

# Jungian Psychology and Personal Correlations

## Part 6 of 7

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Somewhere Dr. Jung has noted that where Eastern man, in the sense of East Indian man, regards certain depth experiences as being metaphysical in nature, the Western psychologist, on the contrary, views it as psychological.<sup>1</sup> This brings up a matter of very profound importance that has several difficulties in it. We as individuals are psychological entities; there is no doubt about that. But we stand in relationship, apparently, to something that lies beyond our psychological experience. On one side, there is a supposed order which we call the mundane, and on the other side a supposed order which we call the metaphysical—and that these are domains which enclose us in some sense. There is a sense in which we can speak of ourselves as “this,” and that surrounding us there is a “that.” What is the relationship between the “this” and the “that”? As empiric individuals, we have a domain of consciousness within us which we may regard as essentially empiric. What relationship do the elements in that psychical field bear to a supposed or real beyond, either in the physical sense or the metaphysical? Now, when the Eastern man views certain types of experience of the supreme order as being representations from a metaphysical order which belongs to “that” rather than “this,” is he speaking in terms that are realistic or is he guilty of a misapprehension?

Let us consider. I have an experience when I look out of my window. I see a mountain which commonly is considered a portion of a 400 mile mountain range. I have that as a psychical fact in my private consciousness. Is there, however, a real mountain out there to which that psychical image corresponds? As I’ve read psychology in the West, the psychologists do not question the existence of a real world out there. They seem to assume that there is a world out beyond having various relationships and objects such as the mountains, the trees, the streams, the lakes, the cities, the continents, the oceans, and the stellar world beyond. These are accepted, so far as I know modern psychology, as real. In fact, one finds the term ‘reality’ as applying to this. And then there is the psychical domain in the individual who is aware of this reality, and there are the psychical relationships in it. Now, there is an order of experience that is very common to most human beings as it appears to us, and that is of a physical order which we have to take into account; that these relationships in the physical order are elements that are in common to all normal, sane human beings. When the relationship is not normally apprehended, then it is supposed that the individual is in a condition that may be classified as neurotic or psychotic; but with the normal individual there is a certain commonality of experience, psychically received, that is supposed to correspond to this external domain that is called reality.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Y. Evans-Wentz, ed., *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), xxix-xxxiv. See the audio recording, “Perception, Conception, and Introception,” part 1, for an extended quotation of this material.

This applies to the domain of ordinary psychical experience, but there are other psychical experiences of a rare and more or less supernal sort such as those which are related to that which Dr. Jung, at least, would call the *numen*. These experiences do as a matter of fact have an enormous influence upon the individuals who have them. It is on the basis of these experiences that our religions are developed and also our religious philosophies. Among these is the supreme experience of the *numen*. I have devised a term for this that I've tried to make as universal in its meaning as possible to give maximum possible comprehension through the term. I've called it the "transcendental component." This may be interpreted in various ways in the light of the religious prejudices of different religious groups. It would naturally be called by the Christian by the name of God, by the followers of Judaism by the name Yahweh, by those who follow Mohammed by the name Allah, by many in India by the name of Brahman, and by the Buddhist by some other more impersonal designation such as the Good Law, the Dharma, or the Root Consciousness. For any experience of this sort, I use the term 'transcendental component' as being as neutral, theologically considered, as possible. Now, this experience does exist. I am personally acquainted with it, and it is a fact of supreme importance to the individual who has such an experience. Now, the question arises, is there a metaphysical existence or reality corresponding to this experience? The answers to this question are various by various students of the subject, and I will outline these different answers.

