

JUNG, THE CONCRETE MAN

CHARLES BAUDOIN

Professor Charles Baudouin, of the University of Geneva, was the indefatigable interpreter to the French-speaking world of the "New Psychology" from the 1920s until his death in 1963. In addition to his books, and the review he edited, he was the founder of the Institut de Psychagogie in Geneva, which had the unique honor of having as patrons the Big Three, Freud, Adler, Jung! When, later, he allied himself with the newly formed International Association for Analytical Psychology, the Jungian cause gained a most distinguished analyst, scholar, and writer. Baudouin's book on the work of Carl Jung is one of the freshest, most original and penetrating of any that have appeared since Jung's death. Baudouin himself died as he was correcting the proofs. The following pages were quoted by him from his own diary account of the seminar which Jung gave at Basel in 1934. I am grateful to the publishers, Payot, Paris, for permission to translate and publish this account from L'Oeuvre de Jung, first edition 1963, pp. 19 to 25. A new edition is now in preparation and it is much to be hoped that a translation will make available to English-speaking readers this major study by a man who was 'un maitre' in his own right.

Elined Prys Kotschnig

It is time to assemble the impressions which Jung's personality has left upon me during these few days, to bind the sheaf, to present the portrait. A standing portrait, emphatically, for I see him on his feet, talking and teaching. The word 'stature' is what springs to mind, or the German word 'gestalt.' This is no man of study or office; this is a force.

One of the anecdotes with which he bespangles his lectures stands out for me. I hope I shall not do it an injustice by repeating it from memory. He had been living with a tribe of Pueblo Indians where, to identify a stranger, they do not ask for his passport, but they ask themselves, "What animal is this?" That is to say, "Of what totem is he?" and they watch him, for to belong to a totem is to be the totem; so strong is the "participation and the sacred animal has so impregnated the man, that one has but to look at him walk and act and live to recognize him. When the man is from a neighboring tribe, the game is easy enough, apparently; but with a white man, so different from all one knows, it is another matter. Jung knew, from his interpreter, of his hosts' embarrassment at having failed to identify him. However, he won their hearts sufficiently for them to invite him one day—a sign of confidence and welcome—to visit the upper storey of the house. This meant climbing a ladder. But while the Indians mount with their backs to the ladder and with the agility of monkeys, he naturally climbed in European fashion, facing the ladder, setting his feet deliberately on the rungs and presenting to the onlookers his square, powerful back. A great clamor broke out then among the Indians, which he later had explained to him. On seeing him mount that way, they had recognized his totem: the bear! the bear!

He had the wit to enter into the spirit of the thing, and his understanding of primitives' was advanced enough for him to feel all the seriousness of it. Substantially, he told them: "Yes, you have guessed aright; the bear is the totem of my country; it has given its name to our capital, Bern; it figures in the coat of arms of the city." And on his return to Switzerland he sent them, as evidence and as a souvenir, a little wooden bear such as we carve over here. He received in return and as a pledge of friendship, if I remember rightly, a pair of leather breeches. I feel that this piquant story of the bear will remain henceforth strongly associated for me with the person of Jung; it will in some sense form part of his portrait.

I have said: *a force*. It is a force securely based, standing upright, with both feet on the ground. I was granted a view of him during this seminar, about to enter his sixties, in full possession of this force, the force of a man turning grey but still full of vital sap, in no way depressed by the approach of old age, for he has learned in advance to accept it as one of life's seasons and he knows that old age is depressing and discordant only for those who reject it, camouflage it, and fear to integrate its values (which is the unfortunate plight of most of our Western contemporaries). But the 'primitives,' who have taught him so much, have taught him this lesson also: among them he saw 'the fine-looking old man' whom one no longer sees too often among ourselves, and he saw in the flesh the 'wise old man,' whose image and 'archetype' he hardly finds in Europe except in the dreams of his patients. This wise old man he is on the way to incarnating himself one day.

