



IN TWO VOLUMES • 2 • BOLLINGEN SERIES • XCIX • PRINCETON

VOLUME

*Notes of
the Seminar
Given in
1930–1934*

Edited by Claire Douglas

C. G. JUNG

VISIONS

NOTES OF THE SEMINAR

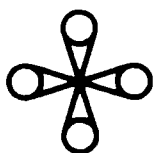
GIVEN IN 1930–1934 BY

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2



BOLLINGEN SERIES XCIX

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SPRING TERM

May / June 1932

LECTURE I

4 May 1932

Dr. Jung:

Ladies and Gentlemen: We shall continue to work at this long series of visions. Do you remember with what particular motif we were concerned at the end of our last seminar?

Mr. Allemann: It was the mandala motif.

Dr. Jung: In what form was that motif represented?

Mrs. Sawyer: The white city and the black city.

Dr. Jung: Yes, we had some time ago the symbol of the white city on top of the mountain, and here we have the black city that is below. This, we said, was according to the two recurring principles of Yang and Yin, which—I must explain to the new members—are terms in classical Chinese philosophy. They are simply contrasts, they represent the paradoxical nature of everything in existence. Also they represent the source of living energy; without these opposites nothing lives, nothing moves; contrast is the source of energy.

We have seen how the unconscious of our patient has moved from the Yang principle down into the Yin principle, from above to below, and this whole series of visions is chiefly concerned with the extraordinary difficulty of the transition from one leading principle to another. Always the leading idea of the conscious, or the leading religious or philosophical conviction, is the Yang, because it is light; it shines, it is differentiated, it appears on the surface of the earth, in the minds of men. And it is always contrasted—and counteracted—by the opposite, the shadow, darkness.

There is a clear demonstration of this fact in the Christian religion, which is much concerned with that tremendous difference between the light and the darkness; St. John, for instance, speaks of the light that shineth in darkness. The Persian Zoroastrian religion is based upon the opposition between the powers of light and the powers of darkness. And the same fundamental idea, the conflict between the light and the darkness, was taken up again in Manichaeism. We know very little of Mani-

chaeism as yet, but it was once a very powerful religion in the East, and it also reached far into the West. It was founded by Mani, a Persian, in the third century A.D. Recent German expeditions, the Turfan expedition in particular, have unearthed a number of Manichaeian remains in India; and a translation of a Manichaeian book into Chinese has been discovered, showing that those ideas were known as far East as China. In Central Asia Manichaeism was extirpated by Mohammedanism in about the ninth century. In the West it figured in the history of the church as an arch heresy, the height of everything evil and devilish, although it was a religion very much like Christianity. It even penetrated into France. The Albigenses, a Catharistic sect that flourished in southern France from the eleventh century until they were exterminated by the Crusades and the Inquisition two centuries later, were much influenced by Manichaeism. And it is interesting that those Manichaeian emissaries coming from the East were Bulgarians. A trace of them remains even now in the modern French word *bougre*,¹ which is derived from *Bulgar*; it was probably first used as a sort of curse, and it is still a derogatory term.

Our own time is characterized by a fully developed religious idea or philosophy, and this conscious system, our *Weltanschauung*, has also to deal with the darkness, it casts a tremendous shadow. And the shadow is growing; it shows itself on every side in the extraordinary development of the darker powers. One sees it in art, in social conditions, in all sorts of forms; the powers from below are trying to rise, and what has been above is descending. That is so in our psychology; of course we resist it, we are afraid of it, yet it is occurring. This process is evident in the visions of our patient. She is constantly fighting against something overpowering that comes from below. At times she falls into it, at times she escapes from it, but then it is only to go back to it again; after futile attempts to cling to the heights, she drops to the depths, deeper down into the underworld. So we have seen lately that the symbol of the white city, which is the culminating vision of Revelations, the culminating vision of fulfillment and accomplishment in the Christian *Weltanschauung*, is counteracted, quite overbalanced, by the black city below; and the symbol of the accomplishment, the mandala, appears now in the colors and forms of the abysmal things. That means a complete reversal, and one might conclude that when such a vision was reached she would be more or less caught in that inescapable law, that she would be forced to make up her mind to a revision of her attitude, or to seek a new attitude

¹ *bougre*: the word in French (and, as *bugger*, in English) for a sodomite; in slang usage, a humorous or abusive word for another man.

that would help her to adapt to this fall, this fact that could not be avoided. We come now to the next vision. She says:

I stood by the sea, looking toward the horizon. A ship appeared and came toward me.

