

The Destiny Concept in Psychotherapy

Edward Whitmont

A psychoneurosis must be understood . . . as the suffering of a soul which has not discovered its meaning. But all creativeness in the realm of the spirit as well as every psychic advance of man arises from the suffering of the soul, and the cause of the suffering is spiritual stagnation or spiritual sterility.

—C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*

Behind the neurotic perversion is concealed his vocation, his destiny: the growth of personality, the full realization of the life-will that is born with the individual. It is the man without *amor fati* who is the neurotic.

—C. G. Jung, *The Development of Personality*

In these words Jung equates psychic health with the discovery of a meaning in suffering; without such a meaning, suffering would remain spiritually sterile. This discovery of meaning amounts to *amor fati*—the acceptance and love of one's fate. The postulate of "fate," as a prepersonal destiny which needs positive commitment and acceptance, carries far-reaching implications which are not merely philosophical but also clinical, as I shall attempt to show. But let us ask ourselves first how we, as psychologists, understand and reconcile ourselves to the idea of fate or destiny.

In terms of what we know now of the objective psyche, destiny does not imply an absolute determinism. We encounter it, I would say, as an unfolding plan, as the prepersonal yet individual pattern of an intended wholeness. Arising from the Self, this plan needs the cooperation of consciousness for its realization in actual life, and its fulfillment within the limits of the ego's capacity. Thus, destiny, or fate, is the unfoldment of the Self-archetype in time and space.

Destiny, in this sense, may be experienced merely as meaningless bondage and pointless suffering or it may be experienced as the fulfillment of one's own deepest, but as yet unknown, identity; that is, as creative freedom. This will depend largely upon the individual's capacity for awareness, his ability to experience symbolic significance, and to attempt a cooperative acceptance of the tragic as well as the joyful patterns of his life.

If this concept of destiny is used as a working hypothesis, a reevaluation of some of our present clinical assumptions is suggested. Relevant events in a patient's history which we have habitually considered to be causes of his present psychopathology may now perhaps be viewed as manifestations of an emergent life-pattern. Traumatic events of childhood which we associate with the genesis of neurosis or psychosis, and therefore regard as quasi-accidental or avoidable under "ideal" circumstances, may perhaps be seen as essential landmarks in the actualization of a pattern of wholeness. They may be understood as the "suffering of the soul" which is needed to engender present and future psychological advances.

Then, in following the development of past events into future consequences, we might discover a meaning beyond mere cause and effect in the way the past comes to view when regarded as the first stage and necessary setting for present and future unfoldment. What we suffered as children or adults as the result of disturbed relationships with parents and other close associates may be seen not just as accident or misfortune but as a destined emotional impasse essential for the actualization of our own particular pattern of wholeness. The necessity for experiencing a particular conflict or trauma in childhood would shape the child-parent constellation in such a way as to bring about the present or future impasse.

Such a proposition may seem absurd to our ordinary, scientific thinking, which is based upon nineteenth-century concepts of mechanics and the laws of chance in physical behavior. But these may be in need of reconsideration. As Robert Oppenheimer (1956) suggests, present-day physics may have something to give back to common sense, which seems to have been lost from it. "The worst of all possible misunderstandings," he adds, would occur if "psychology [should] be influenced to model itself after a physics which is not there any more, which has been quite outdated" (p. 134).

To modern physics our proposition is not at all absurd. In discussing the implications of what is known in physics as the "violation of the principle of parity"—namely, the asymmetry of radioactive emission of atomic nuclei—Jacques Choron (1966) observes:

As this choice does not result from the anisotropy of space we are forced to conclude that there is an anisotropy of time. Cobalt is aware of a future different from its past and it uses this fact in making a spatial distinction between its right and its left. It is capable of making a choice between the two directions. . . . In preferring left to right, the cobalt is proving that there exists a future for the whole universe. Moreover this implies that the universe transforms itself or evolves. (p. 6)

