Chapter 1
The man and his Psychology

Jung was a man of paradox. In one sense he was an individualist, a great eccentric. In another he was the living embodiment of the universal man. He strove to realize in his own life his full human potential; but he was determined, at the same time, to live in an uncompromisingly unique way. If this meant upsetting people, as was often the case, he did not, on the whole, seem to mind. 'To be normal', he said, 'is the ideal aim of the unsuccessful.'

Although considering himself a rational scientist, he was willing to give his attention to matters conventionally regarded as irrational or esoteric, and he was not unduly perturbed on those occasions when such interests put him beyond the scientific pale. In his view, to adopt an exclusively rational attitude to human psychology was not only inadequate but, in the light of history, preposterous. He had to keep faith with the truth as he saw it, and it was not his fault if this led him into realms of theory and experience which were deeply at variance with the prejudices and preoccupations of his time. 'I feel it is the duty of one who goes his own way to inform society of what he finds on his voyage of discovery,' he wrote.

> Not the criticism of individual contemporaries will decide the truth or falsity of these discoveries, but future generations. There are things that are not yet true today, perhaps we dare not find them true, but

> tomorrow they may be. So every man whose fate it is to go his individual way must proceed with hopefulness and watchfulness, ever conscious of his loneliness and its dangers. (*CW* VII, para. 201)

This sense of being drawn by destiny to swim against the prevailing tide makes him a richly intriguing character. And it means that any book on Jungian psychology has to take full account of the life and personality of its founder, for, more than that of any other psychologist, Jung's understanding of humanity grew directly out of his understanding of himself.

Throughout his long life, Jung remained a deeply introverted man, more interested in the inner world of dreams and images than in the outer world of people and events. From childhood he possessed a genius for introspection which enabled him to attend closely to experiences proceeding on or below the threshold of consciousness – experiences of which the great majority of us remain almost completely unaware. This gift was derived, at least in part, from the peculiar circumstances of his birth and upbringing.

Background

Born in the hamlet of Kesswil on the Swiss shore of Lake Constance on 26 July 1875, Jung was the only son of the village pastor, the Reverend Paul Achilles Jung, and Emilie Jung, née Preiswerk. His grandfather, Carl Gustav Jung (1794–1864), after whom he was christened, was a much respected physician, who became Rector of Basel University and Grand Master of the Swiss Lodge of Freemasons. He was rumoured to be the illegitimate son of Goethe. Though he bore a strong physical resemblance to the great poet, this is probably a legend and not fact.

Jung's mother was the youngest daughter of Samuel Preiswerk (1799–1871), a well-known but eccentric theologian, who devoted his life to studying Hebrew in the belief that it was the language spoken in heaven. He was an early advocate of Zionism, had visions, and held



2. The church and rectory at Laufen

conversations with the dead. Right up to the time of her marriage, Emilie was obliged to sit behind him as he composed his sermons in order to stop the devil peering over his shoulder. Most male members of the large Preiswerk family were clergymen, who shared Samuel's preoccupation with the occult. This Jung–Preiswerk mixture of medicine, theology, and spiritualism was to have its influence on Carl's intellectual development.

The family moved twice during Jung's childhood, first to Laufen, near the Falls of the Rhine, when he was six months old, and then to Klein-Hüningen, just outside Basel, when he was 4. Neither of the large vicarages which they inhabited provided a happy environment for a growing child. In his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung describes the home atmosphere as 'unbreathable': he says he was oppressed with a pervasive sense of death, melancholy, and unease, and with 'dim intimations of trouble' between his parents. He tells us that they did not share the same bedroom and that he, Carl, slept with his father. When he was 3, his mother had a breakdown for which she had to spend several months in hospital, and this enforced separation at a critical stage in his development seems to have affected Jung for the rest of his life. This is not an unlikely consequence, for, as has been well

established by John Bowlby and his followers, the despair displayed by young children on loss of their mother is a normal response to frustration of their absolute need for her presence. Should this disaster occur, children usually manage to survive, it is true, but at the cost of developing a defensive attitude of emotional detachment, and by becoming self-absorbed and self-reliant to an unusual degree. Typically, they are left with lasting doubts about their capacity to elicit care and affection. They also tend to become odd and aloof in manner, which does not endear them to others. Although Carl was cared for by an aunt and a maid while his mother was away, he recalled being 'deeply troubled' by her absence: he suffered from nervous eczema and had terrifying dreams. 'From then on,' he says, 'I always felt mistrustful when the word "love" was spoken. The feeling I associated with "woman" was for a long time that of innate unreliability' (*MDR* 23).

Jung's father was a kind, tolerant man, but his son experienced him as powerless, and emotionally immature. Quite early in his ministry, Paul Jung seems to have lost his faith, but, lacking any alternative source of income, felt compelled to persevere with his parish duties. The strain of keeping up the appearance of piety while lacking all religious conviction helped to turn him into a querulous hypochondriac whom it was difficult for his wife and son to love or respect.

An only child until his sister Gertrud was born in 1884, Carl was unhappy at school, feeling alienated both from his companions and from his inner self: his rather schizoid (i.e. withdrawn, aloof, and self-absorbed) manner made him unpopular, and the school environment was one in which he just could not flourish. A sense of personal singularity was aggravated by traumatic incidents, as when a master accused him of plagiarizing an essay which he had composed with immense care. When he protested his innocence, his schoolmates sided with the master. Such experiences made him feel 'branded' and utterly alone. For a long period he dropped out altogether, having developed a proneness to fainting attacks after a blow on the head when knocked over by another



3. Jung's parents in 1876

boy. (As he lay on the ground, much longer than necessary, he thought to himself, 'Now you won't have to go to school any more.') He spent as much time as he could on his own. 'I remained alone with my thoughts. On the whole I liked that best. I played alone, daydreamed or strolled in the woods alone, and had a secret world of my own' (*MDR* 58).

This secret world compensated for his isolation. The fantasies and rituals common to childhood assumed a heightened intensity for him, and they influenced the rest of his life. For example, his adult delight in studying alone in a tower he built for himself at Bollingen on the upper lake of Zürich was anticipated by a childhood ritual in which he kept a carved manikin in a pencil box hidden away on a beam in the vicarage attic. From time to time, he visited the manikin and presented him with scrolls written in a secret language to provide him with a library in the fastness of his attic retreat. This gave Carl a feeling of 'newly won security' which sustained him through his father's irritable moods, his mother's depressive invalidism, and his 'alienation' at school. 'No one could discover my secret and destroy it. I felt safe, and the tormenting sense of being at odds with myself was gone' (*MDR* 34).

Another childhood ritual prepared him for his later insights into the importance of *projection* in psychology. It was an imaginative game which he played as he sat on a large stone in the garden. He would intone, 'I am sitting on top of this stone and it is underneath.' Immediately, the stone would reply, 'I am lying here on this slope and he is sitting on top of me.' Then he would ask himself, 'Am I the one who is sitting on the stone, or am I the stone on which *he* is sitting?' This left him with 'a feeling of curious and fascinating darkness', but he knew that his secret relationship with the stone held some unfathomable significance (*MDR* 33). In this game we can trace the origins of Jung's mature insight into the mysteries of alchemy – that the alchemists had *projected* the contents of their own psyches into the materials on which they worked in their laboratories.