The sea is always the symbol of the collective unconscious, and standing on the seashore is a symbolic situation which occurs often in dreams or visions, meaning that one is on the edge of the conscious world, as it were, looking into the limitless distance, or the uttermost depths of the ocean. The sea, the unconscious, looks like a mirror; one cannot penetrate into it, but one knows that its shining surface covers an immense depth containing all sorts of mysterious forms. And when standing there, she naturally expects something to happen or to appear; she is looking into the distance, or down into the sea, and that *looking*, psychologically, brings about the activation of the object. It is as if something were emanating from one's spiritual eye that evokes or activates the object of one's vision.

The English verb, to look at, does not convey this meaning, but the German *betrachten*, which is an equivalent, means also to make pregnant. *Trächtig* means to carry, to be big with young, pregnant, but it is used only for animals, not for human beings; a pregnant cow is a *trächtige Kuh*. So to look at or concentrate upon a thing, *betrachten*, gives the quality of being pregnant to the object. And if it is pregnant, then something is due to come out of it; it is alive, it produces, it multiplies. That is the case with any fantasy image; one concentrates upon it, and then finds that one has great difficulty in keeping the thing quiet. It gets restless, it shifts, something is added, or it multiplies itself; one fills it with living power, and it becomes pregnant.

Even human beings behave like that; if you stare hard at someone, he gets restless and begins to move. And you can *betrachten*, not by looking, but by putting your hands upon a thing, a table for instance, and if you have the quality of making things pregnant, the table moves. Or if you put your fingers on a glass, it moves away in circles, and the thing you have projected into it begins to talk; that is table-rapping, table-turning, the old trick. And if you put your hands on a human being—as if he were a table—he also begins to move. You can make people talk in a very strange way, or they move their legs and arms about. I have made such experiments and they are exceedingly funny. So if you want to know something from patients, you stare at them hard; then they assume that I know all about them, but I know nothing.

When our patient looks at the sea, then, something she has put into it

comes out of it. It is as if a sort of germ had been latent in the unconscious, which appears when she stares at it. Her conscious mind is an absolute blank, for the conscious things are done for, they are no longer particularly interesting. She simply looks into empty space—what is called the unconscious—and by staring at that void something begins to stir and out comes the ship. Now why just a ship? Why not an animal, a fish, or a sea serpent, or the old man from the bottom of the sea?

Mrs. Schlegel: The ship will bring something from another shore.

Dr. Jung: Yes, we must be quite naive about it. A ship is a hollow form that would naturally contain something. Therefore we may assume that it is here sent ashore to bring something. Now she says: "The sails of the ship were black and on each sail was a ring of gold." What dramatic moment does the black sail suggest?

Mrs. Baynes: Tristan waiting for Isolde.

Dr. Jung: Yes, and there the black sail was an evil portent: it meant death, Tristan's end, his waiting was in vain. It is the great love story; therefore "on each sail was a ring of gold"—a ring always means a union. We could go further and say it pointed to a mandala, but we must wait. She continues: "On the prow of the ship was a wooden image of a woman." Such a figurehead emphasizes the fact that the ship is female,—as a rule it is a woman's figure on the prow—and here it is a woman with dark sails. What does that point to?

Mrs. Baynes: The black anima, but she should not be having an anima.

Dr. Jung: In a man's case it would be a black anima; as a matter of fact that ship was bringing Isolde, Tristan's anima, only the black sails concealed her. But in this case, as a woman is not supposed to have an anima, it would be the shadow part of our patient. Now the ship would naturally come from the unconscious, because the black city in the vision before meant the black self in the depths, and no sooner does she look into the unconscious than she sees that ship looming up.

The ship grounded on the beach beside me and I climbed up into it. There was no one to be seen.

She is obviously in the situation of Tristan, and if Isolde had reached Tristan in time, she would have taken him with her in her ship. So this woman is almost in the place of the man, and since she is acting the part, her animus is not present. And that she climbs into the ship with the black sails means that she accepts the shadow form. She is like Kuan Yin, the goddess of kindness, who took on the form of an evil spirit herself in order not to frighten the devils when she went down to comfort them in hell. Now there is no one to be seen on that ship, it seems to be entirely

empty, evidently she is the only content. She continues: "I descended into the ship and entered a room hung with blue." What does this descent mean?