The space which the asymmetric carbon encloses is entirely similar, although on a much reduced scale, to the space of the universe as a whole, and this space is evolving toward a well defined future state. The physicists do not like to admit in forming their description of nature such a "wave of the future" in the direction of the present, for this would amount to saying that a future state can in some way intervene to guide phenomena situated in the present. They prefer to speak in terms of force fields which fill space and give rise to the evolution from a present state to a future state. . . . In order for us to conform to this tradition and express ourselves in more orthodox language we shall therefore say that there exists a certain kind of "evolutionary field" which fills the space enclosed by asymmetric carbon. (p. 8)

We can scarcely doubt that the evolutionary field which governs the living, like everything else in the hierarchy of the whole universe, is tending toward greater differentiation and greater unification. . . .

Each element in the cell appears to act with great indepen-

dence, consequently individual structure is highly differentiated. . . . But nevertheless, in spite of this independence, each element coordinates its activities perfectly with those of others, in such a way that the overall effect is harmonious and permits convergence toward an advanced state. (pp. 8-9)

The prime mover in this “free coordination” within the cell is undoubtedly the fact that each living element has an awareness of the final state to be attained. This state is neither “debated” nor “debatable”; it is defined by boundary conditions which govern the behaviour of elementary living forms and thus guide life toward the goal which evolution has assigned it. (p. 9)

To deal with the rather awkward logical implications of this level of functioning, Jung has postulated, in the concept of synchronicity, a pattern of orderedness in phenomena like these, which cannot be understood adequately in terms of cause and effect. He defines synchronicity as:

A coincidence in time of two or more causally unrelated events which have the same or a similar meaning. (Jung, 1960, p. 441)

Or, again, synchronicity is:

The same living reality . . . expressing itself in the psychic state as in the physical (p. 452)

The forms of psychic orderedness that Jung calls synchronistic have not, like the properties of natural numbers or the discontinuities of physics, existed from eternity and do not occur regularly; rather, they are “acts of creation in time” (p. 517). Synchronistic events, he believes, consist essentially of so-called chance equivalences occurring between outward physical processes and psychic ones (in the form of archetypal reactions). When this occurs the archetype “takes on the specific aspect of a modality that has the functional significance of a world-constituting factor” (p. 515). Speaking of synchronicity in connection with the *I-Ching*, Jung (1958b) says:

It is assumed that the fall of the coins or the result of the division of the bundle of yarrow stalks is what it necessarily must be in a given “situation,” inasmuch as anything happening in that moment belongs to it as an indispensable part of the picture. If a handful of matches is thrown to the floor, they form the pattern characteristic of the moment. But such an obvious truth as this reveals its meaningful nature only if it is possible to read the pattern and to verify its interpretation, partly by the observer’s knowledge of the subjective and objective situation, partly by the character of subsequent events. (p. 593)

It seems to me that the crucial element of Jung’s formulation is the emphasis he lays upon what belongs to the “moment” as an indispensable part of the pic-

ture. Thus the "moment," the crucial point of "now," is pregnant with meaning and constitutes the pattern that will precipitate events, not "caused" by preceding events but necessitated by what is inherent in the unfolding situation as a whole.

The evolutionary pattern of an individual as it manifests itself in time and space must, as it does so, necessarily constellate configurations and events which express the Self's striving toward its unique and "final" state not only in the psychic but also in the objective world, including also its I and Thou relationships. Thus what must be experienced at the age of sixty-six could well necessitate and precipitate certain experiences at the age of three or four.

For a more adequate visualization of this destiny-synchronicity pattern in our therapeutic approach, I suggest using the symbolism of the drama as a working model. Baumler (1965, p. 72) has postulated the Greek tragedy as a "mirror of the self," a reflection of man's problematic relationship to the gods (i.e., to the world of transpersonal, archetypal powers) based on his primal experiences of death and destiny.

Indeed, the profoundly moving effect which dramatic art has continued to have upon us throughout the ages suggests its relevance as an archetypal model.