Jung's adult delight in solitude, his alchemical studies, and his research into the dynamics of psychic transformation were also foreshadowed in an adolescent fantasy which entertained him as he walked each day from the vicarage at Klein-Hüningen to the school he attended in Basel. It was a vision of an ideal world in which everything would be better than it was. There would be no school and life could be arranged exactly as he wished. On a rock rising out of a lake sat a well-fortified castle with a tall keep, a watchtower, surrounded by a small medieval city, ruled by a council of elders. The castle was Carl's home. Here he lived as Justice of the Peace, emerging only occasionally 'to hold court'. In the harbour lay his personal two-masted schooner, armed with an array of small cannon.

The crux of the fantasy was the keep: it contained a wonderful secret of which Carl was the sole possessor. Inside the tower, extending from the battlements down to the vaulted cellar, was a copper column as thick as a man's arm: at the top were fine branches or filaments extending into the air. These extracted a 'spiritual essence' from the atmosphere which the copper column drew down into the cellar, where there was a laboratory in which he transformed the airy substance into gold. 'This was certainly no mere conjuring trick, but a venerable and vitally important secret of nature which had come to me I know not how and which I had to conceal not only from the council of elders but, in a sense, also from myself' (*MDR* 87).

The need to create a citadel in which to hide from the world is characteristic of people with a schizoid disposition. Young Carl's castle was defensively fortified and only tenuously connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus cut through by a broad canal, with a drawbridge over it. Later, he began building model castles, surrounded by fortified emplacements, and he spent hours studying the virtually impregnable fortifications of Vauban.

Within the security of his inner citadel Carl experienced himself as made

up of two separate personalities, which he referred to as 'No. 1' and 'No. 2' respectively. No. 1 was the son of his parents who went to school and coped with life as well as he could, while No. 2 was much older, remote from the world of human society, but close to nature and animals, to dreams, and to God. He conceived No. 2 as 'having no definable character at all – born, living, dead, everything in one, a total vision of life' (*MDR* 92). As a psychiatrist he came to understand that these two personalities were not unique to himself but present in everyone. However, he acknowledged that he was apparently more aware of them than most, particularly of No. 2. 'In my life No. 2 has been of prime importance, and I have always tried to make room for anything that wanted to come from within' (*MDR* 55). Much later he was to rename these two personalities the ego and the Self and to maintain that the play and counter-play between them constitutes the central dynamic of personality development.

He believed that his No. 2 personality conferred on him a privilege denied to his unfortunate father, namely, direct access to the mind of God. This was confirmed for him by the revelatory nature of his dreams, which contained images (such as that of an underground phallic deity which occurred when he was only 3) which he knew must derive from a source beyond himself, and by a powerful vision, which he struggled unsuccessfully to resist, of the Almighty seated on a golden throne defecating on the roof of Basel Cathedral (which signified to him, not unreasonably, that God had scant respect for His Church). Such revelations made him intolerant of his father's spiritual perplexity and gave rise to heated discussions between them. Whenever Carl tackled him with religious questions the pastor became irritable and defensive: 'You always want to *think*,' he complained. 'One ought not to think, but *believe*.' The boy reflected inwardly, 'No, one must experience and *know*!' But aloud he said, 'Give me this belief.' Whereupon his father merely shrugged and turned away.

Matters came to a head with Carl's confirmation, for which his father

prepared him. He reached the pinnacle of religious initiation and was appalled to find that he experienced nothing whatsoever. An unbridgeable gulf opened between him and his father, for whom he felt 'a most vehement pity'. 'All at once I understood the tragedy of his profession and his life . . . I saw how hopelessly he was entrapped by the Church and its theological teaching . . . I now found myself cut off by the Church and from my father's and everybody else's faith' (*MDR* 64–5).

Whereas other boys in similar circumstances might have turned to their peers for support, Carl Jung, possessing no friends, turned inwards to embrace his 'No. 2', the Self. Throughout his adolescence he experienced the Self as God-like and the strength of his commitment to this internal 'other' took precedence over all outer relationships. He did not feel himself to be among people, but alone with God.

Inevitably, this confirmed him not in the Church but in his isolation: 'Other people all seemed to have totally different concerns. I felt completely alone with my certainties. More than ever I wanted someone to talk to, but nowhere did I find a point of contact . . . Why has no one had similar experiences to mine? I wondered . . . Why should I be the only one?' (*MDR* 71).

He cured himself of his fainting attacks when one day he overheard his father telling an acquaintance about his grave anxiety for his son's future. He returned to school and applied himself to his studies. Lacking all communication with like minds, he turned to literature, philosophy, and the history of religion. Heraclitus was to prove a lifelong favourite, as were Goethe and Meister Eckhart. He was much excited by Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, which, together with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, brought him such illumination that, he says, it revolutionized his attitude to the world and to life. In Goethe's *Faust* he found a legendary equivalent of his own No. 2 personality and this not only heightened his feeling of inner security but gave him, rather belatedly, a 'sense of belonging to the human community' (*MDR* 93).

Student years

Jung enrolled as a student at Basel University in 1895. It is characteristic of him that his decision to study natural science and medicine was determined not so much by his reading as by his dreams. Student life seems to have had a liberating effect on him, as did the premature death of his father at the age of 54, when Jung was only 21. ('He died in time for you,' his mother commented darkly.) 'I now began to display a tremendous appetite on all fronts. I knew what I wanted and went after it. I also became noticeably more accessible and communicative' (*MDR* 93).

One idea that Jung borrowed from Heraclitus was to be of crucial importance to him: the notion that all entities possess an inherent tendency to turn into their opposite. This tendency Heraclitus called *enantiodromia* (lit. 'running counter to'). Jung believed it to be characteristic of all dynamic systems, and saw the human family as a prime example: as children grow up, they display a propensity to compensate in their own lives for the failings of their parents. This tendency was particularly apparent in Jung himself, and his life may be understood in many ways as an effort to make good his father's deficiencies.

Whereas Paul Jung was spiritually timid, intellectually incurious, and inclined to accept dogma, showed signs of emotional immaturity, and ducked the major issues of his life, Carl, by contrast, was to display spiritual courage and intellectual rigour, resisted dogma wherever he encountered it, spent his life refining techniques for the development of the personality, and was disposed to confront all important issues head on, even when this meant courting unpopularity or disapproval.

The same compensatory propensity turned him into a lifelong gnostic (Greek, *gnostikos*, one who knows) – one dedicated to knowing the reality of the psyche through direct experience and personal revelation.

It was this quest for gnosis which led him to grant fundamental importance to his dreams, fantasies, and visions, to attempt to understand them through the study of literature, philosophy, and religion, and, ultimately, to adopt psychiatry as a career.

A crucial dream came shortly after he commenced his studies at Basel. He dreamt that it was night-time and he was making painful headway through dense fog against a mighty wind, his hands cupped round a tiny light, which threatened to go out at any moment. Feeling there was something behind him, he glanced backwards and saw that he was being followed by a gigantic black figure. He was terrified, but knew he would be all right as long as he could keep his little light flickering through the murky night and the wind. 'When I awoke,' he says, 'I realized at once that the figure was a "spectre of the Brocken", my own shadow on the swirling mists, brought into being by the little light I was carrying. I knew, too, that this little light was my consciousness, the only light I have. My own understanding is the sole treasure I possess, and the greatest' (*MDR* 93).

His dedication to scholarship, which was to remain with him all his life, became apparent in his student years, with the result that he qualified in the shortest possible time. Emerging from his social isolation, he joined the Basel branch of the Swiss student Zofingia Society, and began to discover his capacity to influence people through the force and originality of his ideas. Significantly, the title of the first paper he presented before the Society was 'On the Limits of the Exact Sciences' in which he attacked scientists for their inflexible materialism. In a later talk, he proposed that the soul, though immaterial and existing outside space and time, should nevertheless prove susceptible to empirical investigation through research into the phenomena of hypnotism, somnambulism, and mediumistic communication. His presentations drew large audiences and provoked lively discussion.

