



Modern Man and Our Condition

By

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INTRODUCTION

The following paper was written in the hope of gaining some understanding of our age and the people living in it. Our technological progress has been met largely with open arms, yet its power has brought with it a responsibility and the necessity of making great many moral decisions. These decisions are what our fate hangs on.

In this essay I have attempted to trace and relate the viewpoints of key individuals from the mid nineteenth century to the present. These individuals have all developed their ideas with the vision of a new age. In some cases, society's attitude has been reflected and consciously manifested by these sensitive and creative individuals.

MODERN MAN

The Romantic movement began around 1820 and was seen as a revolt against perceived ethical and aesthetic standards. The artists of this period were largely influenced by the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau who expressed, to some extent, already existing tendencies. The basic premise for the movement was an uninhibited emotional output that was to be direct and violent and quite uninformed by thought. Romanticism was to set the foundation for individuals to search the depths of their own nature. Bertrand Russell explains, "The poor were supposed to possess more virtue than the rich, the sage was thought of as a man who retires from the corruption of courts to enjoy the peaceful pleasures of an unambitious rural existence."¹

For long periods of Rousseau's life, he was a poor vagabond and from him the Romantics learnt a contempt for the trammels of convention, first in dress and manners, then in art and love, and at last over the whole sphere of tradition morals. They did not aim at peace and quiet, but a vigorous and passionate individual life. They had no sympathy for industrialism because it was ugly. They regarded money grubbing as unworthy of the immortal soul and that the growth of modern economic organisations interfered with individual liberty. Russell explains, "Revolt of solitary instincts against social bonds is the key to the philosophy, the politics, and sentiments, not only of what is called the Romantic Movement, but of its progeny down to the present day."²

I have used the Romantic Movement as a starting point for the attitudes and concepts that were to develop in Modern Art, and show the reaction of artists and thinkers to a society moving towards industrialisation. This Romantic attitude began to gain momentum with the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the late nineteenth century. This distressed the more sensitive artists and made them turn away from representational expression to a more imaginative painting. It was a retreat in to the psyche of the artist.

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung describes the relation the artist has with society in which they live. "It is a psychological fact that the artist has at all times been

¹ 'History of Western Philosophy' Bertrand Russell, 1979, Unwin Paperbacks

² Ibid

the instrument and spokesman of the spirit of his age. His work can be only partly understood in terms of his personal psychology. Consciously or unconsciously, the artist gives form to the nature and values of his time, which in their turn form him."³ He continues, "It is the aim of the modern artist to give expression to his inner vision of man, to the spiritual background of life and the world. The modern work of art has abandoned not only the realm of the concrete natural sensuous world, but also that of the individual. It has become highly collective and therefore touches not on only the few but many. What remains individual is the manner of representation, the style and quality of the modern work of art."⁴

One of the most impressive personality's at the beginning of Modern Art was Wasily Kandinsky whose influence is still clearly traceable today. In an essay concerning form in modern art he writes, "The art of today embodies the spiritual, matured to the point of revelation. The forms of this embodiment may be arranged between two poles; (1) Great abstraction; (2) Great realism. The two poles open two paths that both lead to one goal in the end. These two elements have always been present in art, the first was being expressed in the second. Today it looks as if they were about to carry on separate existences. Art seems to have put an end to the pleasant completion of the abstract by the concrete and visa-versa."⁵

The rift seems to have first appeared in the Renaissance, when it became manifest as a conflict between knowledge and faith. It meant that humanity was being removed further from its instinctual foundation, and a gulf had opened between nature and mind, between the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche. The opposites characterise the psychic situation that is seeking expression in Modern Art. This expression was found in the most unusual objects such as Marcel Duchamp's famous bottle rack. Jean Bazaine writes, ".....this bottle rack, torn from its utilitarian context and washed up on the beach, has been invested with the lonely dignity of the derelict, good for nothing, there to be used, ready for anything, it is alive. It lives on the fringe of existence, its object, own disturbing, absurd life."⁶ The disturbing object that is the first step to art. Jung comments, "In its weird dignity and abandonment, the object was immeasurably exalted and given significance that can only be called magical. Hence its disturbing absurd life. It became an idol and at the same time an object of mockery. Its intrinsic reality was annihilated."⁷

Other artists such as Picasso, Braque, Ernst, and the most consistent exponent, Kurt Schwitters, who worked with everyday objects and endowed them with magical quality. Schwitter's work, and the magical exaltation of the object, in this case, rubbish, gave the first hint of the place of Modern Art and its symbolic significance in the history of human thought.

What the artist did not realise was the psychological aspect of projection. The artists were endowing matter and these objects with the contents of their psychic

³ 'Man and His Symbols' C. G. Jung, 1976, A Windfall Book, Doubleday & Company Inc.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ 'Concerning the Spiritual In Art' Wassily Kandinsky, 1911

⁶ 'Man and His Symbols' C. G. Jung, 1976, A Windfall Book, Doubleday & Company Inc.

⁷ Ibid

situation. Giving magical significance to objects and seeing them as living entities is a form of participation with the object. The ancient alchemist gave special expression to this form of projection by endowing their chemical experiments with the order of religious numinosity.⁸ Painters began to think about the 'magic object' and the secret soul of things. The Italian painter, Carlo Carrà writes, "It is common things that reveal those forms of simplicity through which we can realise that higher more significant condition of being where the whole splendour of art resides, which recalls the old alchemical concept of a 'spirit in matter', believed to be the spirit in and behind inanimate objects."⁹

Psychologically interpreted, this seems to manifest itself when knowledge has reached its limits and is replaced by mystery. The artist tends to fill the void with the contents of the unconscious. Giorgio de Chirico, the founder of the so called 'Pittura Metafisica' writes- "Every object had two aspects: the common aspect, which is the one we generally see and is seen by everyone, and the ghostly or metaphysical aspect."¹⁰ In the various versions of De Chirico's painting 'The Great Metaphysician', a faceless figure is enthroned on a pedestal made of every day and discarded objects. The figure is an ironical representation of a man who strives to discover the truth about metaphysics, not in its usual mental realm, but as experience through art. The image is a symbol of ultimate loneliness and senselessness that the artist must suffer to find the truth. A figure of the faceless mass man or bowler hatted man as Rene Magritte painted him.