These last days, telling us about the tribes, the spirits of the forest, that other world of mystery that comes alive suddenly at nightfall, he has been more like the sorcerer penetrated by the spirits he talks about, skilled at evoking them and making their disquieting presence hover above the suspenseful audience. Then, all of a sudden, a good story will release the tension with a well-placed laugh. His is a compact force that is fed by a substantial sum of human experience and flows back to him as though multiplied by the response of his own tribe, this circle of disciples from both continents who surround and sustain him. Unkind gossip has accused these disciples and auditors of snobbery. To be sure there is some of it, as there was around the courses which Bergson gave at the Collège de France; which is no argument against Bergson, nor yet against Jung. But when someone raised the objection that a majority of his disciples were women, Jung is said to have replied: "What's to be done? Psychology is after all the science of the soul and it is not my fault if the soul is a woman." A jest; but for anyone who has followed his teaching, a jest which is itself charged with experience, and behind which one sees arising in all its ambiguous splendor the archetype of the anima. One recalls that the cult of the soul was at one time, for knight and troubadour, the extension and natural unfolding of service to the 'lady'. But is not psychology in turn a modern extension of service to the soul?

We may take note here that Jung knows how to teach by jest and wit. He shares this trait, I reflect, with the other master of the new psychology, Freud. But the tone is different: humor in Freud is closer to ill humor, often carping and with a sting of bitterness; in Jung, the humor is more good-tempered; he is closer to the wisdom of peoples and to a healthy peasant joviality, as when he presented us the other day with the vindication of St. Anthony and his pig, that pig which went up to heaven with the saint, since there is in truth no salvation if the pig, too, is not saved! I think we see between these two kinds of humor all the distance between two ethnic groups . . . and all the difference between the two men. Which reminds me of the good souls who regret that Jung did not steer obediently all his life in the wake of Freud. Come, come! It's enough to look at him as the primitives' did when they wanted to discover his totem. He's 'another animal.' And then, more simply, he too is a chief.

Observing him thus, seeing him teach and then relax in a more intimate circle, I registered during this week in Basel many aspects of his being and appearance, many disparate expressions. Under the high forehead of the thinker, the planes of his face are firm and full; the grey eyes seem suddenly curiously small and made for gimlet scrutiny; at other moments they are chiefly mischievous, and the face becomes that of a confessor-accomplice, a priest who enjoys life, suddenly red in the face with a hearty laugh; but the profile then calls one to order—it is much more serious, angular, and marks the top level intellectual.

But watching him live, one perceives that these disparate expressions are organized into a coherent whole. One feels that he denies none of them, that being and appearance (the self and the persona) have found their *modus vivendi*, that his teaching about “integrating all the functions” to form a totality is not book knowledge but lived, which amounts to affirming that he belongs not only among the scholars but among the sages.

I knew Jung from his books and I had met him personally. But during this week passed in his company I feel I have discovered him. To tell the truth, I have made two discoveries. First of all, I have been struck by the strongly *concrete* character of this man and of his thinking. Secondly, I have realized all he owes to his mingling with the ‘primitives;’ those journeys have not been picturesque accidents in his life; they are among the nutritive substances of his thought. I would add that these two points are intimately connected.

The concreteness stands out every moment from his way of expounding ideas, laying emphasis on the facts, his gestures sober and restrained but felt to be charged with energy and asking only to go ahead uncurbed. This is especially visible when he describes one of his African scenes; in fact he acts it out in abbreviated form, he makes it visible. There was that anecdote to illustrate the fact that primitives do not know will-power in the sense that we understand it; they must first mobilize the needful energy for an action and this is the purpose served by certain precise incantatory rituals. For example, the boy who is charged with carrying the mail to town (who knows how many leagues away!) remains passively sitting when the European quietly asks him to perform this service and offers to reward him; it is as if he did not understand. But the sorcerer passes by, takes the case in hand—and the whip too!—starts dancing the ‘running dance’ around the boy; the tribe joins in, the boy is drawn into the circle and finally, as if shot from a sling, is off; and he runs at that! All was reproduced before us; we saw it.

