

JUNG AND PSYCHOSYNTHESIS¹



ROBERTO ASSAGIOLI is on the Board of Editors of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. He was born in 1888 in Venice. He became a medical doctor and was one of the first to introduce psychoanalysis into Italy. As early as 1910, he began to formulate the concept of psychosynthesis, arguing not that psychoanalysis was incorrect but, rather, that it was partial. Assagioli continues an active life training professionals in psychosynthesis and writing. His books include *Psychosynthesis* and *The Act of Will*. He is currently working on a new book with the working title of *Height Psychology and the Self*.

Among psychotherapists, Jung is one of the closest to the conceptions and practice of psychosynthesis. The body of his work is so large and his range covers so many different fields, however, that a complete examination of it would require a sizable book. I shall thus limit myself to a comparative survey of some of the fields that are more directly concerned with psychosynthesis: *the structure of the psyche of the human being, the dynamics of the psychic energies, and the methods of psychological therapy and education*.

THE STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF THE PSYCHE

Jung has a keen sense of the complexity of the human psyche. To quote his own words, "Our psychic nature is of an unimaginable complexity and diversity." He has pointed out the relative autonomy of the various psychic contents and the existence, often quite incompatible, of different subpersonalities, or, as he calls them, personae (in the Latin sense of "masks").

He makes a distinction, however, between these personae—which also correspond to social, interpersonal roles and functions—and the "inner personality." In his view, "The inner personality is the manner of one's behaviour towards the inner psychic processes. I term the outer attitude, or outer character, the persona; the inner attitude I term the anima, or soul [Jung, 1933, p. 593]."

¹Adapted from a series of three lectures given in 1966 at the Istituto di Psicopsintesi, Florence, Italy. Published by the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, 40 East 49th Street, New York, New York 10017.

Concerning the psychic functions, Jung, as is well known, differentiates between four fundamental ones: sensation, feeling, thought, and intuition. In this he differs from almost all other psychologists by his acceptance of the existence of the intuition as a normal psychological function of the human being. Psychosynthesis assumes the same position and lays much emphasis upon the importance and value of the intuition and upon the necessity of developing it. According to Jung, intuition is the psychological function that permits perceptions to arise from the unconscious and causes their contents to emerge as complete wholes. He continues:

Intuitive cognition, therefore, possesses an intrinsic character of certainty and conviction which enabled Spinoza to uphold the “scientia intuitiva” as the highest form of cognition [Jung, 1933, p. 593].

Among the moderns, the greatest advocate of the intuition has been perhaps Henri Bergson. Much as there is to be said about the intuition, I will mention only that there are various types or levels of it: The Bergsonian intuition, which occurs predominantly at the normal personality levels, is very different from that of Plotinus, which is purely spiritual. Jung asserts that the intuition exists at both of these levels, on which it assumes different aspects but is fundamentally the same.

An important difference from psychosynthesis exists, however, in connection with psychological functions. Psychosynthesis maintains that besides Jung’s four fundamental functions, there are others which are as fundamental and merit inclusion as well. The first is the *imagination*. Jung’s lack of recognition of the imaginative function appears strange in view of his attributing such great importance to images and symbols. The explanation lies in his belief that imaginative activity can evidence itself in all four other functions. He asserts this, however, without demonstrating it or dealing with it. It seems impossible to admit that fantasy or imagination can be manifested in the function of sensation, a perception, by means of the senses, the so-called external reality (i.e., of impacts coming from the external world). On the other hand, other psychologists correctly give the imagination a fundamental place in psychological life.

Another group of functions that must be accorded a similar consideration are the *dynamic* or “*hormic*” functions (derived from the Greek word “*orme*” meaning tendency or impulse). This group includes the instincts, tendencies, impulses, desires, and aspirations—in fact, all that impels to action. Desire has been included among these hormic activities, though desire is generally conceived in terms of only, or at least principally, its subjective aspect—desire as something one feels, an emotion one has. But this is solely its *subjective* aspect. In reality, desire is or has a

dynamic energy that impels to action. It has been said that it is a primordial tendency, the attractive impulse toward the not-self.

It may seem surprising that, among these active tendencies, the *will* has not been included. But a fundamental difference exists between the drives, and impulses and desires, on the one hand, and the will on the other. We all can experientially verify the difference—even the opposition between them. One might say that the “human condition” is a constant conflict between drives, impulses and desires, and the will.

In a certain sense, the will is something of a mystery. If academic psychologists have neglected desire, they have for the most part ignored the existence of the will. I shall quote in this connection *The Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms* (English, 1958). Under the item “will” and “voluntary action” it says:

Scientific psychology has not yet reached the point where it is possible to define how these terms should be used; and yet it does not seem possible to do without the concept of a praxis of behavior patterns that should be termed voluntary and which differ from other patterns in various ill-defined ways.