Determined to put his ideas to the test, he began while still a student to



4. Hélène Preiswerk

attend and record the seances of a young medium who was also a cousin, Hélène Preiswerk. His meticulously detailed observations collected over a period of two years subsequently formed the basis of his doctoral dissertation 'On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena' presented at Basel University in 1902.

His approach to this subject was influenced by an earlier study by Theodore Flournoy (1854–1920) of a medium called Catherine Muller (better known under her pseudonym, Helen Smith), who, in the trance state, gave details of her previous lives. Flournoy concluded that her utterances were 'romances of the subliminal imagination', and that they were evidence of the myth-making powers of the unconscious mind.

Two aspects of his cousin's performances particularly impressed Jung. One was how real her 'spirits' seemed to her: 'I see them before me,' she told him, 'I can touch them, I speak to them about everything I wish as naturally as I'm talking to you. They must be real' (*CW* I, para. 43). The other was the way in which a quite different, more dignified personality emerged when Hélène was in a trance. Her 'control' spirit, who said her name was 'Ivenes', spoke in perfect High German instead of Hélène's customary Basel dialect. Jung concluded that 'Ivenes' was the mature, adult personality that was developing in Hélène's unconscious. The seances provided a means through which this development could proceed.

The importance of this study for Jung was greater than the doctorate it earned him. In it we can detect the origins of two ideas which were to become central to the practice of analytical psychology: (1) that part-personalities or 'complexes' existing in the unconscious psyche can 'personate' in trances, dreams, and hallucinations, and (2) that the real work of personality development proceeds at the unconscious level.

These ideas, in turn, gave rise to (1) a therapeutic technique (*active*

imagination) and (2) a teleological concept (*individuation*): the notion that the goal of personal development is *wholeness*, i.e. to become as complete a human being as personal circumstances allow. We shall return to these issues later on.

Jung's decision to be a psychiatrist came towards the end of his medical studies when he dipped into Krafft-Ebing's *Textbook of Psychiatry*. The Preface alone had such an impact on him that his heart began to pound and he had to stand up to draw a deep breath. What excited him was Krafft-Ebing's description of the psychoses (major mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and severe manic-depression in which sufferers are deprived of their reason) as 'diseases of the personality' and his statement that books about psychiatry must, of necessity, be stamped with a subjective character.

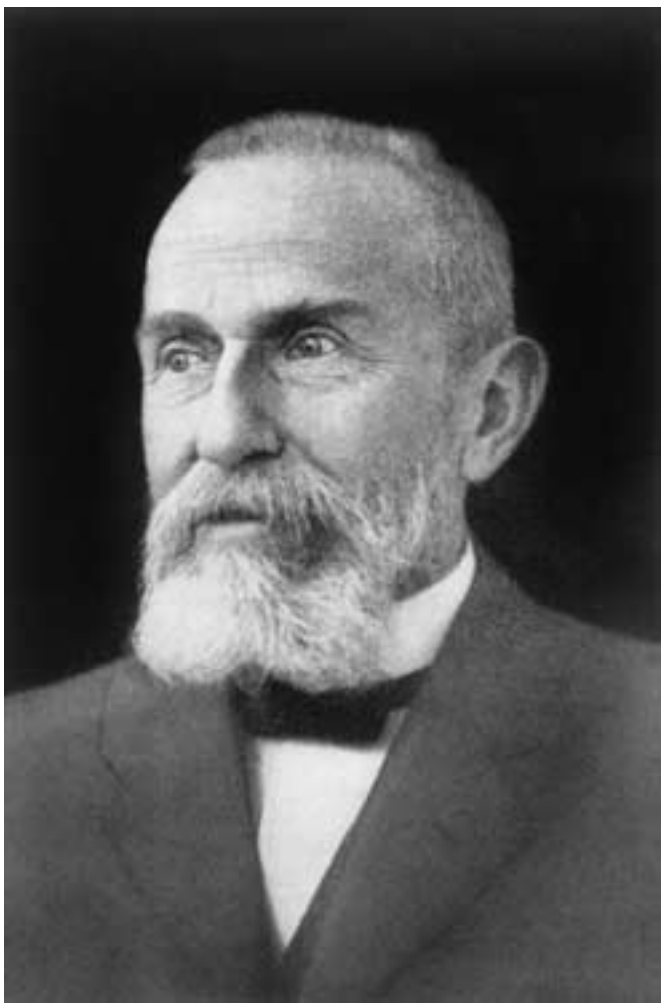
Jung tells us that 'in a flash of illumination' he saw psychiatry as the only possible profession: 'Here alone the two currents of my interest could flow together and in a united stream dig their own bed. Here was the empirical field common to biological and spiritual facts, which I had everywhere sought and nowhere found. Here at last was the place where the collision of nature and spirit became a reality' (*MDR* 111).

Years of apprenticeship

When Jung informed his tutors and fellow students that he proposed to specialize in psychiatry, they were shocked, for they felt he would be wasting his talents: psychiatry was the least respected speciality in medicine and they believed Jung could have a promising future as a physician. 'My old wound, the feeling of being an outsider, and of alienating others, began to ache again' (*MDR* 111). However, having obtained his medical degree with distinction at the end of 1900, he had the good fortune to be taken on to the staff of the Burghölzli Psychiatric Hospital in Zürich as an assistant to Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939), one of the outstanding psychiatrists of his time, and destined to enter history



5. The Burghölzli Mental Hospital



6. Eugen Bleuler

as the originator of the term schizophrenia. The Burghölzli enjoyed an excellent reputation as the Psychiatric Clinic of Zürich University and Jung regarded the years he spent there as an invaluable apprenticeship. Bleuler was quick to recognize Jung's brilliance and did much to advance his career, promoting him to be his deputy, making him head of the out-patient department, and arranging his appointment as lecturer in psychiatry and psychotherapy at Zürich University. More important still, Bleuler set him to work on Galton's word-association test. This research was to earn Jung considerable fame in the world of psychology as well as the friendship of Sigmund Freud.

The word-association test, with which all students of psychology are familiar, was devised by Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911) and developed by Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920). The procedure is simple. The experimenter reads out to the subject a series of words from a carefully prepared list, pausing after each word to allow the subject to respond with the first word that comes to mind. The response word is recorded together with the time, in seconds, taken to elicit the response. When all the words have been presented, the procedure is repeated, the subject being asked to respond with the same words as on the previous occasion.

One researcher who worked on the test before Jung, Theodor Ziehen, had already demonstrated that a prolonged reaction time occurred when a stimulus word was associated in the subject's mind with some disagreeable or disturbing idea. When all words resulting in delayed responses in a given subject were gathered together it was sometimes possible to detect in them a cluster of related ideas – what Ziehen called 'an emotionally charged complex of representations'. This finding particularly intrigued Jung because his work on Hélène Preiswerk's trances had already alerted him to the existence of part-personalities made up of dissociated unconscious components similar to those described as 'subconscious fixed ideas' by the French psychologist, Pierre Janet (1859–1947), under whom Jung studied briefly in Paris, on leave from the Burghölzli, in 1902. These Jung identified with Ziehen's

'complexes', and when he read Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) he recognized them again in the 'repressed wishes' and 'traumatic memories' which Freud held to be responsible for neurotic symptoms and for the content of dreams.