However, the drama which the Self plays out is not of the same order as that which we are accustomed to see on the stage, where the actor is bound to a fixed script and the action is prescribed. Rather, the drama of the soul corresponds to a more archaic model. For presumably prior to written tradition, the drama was based less on a fixed text than on a partially improvised interaction among the actors. This is still to be found in children's play and in some modern drama techniques. Thus even within the limits of a definite theme, there is a certain amount of freedom for qualitative reactions and expressions in accordance with the personality types involved. These diversified possibilities of interaction may not only produce variations in the drama as it is presented (played out) but may even effect its eventual outcome, although the underlying theme and perhaps even the situation remain the same.

A dramatic evolution requires an awareness not only of the sequential chain of events, from exposition through crisis to lysis, but also a comprehension of an underlying idea or meaning. The naive observer, who identifies with the play as it is presented, is moved in terms of cause and effect. In order to provide motivation and engender involvement, the play must be presented in these terms. The misfortunes of act two must seem motivated, that is, appear to be "caused," by the situation built up in act one. Act two without act one would be devoid of meaning, and similarly the solution in act three would be without dramatic intensity. The staging in terms of "causation" appears, then, to be relative to the human mode of experiencing the coherence of events. It heightens the involvement of the spectator as participant.

Thus, while it is true that the staging of the tragic or joyful situation in act two seems to be caused by the "right" or "wrong" action which preceded it in act one, it is equally true that this effect of causation is deliberate or destined. Act one has set the scene and built up its consequences or "effects" in order to reveal the intent or plot of the drama as it unfolds later in actuality.

Moreover, an awareness of the roles of the actors as roles is indispensable. By viewing them as a spectator, we may experience a range of related emotions; the

villain may evoke anger or hate; the hero love, admiration, even envy, but only a child, or one who identifies completely with the hero or the victim role, would really want to do away with the villain. We realize his presence is necessary and that the portrayal of misfortune and injustice is an integral part of the drama: We also realize that if the battle is not joined against these forces, there will be no drama, no "moment" of crisis. This is because if the misfortune is not met as a dynamic challenge, it leaves us stagnating in the Slough of Despond and spiritually sterile. Therefore the attempt to overcome the "villain" or to resolve the injustice, whether successful or not, is an intrinsic part of the drama and actually the key to its lysis.

Although we may understand a play reductively, that is, in terms of the sequence of cause and effect, unless we are also able to comprehend the dramatic intent or the destined meaning behind the causal sequence, we will not be moved by the inner logic of its timing and consequently will not be able or qualified to assist in the staging of that particular drama in such a way as to bring out its essence. This seems to me the pertinent point that we, as therapists, must understand not only in the life drama of our patients but, incidentally, also in ourselves.

Yet while it is true that if we fail to grasp the patterns of archetypal destiny, we will lose meaning, at the same time, if we overemphasize this meaning at the expense of carefully observing the orderly and logical sequence of cause and effect and the interaction of the various roles and events, we will also fail as stage assistants.

Amor fati and the discovery of the meaning of one's own life call for an understanding of these two views also. For *amor fati* means an acceptance of one's own assigned part together with an understanding of the interaction of present events with those of the past and, hopefully, the future.

Thus meaningful living, as well as the ability to help others live meaningfully, requires both a mythological perspective and a personalistic, clinical, reductive approach. The two are not mutually exclusive but complementary and mutually in need of each other. They enable us to grasp different facets of the life-engendering impulse of the Self as it strives for the unfoldment of its destiny in space and time.

In terms of practical psychology, the relative unalterableness of our destined "script" expresses itself in the fact that, contrary to our unfortunate terminology, archetypal compulsiveness cannot be dealt with by what we call "withdrawing projections." It is not a matter of a deliberate act, or merely of understanding and good will. We cannot will to renounce illusions and projections, try as we may. To some extent compulsive identifications and fascinations can be mitigated by rational understanding and self-control. Yet, vitally important as this first step is, it is no more than a first step. The capacity to draw consciousness into the depths of the unconscious is still retained by these images. Compulsion, fascination, and projection are expressions of a relative disproportion between the personal possibilities of actualization available to the individual for the expression of constellated archetypal elements and their "intended" range. The stage setting is inadequate for the range of the plot. What we cannot adequately fit into our available means of personal expression obsesses and fascinates us in the form of blind projections. This makes it necessary for consciousness to continually provide new channels for the flow of archetypal energy. But we must not forget that here the

rather abstract term “channels” refers not only to images and concepts but also to very concrete feelings and emotionally determined behavior patterns.

