteria is in its most difficult form consistent with a substantial and gifted aptitude” . . . “that hysteria does not preclude a blameless character development and goal-oriented lifestyle.” In another place he speaks of “a quite widespread propensity to contract hysteria; that is, he recognized this unconscious tendency of the period, but at the same time the fact that behind the symptoms of illness — to use his language, “repressed” — there were hidden contents that were essential to life. He is the first to observe the

¹³ Breuer himself was no longer actively involved.

¹⁴ See the book of Pierre Janet, “L’Automatisme Psychologique (Paris: Librairie Alcan), which summarizes the phenomena of hysteria very clearly.

expressions of the unconscious in a sufficiently unbiased way to be able to rediscover for the modern age its most refined expression, the dream.

Nevertheless, Freud was not altogether prepared for the women who came to him as patients and who were the primary source of the material for his theories. Especially in the beginning of his career he was quite easily misled by them, in that they inveigled him into taking their fantasies at face value. Freud at that time viewed the totality of human substance more or less as an algebraic system of equations. His healing method lay in ascertaining the unknown quantities by means of abreaction or vocalizing, through which the equation was solved — the patient could be healed. The whole host of excitations in the patient were assigned as factors to the individual variables of the algebraic system; their sum was considered to be constant. For Freud there was no factor in the whole system that could not be accessed either directly or indirectly and put in order — hence, e.g., his idea of conscious repression. Time, as a quantity, was hardly taken into account. This equational system in itself was regarded as solved, as in a state of equilibrium; disturbance or confusion entered it as the result of a “trauma” from the outside. Freud would be reinforced in this view by all the unconscious women, who were only too pleased to offer themselves as sacrifices to the imagination, and who willingly described their life stories as a series of the most unbelievable traumas that one can imagine. When from time to time we leaf through Freud’s earliest writings and read what many women are supposed to have gone through before they came to him, we cannot comprehend how these accounts of fantasies could have been misconstrued as real facts. Here and there in his writings Freud himself is made uncomfortable by them. Hence he writes in the aforementioned book,¹⁵ “It strikes me, too, as odd that the medical case histories I am writing read like novels and that they lack as it were the serious character of scientific rigor. I have to console myself in this regard, that the nature of the subject is evidently more responsible for this than are my predilections.” But the responsibility for this was really the nature of the women who had told him the stories, without being able to distinguish what was fantasy and what was reality. Freud recognized this later on and gave up the trauma theory in favor of the concept of the incest wish. But Freud did not understand the women themselves, not by a long shot, first because he did not comprehend the irrational, and second, because he understood only as much of the psychic, which conditioned and defined these women, as had a place in his system.

Yet Freud’s work was path-breaking. An extraordinary amount has been written and said about it, and his technical terms have attained a popularity that clearly shows how much people thirsted for a new conceptualization by which to express in some way an experience other than the “normal.” The fact that his conceptual system is inadequate has since his time been sufficiently emphasized. Freud’s language simplifies far too much to be able to meet the needs of consciousness, forcing us into a new procrustean bed of understanding. It was a beginning that had to be overcome, and could be, for it was a beginning that corresponded to the potentials of the outgoing 19th century. Before the soul could really be discovered we first had to see our own shadow side and our weaknesses and our strange bonds of attachment to others, with their compulsive demands.

¹⁵ Translator’s note: No reference is in fact given in the German text.

In connection with this there has been much derisive laughter and mockery, for it was mainly women who crowded into the psychoanalytic consultation rooms, which since Freud have shot up like mushrooms. Certainly, many women ran to the physicians simply because it was fashionable. Many more women turned to psychoanalytic treatment from an instinctive awareness that this dark and joyless path, when taken seriously, would lead in the end to a still undiscovered soul. They were right in this, for modern psychology, after many vacillations and volatility in moving away from its initial narrow focus on the merely personal, found an angle of vision that permitted an entry into the experience of a human commonality.

Modern psychology, especially, seeks out the hinterground, to apprehend the foundations of humane existence that are not visible on the surface. Hence it is called depth psychology. Quite in contrast to the strivings of theosophy or the other movements mentioned above, modern psychology, from its beginnings onward, refused in any way to gloss over, or blindly abandon, the things that it discovered. Through adherence to scientific objectivity, through an approach corresponding to the European mentality, with its undaunted desire to understand, it has step by step penetrated inward, laying open the subjective contents of the mind and ordering them in accordance with fresh points of view.