At one extreme there is the solipsist who would say the psychological experience is all that there is, that there is no external world corresponding to the psychical *imagos* which we have. Thus, for instance, one may have the *imago* of a tree. He would say that is all there is; there is no external tree corresponding to it. And if one insists that he can prove that such a tree exists because he sees it; secondly, he can strike it with what we would call a stick and hear a sound; he can lay his tongue against it and get a taste; he can smell it and get an odor; he can push against it with his hand and get a kinesthetic impression. Now, every one of these items is only psychical. If by some subtle management of the psyche of an individual he were given all of these impressions, he would have the same equivalent experience even though there was no external tree. He'd say then that this psychical impression, or group of impressions, is all that there is; there is no external tree. And also with respect to the royal psychical experience which we call the experience of the transcendental component, it is only a psychical existence and there is no divinity, or ultimate, or transcendental reality corresponding to it. This is actually the solipsistic position. It is very difficult to try to annihilate it from any angle of logic. It is logically virtually impregnable. Schopenhauer recognized this and said the position of the solipsist was like that of a fort which could not be successfully assailed. But, he said, we can go around the fort and ignore it. Here, we handle this problem by means that are other than really logical, by our prejudices, if you please, by our preferences. We prefer to believe in the reality of our friends. We prefer to believe in the reality of the mountains of which we have *imagos*. We prefer to believe in a real world and act as though it really existed. But we are not able to prove that that is so. And the solipsist takes the same position with respect to the idea of a metaphysical existence. His position, I would say, is thoroughly logical; although, I would also say that I find it very unsatisfactory.

Now, we can take a second position in this form—and this seems to be the position maintained by most of our psychologists and our medical materialists—and that is that corresponding to the ordinary psychical *imagos* that belong to the world about us

in which apparently all creatures exist, as corresponding to a real existence that is out there, that is an authentic “that”; but concerning the royal *imagos*, the experience of the transcendental component, there is no real existence out there corresponding to it. This position is not logically consistent. Why give to the ordinary, humdrum, philistine type of psychic experience a correspondence with an objective reality while denying to the profounder experience an objective reality. It’s not logically consistent.

There is a third position which is represented very well by the standpoint of Sri Shankaracharya, namely, that corresponding to the ordinary sort of psychical *imagos* there is no corresponding objective reality; all that which we suppose to be out there and providing an environment for us is only *maya*, an illusion. It has no more reality than the snake that is seen in a rope. But that corresponding to our royal psychical experiences, the experiences that are deep within and highly moving, there is a real Brahman; and this is the sole reality, and the domain of our ordinary world experiences is only a *maya*, a somewhat which vanishes when one awakens to the reality of Brahman.

And there is finally the position that corresponding to both kinds of psychical experiences there is a corresponding reality, a corresponding “that,” which relates to “this”; that there is a real world, a real mundane, and also a real supermundane, or metaphysical order. This is the position maintained by Sri Aurobindo in his doctrine of universal realism.

Of these four positions, the first and the fourth are the most logically coherent and dependable. The other positions represent something like a prejudice in favor of the reality of one class of psychical *imagos* as against another class. For my part, if I were forced to make the choice between the point of view which is maintained by at least many of our Western psychologists, that there is a reality corresponding to our mundane psychical *imagos* but not a reality corresponding to our royal psychical *imagos*, on the one hand, and the standpoint of Shankara, and there were no other choice, I would most emphatically go along with Shankara. But here I must concede that on this point, Aurobindo seems to have the most consistent position and that there is at least a relative reality corresponding to our more mundane psychic images as well as corresponding to our royal psychic *imagos*.

At least some individuals among Western psychologists might say to a psychologically disturbed young man, go and drink some beer or eat Skittles, whatever Skittles may be; or he might say, go and find a fair and charming young maiden and then your problems will be resolved. But the Eastern sage would say, go seek for Brahman and then with the Realization of Brahman all your present problems and all future problems will be resolved. And this I know, he who has found Brahman will be far better prepared for that cataclysmic event which men call death than he who has merely solved his problems by drinking beer and eating skittles. I know that he who has found the transcendental component has found the value beyond all other values. I know that even though he lost all of the values that belong to the mundane in order to achieve this winning, the price would be small indeed. Yet I also know that he who has found the transcendental component can still return to the mundane order and deal with it on its own terms—perhaps even more effectively than before.

No doubt there are difficult passages in moving through this experience and making this return, but those passages can be surmounted. And when the transcendental component is realized, then the great problems that beggar this life are resolved. He knows that there is a meaning underlying all the experiences of life, and he knows that the journey is well worthwhile. This is the solution, and the only solution which is ultimately effective. Without the transcendental component, all here in this world is totally meaningless; and if there were no Realization of the transcendental component possible, death is preferable to life here, for he who has found the transcendental component knows full well that, relatively speaking, life here, by itself, is life in a sewer, but that beyond, in that transcendent realm, there is a rose garden of utter satisfaction. However, the sewer of outer life may be transformed and provide a fertilizer for the rose garden of the supernal.