For an archetypal pattern is not only an image but also:

An inherited mode of psychic functioning, corresponding to that inborn way according to which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar; and eels find their way to the Bermudas. In other words, it is a “pattern of behavior.” (Jung, 1955, p. ix)

And to this is added a pattern of emotions.

Those inborn action and reaction patterns have varying degrees of “openness,” namely adaptability to given external situations. The gosling, for instance, adopts as its mother the first being it beholds upon emerging from the egg. We may say that the mother archetype “stages” itself for the gosling in this first animate being, and that the emotional and behavioral pattern toward the maternal which is established at this first meeting remains “fixed” or conditioned thereafter, no matter how the mother is represented or misrepresented.

For man, the first channelling or actualization of archetypes occurs in early childhood in the original family group, and not only parental value patterns but also cultural value patterns influence it. But since these influences are parental and cultural, the first actualization of the archetypes is bound to be somewhat at variance with the preexisting, prearranged individuality of the child. Therefore even in the absence of severely traumatic situations, the childhood conditioning first actualizes archetypal energy in a non-individual fashion, thereby creating the first specific conflict between individuality and collectivity—between the wholeness of the Self and the distorting one-sidedness of its actualization in the ego. The response of the Self is a compensatory attempt to bring forth the missing traits which belong to this particular individual and no other: it is the drive toward individuation. But since the relative one-sidedness of the original conditioning makes the manifest conceptual and behavioral habit patterns unlikely to fit the needs of the new impulses, the individuating urges must, by force or stealth, create new feelings and new behavior patterns; they must pry open locked doors. Hence the frequent dreams of threatening intruders or burglars who, when they are allowed to enter despite our fear and terror, turn into helpful figures.

Thus act one of the life drama always presents the individual potentials channelled into forms at variance with the needs of individual fulfillment. The subsequent necessity of finding forms suited to the individual expresses itself in the deadlock and crisis of act two. The rechanneling of archetypal contents for the lysis of act three requires not only an adequate understanding of the underlying themes but also an emotional awareness of the preceding events which precipitated the impasse. Only by entering into our emotions, past and present, and reexperiencing them with an awareness of their underlying (destiny) pattern, can we understand the nature of our automatic reactions and responses. An intellectual understanding or acknowledgment of them is not enough. The analysis of the transference reactions in terms of their archetypal as well as their genetic and personalistic meaning also becomes an indispensable necessity at this juncture.

Without such an emotional actualization, we blindly continue in the same patterns with no possibility of redirection.

The discovery of the power of the archetypal images has tended to make some of us minimize the importance of the personal reaction pattern in past and present situations. It was assumed that the unfoldment of the archetypal images would *ipso facto* resolve the petty personal details. But this is not necessarily the case. The actor, although he never loses sight of the underlying objective of the drama, must nevertheless base his action upon his own awareness of the events in the past which have led to the present dilemma and upon the other person's present behavior. Only by maintaining, in this way, a constant awareness of the interaction of his own role with that of the other can he produce, from his own point of view, a verisimilitude of life in the drama. The neglect of this reductive dimension and the failure to analyze transference reactions can make an analysis a mere intellectual exercise or a purely intuitional concept without living emotional reality.

Conversely, a one-sided reductive approach which deals with the past solely in terms of cause and effect, rather than as a staging of the first act of an archetypally destined drama, may and often does lead to the sterile fallacy of current psychoanalysis, which avoids personal responsibility by placing the blame on the parents and society—"factors beyond one's control"—and so makes us all helpless victims of those external factors. The prevalence of this attitude today has created the "guilty" parent and an "unbearable" society in which it is impossible to find personal fulfillment. We are able to explain everything and accomplish nothing. Rationalizing our own escapism and inertia, we convince ourselves that we are engaging in impressive gestures of rebellion and reform. (Witness, the hippies.) But our efforts are directed at external factors; we do not reform ourselves.