In so doing, modern psychology has attempted the second part of the program of development that Jakob Burckhardt derived from the aspirations of the Renaissance for the modern age: that man may live his subjective life and come to know himself as an individual. In this regard it has been conclusively shown that the anxiety and revulsion by which the past century turned away from the life of the soul are not justified. The human soul is not just a cesspool in which obscene desires or evil lusts for power putrefy together with their own maladjusted attributes. This was merely the illusion of those entrapped in their collective rationalism, the alienated persons of the Victorian era.

It was C. G. Jung who finally cleared away the rationalistic bias and who recognized the true significance of psychic activities. Jung's way of seeing mirrors human life as a psychic event, as it really is, with all its many-sidedness and polarities. His theory is therefore complex and hard to understand, but at the same time it is accessible to every person in a most simple way: namely, through his own experience. For it is an interpretation of the fundamental facts of every human life, of childhood, maturity, old age, and death, and of the conflicts and transformations that occur throughout. In his introduction to *Secret of the Golden Flower*, Jung says:

I had realized in the meantime that the greatest and most important life problems are fundamentally unsolvable; they must be so, for they express the necessary polarity that is inherent in every self-regulating system. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. . . . When I considered the human course of development, implied in each person, how unconsciously he grows beyond himself, I saw that, in terms of human fate, everyone shared something in common, namely that the New emerges from a dark field of possibilities, from without or from within; each person took this and proceeded to mature. Never, however, was the New a thing solely on the outside or solely on the inside. If it

came from the outside, there was also an inner experience. If it came from within, there would also be an external event. But never was it brought about deliberately and consciously willed; rather it flowed out from the stream of the age.

For the modern European, however, life unfolds in dealing with matters in the outside world and in the realm of rational thought. There are only a few among them so constituted that they could grow by themselves without the intervention of consciousness. The stream of the age flows by them unnoticed, the New that pours out from the ground of the soul remains lost to them. Hence Jung emphatically sets out, and tries again and again in every way, to make the world of subjective contents, or the unconscious, accessible to the people of his time.

In his book *Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious*, he writes, “For as much as it is now highly probable that we are very far from having climbed the mountain peak of absolute consciousness, every one of us is capable of further consciousness, for which reason we can accept that unconscious events will always introduce new contents to our awareness; these, when recognized, widen the breadth of our awareness. Viewed in this way the unconscious would seem to be a field of experience capable of unlimited expansion. If it were merely reactive to consciousness, one might fittingly designate it as a psychic mirror-world. In this case the important source of all contents and activities would lie in consciousness, and nothing else at all would be found in the unconscious but (at best) distorted mirror-images of conscious contents. The creative process would be exclusively found in consciousness, and all that was new would be nothing other than conscious perception or a product of the intellect. But the facts of experience tell us otherwise. Every creative person knows that the ‘spontaneous’ is the essential quality of creative thought. Because the unconscious is not just a purely reactive reflection but an independent, productive activity, so that its field of experience is a world of its own, a reality of its own, about which we can say that it affects us, as we affect it, the same as we say of our experience in dealing with the outside world. And as we say of the outside world that the material objects are the constituting elements, so the psychic factors are the objects in that world.” . . . “I take the standpoint that the world is outer and inner, that reality corresponds to the outer and inner equally; so, to be consistent, I have to understand that the disturbances and detrimental effects that happen to me on the inside are symptoms of a defective adaptation to the conditions of my inner world. . . . Failure to adapt to this inner world is just as serious an omission as ignorance and incapacity in the outer world.”