Within the class of the medical practitioners upon the physical level, there is a subclass which has noted the fact that corresponding to outstanding religious experience, there may be a discernible deviation in the functioning of the physical body corresponding to the religious type of experience, and this particular subclass tends to view the significance of the religious experience as no more than the physical deviation in the functioning of the body. In other words, that the meaningful content of the experience is of no value at all, that the reality is a deviation in functioning. There is also a class, a subclass in the total class of psychological practitioners who view such apparently meaningful values as being no more than a particular psychical state.

Now, we will grant that in connection with any experience of a religious sort that gives to the one who has this experience a certain meaningful content, there very well may be a variation in the facts concerning the functioning of the physical body from that which is the norm in the case of the well-rounded mediocrity. And we also may grant that there is discernible a psychical deviation also corresponding to this religious content. Now, the medical materialist takes the position that the whole significance of the religious experience is no more than the physical or physiological event, that its meaning is summed up in that event. And the nothing-but psychologist does the same thing in a subtler sense.

Now, as William James has so well noted in his first chapter in the book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, we have here a confusion of two types of judgment. One is the existential judgment and the other is the judgment of meaning, or spiritual judgment. And the point which he has made so well in that chapter is that we do not derive the significance of the experience from our understanding of the physical or psychical event. The value of that experience is on the level of a judgment of meaning, or a spiritual judgment. This way of thinking by the medical materialist and the nothing-but psychologist is one that produces a great pejorative effect upon the value of the religious experience.

Now, if we regard that all states of meaningful value as being related to a physical functioning, or state of the body, or related to a psychical state, it would imply that the principle involved here applies not only to religious experience, or religious formulation, but to all forms of formulation: scientific, mathematical, and philosophical. In other words, corresponding to the development of a scientific theory on the physiological level, on the physical level of the physicist, or upon the mathematical level, and indeed upon

any other scientific level, is also correlated with physical body condition or with psychical state. To be consistent, the medical materialist and the nothing-but psychologist should apply the same pejorative thinking with respect to these interpretations, scientific and other, and say that the meaning of the scientific interpretation, for instance, is no more than the physiological or psychical state event. Typically, these classes of the medical materialist and the nothing-but psychologist do not take this position consistently, although logically they would be forced to do so.

We are willing to grant as plausible that corresponding to any meaningful content in consciousness such as a religious content, a philosophic content, a mathematical content, and an empiric scientific content, there may indeed be a discernible difference in the state of the body or the functioning of the body and in the psychical state of consciousness that corresponds to the meaningful content. But we most definitely assert that the value and significance of the meaningful state is not determined by the physical state or the psychical state, that it must be judged on its own level. Thus, if corresponding to a certain physical state and a certain psychical state a mathematician brings forth a theorem, the truth of the theorem is not determined by the state of the body or the psychical state even though they are atypical, and therefore regarded as abnormal, but is to be valued by the possibility of proving the theorem. The theorem is true if proven regardless of the state the mathematician was in physically and psychically at the time of discovery.

An example of this is afforded by an article written by Henry Poincare and published in the defunct *Monist* magazine. Henry Poincare, at the time of his life, had achieved the position of the world's leading mathematician. He also had an interest in the psychological side of creativity and he reported his experience in a case of a given problem which he was researching by an article covering his experience at that time. He said that he had been working upon a theorem that would prove the nonexistence of a certain kind of function, as I remember it. He had made no progress in achieving a determination after a period of several days work. Then on an occasion when he had eaten a meal in a cafe and had drunk more than a normal amount of coffee, then later as he was stepping into the cab, the solution of his problem flashed into his mind and he then very quickly developed the theorem. The solution proved to be the opposite of what he had expected. It was a proof to the effect that the given function could exist. Now, what was the relationship of the excessive amount of coffee to the proof? We ordinarily would say that it is entirely irrelevant, that the proven theorem stood on its own feet entirely independent of the physical or psychical state of the mathematician. But let us suppose that a dietetic fanatic were to judge the situation. He would probably say that the excessive drinking of coffee was a very bad dietetic practice, and that therefore he might conclude that the theorem was unsound.