Mrs. Fierz: She goes again into the lower parts of her body, so to speak.

Dr. Jung: Yes, she enters the heart of darkness. That is a speech metaphor in the *I Ching*, in the hexagram about overcoming the darkness; when the Yin has reached its greatest power, the *enantiodromia* begins and Yang appears again. Here she descends into the belly of the ship, and enters a room hung with blue. What would that indicate?

Mrs. Crowley: It would be the Yang, having to do with the sky.

Dr. Jung: It is on the Yang side, but it is not exactly the Yang, because the Yang would be a positive light, not a color. What is the reason for the blue color of the sky?

Mrs. Baynes: It comes from the thick layers of air.

Dr. Jung: Yes, layers of air are always blue like the water, so this blue refers to air or to water, and therefore it symbolizes intuition or mind or spirit, anything more-or-less mental as opposed to hard, heavy matter. All the lighter forms of matter, like gases or vapors or water, symbolize the more spiritual side of nature. Therefore in alchemy the volatile substance, the essence, that rises into the alembic from the heavy dense body heated in the retort, was called the *spiritus*. The original meaning of the word *spiritus* was breath, one that has spirit; the spirit was a subtle body, or a puff of wind, a breath of air. So the blue refers to something spiritual in the large sense of the original word. But descending into the heart of darkness would mean going down into blackness, matter, into everything that is a contrast to the light, where one would not expect to find anything particularly spiritual. How do you explain the presence of a blue room down there?

Mrs. Crowley: It would be like the Yang and the Yin again, in the *Tai-gi-tu*.

Dr. Jung: Yes, like that symbol of the two fishlike forms, the white fish with the black eye and the black fish with the white eye. In the center of the fully developed Yin is that one point which is the germ of the Yang. When the day is at its height, at full noon, the germ of darkness appears; as at midnight the germ of the new day is already underway. She enters that room, which is the germ of the new light, and she says: "In the center of the room was a white fur rug on which lay a snake coiled up." The center of the room means its very essence, and there is the white rug. Why not an ordinary carpet? And why just fur?

Mrs. Crowley: The fur belonged to an animal, and a carpet would have been made by man.

Dr. Jung: It is not a living animal, it is a prepared animal skin. What is your fantasy about it?

Mrs. Baynes: A polar bear!

Mrs. Fierz: One could say in German that it is *abgezogen*.

Dr. Jung: Yes, it is an abstract animal because the skin is pulled off, it is detached. *Abgezogen* means something pulled off, but it also means something distilled, or abstracted.

Mrs. Sawyer: Could it be the sacrificed animal?

Dr. Jung: Well, it is an animal that has been denaturalized, it has been flayed. But flaying was part of a famous sacrificial rite. You Americans should know that.

Mrs. Baynes: In Mexico?

Dr. Jung: In Mexico they flayed a criminal every year, and the priest then got into the skin of the flayed victim, thus representing the god. The symbolical meaning is that man must be denaturalized in order to attain to the god. In all religions there is the same idea of the denaturalization of man in favor of the god, that the god may be born in man, or in witness of his power, his light. One could say that monasteries were great flaying institutions, and the practices of the Christian hermits were efforts to get out of their old skins, as if they were caterpillars that by flaying themselves would become butterflies. It is like laying off the old Adam and putting on Christ, as St. Paul says. Or it is like the Negro idea of how death first appeared on earth. They thought that human beings were originally like snakes that shed their skins once a year and thereby got a new skin, a new life; but once an old woman became somewhat distracted and put on the old skin again, and so death came into the world. The idea of flaying is really archetypal, so the fur rug probably refers to the animal that has been flayed, meaning the animal consciousness that has been transformed into a detached consciousness. Now an animal consciousness is an instinctive consciousness, therefore compulsory, a consciousness which is always dependent, always in *participation mystique* with circumstances—like a person who cannot imagine anything which is not just under his nose, for instance, who cannot think hypothetically or make assumptions, cannot say what he would do “if.”

