Man and his Symbols

conceived and edited by

Carl G. Jung

The first and only work in which **Carl G. Jung**, the world-famous Swiss psychologist, explains to the general reader his greatest contribution to our knowledge of the human mind: the theory of the importance of symbolism—particularly as revealed in dreams.

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But for a dream, this book would never have been written. That dream — described by John Freeman in the Foreword—convinced Jung that he could, indeed should, explain his ideas to those who have no special knowledge of psychology. At the age of eighty-three, Jung worked out the complete plan for this book, including the sections that he wished his four closest associates to write. He devoted the closing months of his life to editing the work and writing his own key section, which he completed only ten days before his death.

Throughout the book, Jung emphasizes that man can achieve wholeness only through a knowledge and acceptance of the unconscious—a knowledge acquired through dreams and their symbols. Every dream is a direct, personal, and meaningful communication to the dreamer—a communication that uses the symbols common to all mankind but uses them always in an entirely individual way, which can be interpreted only by an entirely individual "key."

(Continued on back flap)

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and M.-L. von Franz, Joseph L. Henderson, Jolande Jacobi, Aniela Jaffé

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Introduction: John Freeman

The origins of this book are sufficiently unusual to be of interest, and they bear a direct relation to its contents and what it sets out to do. So let me tell you just how it came to be written.

One day in the spring of 1959 the British Broadcasting Corporation invited me to interview for British television Dr. Carl Gustav Jung. The interview was to be done "in depth." I knew little enough at that time about Jung and his work, and I at once went to make his acquaintance at his beautiful lakeside home near Zurich. That was the beginning of a friendship that meant a great deal to me and, I hope, gave some pleasure to Jung in the last years of his life. The television interview has no further place in this story, except that it was accounted successful and that this book is by an odd combination of circumstances an end-product of that success.

One man who saw Jung on the screen was Wolfgang Foges, managing director of Aldus Books. Foges had been keenly interested in the development of modern psychology since his childhood, when he lived near the Freuds in Vienna. And as he watched Jung talking about his life and work and ideas, Foges suddenly reflected what a pity it was that, while the general outline of Freud's work was well known to educated readers all over the Western world, Jung had never managed to break through to the general public and was always considered too difficult for popular reading.

Foges, in fact, is the creator of *Man and his Symbols*. Having sensed from the TV screen that a warm personal relation existed between Jung and myself, he asked me whether I would join him in trying to persuade Jung to set out some of his more important and basic ideas in language and at a length that would be intelligible and interesting to non-specialist adult readers. I jumped at the idea and set off once more to Zurich, determined that I could convince Jung of the value and importance of such a work. Jung listened to me in his garden for two hours almost without interruption—and then said no. He said it in the nicest possible way, but with great firmness; he had never in the past tried to popularize his work, and he wasn't sure that he could successfully do so now; anyway, he was old and rather tired and not keen to take on such a long commitment about which he had so many doubts.

Jung's friends will all agree with me that he was a man of most positive decision. He would weigh up a problem with care and without

hurry; but when he did give his answer, it was usually final. I returned to London greatly disappointed, but convinced that Jung's refusal was the end of the matter. So it might have been, but for two intervening factors that I had not foreseen.

One was the pertinacity of Foges, who insisted on making one more approach to Jung before accepting defeat. The other was an event that, as I look back on it, still astonishes me.

The television program was, as I have said, an outstanding success. It brought Jung a great many letters from all sorts of people, many of them ordinary folk with no medical or psychological training, who had been captivated by the commanding presence, the humour, and the modest charm of this very great man, and who had glimpsed in his view of life and human personality something that could be helpful to them. And Jung was very pleased, not simply at getting letters (his mail was enormous at all times) but at getting them from people who would not normally have no contact with him.

It was at this moment that he dreamed a dream of the greatest importance to him. (And as you read this book, you will understand just how important that can be.) He dreamed that, instead of sitting in his study and talking to the great doctors and psychiatrists who used to call on him from all over the world, he was standing in a public place and addressing a multitude of people who were listening to him with rapt attention and *understanding what he said*.