Jung says that dominating his research interests was one burning question: what actually takes place inside the mentally ill? Unlike the majority of psychiatrists before or since, he gave serious attention to what his schizophrenic patients actually said and did, and was able to demonstrate that their delusions, hallucinations, and gestures were not simply 'mad' but full of psychological meaning. For example, he discovered that one old lady, who had spent the fifty years of her incarceration in the Burghölzli making stitching movements as if she were sewing shoes, had been jilted by her lover just before she became ill: as Jung was able to discover, he was a cobbler.

Although Jung believed psychotic phenomena were associated with the presence of a biochemical toxin circulating in the patient's bloodstream, he nevertheless argued that schizophrenia could be understood in psychoanalytic terms as 'an introversion of libido' – the libido being withdrawn from the outer world of reality and invested in the inner world of myth-creation, fantasy, and dreams. The schizophrenic, he maintained, was a dreamer in a world awake. He published his observations in *The Psychology of Dementia Præcox* in 1907, which added to his already considerable reputation as a research psychiatrist.

Friendship with Freud

Realizing that his experimental findings provided objective support for Freud's theory of *repression*, Jung sent him a copy of his book *Studies in Word-Association* on its publication in 1906. Freud's enthusiastic response encouraged Jung to go to Vienna to meet him in March 1907. They got on so well that they talked without interruption for thirteen hours. There is no doubt that they were intellectually infatuated with



7. Sigmund Freud

one another and the friendship which blossomed between them, largely sustained by correspondence, lasted for nearly six years.

Like Bleuler, Freud was impressed by Jung's energy, enthusiasm, and commitment. He became powerfully attached to him, recognizing him as 'the ablest helper to have joined me thus far' and seeing him as his probable successor as leader of the psychoanalytic movement. Although Freud was only 50 when they met, he was something of a hypochondriac, and had a superstitious fear that he had only twelve years longer to live. Securing 'the succession' was thus a high priority for him, and, on the face of it, Jung was an excellent choice for the role. He had a first-rate mind, was a successful psychiatrist working at one of Europe's most respected hospitals, and, perhaps most important of all, he was not Viennese and he was not a Jew. Freud was acutely aware of the danger that anti-Semitism, associated with public disgust at his ideas on infantile sexuality, could result in the widespread rejection, or even suppression, of psychoanalysis, and he hoped that the adherence of a Swiss Christian of Jung's stature could help rescue his movement from this fate.

In addition, Jung was able to make significant contributions to psychoanalytic theory and practice. Not only did his word-association experiments provide hard empirical evidence for the existence and power of unconscious complexes, but his work with schizophrenics carried psychoanalytic concepts into areas beyond Freud's reach. (Freud trained as a neurologist and had little psychiatric experience, having worked only briefly as a *locum tenens* in a mental hospital.) Moreover, Jung infected Freud with his enthusiasm for the study of mythology and comparative religion, though with potentially disastrous consequences, for the conclusions that both men drew from these studies were explosively at variance with one another.

On Jung's side, the desire for Freud's friendship was as much personal as professional. In the older, more experienced man, he found a mentor – a



8. International Psychoanalytic Congress, 1911. Jung, centre in large bow tie, has Emma Jung in front of his left arm. Toni Wolff sits two away on Emma's left

distinguished colleague who represented the intellectually courageous father that his own father, the doubting theologian, was not. Both men understood this. 'Let me enjoy your friendship not as one between equals but as that of father and son,' wrote Jung soon after their first meeting. Freud responded at a later date by formally anointing Jung as his 'Son and Heir'; his 'Crown Prince'. In fact, Freud needed a 'son' no less than Jung needed a 'father', but the kind of son Freud wanted was one who would be willing to defer unconditionally to his authority and to perpetuate, without modification, the doctrines and principles of his rule. For his part, Jung needed a father-figure through whose influence he could overcome his adolescent misgivings and discover his own

masculine authority. Although Jung basked in Freud's approval and was flattered to be deemed a worthy successor to him, he knew that he could not endorse Freud's ideas in their entirety. Nor could he sacrifice his intellectual integrity to a set of dogmas in the way that his father had done. He nevertheless acquiesced in Freud's wish that he should serve as the first president of the International Psychoanalytic Association when it was set up in 1910, and as chief editor of the first psychoanalytic journal, the *Jahrbuch*.

As time passed, Jung's differences with Freud became harder to conceal. Two of Freud's basic assumptions were unacceptable to him: (1) that human motivation is exclusively sexual and (2) that the unconscious mind is entirely personal and peculiar to the individual. Jung found these and other aspects of Freud's thinking reductionist and too narrow. Instead of conceiving psychic energy (or *libido* as Freud called it) as wholly sexual, Jung preferred to think of it as a more generalized 'life force', of which sexuality was but one mode of expression. Moreover, beneath the personal unconscious of repressed wishes and traumatic memories, posited by Freud, Jung believed there lay a deeper and more important layer that he was to call the *collective unconscious*, which contained in *potentia* the entire psychic heritage of mankind. The existence of this ancient basis of the mind had first been hinted to him as a child when he realized that there were things in his dreams that came from somewhere beyond himself. Its existence was confirmed when he studied the delusions and hallucinations of schizophrenic patients and found them to contain symbols and images which also occurred in myths and fairy-tales all over the world. He concluded that there must exist a dynamic psychic substratum, common to all humanity, on the basis of which each individual builds his or her private experience of life.

Whenever he attempted to express these ideas to Freud, however, they were attributed either to youthful inexperience or to *resistance*. 'Don't deviate too far from me when you are really so close to me, for if you do,

we may one day be played off against one another,' Freud admonished him, adding: 'My inclination is to treat those colleagues who offer resistance exactly as we would treat patients in the same situation.' Jung was irked by such condescension, and it was inevitable, given the character of the two men, that a row would eventually break out between them. It was heralded in 1911 by the publication of the first part of Jung's *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* ('It is a risky business for an egg to be cleverer than the hen,' Jung wrote to Freud. 'Still what is in the egg must find the courage to creep out') and finally erupted in 1912 with publication of part two (in a letter to Freud Jung quoted Zarathustra: 'One repays a teacher badly if one remains only a pupil'). In this work, and in a series of lectures given in New York in September 1912, Jung spelt out the heretical view that libido was a much wider concept than Freud allowed and that it could appear in 'crystallized' form in the universal symbols or 'primordial images' apparent in the myths of humanity. Jung drew special attention to the myth of the hero, interpreting the recurrent theme of his fight with a dragon-monster as the struggle of the adolescent ego for deliverance from the mother. This led him to interpretations of the Oedipus complex and the incest taboo which were very different from those proposed by Freud. In Jung's view, a child became attached to his mother not because she was the object of incestuous passion, as Freud maintained, but because she was the provider of love and care – a view which anticipated the theoretical revolution wrought some forty years later by the British analyst and psychiatrist John Bowlby. Furthermore, Jung maintained that the incest taboo was primary: it existed a priori, and was not derived from the father's prohibition of the boy's lust for his mother, as Freud insisted. Oedipal longings, when they occurred, were the consequence of incest prohibition rather than its cause. Jung also argued that the Oedipus complex was not the universal phenomenon that Freud declared it to be.

In redefining libido as undifferentiated psychic energy Jung looked beyond psychology to parallels in physics, in particular to the theory of

the transformation of energy as proposed by Robert Mayer. All psychological phenomena, like all physical phenomena, Jung argued, are *manifestations of energy* and this gives symbols their dynamic transformative power. We shall give further consideration to this propensity in Chapter 5.

Publication of these views provoked a major rift with Freud which resulted in the formal termination of their relationship early in 1913. Jung resigned his presidency of the Association, his editorship of the *Jahrbuch*, and his lectureship at the University of Zürich, and withdrew from the psychoanalytic movement. Once again, he was entirely on his own.