Adaptation to this inner world is however not a one-time or random act, but rather an ongoing experience of, and confrontation with, the ever-new, emerging unconscious contents of a personal and common nature as they are imparted to consciousness through dreams and fantasies. It is a living psychic process, the growth and becoming of our existence, the recognition of all that we are and all that surrounds us. The confrontation with the psychic factors therefore means at the same time the fulfillment of the Renaissance program of Jakob Burckhardt — the fact that the individual should know himself as such. Jung calls this event — the awakening of the inner man, which the recognition of the collective things of the outer world first makes precious — *individuation*. Because of this realization, the fact that he has raised the problem of

individuation in a form that is adequate to the needs of people in our time, he has for the first time lifted the veil of psychic blindness that banishes modern European man to the mediaeval sphere of unconsciousness about himself. He has accordingly defined a new meaning of life, which does not contradict or reject our past but which itself emerges from the past, and as an organic, subsequent stage of development.¹⁶ The problem of individuation is the problem of individual development, the conscious confrontation of the ego with the psychic powers working on it from the outside, powers that Jung calls the collective unconscious. This is the problem that most deeply affects the modern world. According to this idea of the collective unconscious the individual person can comprehend that he is conditioned by psychic factors that all men have in common, and through which consciousness strives from within to move beyond its own boundaries to a new place in the human totality.

The idea of the collective unconscious, moreover, answers in the best way the question of Hyslop, in accordance with a hypothesis that can explain the medial phenomena.¹⁷ What appear to consciousness as a personification of spirits or as mysterious influences from the “beyond” are images of the workings of the psychic, an archetypal realm that forms the basis of human experience. Any person can receive, can be gripped by, an image or phenomenon from the great book of images on which the whole of humanity has drawn. This person is then a thinker, a seer, a poet — or a medium, depending on the level of consciousness by which the emerging content has been formed.

The preponderance of mediums as receptors of collective unconscious contents during the past century moves me to think that in that period there was no conscious attitude at all that could receive messages from the inner world, that is, there was no mature introspection available at all. So the receptors could in a peculiar way remain undeveloped people, whose introspection was all that was functioning in them. Mediumship, due to neglect and therefore rendered primitive, seems to me to be a

¹⁶ “One can raise the question here why it is desirable that a person should individuate. It is not only desirable, but even unavoidable, for through his involvement with life (with the world inside and outside) the individual arrives at situations that make him feel divided within himself. . . . A solution to this only appears, however, when he can be and live out what he feels. . . . If such a person can say of his state and his actions that, ‘This is what I am, so this is how I will live,’ he can be one with himself even when things are hard for him, and he can take responsibility for himself even when he is struggling. It must be recognized, however, that a person does not endure anything more trying than himself. (‘You sought the most onerous burden, because you found yourself.’ – Nietzsche) But even this most difficult achievement becomes possible when a person can distinguish himself from his unconscious contents. The introvert discovers these contents in himself, the extravert finds them projected onto a human object. In both cases the unconscious contents cause blind illusions that falsify our relations with our fellow man and make them unreal. For this reason, individuation is unavoidable for certain persons, not only as a therapeutic necessity but as a high ideal, as a conception of the best that man can do. I may not omit to mention that at the same time the early Christian ideal comes from the realm of God, ‘which dwells within you.’ The idea that lies at the root of this ideal is that right action comes from a right disposition, and that there is no healing and no betterment of the world that does not begin with the individual himself.” – Jung, *The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious*.

¹⁷ See the essay “Instinct and Unconscious” in Jung’s *On Psychic Energy*.

distorted or illegitimate form of introspection. There is something repugnant about it that we experience on each occasion, for it is not a natural growth but an abnormality of an experientially stunted era. The turn to conscious introspection, the necessity for which Jung is always emphasizing in his writings, will in this regard have a curative effect, for it again makes space for man's natural aptitude for experiencing the psychic.

Jung abolished the restrictions through which Jakob Burckhardt, like his contemporaries, prejudged the cognition of the individual, when he called the individual a spiritual being. Spirit is only one side of soul life; the other is our connection with the earth. Thus Jung says in his introduction to *Secret of the Golden Flower*, "Spirit is higher than intellect, in that it includes not just intellect but also the mind. It is a way and a principle of life that aims at supra-human, illumined heights. But in opposition to it we find the feminine, the dark, the earthly (Yin) with their timeless depths and bodily rootedness downward into emotionality and instinctivity. Doubtless these concepts are purely intuitive ideas, but we cannot do without them when we attempt to comprehend the nature of the human soul."