When, a week or two later, Foges renewed his request that Jung should undertake a new book designed, not for the clinic or the philosopher's study, but for the people in the market place, Jung allowed himself to be persuaded. He laid down two conditions. First, that the book should not be a single-handed book, but the collective effort of himself and a group of his closest followers, through whom he had attempted to perpetuate his methods and his teaching. Secondly, that I should be entrusted with the task of co-ordinating the work and resolving any problems that might arise between the authors and the publishers.

Lest it should seem that this introduction transgresses the bounds of reasonable modesty, let me say at once that I was gratified by this second condition – but within measure. For it very soon came to my knowledge that Jung's reason for selecting me was essentially that he

regarded me as being of reasonable, but not exceptional, intelligence and without the slightest serious knowledge of psychology. Thus I was to Jung the "average reader" of this book: what I could understand would be intelligible to all who would be interested; what I boggled at might possibly be too difficult to obtain for some. Not unduly flattered by this estimate of my role, I have none the less scrupulously insisted (sometimes, I fear, to the exasperation of the authors) on having every paragraph written and, if necessary, rewritten to a degree of clarity and directness that enables me to say with confidence that this book in its entirety is designed for and addressed to the general reader, and that the complex subjects it deals with are treated with a rare and encouraging simplicity.

After much discussion, the comprehensive subject of this book was agreed to be Man and his Symbols; and Jung himself selected as his collaborators in the work Dr. Marie-Louise von Franz of Zurich, perhaps his closest professional confidante and friend; Dr. Joseph L. Henderson of San Francisco, one of the most prominent and trusted of American Jungians; Mrs. Aniela Jaffé of Zurich, who, in addition to being an experienced analyst, was Jung's confidential private secretary and his biographer; and Dr. Jolande Jacobi, who after Jung himself is the most experienced author among Jung's Zurich circle. These four people were chosen partly because of their skill and experience in the particular subjects allocated to them and partly because all of them were completely trusted by Jung to work unselfishly to his instructions as members of a team. Jung's personal responsibility was to plan the structure of the whole book, to supervise and direct the work of his collaborators, and himself to write the keynote chapter, "Approaching the Unconscious."

The last year of his life was devoted almost entirely to this book, and when he died in June 1961, his own section was complete. He finished it, in fact, only some 10 days before his final illness; and his colleagues' chapters had all been approved by him in draft. After his death, Dr. von Franz assumed over-all responsibility for the completion of the book in accordance with Jung's express instructions. The subject matter of *Man and his Symbols* and its outline were therefore laid down — and in detail — by Jung. The chapter that bears his name is his work and (apart from some fairly extensive editing to improve its intelligi-

bility to the general reader; nobody else's. It was written, incidentally, in English. The remaining chapters were written by the various authors to Jung's direction and under his supervision. The final editing of the complete work after Jung's death has been done by Dr. von Franz with a patience, understanding, and good humor that leave the publishers and myself greatly in her debt.

Finally as to the contents of the book itself.

Jung's thinking has colored the world of modern psychology more than many of those with casual knowledge realize. Such familiar terms, for instance, as "extravert," "introvert," and "archetype" are all Jungian concepts—borrowed and sometimes misused by others. But his overwhelming contribution to psychological understanding is his concept of the unconscious—not like the unconscious of Freud: merely a sort of glory-hole of repressed desires, but a world that is just as much a vital and real part of the life of an individual as the conscious, "cogitating" world of the ego, and infinitely wider and richer. The language and the "people" of the unconscious are symbols, and the means of communication dreams.

Thus an examination of Man and his Symbols is in effect an examination of man's relation to his own unconscious. And since in Jung's view the unconscious is the great guide, friend, and adviser of the conscious, this book is related in the most direct terms to the study of human beings and their spiritual problems. We know the unconscious and communicate with it "a two-way service" principally by dreams; and all through this book (above all in Jung's own chapter) you will find a quite remarkable emphasis placed on the importance of dreaming in the life of the individual.

It would be an impertinence on my part to attempt to interpret Jung's work to readers, many of whom will surely be far better qualified to understand it than I am. My sole, remember, was merely to serve as a sort of "intelligibility filter" and by no means as an interpreter. Nevertheless, I venture to offer two general points that seem important to me as a layman and that may possibly be helpful to other non-experts. The first is about dreams. To Jungians the dream is not a kind of standardized cryptogram that can be decoded by a glossary of symbol meanings. It is an integral, important, and personal expression of the individual unconscious. It is just as "real" as any other