It is a well-known fact that certain drugs such as alcohol, Indian hemp, hashish and LSD, modify consciousness and enable the unconscious to be projected into inanimate objects. Hashish has long been used in the East to produce the unconscious projections mentioned earlier. R. C. Zachner describes the experiences of Aldous Huxley who was under the influence of mescaline.¹¹ He wished to document experimentally the effects of the drug and record his thoughts, events and experiences. Zachner asked Huxley several questions- "What about spatial relationships?" Huxley answers, "Perspective looks rather odd" reminiscent of De Chirico's warped perspective. Huxley continues, "Who cares anyway." This indicates that spatial relationships had ceased to matter and that the mind was perceiving the world in terms of other than spatial categories. The mind was not perceiving in terms of space at all. It was perceiving in terms of intensity, intensity of existence, profundity of significance and relationship within a pattern. The mind was primarily concerned, not with measures and locations, but with being and meaning. Why, instead of where. His perception of time was also altered, "there's plenty of it", suggesting the unimportance of consciously perceived reality in space and time.

Through the application of the drug mescaline, the threshold of consciousness was lowered allowing certain contents of the unconscious to come to the forefront. This gave Huxley the feeling that time had no significance and that he was in the realm of something eternal and outside of the space-time continuum. Huxley's mind then turned to furniture. He saw it as "an intricate pattern of

⁸ 'Psychology and Alchemy' C. G. Jung

⁹ 'Man and His Symbols' C. G. Jung, 1976, A Windfall Book, Doubleday & Company Inc.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ 'Mysticism Sacred and Profane' R. C. Zachner, Oxford University Press

horizontals, uprights and diagonals - a pattern all the more interesting for not being interpreted in terms of spatial relationships. In fact he saw it as a "cubist picture". This experience was, however, shortly to give way to something much more exciting. He states "This purely aesthetic cubist eye view gave place to what I can only describe as the sacramental vision of reality. Everything shone with an inner light, and was infinite in its significance. The legs, for example, of that chair, how miraculous their tubularity, how supernatural their polished smoothness,..... I spent several minutes, or was it centuries, not merely gazing at those bamboo legs, but actually being them."¹² The similarity between the experiences of Huxley and religious ecstatic vision is unmistakable. The perception of space, time and everyday objects was altered through the mescaline and the objects given a life they normally do not have. The unconscious of Huxley endowed them with a magical life and a soul of some kind. From these observations it seems that modern Art was concerned with the ability to draw on an unconscious foundation and go beyond consciousness. The experiences of Huxley were regarded as closely comparable to genuine mystical experiences.

William James writes about the manifestation of the negative aspect of the unconscious, "In delusional insanity, paranoia, as they sometimes call it, we may have a diabolical mysticism, a sort of religious mysticism turned upside down. The same sense of ineffable importance in the smallest events, the same texts and words coming with new meanings, the same voices and visions and leadings and missions, the same controlling by extraneous powers; only this time the emotion is pessimistic; instead of consolidations we have desolations; the meanings are dreadful, and the powers are enemies of life." This point shows that consciousness has an equal part in the perception of unconscious contents. If the conscious mind is lost among the contents of the unconscious and unable to discriminate between what is consciousness and the unconscious, we have the diabolical mysticism that James describes.

The work of Salvador Dali is an excellent example of a man's ability to give concrete shape to the images and ideas emanating from the unconscious. Ramon Gomez de la Serna writes of Dali, "It is easy to call an extraordinary artist mad, difficult to prove it, and Dali in any case has an answer to the charge 'The only difference between me and a madman is that I am not mad. 'The nearest he comes to madness is in his imitation of it in his 'paranoiac critical period' which he has described as 'a spontaneous method of irrational knowledge, based on the interpretive critical association of delirious phenomena'".¹³ De la Serna goes on to say about Dali- "Dali's great instinct is for preserving his infantile impressions intact, with all their insights; he is quick to seize, and to release, the things that attract him, faster and franker than anyone to the minute, five thousand revolutions of times more than anyone else. Dali was a unique adolescent who has remained an adolescent."¹⁴

"The nothingness with which the painter begins in space, the space which is the nothingness which envelopes every object in the work, caressing and strangling it at the same time, it is from this nothingness that Dali has done everything. He

¹² Ibid

¹³"Dali" R. G. De la Serna, Park Lane New York

¹⁴Ibid

strives to make his work on reality mysterious, scabrous and disconcerting."¹⁵ Although Dali did paint the images that came to him from the unconscious, he did paint them in a concrete way. He always related the unconscious imagery to visual reality, in fact, it is Dali's ability to render the imagery in this way that gives him durability over painters concerned solely with visual abstraction.

Madness, which Dali was often accused of, has diabolical consequences for the subject. The contents of the unconscious can cause the conscious ego a loss of relatedness, and severe confusion giving the impression that the person is not in control of their personality. When a person becomes involved with unconscious processes it is very dangerous and should not be underestimated. I refer the reader to the relevant texts on the subject of Psychoses.¹⁶ Zachner writes about madness- "The Muslim mystics were perfectly aware that the human psyche is subject to more or less violent oscillations between the extremes. Hope and fear in this context, mean hope of the divine mercy and fear of the divine chastisement, hope of heaven and fear of hell."¹⁷ Hell in this case refers to the loss of personality and relatedness mentioned earlier. It is a loss of relationship to the outer object. Zachner sites a case of such a loss. "Mr Cunstance is interesting in that his bouts of mania and depression are sporadic. He has long periods of complete sanity, however he does have an uneasy conviction that during his manic period he obtains a more profound insight into reality than he does when he is merely sane; and this is a common experience of all nature mystics."¹⁸ In *Adventure into the Unconscious*, Cunstance writes, "during one of his manic periods, he attempted to put his theory into practice, a theory of opposites and their reconciliation to which parallels can be found in India and China".