Yet, culture and civilization do not descend from nowhere; they are the expressions of evolving human nature, and our imperfect parents were nurtured, or beset, by imperfect parents of their own. That is how destiny seems to operate; but that is no reason why it should be made a fatalistic excuse for inertia. Destiny, as it is actualized for the individual in his parents, his circumstances, and society generally, constitutes a challenge to the unfoldment of the Self, which can achieve its full expression only when the ego is roused to conscious effort through an active polar opposition.

The practical application of these concepts is illustrated in the following case history. The patient was a woman in her twenties who had experienced a number of unsatisfactory love affairs. She had repeatedly found herself drawn to men who were below her level culturally or who had serious psychological disturbances; in fact, one of them was overtly psychotic. Her overwhelming hope and ambition was to be "successfully" married and at the same time to be a great artist. Yet her artistic efforts were negligible, and since she disliked her relatively menial and uninteresting job she spent most of her time resentfully and despairingly daydreaming.

Her predominant daydream was a vision of herself as a princess or queen, playing a harp in a beautiful castle filled with enchanted admirers and obedient servants. For only as servants and admirers were men allowed in this castle.

Of her dreams, I will give only the three most important. In the first dream she saw herself rising naked from the sea and being taken into the arms of a beautiful, worshipping youth. And she herself commented upon the Aphrodite

Anadyomene identification here. In the second dream she saw her mother drawing crosses over the faces of men, and in the third dream she found herself desperately searching through the rubble of a broken-down sanctuary of Venus, whom she was to serve as a priestess.

These dreams, of course, express a state of identification with the archetype of the Great Goddess; the patient felt herself to be the virgin daughter of great Venus, who in her destructive aspect, as Hecate, marks men with her sign, the cross, and thus crosses them out. While living this role, the patient could make no real personal relationships to men; she could only use them as phallus-bearers to satisfy her needs, bestowing her divine blessing upon them as she saw fit, from a position of divine superiority. For she was not able to feel attracted to any man she could not look down upon, only to those whom she could guide, enlighten, and mother from a position of unchallengeable superiority. This identification with the archetype failed to really satisfy her deepest feminine needs, since it always left her disappointed with these "worthless" men. Furthermore, it bound her to a world in which reality, as it confronted her, was depreciated because it never measured up to her beautiful vision of herself as the "princess" of an enchanted castle. Another aspect of the "princess" role was that it caused her to expect beauty and creativity to flow into her artistic efforts of themselves. But, of course, this never happened, and, since the outlook of the "princess" allowed for nothing short of perfection, her hesitant endeavors necessarily seemed empty by comparison.

The patient was quite able to assimilate and understand these implications, as they were gradually interpreted from her material. But her enlightened understanding did not improve the reality situation. On the contrary, the phantasies and daydreams continued to haunt her, and this fact intensified her despair. For her attitude toward them was ambivalent. In the light of her new understanding, she assumed that they were unrealistic and misleading and that they should therefore be destroyed; thus one part of herself longed to be free of them. But another part of herself felt threatened with the loss of something vital and precious, and resisted their destruction. Consciously she condemned this resistance, but she reacted to the condemnation with depression, and felt more and more fascinated by her beautiful visions.

There was still, to be sure, her dream of serving the goddess as a priestess rather than identifying with her, but no hint as to how this might be accomplished. At this stage, the archetypal themes in her material could not be seen as contributing anything that would "make sense" in terms of actual living.

In order to make the discovery of a practical meaning possible, it was now essential to bring out the poignancy of these themes: to find what original personal experiences lay beyond the general mythologem. This was done by assuming that the dream in which the mother crossed out the faces of men had to do with the actual mother as well as with the mother archetype. Since it was by identifying with the image of the goddess that the patient had obliterated the face of the masculine, we needed to know what personal attitude of hers lay back of the identification, and how the attitude had been engendered by her relationship with her own mother.