The insight into the existence of this feminine principle is at the same time the only access to a real understanding of the woman herself, whose nature is especially linked with the feminine depths of the soul. Only from this place can we understand — and see through — women as they really are. Nothing is more beneficial for a woman (even when she does not admit it) than to be really seen through by a man. Only then does she understand herself and find the way to her own peculiar reality; this is so different from her idealized appearance, which so often conceals her from the man. Then she need no longer be his soul — which she manages only badly; rather, she can live her own soul and her own nature. And this is completely different from the magical image that the man, from his soul, projects onto her. She is, e.g., neither true, nor good, nor beautiful. This and so many other notions, with which men have adorned the "weaker sex," are based on an ideal world that stems entirely from the masculine spirit and which is contrary to every woman *as woman*. Seen from the standpoint of the masculine spirit, women certainly are a weaker sex. In their own realm, however, they are strong, instinctive, not to be influenced, and sometimes of a monumental objectivity. Or, I should rather say, they are what they are when they know how to live in and of themselves? But to live in and of themselves is for the modern women, who strive so energetically for equality with men, really the most onerous burden. Most women are quite disinclined to admit that they are not the same as men but, being different, are of equal value; for the idea of women's rights dominates the consciousness of a great many women who do not belong to the actual women's movement, many more women than one might think. This thought poses an initial obstacle on her path to self-realization.

Originally, women's rights were founded to be sure on the basic demands of women, to smash open the prison walls behind which they had been locked in the Victorian era and to live in accordance with their own needs. But the attempt at liberation degenerated in many instances into a quite bizarre arrogation of masculine freedoms. The annoying and unpleasant manifestations of women's rights are, however, understandable if we view them as symptoms of a change of epoch, as a further, confused striving of "crazy" women for the new way of living. It is understandable that in a time in which all the values in the outer world were confused, many women had to understand the New as a social renewal. So far as such a view was necessary, it gained acceptance. Women

today are much more independent than before. But for this reason the symptomatic character of the women's rights movement has not been expounded on. We still have to ask what it really means when women strive so hard to have rights equal to those of men. The fact that this equality has been sought in the outer world seems to me to be a misunderstanding of consciousness. Fundamentally it has to do with the fact that women faced the problem just like the men, to understand themselves as individuals. It is this *commonality* of the problem that the advocates of women's rights sensed, but they confused this with equality.

* * *

It is always the inner experience, the soul's task, that a period of history presents that enjoins people most firmly and in the most intimate way. But we are so profoundly enmeshed in the heart of this task that perhaps the most difficult thing is to see it with any degree of clarity. We are able to pay attention only to the outer signs of the collective inner event, which present to us life itself. When we look back at the past, we find as a clear symptom of the future-bearing suffering just that cry for help on the part of the "crazy" women, a situation I have tried to describe. One can call these women crazy with a certain justification, for while they lived they had no understanding at all of what they were living, but who as powerless instruments had been removed to an existence that was beyond their limited understanding. We must therefore interpret their experience if we are to understand it. In this sense we can compare them most closely to the Pythiai and Sibyls of the ancient world, with respect to whose dichotomous oracles everything came down to a correct interpretation. The modern "prophetesses" were at a disadvantage in comparison with their ancient sisters, in that no one came to them to try to understand or interpret their utterances. Either people blindly accepted their ambiguous, equivocal sayings or just as blindly refused to do so. And they in every way made themselves a lot more difficult for their fellow men to understand, for, as veritable children of a wholly irreligious period in history, everything they sensed, felt, or did was in reference to themselves and brought into this world by themselves as though they were saviors incarnate, to whom other people had to offer obeisance. For all the "women's movements" I have described this feature is characteristic — for theosophy, Christian Science, mediumship, and women's rights.¹⁸ They imagined that they had the keys to a secret or to a panacea for the root of all evil. But they possessed neither secrets nor means of healing — that is, no conscious understanding — rather merely secrets and evil, or, rather, they were so possessed that they no longer knew themselves. Indeed, they found it difficult during their involuntary calling to avoid becoming enraptured with their godliness, for what they presented was of real importance, of the highest value: they reflected indeed the soul of their time.

Most who looked into this mirror felt repugnance and dread, or they quickly stuck their heads in the sand. This did not help them in the end, for the world war destroyed the "huts" that European understanding had so artfully constructed. Nothing remained but to follow the wistful call of the eternal feminine and to overcome the barriers of a world-view that had proved unsound. What do we find as a result?

¹⁸ There are several others besides these. I will mention only the various methods of suggestion, natural healing, or diet; limited space prohibits me from going into them further.