Huxley under the influence of mescaline, on the other hand, says, "the ability to think straight was little, if at all, reduced, secondly, visual impressions were greatly intensified, third, the will was weakened and moral values ceased to make much sense, what he calls the 'better things' were experienced as being both inside and outside oneself."¹⁹ This shows how the images from the unconscious can be projected into objects and seen as a world beyond the every day. This notion is reinforced by Cunstance as he writes- "In its favourite aspect, it is a strange and lovely land beyond individuality, and incidentally also beyond good and evil, since the opposites were reconciled and the peace that passes all understanding rules supreme. In it there is no death, no final separation, no fundamental or absolute division or distinction, no time, for all that ever was still is, now and for ever more. Heaven and Hell wedded, the wonderful longing for the abyss, what every strict logic and morality may have to say about the apprehension, there is no doubt that we are somehow touching the springs of the soul. It is the ultimate uniting, the final synthesis, the rebirth that makes all things new."²⁰

¹⁵Ibid

¹⁶ 'Mysticism' R. G. Zachner, Oxford

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸Ibid

¹⁹ 'Mysticism Sacred and Profane' R. C. Zachner, Oxford University Press

²⁰ Ibid

He continues, "Probably I am mad enough at the moment to produce a precise theory, but I know from bitter experience that I should only scrap it later. All I will say is that in some way, once the opposites are bridged, and my state of elation is itself a bridging of or making contact between the opposites, the watertight compartments of individuality, the hard shells that surround our egos, tend to disappear, I am not one but many, those I meet are not merely themselves but many other too."²¹

Jung calls this phenomenon 'positive expansion'. It occurs when the ego's boundaries are widened or dropped altogether and the individual experiences a relation to all of creation, birth from within and without. There is a common thread to all these experiences, whether drug induced, mania or natural, as Huxley explains- "The evidence we have analysed does seem to show that certain states usually referred to as mystical are also characteristic of lunacy, whether criminal or otherwise. There seems to be four principal modes to these states:-

1. An intense communion with nature in which subject and object seem identical
2. The abdication of the ego to another centre, the self of Analytical Psychology, God to the religions
3. A return to a state of innocence and the consequent sense that the subject of the experience has passed beyond good and evil
4. The complete certainty that the soul, is immortal, and that death is therefore at least irrelevant and at most a ludicrous impossibility²²

Oscar Wilde had some interesting things to say about his idea of the true personality of man. "It will be a marvellous thing, the true personality of man, when we see it. It will grow naturally and simply, flowerlike or as a tree grows. It will not be at discord. It will never argue or dispute, it will not prove things, it will know everything, and yet it will not busy itself with knowledge. It will have wisdom. Its value will not be measured by material things. It will have nothing, and yet it will have everything, and whatever one takes from it, it will still have, so rich will it be. It will not be always meddling with others, it will help all, as a beautiful thing helps us, by being what it is. The personality of man will be very wonderful. It will be as wonderful as the personality of a child."

The secret of the integrated personality is one of passivity, of 'allowing things to happen to one' a technique developed by one school of Zen Buddhism in Japan. It is to allow the feminine or instinctive principle of the unconscious to participate in conscious life without prejudice, control or analysis. The great philosopher Lao Tzu gives an excellent account of his model of integration.

Know the male
But keep to the role of the female
And be a ravine to the empire.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

If you are a ravine to the empire,
Then the constant virtue will not desert you
And you will again return to being a babe
Know the white
But keep to the role of the black
And be a model to the empire.²³

It is necessary however, to document or give form to the images from the unconscious. This will enable them to be rendered concrete and static and put aside for later evaluation. Once the feminine has 'said' her piece, the masculine, rational and differentiating principle of consciousness can analyse the material. A method prescribed by Jung he termed 'amplification'.²⁴ It involved a free association of the material and a building of an alternate and amplified scene of the material. This is opposite to Freud's idea of reduction where the elements in the material were reduced to their basic and undefinable form.²⁵ Once the material has been amplified it can then be integrated into the conscious part of the personality. Integration means apprehending the material intellectually and morally.

Returning to Modern Art for moment, it is clear that artists of this century have moved slowly away from representational art to an art that expresses the psychic situation of their time. The relation between psychology and art came from artists such as Ernst, Masson, Miro, Matta, de Chirico, Dali and Magritte. These talented individuals experimented on theories espoused by Rimbaud, Lautreamont, Mallarmé, the German Romantics and Freud, whose theories on the unconscious influenced them immensely. Patrick Waldberg writes on the Surrealists- "A distrust of rationalism, and formal conventions prompted the young men towards the exploration of the realm of the unconscious and the dream. They were seeking what might be called 'the language of the soul', that is the expression stripped to its nakedness."²⁶ In this way the process called 'automatic writing' came into being. The pen had a life of its own, conscious control was suspended and the unconscious allowed to speak without hindrance.

Fine art evolved from these beginnings in two directions. The first was the abstraction from the object and visual reality. Automatic painting became abstracted to such an extent that all relation to visual reality was extinguished. The result was Abstract expressionism which is a pure example of unconscious energy combined in a ritualistic dance in application. It is the unconscious matrix par excellence. The paintings of Jackson Pollack show how the unconscious as container or matrix can be rendered visible. The things that are either obscure or missing in his work are the contents of the unconscious, the contents we usually perceive in our night time dreams. The second group were not so much concerned with the psyche as container, but the contents. They remained true to

²³ 'Tao Te Ching' Lao Tzu, Penguin Classics 1963, Book 1, page 85

²⁴ 'Two Essays on Analytical Psychology' C. G. Jung, 1972, Princeton University Press

²⁵ 'The Collected Works' C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press