The manner in which their friendship ended was typical of them both. To Jung, the purpose of life was to realize one's own potential, to follow one's own perception of the truth, and to become a whole person in one's own right. This was the goal of *individuation*, as he later called it. If he was to keep faith with himself, he *had* to go his own way: it would have been impossible for him to spend his life playing second fiddle in a two-man band. As for Freud, belief in the correctness of his own theories was absolute, and this made him so intolerant of dissent that he usually ended up provoking it. He was a strange amalgam of autocrat and masochist: as he once admitted to Jung, his emotional life demanded the existence of an intimate friend and a hated enemy, and, not infrequently, he encountered both in the same person. This pattern was apparent in his childhood relationship with his nephew John (who happened to be his own age), and in the friendship which supported him through his period of 'splendid isolation' (1894–9, when he was conducting his self-analysis and establishing the principles of psychoanalysis) with Wilhelm Fliess. Freud's friendship with Jung, the quarrel, and Jung's subsequent loss to psychoanalysis constituted but one of a number of such painful episodes. A similar fate overtook Freud's relationship with Breuer, Adler, Stekel, Meynert, Silberer, Tausk, and Wilhelm Reich. Reich



9. Carl and Emma Jung in 1903

developed a psychosis, from which he recovered only temporarily, while Silberer and Tausk eventually committed suicide. For Jung the consequences were almost as dire, for he fell into a protracted 'state of disorientation', at times verging on psychosis, which lasted four or five years. Although profoundly disturbing, this proved to be a period of intense creativity which Jung referred to as his 'confrontation with the unconscious', and it was triggered as much by upheavals in his domestic life as by the loss of his friendship with Freud.

Married life

In 1903 Jung had married Emma Rauschenbach (1882–1955), the daughter of a rich industrialist. Between 1904 and 1914 they had five children: four daughters and a son. At first they lived in a flat in the Burghölzli. Then in 1908 they moved into a handsome house which they designed and built beside the lake at Küsnacht, and there they remained for the rest of their lives.

Emma Jung was an attractive, elegant woman, who, with her husband's

encouragement, was destined to become a gifted analyst, lecturer, and author. She was an admirable wife and mother, and there can be no doubt that Jung loved her all his life. However, as he confessed to Freud, he recognized 'polygamous components' in himself, asserting that 'The pre-requisite of a good marriage, it seems to me, is the licence to be unfaithful' (*The Freud/Jung Letters*, 289; 30 January 1910).

Jung maintained that essentially two kinds of women are important for a man: on the one hand, he needs a wife to create his home, and to bear and rear his children; on the other, a *femme inspiratrice*, a spiritual companion, to share his fantasies and inspire his greatest works. This assertion probably resulted from a split in his own *anima* (the female complex in his unconscious) and the most likely explanation of this split derives from the period in his fourth year when, separated from his mother, he was looked after by a young maid from his father's parish. The latter made an indelible impression, and he still remembered her in his eighties:



10. Jung with his wife and four of his children in 1917

> She had black hair and an olive complexion, and was quite different from my mother. I can see her, even now, her hairline, her throat, with its darkly pigmented skin, and her ear. All this seemed to me very strange yet strangely familiar . . . This type of girl later became a component of my anima. The feeling of strangeness which she conveyed, and yet of having known her always, was a characteristic of that figure which later came to symbolize for me the whole essence of womanhood. (*MDR* 23)

This temporary nursemaid was the first embodiment of a maternal adjunct, the *femme inspiratrice*, the consolation of his lonely inner journeying. Although well content with Emma as a wife, his anima continued to demand the additional presence of a loving companion and confidante with whom to share his latest dreams and ideas. On at least two occasions this enticing figure was to present herself to him in the guise of a patient, briefly in the case of Sabina Spielrein (the first patient he treated successfully with Freud's methods) and, more lastingly, in Antonia Wolff, who became a lifelong intimate and colleague. In addition, Jung gathered round himself a number of female devotees (irreverently known to Zürich wits as the *Jungfrauen*), who came to Zürich to analyse and study with him and could seldom bring themselves to leave. It was as if the early separation from his mother had taught him that he could never trust the love of one woman and must always seek safety in numbers.

Understandably, Emma was not happy with this state of affairs, though with time, and out of necessity, she came to endure it. Jung's affair with Toni Wolff began sometime in 1910, and it caused a scandal when he insisted on bringing her, together with Emma, to the Weimar Conference of the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1911. There were bitter rows in which Jung resisted Emma's demands that he give up his extramarital relationship, insisting that Toni was far too important for him to do without her. Since there could be no question of a divorce, Emma must adjust to the situation and accept Toni as an indispensable part of his life. Emma appears to have given way to him as



11. Carl and Emma Jung in 1953

much out of fear for his sanity as a determination to preserve her marriage. Certainly it was a traumatic time for both of them, and it may well have been a precipitating cause of the prolonged psychic disturbance which began to afflict Jung towards the end of 1913.

Confrontation with the unconscious

This started with a horrifying vision that recurred during the autumn of 1913 in which he saw the whole of Northern Europe flooded by a sea of

blood. This was followed by dreams in which all Europe had been frozen by an Arctic wave and in which he shot and killed the Teutonic hero Siegfried as he rode past in a chariot. 'An incessant stream of fantasies had been released . . . I was living in a constant state of tension; often I felt as if gigantic blocks of stone were tumbling down upon me. One thunderstorm followed another' (*MDR* 170–1).

At times the disturbance was so severe as to bring him to the edge of madness. He played in his garden like a child, heard voices in his head, walked about holding conversations with imaginary figures, and, during one episode, believed his house to be crowded with the spirits of the dead. Yet it is a measure of his unusual qualities that he regarded this disaster *as if it were an experiment being performed on him*: a psychiatrist was having a breakdown, thus providing a golden opportunity for research. He could study the whole experience at first hand and then use it to help his patients.

> This idea – that I was committing myself to a dangerous enterprise not for myself alone, but also for the sake of my patients – helped me over several critical phases . . . It is, of course, ironical that I, a psychiatrist, should at almost every step in my experiment have run into the same psychic material which is the stuff of psychosis and is found in the insane. This is the fund of unconscious images which fatally confuse the mental patient. But it is also the matrix of a mythopoeic imagination which has vanished from our rational age. (*MDR* 172, 181)

The dream of killing Siegfried suggested to him that the conscious ideals embodied in this heroic figure with whom his No. 1 personality had identified itself were no longer appropriate and had to be sacrificed, 'for there are higher things than the ego's will, and to these one must bow' (*MDR* 174). He turned inwards to encounter his No. 2 personality and gave free rein to the powerful energies he found there.

> In order to seize hold of the fantasies, I frequently imagined a steep

> descent. I even made several attempts to get to the very bottom. The first time I reached, as it were, a depth of about a thousand feet; the next time I found myself at the edge of a cosmic abyss. It was like a voyage to the moon, or a descent into empty space. First came the image of a crater, and I had the feeling that I was in the land of the dead. The atmosphere was that of the other world. (*MDR* 174)

This method of seizing hold of the fantasies was much later used by him as a therapeutic technique in his analytic practice. He called it *active imagination*, and its discovery owed much to the example of his mediumistic cousin, Hélène Preiswerk. Going down the steep descent was akin to entering a state of trance during which unconscious personalities emerged with sufficient clarity for him to hold conversations with them. Essentially, what he had discovered was a knack – the knack of descending into the underworld, like Odysseus, Heracles, or Orpheus, while remaining fully conscious. Two of the figures he regularly encountered on these excursions were a beautiful young woman called Salome and an old man with a white beard and the wings of a kingfisher called Philemon. Jung came to see these as the embodiment of two archetypes – the eternal feminine and the wise old man.