Vague as this may be, one can detect a rather tight-lipped admission that there exists this disturbing something in psychology which is the will.

One of the reasons for this mystery about the will lies in its intimate association with the “I,” the subject, the center of consciousness. In reality, all functions are functions of a *living, self-conscious being* and thus of an “I.” It is the “I” that feels and thinks, that imagines, that desires, and that wills—above all that *wills*. Consequently, as one has, in general, a relatively vague and dim sense of one’s self, of self-consciousness, it is not surprising that one’s sense of its fundamental function—the will—is equally confused and faint. Figure 1, though only approximate, is intended to indicate this structure of the psyche.

The triangles starting from the central circle represent the psychic functions: sensation, emotion, imagination, impulse and desire, thought, and intuition. The will occupies a position apart from the others, a central position indicated by the circular area surrounding the point of self-consciousness—the “I” or ego.

Direction of Vital Interest

We now come to the direction of the vital interest, and so pass from the descriptive to the dynamic aspect of psychology. One of Jung’s most

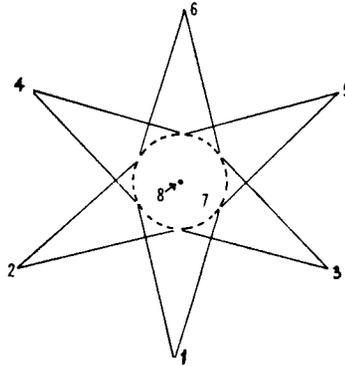


FIG. 1. The center of consciousness and the psychological functions. Numerical representations are as follows: 1. Sensation; 2. Emotion—Feeling; 3. Impulse—Desire; 4. Imagination; 5. Thought; 6. Intuition; 7. Will; 8. Central point: “I” or ego.

valuable contributions was the discovery and description of two fundamental psychological types based on whether the vital interest is directed outwards or inwards, and thus “*extraverted*” or “*introverted*.” I should mention at once that it is less a matter of “types” in a precise and static sense, and more of the *prevailing direction* of the vital interest, and thus of the consequent evaluations, choices, decisions, and actions. This predominating tendency can be more or less strong and susceptible to *alternations* and *oscillations* ranging from the normal and moderate to the extreme and pathological. The extremes in alternation are to be found in cyclothymia and manic-depressive psychoses, which may or may not be intercalated by periods of equilibrium. In addition, the alternation can be rapid or slow, the cycles long or short. It is interesting to observe how a normal alternation occurs in relation to the various ages from birth to old age. The infant is totally introverted, totally absorbed in his organic sensations. As childhood progresses, he becomes increasingly extraverted and directs his interest toward the external world. The adolescent reverts to introversion when the awakening of energies, feelings, and emotions creates problems and crises that focus his interest upon himself. This generally gives place again to extraversion as the young man and adult become involved in relationships with others (interpersonal and social) and in professional activities. Maturity and especially old age produce a return to introversion, accompanied by detachment and waning interest in the external world, and by a tendency toward the inner life, contemplation, and dispassionate observation.

By combining the tendency to extraversion or introversion with the four psychological functions he postulates, Jung arrives at a classification of eight types: the extraverted sensory, the extraverted emotional, the extraverted mental, the extraverted intuitive, and four corresponding introverted types. But this and other classifications expose those who adopt them to the dangers of schematicism and pigeon-holing, of yielding to the (so comfortable!) tendency to "label" human beings. We must be on our guard against overlooking the multifarious and complex facets of human reality. It is all too easy to regard others as "objects" instead of "subjects." (Assagioli, 1973, Appendix V: Differential Psychology). And this labeling, with its associated attitudes of judging, or more often depreciation, often provokes hostile reactions, sometimes of an intense kind, which are thoroughly justified.

But to the eight types recognized by Jung, others must be added. Opposite interest-directions can be associated *simultaneously* with different levels in the same personality. For instance, a man may be predominantly extraverted physically, introverted emotionally, and again extraverted mentally. His will can also be extraverted or introverted. Furthermore, another distinction must be made: the direction of the vital interest is subject to two separate "*modalities*" or *attitudes*, the *active* and the *reactive* or passive. Jung mentions this, but does not develop the point, which, in my opinion, has a fundamental importance. A passive extravert, endowed with excessive sensitivity, who succumbs to every external influence and is dominated by the will of others, is very different from an active extravert who tends to dominate things and people, to bend them to *his* will. In this sense, they are opposite types.

To this must be added the fact that there are two other interest-directions to be recognized and given the utmost consideration; the direction *downward toward the low*, which may be called *infraversion*, and that *upward toward the high*, or *supraversion*. Infraversion is the tendency to plumb the unconscious in its lower aspects. It can be said to be the province of "depth psychology" in its more restricted sense (the "descent into hell") and can be compared to subaquatic sport. Classical Freudian psychoanalysis displays an almost exclusive interest in the lower aspects of human nature.