When asked what the mother's act of crossing things out meant to her, she remembered that her mother had crossed out the "wrong" or inappropriate

answers in the written work of her Sunday school and elementary school pupils. As a schoolteacher and a Fundamentalist church member in a provincial small town, her mother knew, emphatically, what was wrong, much more than she knew what was right. Needless to say, sex was the principal offender. And here the father, a simple uneducated laborer, who drank heavily, came into the picture. This kindly man was at heart a frustrated poet, but he was a failure and could not stand up to the mother's superior education and virtue; so the mother's only function in their relationship was that of the virtuous savior—a Salvation-Army-major type of savior.

As one would expect, the daughter's emotional reactions had been conditioned by the mother's, and her attitude was identical. Ostensibly she felt sympathetic and protective toward her father, but actually she rejected him as weak and despicable; and this attitude shaped her feeling pattern and her attraction toward men in general. She continued, judgmentally, to cross out the human and instinctual functioning of men as weak, inadequate, or bad, but those who appealed to her emotionally were precisely the inadequate failures, the ones whom she could "save." In imitation of the mother, her Eros attitude became that of a missionary eager to save men as a matter of principle, but rejecting and despising them individually and concretely.

How does this relate to the archetypal theme? The archetype of the Great Goddess (and her priestess) is incarnated or actualized here in the form of a puritanical missionary. As a missionary the patient feels urged to bring divine blessings to the world of men by showing them the light of true salvation, without in the least realizing the personal self-satisfaction and sense of virtuous superiority which this brings her. The attraction to inferior or psychologically unbalanced men, whom she can easily "cross out" as persons, follows as a necessity from such an attitude.

But the pattern of personal actualization established in childhood determines more than outward forms of expression; it also directs the personal relation to the archetypes of the collective unconscious; in this case, to the animus. The patient's identification with this narrow, moralistic version of the Great Goddess led her to condemn and disdain the "man" within herself, her own masculine creative potential. And because she felt that the masculine must serve her as a princess, her creative attempts were sterile.

Conflicts of this kind, between two entities as incommensurable as the love goddess and a Salvation Army missionary, have customarily been viewed by us as explicable exclusively in terms of a one-sided compensation by the unconscious for a too narrow conscious outlook. Thus the latter is given a causational priority. The constriction of emotional capacity by the mother's conditioning is assumed to evoke Aphrodite as a compensation. But why just Aphrodite? The compensation could equally well have been effected by Pallas Athene, Mary, an artist, a witch, the good mother, or the wise woman. I would like to suggest that the direction of the compensation is already part of an *a priori* pattern—the intended second act—rather than a chance following through from cause to effect; and that the dramatic conflict destined to be staged is selectively chosen for the particular individual. Considered as a whole in terms of a drama, the theme presented in this woman's life is the realization in a sterile Fundamentalist morality of the trials of the Great

Goddess (like a play about Ishtar in the Land of the Dead). It is staged in a small town atmosphere, and the goddess being sought for is disguised as a narrow-minded Sunday-school-teaching mother. A dramatic theme both tragic and humorous; worthy of a daring playwright!

The implication would then be that the narrow-minded mother, or the patient's experiencing of her mother as narrow-minded (for we often discover that the child's extreme images are at variance with the actual parental figures), might have been evoked by the Great Goddess Aphrodite herself to bring forth that particular crisis in the early life of the patient and its compensation in later life by the collective unconscious. A further implication would be that the evolutionary needs and intents of the Self are the prime factors in the constellation of child-parent relationships—that is, in the particular archetypal patterns which are set up in early life to provide, as it were, the staging for the play: it is as though we, or rather the Self, selected the parents needed for our particular life drama.

This is an awkward and demanding idea! But does it differ in essence from Jacques Choron's previously quoted suggestion that "a future state can in some way intervene to guide phenomena situated in the present"; or from what the physicists, in more orthodox language, call "evolutionary fields" and think of as determining what happens at a given point of time; so that, to repeat Jung's words in introducing the *I-Ching*, "anything happening in that moment belongs to it as an indispensable part of the picture"—a picture which "reveals its meaningful nature only if it is possible to read the pattern and verify its interpretation"?