Now, this imaginary situation, of course, is absurd. But I employ it to illustrate the point. No doubt the medical materialist or the nothing-but psychologist would not make such a ridiculous spectacle of himself in the case of the mathematician, but in dealing with religious genius, they do precisely this sort of thing. They judge the content of religious genius production as conditioned by the physical state and the psychical state in which the genius was at the time of his production. This is not consistent. To be sure, the mathematician can defend himself by the proof, and further,

as often happens, there may be a practical application in the mundane order that becomes possible because of the proven theorem, and it is impossible for the medical materialist or the nothing-but psychologist to deny this fact. But in the field of religious insight, there is not this clear proof on the mundane level; therefore, both of them tend to express their own personal prejudice in forming a interpretive judgment concerning the product of the religious genius. This is totally irrational, logically unsound, and essential inimical in its total effect.

How are we to judge the content of the production of religious genius? In general what religious genius proclaims is a presumptive truth concerning something that belongs to the supermundane, and is therefore not within the range of ordinary means of verification. William James suggests that for those who stand outside the circle of religious genius, the test is empiric. Does it result in a higher order of personal integrity upon the part of those who follow the leadership of religious genius? Do they exemplify in their lives a greater degree of peace, of happiness, of contentment, and of general inner harmony? These are empiric tests that are not based upon theoretical proof as in the case of mathematical genius. I rather think that William James' test here is the one valid one for those who are outside the circle of the genius itself. But for the genius itself, it may rest upon the source of the insight which they receive. It may come from the transcendental component with a clear, unambiguous authority for the one who is a religious genius himself, and that may be the ground of his affirmation. But he who is outside the circle of such genius is probably restricted to the test which William James has suggested. There is not here the positive proof which the mathematician can produce, nor the relatively determinant proof of the empiric scientist; therefore, it is a situation where we're dealing with something that is not highly determinant on this plane. We cannot exclude the factor of faith and confidence in that which lies beyond our present power of determination.

What is it that happens to an individual when he experiences the mystic or yogic breakthrough? I have used the figure of the relationship between the caterpillar and the butterfly to represent this. The caterpillar is a worm-like creature that crawls on surfaces. At a certain stage in its development it passes through a transition which might be called a kind of death when it becomes a chrysalis. Then after a passage of time there emerges from the chrysalis a winged creature which we call a butterfly. This winged creature has six legs as well as wings. Because it has six legs, it can crawl, or walk, on the surfaces that constituted the whole world of the caterpillar; but because it has wings, it can also fly in airy spaces, which was a feat totally impossible to the caterpillar. The period of the chrysalis corresponds to that which has been called the mystic death—a process of transition; a dying to one level of consciousness and being born again on another level of consciousness.

Now, in the case of these two states of the creature, we have naturally two psychologies. The psychology of the caterpillar would correspond to the psychology of the ordinary man in the world, the one who, if perfectly adjusted to worldly relationships, we would call the well-rounded mediocrity. The butterfly, on the other hand, has another kind of psychology. He is organized upon a different basis. This transition in an individual may cause psychological difficulties because there is a problem of readjustment. He no longer is governed exclusively by the psychological adjustments that

were completely valid for the caterpillar. Therefore there has to be a readjustment in the form that fits the psychology of the butterfly. And note the fact that though the butterfly is capable of flight, it also is capable of walking upon the surfaces that constituted the whole world of the caterpillar. He moves in a dimension of greater freedom, greater comprehension. And because he includes the capacity that was the whole world of the caterpillar, it would seem to follow that he has a broader and truer comprehension of that which is the ultimate truth of the domain of life and consciousness.

Difficulties in this transition there may be, but if the nothing-but psychologist objects because he deviates from the psychology of the caterpillar, that psychologist could do the butterfly who is not yet fully adjusted in his domain infinite harm. I am pleading for a wider psychological understanding. We're dealing with two domains of psychology, and the adjustments that were valid for the well-rounded mediocrity are no longer valid for him who has had the mystical or yogic awakening. We have here another example of the shift from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican point of view. What we need among our psychologists are those who have acquired the Copernican point of view.