In supraversion, on the other hand, the vital interests and search are directed toward the higher aspects of the psyche, toward the superconscious, toward spiritual experiences. This, in contrast to subaquatic sport, can be compared to mountain-climbing. To Jung must be given the credit of having recognized and demonstrated the existence in the human being of the natural tendency toward the high, of a genuine *need*, which he

called instinctive, for spiritual satisfaction. He gave prominence to the fact that the neglect or repression of this need can create serious neuropsychic and psychosomatic disturbances.

Another, and important, difference is one of *quality*, which is different from *direction*. There can be a supraversion of an inferior kind: the dreamer, the passive idealist, the sterile theoretician, the impractical utopian are examples of it. There is again a subversion of a superior kind, such as the scientific investigation and exploration of the lower aspects of the unconscious, what could be termed psychological geology and archaeology. All this shows the great complexity of the human psyche and the impossibility of framing or pigeon-holing it in some designation or description arrived at from a single viewpoint.

The Psychology of the Unconscious

Up to this point, I have scarcely mentioned the unconscious. According to Jung, the unconscious is an exclusively psychological concept and includes all the psychic elements, contents, and processes not associated with the "I" or ego in a conscious way. Therefore, Jung maintains, the unconscious has no "personal center." This is in agreement with psychosynthesis, which warns against the tendency to make of the unconscious an "entity," almost a personality, more or less in accord or in contrast with the conscious. "Unconscious," as I have stressed elsewhere, should be considered an adjective, not a noun, and it indicates a temporary condition of the "psychic contents," many of which may have been conscious and may become so again.

Jung's most important contribution to the psychology of the unconscious is represented by his extensive studies of the collective unconscious. Before him, psychoanalysis had concerned itself almost exclusively with the study of the personal unconscious. Jung then showed the great extent of collective psychic elements and forces which exercise a powerful effect on the human personality. In the diagram of the constitution of the psyche (see Figure 2) the collective unconscious is represented as lying outside the individual psyche. The demarcation line is dotted to suggest the continuous exchanges going on between the collective and the personal unconscious. And the two horizontal lines are extended beyond the area of the personality to indicate the existence of lower, middle, and higher collective unconsciouses which correspond to the three divisions of the personal unconscious.

Thus the collective unconscious is a vast world stretching from the biological to the spiritual level, in which, therefore, distinctions of origin,

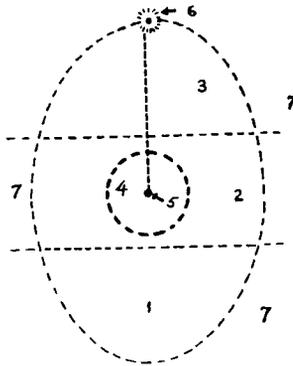


FIG. 2. Numerical representations are as follows: 1. The lower unconscious; 2. The middle unconscious; 3. The higher unconscious or superconscious; 4. The field of consciousness; 5. The conscious Self or "I"; 6. The higher or transpersonal Self; 7. The collective unconscious.

nature, quality, and value must be made. It should be noted that Jung often disregards these distinctions. He speaks of the collective unconscious *en bloc* and is inclined to confuse what he terms "archaic," that is, what originates in the ancient collective human experience, with what is higher (we would say superconscious) and in the spiritual sphere. Jung speaks of "archetypes" as "images." At times he describes them as archaic, racial images, charged with a strong emotional tone accumulated during the centuries, and on other occasions he treats them as "principles," as "ideas," suggesting their affinity with the Platonic ideas. In reality, there exists not only a difference, but an actual antagonism between these two conceptions of "archetypes." From this confusion between archetypes arises various debatable consequences, debatable at the theoretical level and liable to be harmful in therapy. In my opinion, it can be said without disrespect that Jung himself has been dominated by the potent fascination of the collective unconscious, against which he puts his patients on guard.

Jung correctly attaches great importance to symbols and symbolism, to which he devoted much study. He recognizes the plurality of meanings associated with one and the same symbol, in contrast to the all too frequent tendency to interpret a symbol in only one way and on the basis of the preconceived theories of whoever interprets it. Jung shows that the same symbol can have different meanings, not only in various individual cases, but also in the same person. He shows, furthermore, that there are

regressive and *progressive* symbols—symbols that relate to the archaic symbolism of the collective unconscious, and symbols that indicate the attempts and efforts to resolve certain problems and to bring about certain developments. Jung says that some symbols are messages from the unconscious (we would say of the superconscious) to the conscious personality. Frequently he utilizes these progressive symbols in his method of treatment.

We come now to an important subject: spirituality. As we have noted, Jung possessed the great merit of recognizing and proclaiming the reality and importance of spiritual needs. He maintained that man has the need to reach an understanding of the meaning of life, to believe it has a value and purpose of a spiritual nature. He ascertained that many neuropsychic disturbances are rooted in the lack of satisfaction of this need (i.e., in its repression). To quote his own words, “the lack of meaning in life is a soul-sickness whose full extent and full import our time has not yet comprehended [Jung, 1945].” He therefore fully admits the importance of the spiritual factor.

