
C.G. Jung: On the Unconscious

- The unconscious mind of man sees correctly even when conscious reason is blind and impotent.

—"Answer to Job" (1952), in *Collected Works: Psychology and Religion: West and East* (2nd ed.), 365-470, at 386.

- Nobody can say where man ends. That is the beauty of it. The unconscious of man can reach God knows where. There we are going to make discoveries.

—"Four Filmed Interviews with Richard I. Evans," in *Conversations with Carl Jung* (1957).

- The conscious mind allows itself to be trained like a parrot, but the unconscious does not—which is why St. Augustine thanked God for not making him responsible for his dreams. The unconscious is an autonomous psychic entity; any efforts to drill it are only apparently successful, and moreover harmful to consciousness. It is and remains beyond the reach of subjective arbitrary control, a realm where nature and her secrets can be neither improved upon nor perverted, where we can listen but may not meddle.

—*Collected Works: Psychology and Alchemy* (2nd ed.) (Vol. 12), at 46.

- Empirical psychology loved, until recently, to explain the "unconscious" as mere absence of consciousness—the term itself indicates as much—just as shadow is an absence of light. Today accurate observation of unconscious processes has recognized, with all other ages before us, that the unconscious possesses a creative autonomy such as a mere shadow could never be endowed with.

—"Western Religion," in *Collected Works: Psychology and Religion: West and East* (Vol. 11), at 84-85.

■ Rationalism and superstition are complementary. It is a psychological rule that the brighter the light, the blacker the shadow; in other words, the more rationalistic we are in our conscious minds, the more alive becomes the spectral world of the unconscious.

—“Foreword to Moser: “Spuk: Irrglaube Oder Wahrglaube?” in *Collected Works: The Symbolic Life* (Vol. 18), 317-329, at 318.

■ We know that the mask of the unconscious is not rigid—it reflects the face we turn towards it. Hostility lends it a threatening aspect, friendliness softens its features.

—*Collected Works: Psychology and Alchemy* (2nd ed.) (Vol. 12), at 25.

■ The unconscious is not a demoniacal monster, but a natural entity which, as far as moral sense, aesthetic taste, and intellectual judgment go, is completely neutral. It only becomes dangerous when our conscious attitude to it is hopelessly wrong. To the degree that we repress it, its danger increases. But the moment the patient begins to assimilate contents that were previously unconscious, its danger diminishes. . . . [T]he overwhelming of the conscious mind by the unconscious—is far more likely to enuse when the unconscious is excluded from life by being repressed, falsely interpreted, and depreciated.

—“The Practical Use of Dream Analysis,” in *Collected Works: The Practice of Psychotherapy* (Vol. 16), at 152-153.

■ The unconscious is the unknown at any given moment, so it is not surprising that dreams add to the conscious psychological situation of the moment all those aspects which are essential for a totally different point of view. It is evident that this function of dreams amounts to a psychological adjustment, a compensation absolutely necessary for properly balanced action. In a conscious process of reflection it is essential that, so far as possible, we should realize all the aspects and consequences of a problem in order to find the right solution. This process is continued automatically in the more or less unconscious state of sleep, where, as experience seems to show, all those aspects occur to the dreamer (at least by way of allusion) that during the day were insufficiently appreciated or even totally ignored—in other words, were comparatively unconscious.

—“General Aspects of Dream Psychology,” in *Collected Works: The Structures and Dynamics of the Psyche* (Vol. 8), 237-280, at 245.