

ORIGIN OF THE SYMBOL
IN THE SPIRIT
OF MUSIC

I. FUNDAMENTALS TOWARD A DEFINITION

The symbol is a form composed by man more unconsciously than consciously. With primitive peoples, this form seems to have been born from the desire to penetrate to the kernel of supernatural or magical power by means of a concise formula, all-inclusive or ambiguous, particularly through a magic incantation or a song. This penetration, however, is only possible if one understands the inner structure of such a power. According to primitive belief, the true seat of this power is not found in the world of our direct experience but in a magical area in which it rests in a completely abstract, latent state. In this condition it has not yet spread out into various shapes which it has to assume for concrete manifestation but appears completely homogeneous and solid. Moreover, the innermost substance (kernel) of this power is always organized antinomically. From this fundamental tendency to include opposites in a dualistic way, thunderstorms for example emerge as a

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dual combination of fire and water. Also dualistic is the “fiery stream of volcano and smithy,” the light-dark, hermaphroditism, etc. Psychologically, the original dual event is expressed in the fusion of love and hatred or the combination of a lust for power with inferiority.¹

If we train our eye not on the homogeneous substance withdrawn from the direct view but only on its outward appearance, we will experience only a few very specifically limited partial manifestations; that is, the concrete, individualized single aspects of the split-up power and never its fulness or its primary form (the homogeneous kernel). Thus we recognize, for example, in the outward appearance of warmth (the blooming of a plant, the melting of metal) only the momentary effect of warmth in a limited area but not the innermost nature of this power, which, unchangeable as it is in its substance, manifests itself differently in its outward appearance from one case to another.

With a purely superficial method of observation we can also never hope to grasp the second characteristic, the antinomic character, of such a force, because we cannot grasp the simultaneous flow and counterflow, the simultaneity of thesis and antithesis in this magic power as a homogeneous *coincidentia oppositorum*, a true amalgamation of opposites, but can only imagine a periodical change. We shall always see only one side or another of a phenomenon.

The task of the symbol to grasp a given force in its essence—stripped of all outward manifestations—to make apparent its homogeneous background and at the same time to embody its antinomy can thus not be carried out by pure intellect. Therefore the symbol can be created neither by logically reasoning intellect nor by clear observation. It must originally have been the work of that region of the human psyche in which the confusing multiplicity and antinomy of phenomena could, without resistance, be accepted and assimilated as a unit. In other words, it can only have resulted from an irrational wish in the subconscious overriding all processes of logical thought.² But since neither *coincidentia oppositorum* (dualism) nor a cross-section of the various single manifestations, penetrating to the homogeneous kernel behind them, is rationally possible or acceptable, this view can be affirmed and

1. These are trains of thought which the author abstracted from a series of conversations with three Baule Negroes who had for a long time served as cult drummers.

2. C. B. Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. IX: *About the Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* (New York: Pantheon, 1953).

made legitimate only in the area of the cult. Cult makes real and present that which is supra-rational and in the background. Only ritual—this intermediate world supported by myth which by definition is meant to overcome the multiplicity of appearances and to adjust the great contrasts (heaven and earth, time and space) through a fusing dualism—only ritual can speak the mediating language of the symbol, the language which tries to give man access not otherwise attainable to the roots of a force.

The symbol, then, which is to condense the diversity and inherent contradiction of things must be a tool whose effectiveness places it above the accidental or single event. It should be able to hit upon the basic homogeneous kernel of a force (this is, to furnish a cross-section through the various manifestations of the same force) and, moreover, to embody organically the inner antinomy of this force in such a way that it is not itself destroyed by the task or the desired force weakened or changed in its structure. Such a tool, however, gifted with the language of the cross-section as well as with the antinomy of a given power, can of course never itself become this power; but it can be its stream-bed. This determines the character of the most ancient kind of symbol. It is a tool which is meant to catch and channel the flow of an antinomic power, which is not to be grasped rationally in all its depth, in such a way that man can partake of it.

2. THE SILENT SYMBOL

Since the modern study of symbolism (except for psychological research) is primarily concerned with the recording and interpreting of concrete forms and since the description of the psychological phenomena leading to the formation of the symbol is rarely accompanied by a simultaneous thorough analysis of material symbolic forms, it seems proper to begin this discussion also with the traditional treatise on concrete forms.