²⁶ 'Surrealism' P. Walberg, Thames and Hudson

visual reality as are dreams, and depicted the contents in the way they were perceived, and that is, in concrete visual terms.²⁷

An artist that remained true to representational art was Rene Magritte. He referred to his work as "the true art of painting"²⁸ admitting that he was just someone who thought and painting seemed like a good medium to use". Suzi Gablick writes- "Each painting, in addition to its intrinsic value, has a positional value within a sequence, it is part of a systematic attempt to solve a particular problem. The key themes that run through the paintings are best understood as the sum of many variations, cross references, combinations, transformations and syntheses. Magritte was never involved in the experimental techniques and stylistic innovations of the other surrealists, perhaps as a result, his work has proved to hold more options for the future. By focusing the tension between reality and illusion, his paintings bear directly upon the entire chain of problems whose solutions have led to the central fact of twentieth century art."²⁹ Suzi explains, "His life had been solitary posture of immense effort: to overthrow our sense of familiar, to sabotage our habits, to put the real world on trial."³⁰ Magritte's paintings are intended as an attack upon society's preconceived ideas and predetermined good sense. He considered his work successful when no explanation of causality or meaning could satisfy our curiosity.

In Magritte's paintings, we perceive objects and events without the inner connection between cause and effect. Problems are solved, in the manner of philosophy, not by giving new information, but by rearranging what we have always known. The fear of being mystified, according to Magritte, applies equally to painted images that have the power to provoke such fear. Sometimes an image can place its spectator under serious accusation. A person who only looks for what he wants in a painting will never find that which transcends his preferences. If one has been trapped by the mystery of an image that refuses all explanation, a moment of panic will sometimes occur. It is these moments of panic are what count for Magritte. It is what the psychologists call reaching the limit of knowledge. Where knowledge is not present, the unconscious filled the void and this once again re-establishes the psychic equilibrium. How else could the ancients have projected their Gods into the night sky naming the planets and constellations after them?

Suzi continues, "For him (Magritte) they are privileged moments, because they transcend mediocrity. For that however, there does not have to be art, it can happen at any moment. The mark of a philosopher is to doubt that which is usually taken for granted, and to think how everything could just as easily be otherwise, attaching no more importance to what is, than to what is not. It is a way of questioning the stereotyped habits of the mind, since only a wilful disruption of the usual certainties will liberate thought and open the way to

²⁷Pollack's work sometimes includes images from visual reality in them, but this is not common for his work.

²⁸'Magritte' S. Gablick, New York graphic Society

²⁹Ibid

³⁰Ibid

authentic revelation. For this, attention must be shifted from the trivialities of experience to its real nature. Magritte used painting for this purpose alone."³¹

By focusing on the inner realm of the unconscious Magritte demonstrates how one can work with it and solve certain problems posed to it. It is as if the unconscious had a wisdom and problem solving capacity. The solution is presented to consciousness in the form of a spontaneous revelation.

Gablick goes on to say, "A study of his work is likely to disclose the intellectual integrity and searching mind of a philosopher rather than the aesthetic and painterly concerns of the artist."³² Magritte was at peace only when his mind was tormented by problems. His paintings attempt to make thought visible, but thought which is identified with images not ideas. They are evidence of a philosophical temperament, which was continually investigating and analysing the structure of our common-sense beliefs and struggling to reconcile the paradoxes of existence. Magritte explains himself, "To equate my painting with symbolism, conscious or unconscious is to deny its true nature. People are quite willing to use objects without looking for any symbolic intention in them, but when they look at a painting, they cannot find any use for them. So they hunt around for a meaning to get themselves out of the quandary, and because they don't understand what they are supposed to think when they confront the painting. They want something to lean on, so they can be comfortable. They want something secure to hang onto, so they save themselves from the void. People who look for symbolic meanings fail to grasp the inherent poetry and mystery of the image. No doubt they sense this mystery but they wish to get rid of it. They are afraid. By asking 'what does this mean' they express a wish that everything be understandable. But if one does not reject the mystery, one has quite a different response. One asks other things."³³

The key words in this quotation are the 'void, mystery and poetry'. Magritte knows very well the importance of the unconscious although he does not acknowledge his work's symbolic content. His thinking on language is an example of his distaste of people who use language to depotentiated an object or image and think that they know anything about the object itself. Reality for Magritte is his inner world, images from the outer world are used to give concrete expression to his inner world. Magritte's entire enterprise was to bring forth the contents from his inner world and follow this path to its logical conclusion. This was his path, his way, his individuation.

It's at this point I would like introduce the concept 'principium individuationis'. This concept was first used in Scholastic Philosophy by Duns Scotis in the fourteenth century. It was further investigated by Schopenhauer in 1814³⁴. Jung used the term as the cornerstone of his approach to psychology and relates it to the becoming of individuality. In other words, it is the process whereby an individual becomes what he is and grows along his own path. A person thus becomes a

³¹Ibid

³²Ibid

³³Ibid

³⁴ 'The World as Will and Idea' Arthur Schopenhauer, Everyman, 1997, Book Two, The World as Will, page 44 sect. 23

psychological 'in-dividual', that is a separate, indivisible unity or whole. This whole includes conscious and unconscious contents of the psyche. Jung explains, "The autonomy of the unconscious begins where emotions are generated. Emotions are instinctive, involuntary reactions which upset the rational order of consciousness by their elemental outburst. Affects are not 'made' or wilfully produced, they simply happen. We call the unconscious 'nothing' and yet it is a reality in potentia. The thought we shall think, the deed we shall do, even the fate we shall lament tomorrow, all lie unconscious today. The unconscious has a Janus face: on one side its contents point back to a preconscious, prehistoric world of instinct, while on the other side it potentially anticipates the future, precisely because of the instinctive readiness of action of the factors that determine man's fate. Whereas we think in terms of years, the unconscious thinks in terms of millennia. So when something happens that seems to us an unexampled novelty, it is generally a very old story ended. We still forget, like children, what happened yesterday."³⁵