There is another subject matter that has a relevance for our psychological problem. This consists of a certain statement made by Sri Aurobindo. Somewhere Sri Aurobindo has said that the All or the Ultimate has two statuses: one in the superconscient and the other in the subconscient. To correlate this I designed a symbol consisting of the following form. Imagine something in the shape of a horseshoe magnet. Consider this as standing in a vertical orientation; that the upper rod, or limb, of the magnet moves, say, from the right to the left in a connecting arc to the lower arm, also in horizontal position. Conceive of an unlimited plane connected with the upper arm of the magnet, and in a horizontal position; also a similar plane connected with the lower arm of the magnet, and also in a horizontal position. The lower plane represents the mundane order, or that which is earthy in its nature, and the upper plane represents the supermundane order. Between these two planes there is a space. Now, in the evolution, the psychical evolution of man, there comes a time when the attraction of the upper plane operates upon the human consciousness, and he's drawn upward in consciousness. If he is fully successful in the sense of the yogic ascent, he will reach the upper plane; but the vast majority of human beings are either unaffected by the attraction of the upper plane or they are only partly affected, and in that case, they tend to rise in consciousness. But if they are unable to rise sufficiently to attain correlation and union with the upper plane, they can fall.

Now, here is a—two different ways of viewing the problem of the individual who attempts to rise in consciousness. Certain psychologists would say that if a person rises in consciousness he must also return to the earthy or mundane base and never permit himself to ascend too far; otherwise he reaches a condition of psychical abnormality. There is another position that if the individual is sufficiently developed he may ascend until he establishes himself on the base of the upper plane. We may call the upper plane the sky, the lower plane the earth. If he succeeds in establishing himself on the foundation which would be represented by the sky, he has effected the supreme transition; otherwise, he would remain oriented to the earth, or the autochthonic, until he has attained a sufficient psychical evolution to effect the transition between the earth plane and the plane of the sky.

He who makes this ascension and establishes himself on the foundation of the sky does in the process face psychological problems of adjustment that may seem to be very much like the problems of the mass of human beings, but which are essentially very different. If, now, in the face of those problems he were to have an impact with the ordinary psychologist, the latter could easily do him infinite harm in dictating a policy of orienting to the earth consciousness—the consciousness that emerges from below. It may well be granted that most psychological problems are not of this sort and that many who are not yet ready who ascend too far do have need of reorienting themselves to an earthy base, and the treatment that would be valid for them could be positively deadly for the one who is able to make the full ascension and orient to a new foundation, namely, the foundation of the sky. This is the reason why I bring out this point. The psychologist, in such a case, could be the supreme enemy. On the other hand, if he understands what is involved here, he could furnish effective aid. But he would have to dismiss his orientation to earthy consciousness as being the foundation for all entities. It is possible through yoga for those who are prepared to make this ascent and establish a new foundation; although, in the process, there are undoubtedly many problems of adjustment.

He who has achieved the sky as his foundation has two possible courses of action of which we have knowledge. He can either withdraw completely from all relationship with earthy consciousness, and that would mean the *nirvanic* withdrawal; or he can take the course of action indicated by the Kwan-Yin vow, or by the instruction in *The Voice of the Silence*, and retain a relationship to those who still are dwelling within the limited zone of earthy consciousness. In that case, he reaches down to this consciousness, but no longer regards it as foundation. He lifts up. He does not require return to an earthy orientation, but the reverse. He helps in the process of rising in consciousness to that status which he himself has attained. Such an individual is a guest in the world. He is no longer a citizen of the world. And as a true guest, he abides by the rules that govern the lives of the citizens of the world, but they are not the rules that are valid for his own level of consciousness. Such a guest in the world has no need of the values which the world has to offer. He comes with the gold of a higher consciousness which he offers to those who are able and willing to receive. He seeks only their advance to the illumined state of consciousness.

In analytic psychology one finds the figure of an island rising out of the sea as representing the emergence of relative consciousness emerging from the unconscious. The islands may be of various sizes, and may even become continental in extent, but the sea is greater than all and it is always possible that the islands, and the continents even, could be ultimately submerged by the sea. In other words, that the unconscious is all-embracing, surrounding the relatively weak emergence of consciousness, in the case of the islands, and the stronger better established relative consciousness symbolized by the continents. But all are derived from the sea of the unconscious which lies below. He who has established his foundation in the sky finds it not so, but rather that beyond him and supporting him is a greater kind of consciousness—that which is called the superconscient. Here, the relative consciousness is not fed and sustained by an unconscious sea which lies below; but rather, is maintained by a descending rain of superconscient consciousness. This would change completely the figure of consciousness as an island rising out of a sea. This is a point which I suggest the analytic psychologist should bear in mind.