His conversations with these figures brought him the crucial insight that things happen in the psyche that are not produced by conscious intention: they possess a life of their own.

> Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversations with him, and he said things which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I. He said I treated thoughts as if I generated them myself, but in his view thoughts were like animals in the forest, or people in a room, or birds in the air, and added, 'If you should see people in a room, you would not think that you had made those people, or that you were responsible for them.' It was he who taught me psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche. (*MDR* 176)



12. Philemon

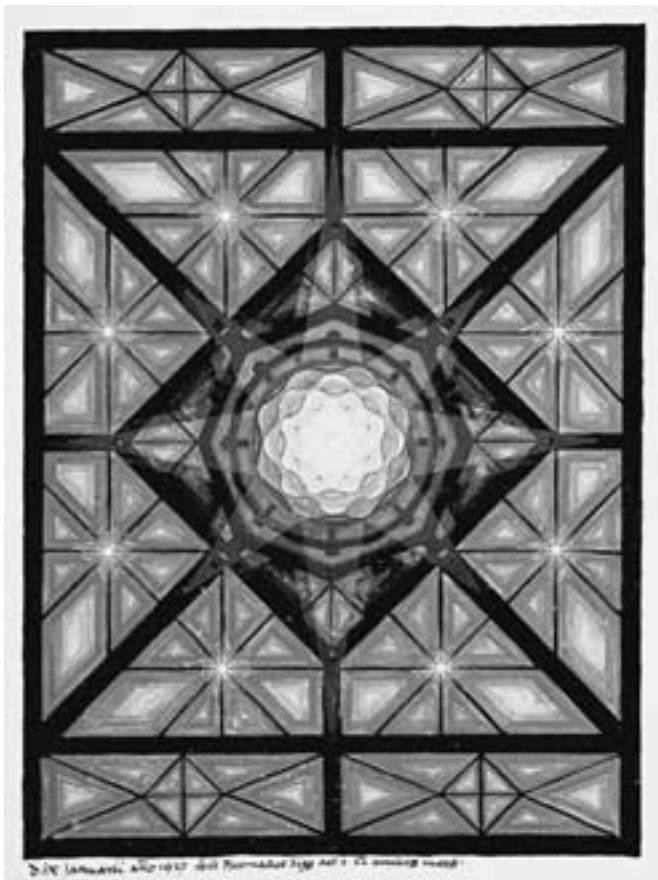
By 'the reality of the psyche' Jung meant that he understood the psyche to be an a priori fact of nature, an objective phenomenon which is irreducible to any factor other than itself. 'Psychic existence is the only category of existence of which we have *immediate* knowledge, since nothing can be known unless it first appears as a psychic image' (*CW* XI, para. 769). Like 'Ivenes' for Hélène, Philemon inhered Jung's own potential for maturity. 'At times he seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living personality. I went up and down the garden with him, and to me he was what the Indians call a guru' (*MDR* 176). Far from being destructive psychotic phenomena, these conversations with Philemon helped Jung to discover a new security. Having lost his outer

father-figures in the form of Bleuler and Freud and destroyed their heroic representative in the shape of Siegfried, he now found his own inner authority in Philemon. Moreover, Philemon was the first clear manifestation of the richly charismatic personality Jung was destined to become – the wise old man of Küsnacht.

That such experiences did not tip him over into a full-blown psychosis may well have been due to the attitude he adopted to them: he says that he took great care to record every detail of what occurred to him, first in what came to be known as the Black Book, consisting of six black-bound notebooks, the contents of which he later transferred to the Red Book, a folio volume bound in red leather, written in Gothic script, and embellished with illustrations.

One day while engaged in this work he heard a female voice say that what he was doing was not science but 'art'. He was intensely irritated by this and expostulated, 'No, it is not art! On the contrary, it is nature.' He resented the suggestion that he was engaged in an artistic activity because this would imply that his experiences were wilfully contrived and not the spontaneous eruptions from the unconscious that he took them to be. However, he reflected deeply on the existence of this inner woman who possessed the power to upset him, and concluded that she must be the personification of his soul. 'Later I came to see that this inner feminine figure plays a typical, or archetypal, role in the unconscious of a man, and I called her the "anima" ' (*MDR* 179).

The whole crisis resolved itself during the months immediately following the Armistice in 1918 when Jung served as the commandant of a camp for British internees. The duties were not onerous and he spent his mornings working on a series of spontaneous drawings which seemed to express his psychic state at the time. He subsequently realized that these drawings resembled ancient mandalas. Mandalas have been found all over the world and are primordial images of wholeness or totality. Although circular, they commonly incorporate



13. Jung's mandala, 'Window on Eternity'

some representation of quaternity, such as a cross or a square. The centre usually contains a reference to a deity. Jung began to understand these as representations of the Self, the central nucleus of the personality, which he sometimes referred to as the 'archetype of archetypes'. He found that his mandala drawings enabled him to give objective form to the psychic transformations that he underwent from day to day. 'I had a distinct feeling that they were something central, and in time I acquired through them a living conception of the Self' (*MDR* 187).

Finally, there was a dream which had an extraordinary impact on him. He found himself in Liverpool (lit. 'pool of life'), a city whose quarters were arranged radially about a square. In the centre was a round pool with a small island in the middle. The island blazed with sunlight while everything round it was obscured by rain, fog, smoke, and dimly lit darkness. On the island stood a single tree, a magnolia, in a shower of reddish blossoms. Although the tree stood in the sunlight, Jung felt that it was, at the same time, itself the source of light.

This seemed to sum up all he had been through, and to symbolize the point he had reached. 'When I parted from Freud, I knew that I was plunging into the unknown. Beyond Freud, after all, I knew nothing; but I had taken the step into darkness. When that happens, and then such a dream comes, one feels it as an act of grace' (*MDR* 190).

When they were over, he regarded the years of his 'experiment' as the most important of his life: 'in them everything essential was decided' (*MDR* 191). They determined the future course of his development and were to provide him with the basis of the psychotherapeutic discipline that bears his name. 'It all began then; the later details are only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious, and at first swamped me. It was *the prima materia* for a lifetime's work' (*MDR* 191).

Creative illness

There has been much discussion about what actually happened to Jung during this critical phase of his life. One of the most persuasive interpretations is that of Henri Ellenberger, who, in his encyclopaedic *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970), suggests that Jung underwent a form of 'creative illness' similar to that suffered by Freud at an identical period (i.e. between the ages of 38 and 43).

The illness is prone to strike after a time of intense intellectual activity and resembles a neurosis or, in severe cases, a psychosis. Still struggling with the issues that were a prelude to the condition, the sufferer grows convinced that he is beyond outside help, becomes socially isolated, and turns deeper into himself. The disturbance can last four or five years. When recovery sets in it occurs spontaneously, and is associated with euphoria and a transformation of the personality. The subject feels that he has gained insight into important truths and believes that he has a duty to share these with the world. Thus, Jung observed:

> there were things in the images which concerned not only myself but many others also. It was then that I ceased to belong to myself alone, ceased to have a right to do so. From then on my life belonged to the generality . . . It was then that I dedicated myself to the service of the psyche. I loved it and hated it, but it was my greatest wealth. (*MDR* 184)

Jung's experience was similar to that undergone by shamans and religious mystics, as well as some artists, writers, and philosophers. Examples include van Gogh, Strindberg, Nietzsche, Theodor Fechner (the founder of psychophysics), and the theosophist, Rudolph Steiner. Jung himself compared it to Odysseus' *Nekyia* (his visit to the Sojourn of the Dead) and it was prefigured in the fantasies of Miss Miller (which formed the basis of his book *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*) as much as by the trance performances of Hélène Preiswerk and Helen Smith. In Miss Miller's case, Jung has detected first a 'renunciation of the

world' (associated with an introversion and regression of libido) followed by an 'acceptance of the world' (associated with an extraversion of libido and a more mature adaptation to outer reality). The theme of the descent into the underworld and the return also occurs in the epic of Gilgamesh, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. But the most interesting parallel is, as we have already noted, the neurotic breakdown suffered by Freud in the 1890s which he cured with his own self-analysis, discovering in the process the basic principles of psychoanalysis – the use of free association and dream analysis, the role of sexuality in the aetiology of neurotic illnesses, the stages of libidinal development in childhood, the fixation and regression of libido, the repression of forbidden wishes, and so on.