Jung continues, "We are still living in a wonderful new world where man thinks himself astonishingly new and modern. This is unmistakable proof of the youthfulness of human consciousness, which has not yet grown aware of its historical antecedents. Because of its youthfulness and vulnerability, our consciousness tends to make light of the unconscious. Historically as well as individually our consciousness has developed out of the darkness of primordial unconsciousness. There were psychic processes and functions long before any ego-consciousness existed. 'Thinking' existed long before man was able to say 'I am conscious of thinking'. The unconscious is the mother of consciousness, this can be seen if every child and how hesitantly and slowly its ego-consciousness evolves out of a fragmentary consciousness lasting for single moments only, and how these islands gradually emerge from the total darkness of mere instinctuality."³⁶

Nevertheless we cannot overlook the fact that, consciousness arises from the unconscious, the ego centre too crystallises out of the dark depths in which it was somehow contained. Jung explains, "Normally the unconscious collaborates with the ego without friction or disturbance so that one is not even aware of its existence. But when an individual or a social group deviates too far from their instinctual foundations they then experience the full impact of unconscious forces. The collaboration of the unconscious is intelligent and purposive, and even when it acts in opposition to consciousness its expression compensates as if it were trying to restore a lost balance. The general aspect of unconscious manifestations is in the main chaotic and irrational, despite certain symptoms of intelligence and purpose. The unconscious produces dream, visions, fantasies, emotions, grotesque ideas, and so forth."³⁷

"We believe in ego consciousness and what we call reality, therefore our ego is inclined to swallow up the unconscious and if this should not prove feasible, we try to suppress it. But if we understand anything of the unconscious we realise it cannot be swallowed. We also know that it is dangerous to suppress it, because

³⁵The Collected Works' C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press

³⁶Ibid

³⁷Ibid

the unconscious is life and this life turns against us if suppressed, as happens with neurosis. Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. If they may contend, let it at least be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides. Both are aspects of life."³⁸

Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, on the other hand, the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given a chance of having its way too, as much of it as we can stand. Jung continues, "this means open conflict and collaboration at once. That evidently is the way human life should be. It is the old game of the hammer and anvil; between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an individual. Out of this union between the contents of the conscious and unconscious new situations and new conscious attitudes appear."³⁹

The individuation process that Jung speaks of, can be linked in certain ways to the phenomenon of rebirth. Jung writes, "Rebirth is an affirmation that must be counted, among to the primordial affirmations of mankind."⁴⁰ The primordial affirmations are based on what Jung calls archetypes. "Nature herself demands a death and rebirth". As the alchemists Democritus says, "nature rejoices in nature, nature subdues nature, nature rules over nature". Natural transformation processes announce themselves mainly in dreams. Dreams that exhibit rebirth symbolism and usually involve a long drawn out process of inner transformation and rebirth into another being. This other being is the other person in ourselves, that larger and greater personality maturing within us, whom we have already met as the inner friend of the soul. This relationship is a mystery to the scientific intellect, because the intellect is accustomed to regard these things unsympathetically."⁴¹

Experience has shown that at beginning stages of this transformation into a more psychologically developed whole, the child archetype presents him or herself. Jung writes, "It is assumed and blocked by investigation that with archetypes we are dealing with "autonomous" revivals independent of all tradition, and, consequently, that "myth forming" structural elements must be present in the unconscious psyche. These products are never (or at least very seldom) myths with a definite form, but rather mythological components which, because of their typical nature we can call 'motifs', 'primordial images' or 'archetypes'. The child archetype is an excellent example of this. In the individual, the archetypes appear as involuntary manifestations of unconscious processes whose existence and meaning can only be inferred, whereas the myth deals with traditional forms of incalculable age."⁴²

The collective unconscious thus contains mythological archetypes that have not changed since the dawn of civilisation. The archetype of the 'child god' is widespread and intimately bound up with all the other mythological aspects of the child motif. The archetypes are by no means limited to human beings either.

³⁸Ibid

³⁹Ibid

⁴⁰Ibid

⁴¹Ibid

⁴²Ibid

There is evidence suggesting that animals also operate under the influence of archetypal patterns and motifs. One has only to think of the humble family cat which through centuries of domestication can still run wild through the house chasing imaginary creatures and objects. Archetypal images, one could say.

Jung continues, "The clearest and most significant manifestation of the child motif is in the maturation process of personality induced by the analysis of the unconscious, in other words individuation. Here we are confronted with preconscious processes which, in the form of more or less well formed fantasies, gradually pass over into the conscious mind, or become conscious as dreams, or lastly are made conscious through the method of active imagination". He continues, "The child motif represents the preconscious, childhood aspect of the collective psyche."⁴³

"Experience shows that certain phases in an individual's life can become autonomous, can personify themselves to the extent that they result in a vision of oneself, one sees one self as a child. Visionary experiences of this kind, whether they occur in dreams or in the waking state, are, as we know, conditioned on a dissociation having previously taken place between past and present. Such disassociations come about because of various incompatibilities, for instance a man's present state may have come into conflict with his childhood state, or he may have violently sundered himself from his original character in the interest of some arbitrary persona, more in keeping with his ambitions. He has thus become unchildlike and artificial and has lost his roots."⁴⁴

"All this presents a favourable opportunity for an equally vehement confrontation with the primary truth."⁴⁵

It is clear from Jung's analysis that the child archetype becomes manifest when a definite inward direction is made toward the collective unconscious through the personal unconscious. Only through the personal unconscious ie. one's own childhood to the present, with the subsequent bringing into consciousness any repressed material that may be blocking the path, can the individuation process proceed. It is as if the personal unconscious with all its frustration, disappointments, traumas and longings is the gateway to an inner world. In fact any dedicated and serious study of the unconscious and its contents not only changes the individual's attitude to the outer world, but also gives him a view of the equally vast and complex inner world of the unconscious.