THERAPY

A comparative survey of Jung’s therapeutic method and the methods used in psychosynthesis discloses a substantial agreement in goals, but also some marked differences in means and techniques. One of Jung’s greatest merits has been his opposition to the “pathologism” which still holds almost undisputed sway over official psychotherapy. Attention is chiefly directed to morbid manifestations, to fighting symptoms and disorders, neglecting what is healthy and sometimes of higher quality in the person. And there are also “defensive structures” erected by the psyche of the client, which must be recognized and not demolished until it is discovered how to replace them with other and better patterns.

As I have mentioned, Jung reacted vigorously against such “pathologism” and declared: “I prefer to understand man in the perspective of his health [Cahen, 1952, p. 180].” Jung’s position here is in complete agreement with the basic principle of psychosynthesis.

Let us now examine in more detail the therapy used by Jung. This survey, however, presents difficulties for various reasons. First of all, Jung openly acknowledged the infinite variety of human beings and conditions, and therefore the necessity of using different psychotherapeutic methods adapted to the constitution and specific situation of each client. Here is how he puts it:

I am always entertained when clinicians claim to cure by A's method, or C's or F's, or even J's. Such things do not exist and cannot exist, and if they do occur are well on the way to failure. If I treat Mr. X., I am forced to apply the X method, and with Mrs. Z, the Z method; and this means that the ways and means of treatment are predominantly determined by the nature of the patient.

This too is in close agreement with psychosynthesis, which chooses, among the plurality of psychotherapeutic techniques it has adopted, the one that is most appropriate in each existential situation.

Because Jung's methods were developed and expanded during many decades, as well as because of the growing prevalence in the last years of his cognitive interests and psychological investigations over purely therapeutic questions, Jung never wanted to set forth his methods of treatment in any systematized and complete manner.

To fill this gap to some extent, one of Jung's pupils, Ronald Cahen (1952), has, with great patience and skill, extracted from the mass of Jung's writings the passages and chapters dealing with therapy and compiled them in *La Guérison Psychologique*. This work was revised and approved by Jung himself and thus constitutes an authorized exposition.

A preliminary observation of a general nature concerns the actual name of Jungian therapy. He kept to the last the designation "analytical psychology," which he adopted to indicate its derivation from and connection with psychoanalysis. In reality, however, this name does not do justice to the integrative and synthetic tendency which increasingly inspired Jungian therapy. In fact, it aims at producing a profound transformation of the personality and its integration by means of what Jung called the "process of individuation."

But before explaining and examining Jung's specific method, it should be made clear that, as he said himself, this method must not be used with all clients. There are many, especially among the young, whose disturbances have been produced by psychic traumas, by conflicts rooted in the personal unconscious, or by strife between the individual and other people—above all, members of the family and the social environment. Jung maintains that in these cases mainly psychoanalytical treatment and certain methods that he included in what he called "little therapy" may suffice. These cases, however, often require the additional application of *active* techniques that Jung neglects.

On the other hand, there is a large group of clients whose disturbances are the product of crises and deep conflicts of an "existential" kind, involving fundamental human problems about the meaning and purpose of life in general and about the individual's own life. It is to be remarked

that, not infrequently, the client is not aware of these deep-seated causes of his illness, and it is the therapy that renders him conscious of them and then helps him to eliminate them.

The principal aim of Jung's method, as elaborated by him during the last period of his active work, is the liberation of the individual from the influences of his personal unconscious and of the collective unconscious, by means of a process the phases of which can be indicated as follows:

1. *Clarification*, or the above-mentioned recognition of the nature and causes of the disturbance;
2. *Conscious assimilation of the content of the unconscious*;
3. *The discovery of the self*;
4. *The transformation of the personality*;
5. *Personality integration and synthesis*.

From the above, it is evident how closely what could be called Jung's "therapeutic program" is akin to that of psychosynthetic therapy.

It is not my intention to describe Jung's procedures. They can be found amply dealt with in his books and in those of his pupils. He developed a series of profound concepts, sometimes somewhat obscure, about the "shadow," about certain parts of the unconscious both antithetical and complementary to the conscious personality, which he called "anima" in the man and "animus" in the woman. I will touch only on some points to emphasize the similarities and differences between these concepts and the techniques of psychosynthesis.