On their recovery, both men published major and original books: Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* appeared in 1900 when he was 45, and Jung's *Psychological Types* in 1921 when he was 46. Thus it was that most of Freud's ideas were already developed and had become fixed before he met Jung, whilst most of Jung's were developed after he had found the courage to part company from Freud and suffer the consequences of his loss. If the six years of their friendship was a period of discovery and preparation for Jung, for Freud it was a time of retrenchment, during which he became increasingly intolerant of those who would revise his ideas, which for him had become matters of indisputable fact.

Gregory Bateson (*Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 1973) was not wrong when he described Jung's *Nekyia* as an *epistemological* crisis, during which he threw off Freud's reductionist theories and established the groundwork for his own. With the energy of one emerging from a creative illness, he returned to the study of myth, philosophy, and religion to find objective parallels to what he had experienced. *Psychological Types* was the fruit of this labour. In this book he began to organize his ideas about the structure and function of the psyche and to examine the basis of his differences (and Adler's differences) with Freud. He argued that in the

course of development people come to adopt habitual attitudes which determine their experience of life. From a wide-ranging review of cultural history he concluded that two fundamental psychological orientations are apparent, which he called *introverted* and *extraverted attitudes*. Introversion is characterized by an inward movement of interest away from the outer world to the inner world of the subject, extraversion by an outward movement of interest away from the subject to the outer realm of objective reality. Jung believed that his differences with Freud were due to his own introversion working in opposition to Freud's extraversion.

This explanation contains more than a grain of truth, but it did not give sufficient weight to other no less important factors. The men were products of very different backgrounds. Freud, an urban Jew, doted on as a child by a young and beautiful mother, was educated in a progressive tradition that led him naturally into science; while Jung, a rural Protestant, insecurely bonded to a depressed, sometimes absent, mother, was steeped in theology and Romantic idealism. Consequently, it is not surprising that Freud should be a sceptical empiricist and that he should believe in the universal significance of the Oedipus complex, while Jung retained a commitment to the life of the spirit and held that the Oedipus complex had no universal validity.

Another important distinction between them was Freud's habitual tendency to look backwards, which gave him a reductive concern with origins, and Jung's tendency to look forwards, which gave him an adaptive concern with goals. This distinction is apparent in their respective approaches to art as well as to mental illness. Jung came to the nub of the matter when rehearsing his differences with Freud in an article he wrote in 1920: 'Philosophical criticism has helped me to see that every psychology – my own included – has the character of a subjective confession,' he wrote. 'Even when I am dealing with empirical data, I am necessarily speaking about myself' (*CW* IV, para. 774). The same was true of Freud.

Individuation: the realization of the Self

For the rest of his life Jung was preoccupied with the dynamics of personal transformation and growth. He was one of the few psychologists in the twentieth century to maintain that development extends beyond childhood and adolescence through mid-life and into old age. It was this lifelong developmental process that he called *individuation*, and he believed that it could be brought to its highest fruition if one worked with and *confronted* the unconscious in the manner he had discovered in the course of his *Nekyia*.

What did he mean by confronting the unconscious? He experienced the unconscious as a living, numinous presence, the constant companion of every waking (and sleeping) moment. For him, the secret of life's meaning lay in relating to this daemonic power in such a way as to *know* it. To this secret the first sentence of his autobiography alerts us like a fanfare of trumpets: 'My life is the story of the self-realization of the unconscious.' How can we enable the unconscious to realize itself? By granting it freedom of expression and then examining what it has expressed. Thus, self-realization requires the psyche to turn round on itself and *confront* what it produces. In conducting this experiment Jung again experienced himself as split in two – between the conscious *subject*, who experienced, recorded, and struggled to survive, and the unconscious *other*, manifesting in the personalities and powers that forced themselves on him, demanding his attention and respect. Two consequences followed: a heightening of consciousness, and recognition of the psyche as a real, objective entity.

As it turned out he was a good advertisement for his own theories. Many have testified to the change that came over him as he entered middle age. The rather aloof, prickly young man gradually gave place to the wise, genial figure of his late maturity. Though never losing his taste for seclusion, he developed a talent for getting on with people in all walks of life, and those who came to consult or visit him were impressed



14. The Tower at Bollingen, 1956

as much by his courtesy and humour as by his wisdom and the quality of his mind. It was the degree of individuation achieved by him that drew people to Zürich from all over the world, that attracted millions when they saw him on television in old age, and which accounts for the interest that has grown in him since he died.

He never ceased to work with the unconscious or to pursue his research into the material he had collected during his 'confrontation'. In 1922 he purchased some land at Bollingen, beside the beautiful upper lake of Zürich, and here he built a simple tower, round which he was to construct additions at various times during the rest of his life, turning it into an architectural mandala. At the heart of this intimate complex of stone, he reserved a room which only he was allowed to enter and there he accomplished his most important work both on himself and on his Psychology. At the end of his life he wrote: 'At Bollingen I am in the midst of my true life, I am most deeply myself' (*MDR* 214). It was the fulfilment in actuality of his childhood fantasy of the castle keep with its secret laboratory.

One crucial event that occurred after his mid-life crisis was his 'discovery' of alchemy. This happened in 1927 when the sinologist Richard Wilhelm sent him a German translation of a Taoist alchemical treatise called *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, requesting that he should write a commentary on it. As he read it, Jung realized with mounting excitement that he had found a historical parallel to his own experience: here was the most extraordinary and unexpected confirmation of his insights into the meaning of the mandala, the circumambulation of the centre, and the phenomenology of the Self. 'That was the first event which broke through my isolation,' he wrote (*MDR* 189). He was struck by the extraordinary affinity he felt with this rich psychic material, coming as it did from a source so remote from himself, and it set in train the series of alchemical investigations which were to absorb much of the life that was left to him.

Two dreams prepared him for what was in store. In one he discovered a seventeenth-century library in a previously unknown annexe to his house; and in the other some gates clanged shut behind him, trapping him in the same century. Patiently he began to assemble one of the largest collections of alchemical texts in existence, and it became clear to him that the alchemists had used a secret language which they expressed in arcane symbols. At first he understood little of what they signified, but as he worked along philological lines, compiling an elaborate lexicon of key phrases and cross-references, 'the alchemical mode of expression gradually yielded up its meaning' (*MDR* 196).

In alchemy, Jung realized, he had found a precursor of his own Psychology. 'The experiences of the alchemists were, in a sense, my experiences, and their world my world. This was, of course, a momentous discovery: I had stumbled upon the historical counterpart of my psychology of the unconscious' (*MDR* 196). Hitherto, alchemy had been dismissed as no more than a crude anticipation of chemistry, but Jung believed that, in their efforts to turn base metals into gold, the alchemists were symbolically engaged in a process of psychic

transformation. In other words, alchemy was a metaphor for individuation.