But this play of gesture to demonstrate and explain flourishes yet more freely in familiar conversation. We were speaking one evening of ‘telepathic’ dreams where, between persons who are emotionally close, a mutual unconscious communication and penetration appears to take place. Jung finally, to sum up his thoughts on the matter, acted them out as follows: with brief, firm gestures he touched first my forehead, then his own, and thirdly drew a great circle with his hand in the space between us; the three motions underscored the three clauses of this statement: “In short, one doesn’t dream here, and one doesn’t dream here, one dreams there.” And there the hand kept turning, like the above-mentioned sling and the idea, like the messenger, was launched.

I have said that this concreteness is tied up with Jung’s African experience. I came to see that he had a feeling of concreteness about the soul; when he entitles a book *Wirklichkeit der Seele* (Reality of the Soul) it is no vain expression. To be sure, he had been convinced by his patients of this concrete aspect of the things of the psyche, but certainly the ‘primitives’ brought him into touch with it in a closer and more convincing way, for this is how they feel. When he was telling me the other day, at Dr. von Sury’s, about these ‘ancestral spirits,’ which fall upon one on return to one’s birthplace, and which he himself feels whenever he returns to Basel, I recognized that these ‘spirits’ had weight, like the atmosphere during a thunderstorm. And when he was led by this reflection to study, on the wall, the genealogical tree of the von Sury family, I realized how he felt those roots digging down and holding fast in an earth that was real and solid.

These incidents seem to me to contribute much to an understanding of Jung's thought. Many are so astonished by the mythological entities on which he draws so freely, by the strange figures of the *anima*, the *shadow*, or the personified functions, that they stand disconcerted before what seems to them a misty, ethereal, theosophical pantheon, or a gratuitous demonology. They are, however, quite mistaken; far from being the anemic phantoms of an exalted or bloodless idealism, these figures have the same kind of reality and density, and exert the same kind of pressure as those powers—spiritual and at the same time physical—in which 'participation' plays so great a role, and in relation to which 'primitive mentality' takes its own measure. Better still, Jung has dug deeply enough into the strata of the civilized mind to discover these same powers keeping their ancient places. The 'nocturnal side,' the dark side in us, is linked up somewhere with black Africa: it is the black continent of the psyche. And those Latin minds, as they like to call themselves, who are repelled by Jung's difficult language and thought, to which they impute excessive abstraction as well as excessive Germanism, they too are far off base; for nothing is clearer, actually, than an abstract formula. If Jung is not always clear enough to please his readers, it is precisely because he does not yield to the premature taste for abstraction, which classifies the idea, he trails along with it a whole amalgam of human reality, natural, illogical, 'pre-logical,' to which the idea intimately adheres. The result is heavy perhaps, but it is rich and true. If Jung is indeed at times a difficult author for a mind dragged from academic moorings, it is because abstraction, in his case, is exercised only upon a psychic content of astonishing concreteness; . . . the difficulty proceeds not from excessive abstraction but from saturation with concrete substance.

This concreteness of Jung's was part of his make-up. In his childhood recollections he tells us of the torments he went through over mathematics, especially over algebraic abstractions, which he found incomprehensible. To make sense out of them, he had to put back numbers in place of letters. The simple equation $a=b$ infuriated him and seemed a rank deception: since a is one thing and b is another, it is a lie to say they are equal. If this was an inborn disposition of his mind, it could not but be reinforced and justified in his eyes by his fertilizing contacts with 'primitive mentality.' The academic mind expected a mapmaker; and it finds itself face to face with an explorer who emerges from the brush armed, weighed down, and solidly swathed in magnificent vines and creepers, trailing with him all the odors of the forest.

Certainly, Jung rises to great heights in his study of man's spiritual activities, but he never cuts them off from their dense and weighty substructures; here we have an aspect of that fine 'balance of opposites' which he tries to restore wherever he finds it violated. He has reintegrated into the materialistic psychoanalysis of yesterday that soul which then had been repressed; but if he has been able to do so effectively and sanely, it is because no one has been more capable than he of preserving what Nietzsche called "the earth sense." Yes, the dominant vision I carry home from this meeting is of a man astonishingly *concrete*, for whom the cathedrals of the spirit can rise with all the more audacity because they are grounded in those primordial earth-levels where one encounters the deliberate step of the Animal and the deeply spreading roots of the Tree.