Clarification

Jung fosters the client's awareness of the contents of the unconscious and its assimilation in his conscious personality by means of dream analysis and free drawing. The analysis of dreams is the basis of psychoanalytic theory, but this implies their *interpretation*; and here arises a substantial difference between orthodox psychoanalysis and Jungian "analysis." In psychoanalysis the interpretation tends to "reduce" everything to infantile impressions and traumas and to instinctive urges. Jung, although admitting the existence of dreams of this type, says that there are dreams of very different kinds, particularly those he calls "prospective" or constructive (i.e., dreams containing true messages from the unconscious or, rather, its higher level, the superconscious). These dreams indicate to the conscious personality of the client certain situations, certain facts, of which he was not aware, and point to the solution of his conflicts and the way leading to integration. In his work, Jung gives many examples of dreams of this type

and their interpretation, confirmed by the clients' recognition and by the healing effects. In reality, dreams fall into many different categories. One must be on guard against stereotyped interpretations of the "dreambook," ignoring the fact that the same symbol can have as many meanings (some of them contradictory) as there are patients. Of this Jung was well aware.

Psychosynthesis makes wide use of dreams and free drawings, and also avails itself of other methods that encourage the emergence of the contents of the unconscious. Prominent among them are a variety of mental imagery techniques, such as Desoille's procedure, the "*rêve éveillé dirigé*" (guided daydream), which can be very rewarding, not only in stimulating the manifestation of the contents of the unconscious, but also in promoting the therapeutic integration of the personality. A method akin to this is the "initiated symbol projection" of Leuner. In addition to the images in use by these and other methods, psychosynthesis employs a wide variety of symbols chosen for their appropriateness to the type of client concerned (see Assagioli, 1971, pp. 177-191).

Conscious Assimilation of Unconscious

The entry, not infrequently a veritable irruption, of unconscious elements and tendencies may produce troubles and sometimes be dangerous, in particular if it originates in the collective unconscious, as Jung clearly recognized. Therefore, in the practice of psychosynthesis—parallel to the evocation of the "daemons" of the unconscious, and at times even before—active methods are employed to reinforce self-consciousness, the consciousness of the "I" or ego, and to develop its power of dominating the elements already present and active in the conscious personality. This so important part of psychotherapy is generally neglected.

Among the many existing techniques for strengthening the ego, the development and training of the will is accorded an important place in psychosynthesis. In addition, specific techniques are used for the activation and "descent" into consciousness of the contents and activities of the higher part of the unconscious, the superconscious.

Discovery of Self

We come now to the really central point, the discovery of the Self. Here we must make clear how Jung's conception of the Self differs from that of psychosynthesis. For Jung, it is an "intermediate point" in which the conscious and the unconscious meet (see Jacobi, 1962). He considers it an "archetypal figure" and states:

From the intellectual point of view, the Self is none other than a psychological concept, a construction aimed at expressing an essence, imperceptible and inconceivable as such, because it surpasses our comprehension. . . . The idea of a Self is in itself a transcendent postulate justifiable solely from the psychological point of view and without possibility of scientific proof [Farau & Shaffens, 1960, p. 116].

Psychosynthesis, on the other hand, regards the Self as a *reality*, rather than as a *living entity*, direct and certain knowledge or awareness of which *can* be had. In other words, it can be defined as one of those “immediate data of consciousness” (to use Bergson’s expression) which bear with them their own evidence—as happens in the case of ethical conscience, aesthetic experience, and the experience of the will. There is a considerable body of testimony in support of this. Here, out of many, is the significant contribution of Father Gratty:

We possess an “inner sense” which at special times when we succeed in interrupting the habitual flow of distractions and passions gives us direct and clear knowledge of our Soul. . . . I used to experience an inner form, full of strength, beauty and joy, a form of light and fire which sustained my entire being, stable, always the same, often recaptured during my life; forgotten at intervals, but always recognized with infinite delight and the exclamation, “Here is my real Being” [Gratty, 1915].

Others emphasize in their testimony the universal aspect of the consciousness of the Self. Hermann Keyserling, for instance, writes:

That which is deeper, more substantial than the individual is never the “general,” but the “universal”: and the “universal” expresses itself precisely through the individual, and the latter becomes more universal in the measure in which he becomes deeper [Keyserling, 1934, p. 167].

The twofold aspect, individual and universal, of the Self is indicated in Figure 3 of man’s psychic structure by the position of the “star,” which is partially outside the periphery of the individual psyche and partially within it. The former indicates the union of the Self with transcendent or ontological reality, the universal Self; the latter, the relationship with the individual superconscious. The ego, or conscious “I,” is an emanation from, or projection of the Self. It can become aware of it in various ways

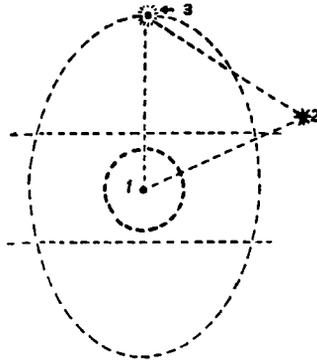


FIG. 3. Numerical representations are as follows: 1. Conscious Self or "I"; 2. External unifying center (the therapist or guide); 3. Higher Self.

and degrees and can identify itself more or less completely and temporarily with the Self.