Jung explains, "One of the essential features of the child motif is its potential future. Hence the occurrence of the child motif in the psychology of the individual, which signifies as a rule an anticipation of future developments, even though at first sign it may seem like a retrospective configuration. Life is a flux, a flowing into the future, and not a stoppage or backlash. It is therefore not surprising that so many of the mythological saviours are child gods. This agrees exactly with our experience of the psychology of the individual, which shows that the 'child' paves the way for the future change of personality. In the individuation process, it

⁴³Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵Ibid

anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements of the personality. It is therefore a symbol which unites the opposites, a mediator, bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole. As bringers of light, that is, enlargers of consciousness, they overcome darkness which is to say that they overcome the earlier unconscious state. Higher consciousness, or knowledge going beyond our present day consciousness, is equivalent to being all alone in the world. This loneliness expresses the conflict between the bearer or symbol of higher consciousness and his surroundings."⁴⁶

It is clear from what Jung writes that the child archetype paves the way for not only an enlargement of consciousness but also its negative isolating effect. Obviously the isolating of the individual can be problematic and not help him get on in the world. This is sometimes the price one has to pay so as not to be in discord with one's true personality. The Freudians tend to view this approach as regressive and detrimental to the individual's need to adapt to the outer world. Jung's point of view however is that an individual can only be secure and adapted to the world if he is secure and adapted to himself. In other words, one cannot be healthy if one is in discord with one's true nature. This sets civilised man apart from his primitive antecedents. It is well known that the primitive mentality, as is the mentality of a child, that our original state of wholeness is intact and not yet disturbed by outer influences. It is only when the original state is disturbed and repressed for the sake of some mode of behaviour more fitting to a so called civilised world.

Jung sums up, "In practical reality, it is not enough for a person merely to know about such developments, what counts is his experience of the various transformations. The initial stage of personal infantilism presents the picture of an 'abandoned' or 'misunderstood' and unjustly treated child with overweening pretensions. The epiphany of the hero (the second identification) shows itself in a corresponding inflation; the colossal pretension grows into a conviction that one is something extraordinary, or else the impossibility of the pretension ever being fulfilled only proves one's own inferiority, which is favourable to the role of the heroic sufferer (a negative inflation). In spite of their contradictoriness, both forms are identified because conscious megalomania is balanced by unconscious compensatory inferiority and visa versa."⁴⁷

"Once the reef of the second identification has been successfully circumnavigated, conscious processes can be clearly separated from the unconscious, and the latter observed objectively. This leads to the possibility of an accommodation with the unconscious and thus to a possible synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements of knowledge and action. This in turn leads to a shifting of the centre of personality from the ego to the self."⁴⁸

Jung's ideas stem from a direct analysis of his own unconscious processes, the unconscious processes of his patients and the study of mythological motifs. He recognised and reinforced the idea that the personal unconscious floats, so to speak, on a vast matrix which he termed the collective unconscious. It is this

⁴⁶Ibid

⁴⁷Ibid

⁴⁸Ibid

realm that gives birth to patterns of behaviour and the archetypes of mythology.

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Erich Fromm gives his view on the nature of symbolic language, "The Universal symbol is one in which there is an intrinsic relationship between the symbol and that which it represents. These universal symbols are rooted in the experience of every human being. It is rooted in the experience of the affinity between an emotion or thought, on the one hand, and a sensory experience on the other. The language of the universal symbol is the one common tongue developed by the human race."⁵⁰

Fromm considers that the symbol or myth making component of the human psyche is universal to all races. This is in accordance with Jung's viewpoint, the difference being however, that Fromm considers the symbol to have been developed by the human race, in other words he allocates the creation of symbol to be an act of volition, we consciously create the symbol. It is obvious that Fromm is looking at symbol from outside in. One could not give credence to the thought that we create our own dreams. We are asleep and they come to us from inside. We do not control the content of imagery nor the effect the dream will have on us.

Michael Haar in his book 'The New Nietzsche' writes, "Metaphor is not a rhetorical figure but a vicarious image that he actually beholds in place of the concepts."⁵¹ In other words Nietzsche understands the working of the psyche but lacks the ability to write of it in other than its manifested form, that is, in symbol and metaphor. The thought that life must be lived over and over again, seems to indicate oscillation between inner and outer realities. This is verified by Jung who identified the alternating nature of the psyche. Life is lived firstly in the inner world of childhood, then moves into the outer world for adaptation. Upon reaching middle age when most conscious goals have been achieved, the movement of energy is once again turned inward. This oscillation naturally varies from individual to individual. The midpoint of the oscillation is termed the self by Jung. It is in his view, a definite archetype stands in this position and takes on the characteristics of the undeveloped components of the personality. For example if a man is very masculine in his attitude, the balancing and complementary archetype will be quite feminine. If a man is quite feminine, as often occurs in homosexual men, their unconscious is quite masculine. This can be seen when men have definite feminine traits and they compensate their femininity by adopting a very tough and muscular macho exterior.

The goal of any inner work is ultimately the integration of both conscious and unconscious aspects of one's personality. By developing both masculine and feminine traits' one glimpses a third viewpoint and that is a position in the psyche where one does not identify with any viewpoint and adopts a third position. The 'self' of Analytical Psychology.⁵² The self has definite but varied forms. It is transcendental and uniting. History has shown many images of the self such as

⁴⁹ 'The Collected Works' C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press

⁵⁰ 'The Forgotten Language' E. Fromm, Grove Press Inc.

⁵¹ 'The New Nietzsche' M. Haar

⁵² 'The Collected Works' C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press

Jesus, Buddha, Allah, Moses, etc., but the self is actually a living and autonomous image that can be experienced by any person if they take the time to do the inner work.