Let us take first the combination of opposites, rain and sunshine, often made the symbol of blessing and fruitfulness. That this picture of rain during sunshine as a *coincidentia oppositorum* to fruitful labor is not a symbol in the original sense can be seen by the fact that it can encompass only one appearance of fertility, that of vegetative life on earth. The image is too superficial. It clings too much to a single manifestation, and any other manifestations of the power of fertility have to

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be supplied by the intellect. The prerequisite, however, for the oldest kind of symbol, independent of intellect, is not only the welding-together of outward contradictions but also the independence of the outward forms from any accidental manifestation. The symbol is set, and the less realistic it is, the more it is suited to its purpose. The symbol must show not only a single aspect of a given power at work but must also penetrate to its primary seat (lying much deeper than the outward appearance), from which the working power has already emerged by the time it has become a concrete phenomenon. In other words, the symbol must reach the homogeneous metaphysical kernel; that is, the whole of the still undivided power. With many primitive peoples such a symbol is, for example, the singing mask. This "home for spirits" encompasses the dual aspects through its construction and use. It achieves cross-section by means of its fantastic shape, which, because it has no counterpart in nature, can be looked upon as the magic seat of the as yet undivided power. A similar attempt to imitate symbolically the dual stream-bed of a whole power was made by the ancient high cultures by means of the abstract art of geometric or mythological figures—for instance, two spirals growing toward each other, hermaphroditic creatures, or fabulous animals. The power of sacrifice, at once physical and spiritual in its effect, was symbolized by a winged steer or a phallic tree. Courage, blazing fire, the sun (cross-section), could be symbolized by the winged lion ready to attack; and their antithesis (force at rest, glowing embers, evening sun) by a weary lion. Of course this was possible only on condition that such animals were made to look not individual or realistic but as abstract as possible.

But even these figures cannot solve the problem completely; for although the mythical imagination here attempts to overcome separate concrete categories of phenomena in nature and to indicate the *coincidentia oppositorum* by, for instance, giving wings to a steer, it is still forced to express itself by means of two concrete and specific elements: body of a mammal and wings. Beyond the concrete single phenomenon we really have only the combination of two elements.

As far as geometric symbols are concerned, they do have the advantage of greater abstraction, but they lack movement which, even in the winged steer, can be only implied. Without movement, however, the original symbol is to be neither imagined nor carried out. The original symbol must be animated, since primitive man feels all power as a

palpable, usually even revolving or spiral, movement encompassing the whole dynamic cycle of this power, with all its peaks and valleys, its thesis and antithesis. The form given a power through a profound human need can indeed become a symbol for primitive man if it not only means something but at the same time can be the bearer and guide of living, moving reality, to be experienced psychologically and physically, and in which man can take part with body and soul. The original symbol cannot be an abstraction, a thing which only represents a force; it has to be a channel for a palpably working force.

But just this last and most important condition cannot be fulfilled by the unanimated picture, since it is not able to make the flow of a power into a reality and, moreover, can always represent only a single moment in the unfolding of a given power. And only in the rarest cases can it express both the unfolding and the recoil (thesis and antithesis) at once. There is a second great drawback to the unanimated picture: it suppresses another factor essential to growth in time, namely, the kind of dynamics with which a power unfolds. The image of the winged steer is the lifeless picture of the moment taking the place not only of a living, moving steer (or a corresponding masked dancer) but also of a roaring steer. Where these fabulous animals are not represented with open mouth, their wings indicate a voice of thunder, since in ancient symbolism feathers are primarily used to express sound translated into the visual (feather-dress). Later on, winged creatures were gradually replaced by musicians. The limitations of this paper prohibit further penetration into the musically symbolic meaning of feathers.

Near and East Asian fabulous beasts carved of stone which have been preserved until now are probably only figures taking the place of a real, that is, a living, symbol. The real symbol was a ritual dance whose magical background power was primarily expressed by the shouts of the dancers. The winged cherubim and angels of the Old Testament, too, were only the visible expression of the singing power of the heavenly choirs.