“Then, finally, the people climbed up to the fourth world above, which is this world. Here they found only one creature, the lord of the unpopulated world: the Corpse Demon, or Death”

There is no denying that the materialist outlook confronted the problem of death with an utter lack of understanding. Its basic optimistic attitude saw in death only a great No, an abrupt end to a temporal existence that was regarded as more important than any other consideration. To *this* death, as a death that we really might prefer to call the Corpse Demon, one can only reach for whatever possible defensive measure there are to fend it off; hence materialism logically grants the medical doctor unchallenged authority in these matters. They are the only ones who have a professional, conscious attitude toward death, in that they work to postpone death for as long as possible and only submit to it at the very last moment. This professional course applies to every instance of death — with children and old people, with those eager for life and those weary of it. The fact of death is thus a realization that is expelled from life as thoroughly as possible. In this respect the materialists are not much better than the aborigines, who do not understand death as a common human experience but see each instance of it as a personal misfortune caused by the magic of an enemy, a cause that really should not have happened. Mrs. Baker Eddy made this concept — a tacit, basic tenet of materialism — into a system. In her world-view, death figures only as a consequence of human weakness or folly, which fundamentally cannot be avoided. This outlook was responsible for much of her success in many circles.

Natural death, however, is merely the physiological aspect of the much more general problem of transformation and renewal, which originally made men out of natural, man-like animals. For this transformation, which encompasses the whole human being and which as the symbol of the godhead inspires him to realize his highest value, death is the archetypal image. As such it was the subject of the loftiest contemplation in every developed religion and the content of all mysteries and initiations. If Europeans are to realize the Renaissance program of Jakob Burckhardt and come to experience themselves as individuals, they must take up a new stance vis-à-vis the problem of death, as a problem that belongs to life itself. In other words, they shall have to learn that death is not to be regarded as a negation but as one of life's goals.

Such a perspective need not be melancholic or gruesome. This fact emerges clearly from the ancient wisdom of the Hopi myth. Mankind, which lives on the surface of the earth and meets the lord Death, does not die. On the contrary, mankind begins to live in a new way. Men light their own lights, the moon and the sun. That is, contemplation about the goal of life awakens in man new, heretofore unused powers; it results in brightness, the expansion of consciousness. The images found at the end of the Hopi myth express for us in a mysterious way *the consciousness of the psychic*.

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When we translate this into everyday language, it simply means that men and women begin to become conscious of the background of their being and activities, of the irrational factors by which these are affected and which they themselves affect. By

becoming conscious of the psychic, men and women learn to live in accordance with what they are by nature, in that they at the same time distinguish themselves from what they are not. But how does this manifest *in reality*? And — here the question raises itself, is a woman who lives as she really is then no longer “crazy”? Or, what will we see from these women, when they shed their old roles and become themselves?

The expression “shed their old roles” is very much to the point here. A woman, most of the time, plays her role without really knowing it — and not only because her vague consciousness can be so easily determined by something outside herself, but because in her there is something that, with uncanny power, demands that she play a role. She is a “deceived deceiver,” even when the source of deception lies hidden in her own nature.

Nevertheless, many women have in the course of time figured out that what they are living is in a disturbing way not quite right and does not correspond to who they are. Their roles are of no interest to them, their enthusiasm slackens. The time has come for an experience of molting — for the old to fall away and for something new to grow. Thus, as already said, even in the 19th century many women noted that the tenets they recognized as guiding principles were such that they could not live them. Their husbands were perhaps good and fair — they themselves, however, were fundamentally partisan and unfair. The woman’s friend was perhaps an artist — she herself, however, merely played the so-called feminine *inspiratrix*. Then she threw away her role like old rubbish. Did she now become herself? Oh, no, she simply fell into the next role. She discovered, e.g., her “black soul” and became proud of her demonism. Or, somewhat later, after she had read Freud, she ostentatiously behaved very badly; even so, she derived from this either no pleasure at all or at best a very moderate amount. She always looked for something new, but every attempt remained in some way a half-measure — something else, something important, was missing. So most women gave up, and again sought salvation in the intellect, in a program, in some little place in the wide-bellied ship of the collective existence.