THE CENTRAL FIGURE - AN IDEAL

I now wish to present various views addressing the type problem of human personality that approximates or approaches wholeness. It should be noted that the types sighted may be viewed as the ideal of perfection or wholeness. This is the distinction. This particular problem has been addressed by many philosophers and psychologists. The following are the viewpoints of some of these men. Nietzsche describes three types as follows:⁵³

1. The Artist
What makes life in hi artistic is the compulsion to dream, and the compulsion to intoxication. The compulsion to dream, the visionary power, is the origin of sculpture, plastic arts and epic poetry, the power of imagination, ie. The power to make the invisible visible. The will to truth, to appearance, to illusion, to deception, to becoming a change (to objectified deception).
2. The Noble
The noble life is not domineering, oppressive, ambitious, or tyrannical, but their capacity for setting masses in motion, in short their effect, not power itself, but the amortisation of power. The higher nature of the great man lies in being different, in incommunicability, in distance of rank, not in an effect of any kind, even if he made the whole globe tremble.
3. The Sovereign Individual
He is sovereign to himself, he is his own legislator, autonomous and supramoral. What is powerful in the sovereign individual is his memory, ie. A memory of his will. He remembers his own word.

Nietzsche's description of the artist, noble and sovereign individual describes the path he trod himself to his image of the higher man. Unfortunately for Nietzsche, he identified with this higher man to such an extent that he lost himself and as a result went insane.

Eric Fromm writes of the ideal state, "Mental health, in the humanistic sense, is characterised by the ability to love and to create, by this emergence from the incestuous ties to family and nature, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside or ourselves, that is, by the development of objectivity and reason. The aim of life is to live it intensely, to be fully born, to be fully awake. To emerge from the ideas of infantile grandiosity into the conviction of one's real though limited strength; to be able to accept the paradox that every one of us is the most important thing there is in the universe, and at the same time not more important than a fly or a blade of grass. To be able to love life, and

⁵³'The New Nietzsche' M. Haar

yet to accept death without terror; to tolerate uncertainty about the most important questions with which life confronts us, and yet to have faith in our thought and feeling, inasmuch as they are truly ours. To be able to be alone, and at the same time with a loved person, with every brother on this earth, with all that is alive; to follow the voice of our conscience, the voice that calls us to ourselves, yet not to indulge in self hate when the voice of conscience was not loud enough to be heard and followed. The mentally healthy person is the person who lives by love, reason and faith, who respects life, his own and that of his fellow man."⁵⁴

Richard W. Cohen in his book 'Hero, Artist, Sage or Saint'⁵⁵ records the views of philosophers, psychologists and existentialists. He also puts forward the views of Eastern and Western religions, Behaviourist and Human Potential Movements. From these he draws conclusions on the optimum personality of the mentally healthy individual. Four basic modes of fulfilment are mentioned:-

1. Creativity
Freshness of experience, he finds value and beauty where it is not dictated by common standards. He develops a system of values and a morality that reflect his own nature. The image of an artist best personifies this mode.
2. Inner harmony
Openness to the total realm of experience, free of disturbing emotions and at peace with himself.
3. Relatedness
Two principle forms - one to one, full acceptance and valuing of the other person for the sake of that other person. Relationship to humanity and a sense of union with other people.
4. Transcendence
This involves the relationship to the divine, to the whole of nature, and to the ultimate ground of being.

Having sighted examples of an individual that approaches wholeness and the stages that occur along the path to wholeness, the question now remains, are these personality types a suitable goal for all of humanity and what can we expect if the population strives for such a personality. Jung believes that the only hope for humanity is that every individual does the inner work necessary to achieve wholeness. It is obvious that this is an illusion that will not occur in our life time if at all. Does he mean that humanity must adopt a new religion, ie. A religion of inner work and self awareness. Jung emphatically stressed the point that Analytical Psychology is an attitude and not a religion, yet for humanity to adopt this new attitude, they must be instructed to do so, taught if you will.

⁵⁴'The Forgotten Language' E. Fromm, Grove Press Inc.

⁵⁵ 'Hero, Artist, Sage or Saint' R. Cohen, New York Columbia University Press

The attitude that Jung proposes is indeed a noble one and rings true throughout history. He often referred to the great religions as psychotherapeutic systems, indicating that he recognised the inherent value of a spiritual container such as religion. What he says though, when a religion became established and its beliefs became dogma, it actually blocked the individual from religious experience.

Humanity's relationship to the unconscious is at an all time low, although there are signs on the horizon of a new stage in human development approaching. We have been swept away by the technological revolution and the global market. As a consequence we have lost sight of the things that relate us to our ancestors and what the anthropologists call the 'natural man'. We live in a world of opposites where the dark is balanced by the light, moon by sun, male by female, etc. These opposites are developed at alternate stage, not only in the individual, but in epochs as well. History shows periods of darkness and enlightenment, stage that most of us go through in our own lifetimes.

The inner and outer opposites balance and complement each other. The tension between them creates psychic energy which in turn gives potential to life and activity. Experience has shown that recognising the opposites and their differing standpoints requires a third orientation, what Jung refers to as the 'transcendent function'. The third function unites and the fourth function binds into an indestructible whole.

APPROACHING WHOLENESS

As with all psychic processes, we are to a large extent dependent on the unconscious and its unfolding, a mechanism that cannot be hurried. Some individuals are blessed with a rapidly unfolding life and a life that moves ahead of the norm. Jung mentions in his autobiography⁵⁶ that he was in the grip of a 'demon' that drove him to his creative work and also responsible for the way he was with people. He once said that he must have appeared like a fool rushing ahead of others, but then equated it with being in a battle where his comrades had fallen, and telling them that he must go on.

The transformation of a culture on the other hand is a very slow and drawn out process. It is the individuals that go beyond the norm who lead the way and transform the culture by the example of their work and lives. If we look at history we can see change's occurring that have taken many centuries and many men to initiate.

Turning back to our time, it is clear that we have major problems that we have created ourselves. In spite of our belief in the proud domination over nature, we are still her victims. Our creative minds have given some wonderful things in the last century, but also given us the means for complete disaster. Creativity is a wonderful aspect of the human condition but it has two sides. One cannot simply talk of creativity on its own for it is coupled with its opposite, destructivity. The only thing that can recognise the difference, or more importantly discriminate between constructive and destructive urges is a conscious moral attitude. Most

⁵⁶ 'Memories Dreams and Reflections' C. G Jung, 1965, Vintage Books

people do not have such an attitude of discrimination. They adopt a general attitude of a religious belief or contend themselves with the local penal code. A personal attitude to morality is a rare achievement and seems to be becoming rarer and rarer.