These roaring or singing fabulous creatures represented in the ritual of high cultures have their counterparts among primitive cultures in the ritual animal and mask dances, in that they represent a power personified by a visual image, whose cry is its most forceful expression. When such dances are "led" by the drum, the movements of the dancers are meant to be only the visual expression of the drum rhythm, which

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is itself full of symbolic effects. In places where this process can be observed today and where the few historical sources have something to say about this rather obvious fact, we also find that a dancing creature of this kind can become a symbol only when its "voice" enables it to become a bearer of and speaker for a higher power.

It is very strange that this crucial meaning of the acoustical phenomenon seems constantly to be ignored in the study of symbols, even though ancient literature and ethnographic reports overflow with examples characterizing the voice as the highest expression of creative power and as the most elegant and penetrating form of unfolding strength.

3. THE SOUNDING SYMBOL

This sounding power was, in fact, considered the basic substance of all the forces in the universe by the cosmologies of the high cultures of the megalithic period,³ particularly by the commentaries upon them, as, for instance, the *Upanishad*.⁴ It was to have been the dream-substance from which originally the whole world arose. As analogy to the life of man or the course of the day, this sounding dream-world is also often referred to as childhood, or the dawn of the universe, or, briefly, as the time of the dream, to which then logically corresponds a second dream-period, that of old age or dusk. But we also find such concepts with primitive peoples. A myth of the South American Uitoto⁵ describes the dream-period of creation as follows: "In the beginning, the word gave birth to the Father (creator)." Then it says: "There is an unexplainable substance which seems an illusion and yet exists in a form hidden from the senses, to be experienced only in one's thoughts. From this the world came to be, when God touched the unreal substance and, following a dream, held it fast through the breath of his mouth by the dream-thread. But when he examined the treacherous ground, it was not there. He pressed on the emptiness with his magic staff and, dreaming, held on to the substance; stamped on the imaginary floor to make it firm, and lay down on that which he had dreamed (the earth)." Then

3. About its distribution see Hermann Baumann, *Das doppelte Geschlecht* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1955).

4. Marius Schneider, "Le Rôle de la musique dans les civilisations non-européennes," *Encyclopédie de la musique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959).

5. Theodor Preuss, *Religion und Mythologie der Uitoto* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1921-23), p. 25.

emerged from the mouth of the creator the sounding *refuenas* ("one who makes a tale" or "is a tale"), the words of which contained the names and the life of all things. To make the rain, he seized, or himself became, a tree-drum from the sound of which the waters gushed out.

The concept that this original music of creation breaks out anew in each newborn child and sounds somewhat different with each individual is also found frequently in primitive as well as in high cultures. But it culminates in the conviction that this dream-music, in its at times varying shades, not only forms the kernel of each individual, but also joins this kernel with the primeval past, the singing dream-period in which its bearer is rooted.⁶

Indeed, all cosmogonies regarding the non-material, the sounding-power, or the "word" as the origin of creation consider the acoustic phenomenon as the antinomic basic substance of all things in the process of growth. This sound is antinomic in that the acoustic event begetting all life issues from the mouth of death (the creator).⁷ In this dream-substance, at first completely without image and without concept, the antinomic event is still a natural process, not a self-contradiction, because at the beginning of creation there was neither formal, logical thought nor a material, palpable manner of manifestation into which a given force would have to split itself during a concrete unfolding. But even in the finished world in which the sounding primal force has to split itself into various concrete shapes, the acoustic primal substance remains in the background of all manifestations, although at this late stage of creation it is often covered with its material clothing, or

6. The philosophy of the Yoga Vasishtha takes the position that, in fact, all objects are a creation of our mind, not only the things we experience in dreams. Maya is not only the created world but also the principle of creation. Things have no individual existence apart from consciousness. But music, because of its finely grained nature, is so little burdened with the concrete imaginings of illusions of the world of our imagination that it forms the real border line between truth and illusion or the conscious and the unconscious. The Tibetan Yoga of the six doctrines says that between earthly illusion of the senses and the Dharma Kaya, the holy incorporeal truth, stands the Sambhoga Kaya, which is not recognized by the soul until after death, in Bardo. This Sambhoga Kaya, which is "the invisible, super-physical body-aggregate of the perfect spiritual attributes of a Buddha," is experienced by the soul as a series of sounds. It is a kind of perfect melody formed from the sixty perfect vowels of Brahma. "As form, the Sambhoga Kaya is mentally inconceivable, as sound it is not wholly beyond mental comprehension" but stands on the border between illusion and knowledge. (W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* [2d ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1958], p. 213 and n. 2).