There is, I repeat, no conflict between these two aspects of the Self: far from opposing each other, they integrate with each other. As an Oriental writer has lucidly put it: "No identity (i.e., self-awareness) can exist without universality, and there is no consciousness of the universal without individual realization." An Italian poet, Carducci, had a vivid experience of this fusion and expressed it admirably in a stanza of his *Cantico dell'Amore* (Song of Love):

Is it I who embrace the world, or from within
The Universe that reabsorbs me in itself?
Ah, it was a note of the eternal poem I heard
And sought to echo in this little verse.

An examination of the varying proportions of the individual and universal aspects in these experiences would prove very interesting. Here I will mention only that in experiences of a mystical, intuitive type, the universal aspect tends to be prevalent (i.e., the invasion of the consciousness by a greater reality). On the other hand, in experiences gained through psychospiritual training, in which the consciousness seeks to rise to the Self and achieve a momentary union with it, the sense of self-consciousness usually remains uppermost. The individual continues to feel "present" and active, while participating in a far wider type of consciousness.

Transformation of the Personality and Its Integration

According to Jung, this constitutes an essentially spontaneous process, which, however, can be fostered by the “catalytic” presence of the therapist and the human relationship with him. Jung accords special importance to this relationship, which he calls “transference.” The Jungian concept of the transference is neither clear nor unequivocal, and it altered in the course of the years. He himself states in the “Conclusion” of his book, *The Psychology of the Transference*: “The problematic character of the transference is so complex and many-sided that I lack the categories needed to offer a systematic exposition of it [Jung, 1953, p. 171].”

In psychosynthesis the problem of building good relations between client and therapist is rendered easier—or shall we say less difficult—by the therapist’s not only pointing out and suggesting to the client, as Jung does, the goal of his “individuation,” but encouraging and educating him from the outset: (a) to practice active methods of acquiring an increasingly clear self-consciousness; (b) to develop a strong will; (c) to master and use correctly his impulsive, emotional, imaginative, and mental energies; and (d) to avail himself of all means of gaining independence of the therapist.

In spite of the variety and complexity of relationships created between client and therapist, one can distinguish in the practice of psychosynthesis four principal ones. Each is utilized, directed, and regulated with the well-being of the client in view.

1. *Transference.* In the strict sense originally attributed to it by Freud, transference is the “projection” onto the therapist of the client’s impulses, attachments, and emotions felt in childhood toward his parents. These attitudes can be positive (loving) or negative (hostile). The projections have to be analyzed and dissolved. Here there is agreement between Jungian therapy, psychoanalysis, and psychosynthesis.

2. *Therapeutic situation.* The specific relationship created by what may be termed the therapeutic situation has the therapist representing and exercising an essentially “parental” function. He or she must, to some extent, take on the role and task of protector, counselor, and guide. In dream symbolism, says Jung, the therapist frequently appears as “wise old man” and corresponds to what the Indians call “guru.” This relationship is very different from the unconscious projection that happens in the transference. It is conscious, factual, and real.

The therapeutic situation is indicated in Figure 3 by the star outside the psyche of the client, which acts as a link or bridge between the client’s “I” and Self. When the client fails to reach consciousness of the Self directly, “vertically,” he or she can be effectively helped by the therapist who

represents for the client someone more in touch with his or her own Self, and therefore becomes a “model,” or even a “catalyst.”

3. *Human relationship.* A human relationship is developed as the therapy proceeds and creates psychological reactions at various levels and of different kinds. The therapist’s delicate and difficult task is to maintain this relationship within proper limits—and, one might say, “at a high level”—assenting to its positive or constructive aspects, but resisting the attachments, demands, pretences, and attempts to monopolize on the part of the client. It can be done with firmness coupled with tact and kindness, and the client can be made to understand how these attitudes, while they may provide temporary gratification, are in reality harmful.

The transition from the second to the third type of relationship is valuable, even indispensable, for a variety of reasons: above all, to promote the client’s growing autonomy, then to eliminate the tendency to lean on someone else, unload his own responsibilities, and get led by the hand.

4. *Resolution of the relationship.* The resolution of the relationship at the conclusion of the therapy is a critical point and needs to be handled with wisdom. I have said “resolution” and not termination of the relationship for two reasons: (a) because the conclusion of the therapy can frequently happen very gradually and almost imperceptibly, and (b) because the positive relationship can continue afterward in some form, either as a friendship or collaboration, or both.

These client relationships, and in general the whole therapeutic process, demand adequate training on the part of the therapist, not only in a scientific and practical vein, but even more so in a humane and spiritual one. Jung was well aware of this need and expressed it explicitly:

The recent development of analytical psychology . . . gives a prominent place to the personality of the doctor himself as a curative or harmful factor, and demands the inner perfecting of the doctor, the self-education of the educator.