Just as nature abhors a vacuum, so, in matters where one knows nothing, imagination will rush in to fill the void. Confronted by a field of ignorance, we project into it our own psychic activity and fill it up with meaning. Psychological *projection* tests make use of this propensity by inviting subjects to report what they see in ink blots or ambiguous figures. Leonardo da Vinci advocated a similar technique for inspiring landscapes by staring at wet patches on a wall. Jung was the first to recognize such practices as a useful means for studying otherwise inaccessible contents of the psyche: they enable us to become aware of new meanings arising from the unconscious by seeing them mirrored in outer reality; and this provides the key to one of the most valuable functions of art therapy. The alchemists, Jung realized, were, without knowing it, making use of the same mechanism: alchemy was an elaborate discipline based entirely upon the psychological phenomenon of *projection*.

Accounts of the stages through which the transformations of the alchemical opus progressed particularly fascinated Jung for he saw in them direct parallels to the stages of analysis. In the relationship between the alchemist and his female assistant, the *soror mystica*, Jung also detected an early model of the transference and counter-transference relationship which develops between the analyst and patient in the course of analytic treatment. The discovery that alchemical symbols occur spontaneously in dreams, even in those of a modern scientist, confirmed for him the validity of his insight that archetypal psychic factors determined alchemical symbolism, and he published a series of such dreams (provided by the physicist and Nobel Laureate, Wolfgang Pauli, 1900–58) in *Psychology and Alchemy* (*CW* XII).

These researches renewed his commitment to analysis, which he now conceived more as a means to produce personal growth than as a

technique for treating mental disorder, and he increasingly devoted his energy to teaching others, whether as pupils or patients, the same methods he had perfected during his own confrontation with the unconscious and which he had excavated in all their bizarre ambiguity from an occult science of the seventeenth century.

Ageing and growth

What distinguishes the Jungian approach to developmental psychology from virtually all others is the idea that even in old age we are growing towards realization of our full potential. This certainly appears to have been true of Jung himself. If, like so many of his European contemporaries, he had died during the First World War, we should have heard very little of him. As it was, his reputation flourished as he grew into old age. Not only were his most influential books published in the latter part of his life but his intellectual horizons continued to widen, as can be judged from the variety of subjects to which he turned his attention – synchronicity and flying saucers, for example, as well as psychotherapy, alchemy, the *I Ching*, and religion. For Jung, ageing was not a process of inexorable decline but a time for the progressive refinement of what is essential. 'The decisive question for a man is: is he related to something infinite or not?' (*MDR* 300). This insight was at the root of his life and his Psychology. The infinite, the eternal, the imperishable were ever present and imminent for him as the bedrock of reality, all the more fascinating for being hidden ('occult'). 'Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome,' he wrote. 'The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away – an ephemeral apparition . . . Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom that passes. The rhizome remains' (*MDR* 18). The great secret is to embody something essential in our lives. Then, undefeated by age, we can proceed with dignity and meaning, and, as the end approaches, be ready 'to die with life'. For the goal of old age is not senility, but wisdom.

The productive vitality of Jung's late maturity was heralded by a second 'creative illness'. Early in 1944, when he was 68, he suffered emboli in his heart and lungs which nearly killed him. As he lay in hospital he had a near-death experience in which he saw the earth from a thousand miles out in space. He felt he was detaching himself from the world and was resentful when his physician brought him back to life. Nevertheless, he made a full recovery, and threw himself into his writing which, for the next seventeen years, took precedence over all other activities. The illness seems to have carried a stage further the transition from his No. 1 to his No. 2 personality. This was confirmed for him by two dreams. In the first he saw a yogi, in lotus posture, deep in meditation. Jung realized that the yogi possessed his own face, and awoke in alarm. 'Aha, so he is the one who is meditating me,' he thought. 'He has a dream, and I am it.' In a second dream, which came much later, he experienced himself as the projection of an unknown flying object shaped like an old-fashioned magic lantern. He understood these dreams as showing that the unconscious is the generator of the empirical personality and that the Self assumes human shape in order to enter three-dimensional reality.

At the age of 82 he wrote:

> In the end, the only events of my life worth telling are those when the imperishable world erupted into this transitory one . . . All other memories of travels, people and my surroundings have paled beside these interior happenings . . . But my encounters with the 'other' reality, my bouts with the unconscious, are indelibly engraved on my memory. In that realm there has always been wealth in abundance, and everything else has lost importance by comparison. (*MDR* 18)

The major themes that preoccupied Jung up to the end of his life were the mystery of opposites, their division, their union, and their transcendence, and the cosmic significance of human consciousness. He recorded his reflections in three difficult and challenging books: *Aion*

(1951), *Answer to Job* (1952), and *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (1955–6). *Answer to Job*, the most accessible of these, brought him into conflict with theologians, for in it he denounced God for burdening humanity with responsibility for all that evil in the world while absolving Himself of all blame. This lack of self-awareness on the part of the Almighty, Jung argued, can only be corrected by human consciousness, and it explains why God found it necessary to incarnate Himself in man. 'That is the meaning of divine service, or the service that man can render to God, that light may emerge from the darkness, that the Creator may become conscious of His creation, and man conscious of himself' (*MDR* 312).

The germ of this insight came to him in 1925 on a visit to the Athai Plains in East Africa. With his travelling companions he stood on a hill looking down on the savannah stretching to the far horizon, gigantic herds of gazelle, antelope, gnu, zebra, and warthog grazing and moving forwards like slow rivers.

> There was scarcely any sound save the melancholy cry of a bird of prey. This was the stillness of the eternal beginning, the world as it had always been, in the state of non-being; for until then no one had been present to know that it was this world. I walked away from my companions until I had put them out of sight, and savoured the feeling of being entirely alone. There I was now, the first human being to recognize that this was the world, but who did not know that in this moment he had first really created it.
>
> There the cosmic meaning of consciousness became overwhelmingly clear to me. 'What nature leaves imperfect, the art perfects,' say the alchemists. Man, I, in an invisible act of creation put the stamp of perfection on the world by giving it objective existence . . . Now I knew what it was, and knew even more: that man is indispensable for the completion of creation; that, in fact, he himself is the second creator of the world, who alone has given to the world its objective existence –

> without which, unheard, unseen, silently eating, giving birth, dying, heads nodding through hundreds of millions of years, it would have gone on in the profoundest night of non-being down to its unknown end. Human consciousness created objective existence and meaning, and man found his indispensable place in the great process of being. (*MDR* 240–1)

Thus Jung's psychology became also a cosmology, for he saw the journey of personal development towards fuller consciousness as occurring in the context of eternity. The psyche, existing *sui generis* as an objective part of nature, is subject to the same laws that govern the universe and is itself the supreme fulfilment of those laws: through the miracle of consciousness, the human psyche provides the mirror in which Nature sees herself reflected.

In old age he had many premonitions of approaching death and what impressed him was the lack of fuss the unconscious makes about it. Indeed, death seemed to him to be a goal in itself, something to be welcomed. Thus, in one dream he saw 'the other Bollingen' bathed in a glow of light, and a voice told him that it was complete and ready to receive him. Looking back on his life he reflected, 'In my case it must have been a passionate urge to understanding that brought about my birth. For that is the strongest element in my nature' (*MDR* 297). This need to understand and to *know* kept him creatively alive well into his eighty-sixth year, when he suffered two strokes within a week of one another and died peacefully on 6 June 1961 at Küsnacht.