Even today, every individual woman’s path to herself is of a similar character. Every woman as it were performs a dance of the veils like Salome, she casts her coverings each around the other, and is always reaching for the next one. But quite unlike that impertinent young wife, every proper woman feels anxious and uneasy when she has to cast off the last veil. She senses what lies ahead: she will then stand before the source of her illusion and deception, and rather than look into these depths she will continue to be the deceived deceiver — even when she is completely alone with herself. So the final thing remains lacking, for in anticipation of this final thing she feels fear, for a woman who has thrown off all her coverings stands before the problem of the feminine principle, and today that is certainly the most burning problem — but also the most alien and disquieting one.

The result, in the context of our culture, is that women today can win back their true nature only by treading a difficult and crooked path. And what woman living today would not be imbued with the present culture? All of us are at the very least civilized, and are in this respect “unfeminine.” This has happened to us while accompanying the man in his development. The entire European past was oriented toward the masculine — toward patriarchal laws, consciousness, the spirit. In the intercourse of society women had to be

silent. Protestantism knew no feminine godhead. This means therefore: it is precisely in matters most important that the feminine has found among us no expression. Even women have become alienated from the feminine. Today, however, women must find their way back to the cultural foundations of the feminine principle, they must discover anew for themselves and their husbands the earth, the depths of an “unknown god.”

I should like here to cite again the words of C. J. Jung: “Opposite it [the spirit] stands the feminine, the dark, the earthy (Yin), with its rich emotionality and instinctivity.” Something is being said here, but what does it mean? We know so little about this that Jung saw himself moved to bring to clarity the Chinese term *Yin*. Richard Wilhelm, in his translation of the Chinese Book of Changes renders *Yin* with the words “the receptive.” And here, too, we have to ask whether we really know precisely what this means.

As always, when we have to interpret, we are readily inclined to idealize and to think here, e.g., that Yin, the receptive — it is like a loving motherliness. We proceed from the mother image, to be able to bring to mind the feminine principle. But it is just this that we may not do, for the feminine is indeed located opposite the spirit, therefore also opposite every ideal. Yin is the mother-womb of the soul — receptive and procreating. What falls into it, it carries, ripens, and eventually throws out. It “bears,” but it is also inertia, lassitude, indifferent in its receiving, immovable, cold, and blind. It never rouses itself from its place; in giving birth it convulses like the volcanic earth that shakes at times — when, we don’t know.

To realize this is in a certain sense truly dangerous, for although the “deep feminine” is the womb from which all psychic life flows, it is owing to the womb’s inertia that all activity and with it all consciousness and culture are set in antagonistic opposition to it. As external nature, without the intervention of man, is created and destroyed in an indifferent, meaningless constancy — as fruits ripen and rot, as animals live, then putrefy — so the feminine principle without the intervening skill of the conscious mind is just as undirected a process, bearing and destroying alike. The feminine is therefore not perhaps primitive — for even the primitive has a relative culture and a relative consciousness — rather it is extra-cultural and non-spiritual.

The frightening thing in connection with this is that this unspiritual, extra-cultural entity is still the wellspring of human experience — similar perhaps to an ancient sluggish animal that has observed the life of man for thousands of years and so already knows everything about it long before it happens. For us, it is almost a shocking paradox that the unspiritual should be wise, and yet it is so. But it is no agreeable wisdom, for it is suited to no particular age or to any particular human being, but only to the cold, stark eternity of the unconscious psychic life. And just like organic life, which despite its immutable permanence never stands still and which even in the cave incessantly renews the organism, the feminine principle encompasses the perpetual cycle of psychic events, the ineluctable transformation into every stable form. Thus it is at once preservative and annihilating, at once unshakeable permanence and convulsing revolution. It expresses itself as sexual compulsion, in the assimilation of instinct, in emotional upheaval, and in a wisdom that, through its unrelatedness, is truly diabolical.

In her innermost femininity, every woman is conditioned by this feminine principle, the Yin. Apart from everything that the woman says or does, apart from every very intimate connection with people and spiritual values, this principle expresses itself in her as a completely alien factor that undeviatingly goes its own way. Here she is averse to all her own needs and to the needs of those close to her, and faces only in the direction of the compelling necessity of cyclic experience. Here she does not recognize external time and its demands but only the unfailing tides of her ebb and flow. Utterly unconscious and unrelated to others, this deepest part of her pays heed only to the growing and ripening processes of *life*, which from there must be supported and fostered whether she is willing to do so or not.