The transformation of the personality and its integration, or psychosynthesis—apart from the transference process—often occur spontaneously, or, as Jung maintains, as a result of the creative and synthesizing action of the symbols that emerge from the unconscious. Jung does not suggest the active intervention in this process either of the therapist or of the will of the ego, the conscious “I.”

Psychosynthetic therapy, while fully recognizing the importance of the spontaneous processes of self-healing and the integrative function of

symbols, takes advantage of the fact that these processes can be promoted and effectively assisted by the cooperation of the conscious personality. This action is performed by what constitutes the center, the dynamic element, that is, the conscious and active subject, using his *will*.

The great importance of such active cooperation is based on two premises. The first, already mentioned, is the need to contain and regulate the energies erupting from the unconscious, and then to promote, as appropriate, their constructive application, transmutation, and sublimation. This particularly applies to sexual, emotional, and aggressive tendencies and energies. The second premise for active cooperation in achieving the integration or synthesis of the personality lies in the advantage—sometimes, indeed, the necessity—of developing by means of active training the psychic functions that have remained at primitive, infantile levels—paralyzed by devaluation or inhibited by repression. In modern man, engrossed in his interests and practical concerns—often with a one-sided development of the intellectual function—the higher feelings, aesthetic sensitivity, the capacity to commune with nature and the ability to establish *human* communication with others are often lacking or atrophied. In other people, instead, emotional and imaginative exuberance relegates to an inferior position mental, and sometimes also practical, activity. There are still other cases, to which Jung draws attention, in which the higher aspirations and needs are ignored, underestimated, or feared, and thus neglected or repressed.

But further advance can be made along the road opened by him. The inflow of the superconscious, spiritual contents, and energies can be actively assisted. As mentioned above, in many cases—indeed, I believe in most of them—an active training is required to eliminate, or at least attenuate, the lack of balance in the development of the various psychological functions. This assistance is of particular importance in enabling the conscious “I” to assimilate the superconscious energies and to integrate them harmoniously into the totality of the psychological life.

EDUCATION

Let us next consider Jung’s ideas on education. Though he did not concern himself directly and actively with the educational application of his conceptions, his writings on the subject contain much of interest and value. As far back as 1910 Jung published an essay on *Conflicts of the Infantile Mind*, in which he examined various problems which concern the birth of children, the contrast between imagination and thought, and the effective relations with parents.

Jung attaches great importance to the psychological rapport between parents and children and between teachers and pupils. The educator must acquire a clear awareness that his or her psychological ignorance and deficiencies, complexes and conflicts, *inevitably* produce repercussions upon those he or she wishes to educate. An educator should therefore recognize the heavy responsibility and the consequent duty involved in training for this noble but arduous task by means of an adequate *self-education* founded upon the discoveries and methods of dynamic psychology.

At a conference on education in Basel in 1942, Jung delivered a lecture on *The Gifted Child*. Its subject is of much importance and present interest in view of the renewed and growing consideration being given to the recognition and education of gifted children. The value of Jung's essay is enhanced by the description of his own personal experiences and scholastic vicissitudes as a "boy of talent":

When I was a schoolboy of ten, I did not feel at all sleepy or stupid. I was often exceedingly bored when the master used to take particular pains with pupils unable to follow. But the boredom was by no means the worst part. Among our many composition themes, which were hardly inspiring, we were once given one that interested me. I set to it with enthusiasm and polished my sentences with the utmost care. In the joyous anticipation of having written the best composition, or at least one of the best, I handed it to the teacher. After giving back the compositions, it was his custom to discuss first the best, and then the others in order of merit. Mine was not the first, nor the second, and not even the third. All the others preceded mine, and when he had finished discussing the last effort, the weakest of them all, the teacher inflated himself in a threatening and ominous manner and delivered his verdict: "Jung's composition is by far the best but he has ruined it by triviality and lack of thought. For this reason it does not merit a place in the list." "It's not true," I interrupted the teacher, "I've never worked so hard on a composition as I did on this." "It's a lie," he shouted. "Look at X (X was the pupil who had produced the worst composition), he has really taken trouble. He'll get ahead in life, but you, no, because one doesn't succeed with ability and tricks!" I said nothing, and from that moment on I did no more work in my German class.

This experience, it is true, dates from more than a half-century ago, and I do not doubt that in the meantime school conditions have greatly changed and improved. But that episode gave me much to think about and left me with a sense of bitterness, which, however, with broader experience of life, has given place to a more

balanced assessment. I understood how, deep down, the master's attitude had been prompted by the noble principle of helping the weak and eradicating the bad. Sometimes, however, it unfortunately happens that these principles get turned into mechanical rules, which, in their turn, get accepted without further consideration and give birth to deplorable caricatures of the good of this sort. The weak are helped and the bad are fought in this way, it is true, but at the same time the danger of neglecting the more gifted individual is exposed. It is as if emergence from the ranks were in itself an awkward and troublesome affair [Jung, 1947, pp. 135-137].