That someone was able to think, “how would it be *if*” was the beginning of all human invention. Even in Roman times they could not do that; the old Romans never discovered a steam engine, for instance, simply because they could not think “how it would be if”; they could not abstract their minds from the mere funny or beautiful aspect of things. They had a complete knowledge of everything which would have enabled them to construct a steam engine; as a matter of fact, they did

have a sort of steam engine, a plaything that was called Heron's Ball, but they simply thought it was amusing, they stopped at that. It was built by Heron, a physicist from Alexandria;² he really invented a steam engine, yet it was only a curio, they played with it. So when Galvani³ saw the frogs' legs jumping, which the cook had hung up on wires that occasionally touched, he might have said, how funny, and everyone else would have thought it was funny, and repeated it forever. But Galvani was a man who had achieved an abstract consciousness, who said to himself, "What would it be *if*?" So he succeeded in constructing the first apparatus for generating electricity. But the Romans did not do that. And of course primitives could not do it, which accounts for the fact that all primitive civilizations are so exceedingly conservative. For a hundred thousand years nothing new happened, absolutely nothing. But the moment man reached the point where he asked himself, "how would it be *if*," in that moment his thoughts became detached, thus far he was liberated from *participation mystique*, and so he began to experiment. Civilization is the result of this process of detachment in the individual life, the development of consciousness, and that process is going on. All progress in human life, every improvement in insight and understanding, is a progress in conscious development: one is more conscious, more aware, one can imagine things which are not, one is detached from facts. One can invent *beyond* the actual possibilities because one can imagine "how it would be *if*."

For instance, suppose there were an epidemic of typhoid fever. After a while someone says, how strange that we have the epidemic always in this district and never in another. Then people go on saying that for three or four hundred years, until one fellow comes along and says there must be a reason for it. He realizes it, he becomes aware of it; he says, *if* it always starts in this particular district, there must be some reason. And then he discovers the fact that there is a particular pipeline that is infected. He is a being with a detached abstract consciousness, who can draw a conclusion in an empty space; he sees no other bank on the other side, but he knows that it must be there. Or perhaps there is a certain place in a town where a street accident occurs, and the next day again an accident, and in a week another, always on the same spot; then people begin to say it is odd that it always happens just there. But nobody yet thinks that there

² Heron (285-222 B.C.), Alexandrian mathematician and inventor who explained the functioning of steam engines, fountains, fire engines, and other devices driven by compressed water, steam, or air.

³ Luigi Galvani (1737-1798), Italian physician and professor of anatomy who conducted experiments on frogs and electricity in his laboratory at the University of Bologna.

must be a definite psychological reason. As a rule we are so much in *participation mystique* with things that we don't see the reason. Such things happen all the time in our psychology, but nobody draws a conclusion. The most we can do is to wonder. Nobody pays attention because nobody is aware that there is a principle behind the whole thing, so a very serious thing is perhaps taken for a long time very lightly.

Now here our patient is about to discover something which has hitherto operated entirely in the darkness, something which would explain a great deal. That is the snake on the fur rug. There is something quite new here. You see the center would naturally be the Yang principle, and here the Yang center is represented by the Yin; the snake seems quite obviously to be the Yin, yet it is now in the place of the Yang, the eye of darkness. How is that possible?

Mrs. Sawyer: The snake is also the two ways, going back and forth.

Dr. Jung: Well, the snake is the thing that is in the unconscious because the snake is quite cold-blooded; the localization of that symbol would be somewhere in the lower spine, and that is profoundly unconscious. Usually, on account of the fact that the snake personifies darkness, we assume that it always means Yin, but here we see that that is not necessarily so, the Yang can be Yin too. That is an absolutely new idea—not to our abstract and intellectual mind with which we can think anything; but as an experience, it is a new idea that philosophical thought, which to us is entirely bright and shining, could in the unconscious darkness be a snake. The Yang principle is perfectly known to us as the bright day where everything is clear and self-evident, and that in the darkness this very same thing could be a demon of the underworld is unheard of, but that is practically what is shown in this form.

I have seen many people who in the beginning of analysis took the unconscious, their dreams, for instance, as a sort of imagination that happened, but that *au fond* meant nothing. They admit that one can, of course, come to certain conclusions; a wish has been repressed from consciousness, for instance, but that is only a sort of negligence, something fell under the table and disappeared in the rubbish heap. But according to their point of view, it is quite excluded that the unconscious could produce anything serious, like a conscious thought. They are astonished when they discover that the unconscious can say something of its own, something very substantial which they didn't know and have never even heard of before. It may be a very small thing: whilst writing a fantasy, a picture may suddenly present itself, for instance, or a voice may break in saying something unexpected. That is usually the turning point, the experience that gets them; then they realize that the

unconscious has really an activity of its own, that it is not just subjective activity, but something like an independent object standing against them and able to influence them. Until that happens they take psychological phenomena as a more or less subjective play of representations, all of conscious origin. But from such an experience they discover the Yang in the Yin, which is an extraordinary spiritual experience, one might say, because it demonstrates in an absolutely irrefutable way—of course not objectively but subjectively—the fact that something psychical within one is alive, and it is not “I,” but *it*.