Modern man has reached a level of understanding and knowledge of the physical world which has diminished his fear of it compared to our primitive ancestors. Fear of the inner world, however, has not diminished to the same extent. When this inner world is projected onto one's neighbour, the individual assumes that the darkness he projects is actually in the other person thus turning them into something menacing and threatening. They have become the enemy within. It is only through careful self analysis and the recognition of one's own darkness that this psychic phenomenon can be understood and dealt with.

It is for good reason we as humans have such a phenomenon within us. It is part of our instinctive make-up and has its roots in the animal kingdom. The phenomenon has a purposeful arrangement whereby animals become aware of an unknown threat in projected form and either prepare for battle or flee. It is clearly a demonstration of the lower 'Will' in the Schopenhauerian sense. It is an aspect of the power for survival and without it, survival is reduced. This holds true in an environment where the threat of death always exists. Unfortunately, the removal of the threat of death does not remove the shadow projecting instinct. This can be observed in cats where they lead a protected and well-fed life yet become possessed occasionally and run around the house chasing imaginary creatures. The look in their eyes when this happens is decidedly wild.

As humans, it is no easy task to turn one's gaze away from the light and into the deep, dark realm of our animal ancestors. It is even a harder task to give up the light altogether and let the inner diamon lead us into the darkness. It requires faith that this guiding spirit will support us and lead back to the light for rebirth in the physical world. Some individuals have indeed not made the return journey and perished in the process. Nietzsche and Holderlin are two examples.

On such a journey expression and documentation of the images emerging from the unconscious now becomes a necessity. It is easy to get completely swept away by the myriad of images and can lead to instability and a scenario where one does not know who one is any more. Turning towards the unconscious has all the hallmarks of an artistic pursuit. If the individual can give expression to the unconscious without prejudice, the images have the necessary healing effect. If however, the images are shaped to satisfy an arbitrary convention or belief. They lose their symbolic content and also lose their effect.

If however, the unconscious is given total freedom of expression, the images are experienced as living symbols concerned with the psychic situation of the individual and the collective consciousness in which he or she is living. The images come out pure and hold their original meaning. The artist generally stops at this stage and expresses them as if watching a magnificent movie. Generally, the artist stops at the aesthetic appreciation of the images and does not relate them to his own situation. If on the other hand the individual asks what the images and characters mean for himself and the world, a relationship to the

unconscious takes place. One literally steps into one's own movie or myth and participates in it. It is as if the individual became an actor in his own story. The images that emanate from the unconscious are also related to characters in the story. It is these characters the Analytical Psychologists call the archetypes.

Mythologies from all over the world have personified and given three dimensions to these archetypes. They represent patterns of behaviour on the one hand and definite autonomous actions on the other. Each character is a vehicle for a particular psychic function, depending on one's personal disposition.

The Analytic Psychologists have schematically categorised these functions into two main groups of four. A person has a preference for either extroversion or introversion and four functions, intuition, thinking, sensation and feeling which are either oriented inward or outward. Naturally, there are many combinations and degrees to which a person will use these functions and orient to the world.

The archetypes have their own particular nature, for example, thinking may be represented by the image of the father, insight and understanding by the grandfather, creativity by the playing child, love by a boy and his mother. The combinations of images are innumerable. Analysis shows that the archetypes revolve around a central figure Jung termed the 'self'.⁵⁷ The image of the self can take on many forms from objects such as gold, diamond, suns, stars, plants and flowers. Animal forms include spiders, fish and birds, human forms include the hero, medicine man and the wise old man, and lastly by abstract circular or square forms known as mandalas. The particular image chosen for the central figure depends on the individual and his or her potential for approaching wholeness.

This central figure is a crystallisation of all the psychic functions and stands at the mid point between the light of the conscious world and the darkness of the unconscious world. Indeed, the self has the characteristics of light and dark. The self must not be equated with the ego for its function is autonomous and quite encompassing. The image surrounds the conscious ego on all sides, at once in front and behind. Above and yet below, light and yet dark. The image of the self changes due to the state of the individual or the state of the culture that it contains. For example, Christ was the image of the self when the culture was still dominated by instinctual autonomous complexes thus representing the light of consciousness, which complements the darkness of instincts.

Wholeness for a culture depends largely on the individuals that take the time to make the confrontation with the darkness and thus raise the level of awareness of psychic processes. This is contrary to many New Age beliefs where the light of consciousness is imagined. This does not however, address the collective autonomy of the unconscious which as history has shown, can have dire consequences. I in no mind believe that our contemporary cultures free from the dominating aspect of the unconscious. In fact we are at the mercy of it more and more. Nature has a good and bad side to it. It is at once creative and positive as well as destructive and negative. It is up to our good nature that we can grow and

⁵⁷The Collected Works' C. G. Jung, Princeton University Press

see the future at least with fifty-one per cent good eyes. Evil cannot be understood or addressed by its repression. It requires a confrontation within the individual mind for its reality to be taken seriously and dealt with. This is not a popular belief because it requires an inward seeking ego and much pain and suffering. Within the darkness however, is a new centre not identical with the ego, which heals and may become the centre of psychic regulation.

In the past it was the child bowing down before an all good father. Today it is a negotiated process of honour and critical analysis. This process is absolutely essential for an individual to attain a complete and healthy personality. Critical analysis because it is dangerous to be led without conscious awareness. History has shown this in all its devastating consequences. The Christian god is an essential component of our human condition and an indispensable aspect of human achievement. The reality however, is quite different. We have consciousness, but we also have urges to destruction, to control and dominate our environment. This is what the human condition is in its completeness. We cannot dispense with our animal origins but we can understand them and transform them by doing the hard work.

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