Jung rightly deplores this pseudo-humanitarian concept and false conception of democracy. "The desire to bring all people to the same level and reduce them to the status of sheep by suppressing the natural hierarchical structure (in the psychospiritual sense, be it well noted) leads infallibly, sooner or later, to a catastrophe [Jung, 1947, pp. 144-145]."

Jung then adds some valuable observations on the difficulties of recognizing and educating talented children:

The problem of the gifted child is in no way a simple matter, since he is not recognizable merely by the fact of his being a good scholar. In certain cases indeed he is the very reverse. He may even be aggravatingly distinguishable by his special brand of absent-mindedness, with his head full of nonsense, by his laziness, negligence, lack of attention, rudeness, obstinacy and by giving the impression of being only half awake. Judging only by superficial observation, it is often hard to tell a talented child apart from a weak-minded one. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that gifted children are not always precocious but apt to develop slowly, so that their gifts may remain latent for a long time [Jung, 1947, pp. 137-138].

Jung draws attention to and shows the importance of what he calls the gifts of the heart:

In addition to the gifts of the head, there exist also those of the heart, which are no less important, but of which it is easy to be unaware, because often in these cases the head is weaker than the heart. And yet people of this sort are frequently more useful and valuable to the well-being of society than those with different gifts [Jung, 1947, p. 141].

Education is a form of interindividual relationship. Let us therefore examine the problems and methods of interindividual and social

relationships both from Jung's standpoint and from that of psychosynthesis. In practice, the goal or ultimate phase of Jungian therapy is *individuation*. I say "in practice," because Jung admits that (to quote his own words):

the actual process of individuation carries with it an awareness of what the human community is . . . Individuation presupposes a unification with oneself and therefore with humanity, of which everyone carries a particle within him [Cahen, 1952, p. 228].

The single individual, does not live his life to the full and fail to grasp its purpose, if he is incapable of putting his "I" at the service of a spiritual and superhuman order [Jung, 1947, p. 145].

Jung, however, limits himself to these allusions which indicate an aspiration more than an effective move in that direction. His method is not designed to actively help the patient to initiate and to "live" that communion with other human being. Rather, he insists strongly on the opposition, indeed the conflict, between the individual and the mass, between the personal life and the collective pressure exercised by modern social life. This is mechanized and regimented, not solely materially, but also psychologically, as evidenced by the mass ideologies, the pressure to conform, the suggestion and "persuasion" of advertising and various forms of propaganda. Jung shares this position with a number of other critics of modern life: philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists, among whom Erich Fromm is outstanding.

There is, unfortunately, a great deal of truth in all this, but that rigid and extreme opposition appears to be one-sided and too absolute. We must recognize that the individual and the mass are included in the extensive sphere of human relations, forming part of the normal life of man, who is, in his inner nature as well as from external necessity, a being both social and sociable. It is indeed true that these human relationships are far from being always easy, harmonious, and constructive. We can observe this all the time. Apart from mass pressures, human relationships come up against many difficulties. Those who are predominantly introverted find it difficult to create psychological relations with others, to communicate "humanly." The predominantly extraverted, on the other hand, establish a wide network of relationships, but these are superficial and incidental, so that in reality the individual remains psychologically and spiritually isolated.

The difficulties and conflicts in human relations are due in large measure to an excessive tendency to self-assertion and overvaluation of

success in the external world. This leads to the depreciation or repression of the higher feelings and the capacity for loving understanding, compassion, and altruistic love. The revaluation and active development of these feelings thus become a necessity, and the therapist and educator may well consider one of their most important tasks to be the fostering of the awakening and expression of those feelings. Practical methods for doing so, such as the recognition and proper appreciation of human and *higher values* and the development and cultivation of good will, can be found in *The Act of Will* (Assagioli, 1973).

Help in achieving interpersonal and group psychosynthesis (also called interindividual and social psychosynthesis) forms an important, indeed an indispensable, part of psychosynthetic therapy and education. It can be justly maintained that our civilization is neurotic and ill-balanced, and that there exist real group neuroses and psychoses (e.g., national glorification and ideological fanaticism). Therefore psychotherapy should include and undertake these more comprehensive tasks, for which it is well equipped. Every disturbed individual who is helped to establish better human relations becomes an element of balance and health in his community. In addition, every effort aimed at reducing collective psychoses makes it easier for the single individual to reach and maintain his personal health.

Thus the tasks and activity of therapists, educators, and all those who, in different fields and ways, devote themselves to the healing of social ills converge and unite in a double purpose. The first and urgent one is to safeguard humanity from the dangers its blindness and folly have created for itself. The second is to promote the coming of a new and better civilization, in which the individual can, in freedom and for the good of all, give expression to and make the most of the wonderful potentialities inherent in each human being.

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