What then was gained for this patient by holding such a viewpoint? First, since the archetypes and their ostensibly inadequate personal actualizations were to be given equal value, neither was to be minimized. Thus the images of our patient's wishful daydreams were not to be dismissed as simply unrealistic; neither could we cast out her missionary zeal or the moralistic frame of reference to which she had been conditioned. Thus the discrepancy between the two, which prevented the images from making practical sense, now became the central challenge.

Aphrodite could not be served by identifying with the "Sunday school teacher," and neither could the Salvation Army missionary, who rejects men, pose as Aphrodite. Somewhere beyond the protagonist and the antagonist of this dramatic confrontation—beyond the unrealistic archetypal phantasies and the equally inadequate and unrealistic genetic conditioning—an encompassing third position was to be sought; therein lay the fulfillment of the Self's inherent life-destiny. The phantasy images, which in their "numinosity" gave meaning and depth to her life, were neither to be disregarded nor identified with; instead, some new form of personal fulfillment had to be found, commensurate not only with external reality but also with her own actual past, which could replace the erroneous forms of self-expression to which she had been conditioned.

In the dream in which the patient searches through the rubble for the sanctuary of Aphrodite, whom she is to serve as a ministering priestess, a personal relationship of service to the goddess, rather than an identification with her, is posed as the solution to this problem. How such a relationship to the archetype is to be achieved was not evident at first. Reductive personal analysis was required to reveal that the rubble of the dream was the feeling of bitterness and disappointment engendered in her by her mother. This was what she now had to

“search through” and experience as her own unconscious emotion, and not as simply something in the past. For it was this bitter contempt for and distrust of men, this inner conviction that only women, “good women,” were worthy of admiration, that had distorted and inflated both Aphrodite’s and the missionary’s endeavors and prevented their coming to terms with each other by obscuring the patient’s own individual feeling and judgment. She had caught this contempt and distrust of men from her mother but, until it was reductively analyzed in her material and also in the transference to the analyst, whom she could not relate to as a man but only as a demigod, she could not recognize it in her everyday feeling pattern or understand how it blocked her access to genuine love and dedication. But now in viewing her situation (past, present, and future) as a single encompassing whole, as an unfolding destiny pattern, the patient gained the sense that whatever happens at a given point of time “belongs” to it as an indispensable part of the picture. The embittered deadlock between her hopes and daydreams, her vocation and the drab reality that she evaded, could be accepted as something more than immaturity or illness; it could be accepted as a valuable, integral part of a larger structure still to be realized—indeed, to be created. In recognizing the value of her suffering, in seeing it as potentially creative material, she experienced a feeling of freedom and the sense that a creative attitude could arise within her; this was the beginning of a love of her fate, of *amor fati*. In realizing not only the source but also the intended meaning in what had become mere bitterness and frustration, she experienced a renewed flow of libido and interest in life, and she gained a greater trust in herself. With this there arose the possibility of a value to be developed from the reality-evading daydreams, which she had formerly judged so negatively.

In conclusion, I would like to make two more general remarks.

With *amor fati*, or at least with the acceptance of the idea of a personal destiny, life can be understood as something more than a never-ending attempt to right past wrongs (all that has been done to us). The prevailing attitude of “If only I, my parents, or society had been different, or had acted differently”—which necessarily carries guilt and blame in its wake—can be transformed into a feeling for life as a creative experience, as a search for fulfillment and realization. A destined identity poses a potential which is always waiting, at any point in time and space, to be actualized by our efforts, our trials and errors, and our creative improvisations in personal situations. Such a viewpoint offers a challenge even in the face of despair. In its suffering, the soul can discover meaning.