Dr. Reichstein: I do not understand why you call this the discovery of the Yang in the Yin here. It seems to me that it is only that both are in the unconscious.

Dr. Jung: But the general prejudice is that all our thoughts start in consciousness, that they are made.

Dr. Reichstein: But it is quite evident that they are not.

Dr. Jung: To you!

Dr. Reichstein: As you explained it, it seems to mean that the whole unconscious would be identical with the Yin.

Dr. Jung: Yes, that is the assumption, that the Yin is a mere shadow of the conscious, that all psychological phenomena are just shadows cast by the light of consciousness which have no substance whatever. Therefore it is an amazing discovery when something in that shadow moves. It is as if I were looking at my shadow in the sun—the shadow walking along with me as usual—and then suddenly see that it is walking in the opposite direction. Or as if, when looking at myself in the mirror, my reflection should walk out of the mirror and away, so I can no longer see myself. I have lost my reflex, my shadow. Like that excellent movie story: *The Man Without a Shadow*, where the devil went off with his shadow. The shadow is one of the primitive symbols of the soul, so the man's soul was stolen.

Mr. Baumann: How is it in the case of men? Can they discover a Yin in the Yang? Is it different?

Dr. Jung: Oh no, it is absolutely the same, it has nothing to do with personal psychology. This is the psychology of our time, it is a matter here of something that is generally human. Therefore it is of a certain interest to interpret and analyze such visions, which otherwise, if they were only personal, would bore one to tears. When one first reads them, without elaboration, one is only impressed with the subjective character, which bores one beyond description. I cannot tell you how bored I was, they are terribly uninteresting, they got on my nerves and for a long time I could not touch them. And when I said to myself, now I must

really go into it, it was as if I had decided to get into a very cold bath at seven o'clock on an icy morning in January. Only when one sees behind the subjective and personal does one realize that these visions are an expression of a very general problem, that they are demonstrating different aspects of the unconscious development in order to bring it a step forward in consciousness, a step nearer the detachment of consciousness.

Mr. Baumann: There is a very interesting story in that book you referred to last term, *Holiday Omnibus*.⁴ Everybody was killed by a volcanic eruption excepting one man, and he tried to destroy everything that might still be left because he wanted to be the only one. Then into that dead black world came a girl, and she would be the one light spot.

Dr. Jung: I had not thought of it in that aspect, but that would be a parallel. In a black Yin world in which every light is dead, the one man alive would mean the Yang principle in utter suppression. I recommend that book. It is just a collection of stories like this; I mean, it is the same unconscious symbolism, which is born out of the spirit of the time, but it is therefore highly symbolical; it conveys a message, one could almost say.

Mrs. Sawyer: I would like to ask if that snake does not here mean something more than it meant before, because it has appeared in her visions so many times. And the sphinx also told her that the way was twofold. Does it mean something else this time? Or is it just a repetition?

Dr. Jung: It is not just a repetition, for everything else we have said about the snake comes in too; here it is summed up again. One always finds that each event, as in dreams, is a summing up of everything that has been felt and thought before. The snake is usually the incarnation of the Yin principle, cold, humid, dark and so on, but we find it now in the center of the Yang. So the snake here symbolizes that thing which is Yin as well as Yang. What is that?

Mrs. Baynes: The transcendent function in analytical psychology.

Dr. Jung: And in Chinese philosophy it is Tao, where yea and nay are the same, where they are one reconciling symbol. Here the reconciling symbol appears in the unconscious under the negative aspect of the serpent, which confirms once more the strange fact that things in the Yang are counteracted by a principle that seems negative, yet it is in reality the most important thing, for it brings about the union of the opposites, Tao.

Mr. Baumann: In *The Serpent Power*,⁵ two snakes are mentioned; one represents the Yang and the other the Yin principle.

⁴ See above, 10 Feb. 1932, n. 3.

⁵ By Arthur Avalon, pseudonym of Sir John Woodroffe (1865–1936). Jung relied on his