This is what makes women so inexplicable for themselves and others. The Yin in them wants to be the inexplicable, the unknown: always the next step on the untrodden path of life, to every Conscious and Unconscious, in very situation the germ of the new. For this reason it is inexpressible, and all words that one brings to bear, all explanations that one might offer concerning it, have no reality and are deception and falsehood. The only thing real here is the darkness that is pregnant with gestating life.

For the people of our time, however, everything that is dark is so suspicious or even hostile that they turn away from it, toward something more opportune. Hence the animate darkness of Yin is seldom even recognized by the modern, educated woman, in whom it naturally expresses itself in impulsive feelings or in emotions that can communicate the movements of the unconscious depths of consciousness. Or when they are recognized, they are quickly covered up and dressed up in opinions, conceptualizations, and rationales that distort the inexplicable as soon as it emerges. What can only be apprehended through *living* is thus blighted in embryo. As a consequence, the subterranean stream of psychic life accumulates and in unguarded moments floods the conscious mind in the form of overpowering affect that lays waste to everything around it. Or the Yin becomes malicious in the woman, expressing itself through her conscious or unconscious intrigues and suspicions, which then unknowingly poison the woman herself and her surroundings. Women who in this way fall into their unconscious femininity are as “crazy” like the Sybils of the 19th century or like the women of that upper, brightly lit cave world in the Hopi myth. From the glaring light of a one-sided and rigid consciousness the women are hurled into the darkness of the Yin.

In this sense, the myth of the Hopi Indians is an image relevant to the fate of modern man. From a youthful unconsciousness man and woman alike fight their way through to a clear ego-consciousness of a mature person. Then, to keep with the language of the myth, they have reached their “highest cave world.” Here they build their “huts” — they learn to say, “*I am this and not that.*” And they undertake “*journeys*” — they comprehend the space that surrounds them. This coming to consciousness of the ego and its adaptation to the demands of the environment is such a great effort that all the powers of the individual have to be collected and to aspire to *a* direction, until the person can finally say his *sum cogitans*. The result for the awakening person is the absolute rulership of the ego. This means an unavoidable one-sidedness, one that nevertheless seems to the individual to be a proud climax — a triumph of consciousness over the unconscious child and the animal. Both of these are overcome and left behind though the “climbing up out of the two bottom-most, dark caves.” But — the unconscious, which in this way seems to

be (and forced to be) *below*, appears anew, and this time, *above*, that is, as the next goal to be attained. What is now covering the brightly lit cave of ego consciousness like an impenetrable ceiling is the unconsciousness of the mature person with respect to the soul, which the ego, in its limitation and one-sidedness, is unable to recognize.

When a woman who has reached the apparent apex of the “highest cave” now becomes wistful and full of affect, this is the first indication that the tyrannical enclosure of ego consciousness needs to be burst open, for the mature person in her wants to turn toward the psychic. So the woman becomes an awakener of psychic life in herself; as though by a cry of help she initiates the coming to consciousness of psychic contents. She again would seem to be unconscious, but not because she is sinking back down but because she is now striving forward, in accordance with the law of the natural cycle, toward the goal. Then what is needed at times at such a moment is perhaps a “crazy” woman — or, the seeming other-worldliness in the woman, by which the partial nature of the ego can be defeated.

Then a profound transformation occurs in the life of the woman and the man: both are now able to experience the psychic, which is greater than they are and which contains them. By virtue of her unconscious femininity the woman first *hints at* this psychic element. But the man is then the first to comprehend it, and he illuminates it with the light of his masculine mind. Hence no woman can understand this psychic life, which penetrates into her from a realm beyond ego consciousness, without the help of the man. That is why, when involved with the portentous stirring of the psychic, she may not forget about the man, to whom she is lovingly devoted. She has to see his reaction to her affect, listen to his voice concerning it, otherwise she remains a blind sacrifice to her femininity.

So man and woman belong inextricably together, if the “cave-world” of ego consciousness is to be overcome and the “surface of the earth” of psychic reality is to be reached. Then both can let their light shine — the sun-knowledge of their own experience, the mysterious moon light of their own devoutness, and the star light of their true, spontaneous emotion. Through these they fulfill in a united way the task that Jakob Burckhardt felt in the context of culture of the Renaissance and which C. G. Jung has made understandable to us: they live within and from themselves as individualities.