The opening gambit of yesterday’s act one, as the exposition of our life drama, and the intended fulfillment of the drama’s plan are constantly with us, if not as a conscious realization then as an unconscious motivation. They codetermine our present activities and future possibilities. Hence every impulse, emotion, and symptom can reveal a different facet of meaning, a different directional tendency, depending upon whether it is seen and experienced as referring to causation in the past, or to archetypal potentialities for the present and future. By consciously investigating and experiencing both of these aspects as expressions of a functional unit, we can ascertain the directional line connecting them which points to the task of destined development. In our patient’s case this line is given by her urge to live in the realm of the goddess and to “cross out” men as well as

to minister to them. In terms of the past this would appear to be arrogance and escapism; but in terms of archetypal meaning it is a search for femininity, spiritual renewal, and the capacity to serve love in a worthy object. Thus her destined line of evolution, the myth of her life, seems to be a development, in the form of a search for the numinosum as love, starting from a position of bigoted superiority and escapist isolation. The image of a drawn arrow comes to mind. What would seem to the naive observer to be “nothing but” a pulling back, is in actuality the source of strength for the arrow’s flight toward its target.

Finally there arises the thorny issue of freedom versus determinism. Limiting ourselves to a psychologically pragmatic, rather an abstract philosophical, definition of freedom, let us define freedom as the ability to plan and execute conscious choices and decisions, coupled with a readiness and willingness to accept or suffer the effects of what we do.

This is an overwhelming task. Its basic or minimum requirement is a consciousness of the situation as a whole and the will to risk and accept the results rather than to remain in unconscious bondage to unconscious compulsion. Only to the extent that we are aware of destiny can such freedom from unconsciousness be attempted at all. The line of destiny is comparable to the wind in sailing. It cannot be disregarded; it is the force which pushes the sail and hence the boat. To make full use of it, we must study its direction and strength. Then with skill and knowledge we can maintain a personally satisfactory course, even in the face of difficult weather; but when we disregard it, we are likely to capsize or to lose our momentum. It is this impersonal force of the wind, the *pneuma*, which provides the power for the voyage.

As we all know well, conscious acceptance of the way of one’s being, or the mold of one’s destiny, is far from easy. Our automatic response is to be defensive, to feel guilty about our shadow qualities and to reason away their negative aspects as somehow not our own “. . . because . . .” By failing to acknowledge what we really are in all of its darkness and depth, and by feeling personally guilty about it, we fail to allow for the possibility of a creative response—we close a door on what we might become. How many dreams tell us this!

Amor fati, then, includes an awareness of ourselves, of our inner and outer limitations, and the kind of acceptance and willingness to concern ourselves with them which makes the striving for adequate fulfillment within such limitations into a challenge to creative improvisation. Only by so accepting ourselves in the light of the overall pattern of our destiny can our sense of compulsive bondage be transformed into motivation. In no other way does the energy of the Self, its sustaining *pneuma*, become available to us for use as an inner freedom permitting us to exert some conscious choice.

Yet what fulfillment is adequate or, indeed, even possible? This remains the riddle of every individual situation, in life or in therapy; it is the very riddle of the Sphinx. And it is well to remember that therapy, and living too, is the art of accomplishing the possible, not just the desirable. In both our personal life and as therapists, we all too often experience the tragedy of the impossible. It may help then to recall that even behind the tragic limitation and the insoluble riddle stands the destiny, “the life-will that is born with the individual” (to use again the words of Jung with which we began); and to remember that “all creativeness in

the realm of the spirit as well as every psychic advance of man arises from the suffering of the soul.”

References

- Baumler, Alfred. (1965). *Das Mythische Weltalter*. Munich: C. H. Beck.
- Choron, Jacques (1966). Physics reveals that evolution has a goal. *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, 23(1).
- Jung, C. G. (1954). *The development of personality*. CW 17.
- _____. (1955). Introduction. In M. Esther Harding, *Woman's mysteries*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- _____. (1958). *Psychology and religion: West and East*. CW 11.
- _____. (1958b). Foreword to the *I-Ching*. CW 11.
- _____. (1960). Synchronicity: An acausal connecting principle. CW 8.
- Oppenheimer, Robert. (1956). Analogy in science. *American Psychologist*, 11(3).