7. Schneider, "Die historischen Grundlagen der musikalischen Symbolik," *Musikforschung*, IV (1951), 116.

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made mute, to such an extent that its innermost nature and its origin in the sound-world of the primeval can at times hardly be recognized. But, concealed as this substance may be, it always remains the decisive border area which enables each object to keep in touch with its dream-origin.

This great value put on the sounding force can also be recognized clearly in the rituals in which song forms at once the substance of action and the bridge (border substance) to that dreamland in which the primal ancestors watch over the sources of life. In totemistic cultures and in ancient China the sound of the first cry of a newborn child is carefully tested at birth to determine with which mythical ancestor the child is most closely akin. In totemistic cultures this relationship with the future guardian was, to be sure, not determined until puberty—after the changing of the voice. To this end the young man has to hear, during the time of his preparation for initiation, a voice in a dream which corresponds to his new vocal register. When he has thus become conscious of the connection between his own nature and that of his ancestor or totem, he also adjusts the formal composition of his individual cry or song to the song form heard in his dream in such a way that now the sound of his voice, as well as his melody, becomes that common acoustic border substance in which he can meet and identify with his dead ancestor. If he shows a special gift for imitating the hissing of a certain snake or the blustering of the wind, then he must be classified genealogically with the totem of that snake or wind in which his patron is manifesting himself at the time. The fact that he is able to imitate one or another of these voices exactly is proof enough to identify him in his innermost being with the totem.

Sound, then, is not only the most concentrated compression (symbol) of his being and the strongest expression of the kernel of his personality but also the bridge (cross-section) between him, the totem, and the ancestor, or between the present and the primeval past. The totem-bearer throws a bridge to his acoustic counterpart in the nether world by answering him, whose song he heard in a dream, in a similar way. But his song is only effective and compelling if the disembodied ancestor has truly manifested himself as song to the singer and if the voice of the living singer has become, through exact imitation, truly the vessel of the voice of the dead one.

This brings us to the original form of the symbol. It is the living man whose voice unites with the voice of a being analogous but opposite (dead) to him (dualism). On the basis of a common tone substance, a living and a dead individual (rising above all differences in appearance) enter into a common action; and out of this dualistic union arises the apparent self-contradiction, i.e., the living corpse or the singing dead. It is only through this acoustic joining, allowing the dead ancestor to speak through the voice of the living or to “ride” on this voice, that living man can fully become a symbol. It is only through these *coincidentia oppositorum* that he himself can become the best possible stream-bed for the flow of that higher power in which he desires a share. And if, besides, he assumes certain bodily attitudes and performs pantomimic dances representing the stream of this power, then his outward form is only a visualization of the sounding dynamic power which flows through him at that moment.

The activity, then, which enables this man to become a partner in the sounding force consists primarily in the imitation of his own dream-music. Logical antitheses felt by waking man between life and death, or himself and his inmost soul, are bridged over and united into a whole in pantomimic dance and at the sound of the dream-music. The preference given to the voice in this imitation is doubtless due to the fact that it is the most adaptable organ of man; for with no disguise and no imitation of visible physical rhythmic motion can man imitate a phenomenon outside himself (the snake, the wind, the sea) as realistically as with his voice. Indeed, the ability of primitive man to imitate sounds of nature surpasses all the expectations of the average European. Moreover, the physical sensations and the sense of reality with which primitive man combines the vibration of his voice are so strong that speech, singing, and shouting are probably to be regarded as vital factors in the genesis of a consciousness of existence and the trance state.

We can already observe in children how deeply rooted is this urge toward acoustic imitation. No boy who has seen a lion in the zoo will omit imitating its roar when playing lion at home. Imitation of the voice will always be more important than all external physical imitation, and it is only after the sounding-power has been prepared openly or inwardly that the lion’s rhythm spreads to the hands—hands which would like to become paws but will always remain the hands of children.

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Indeed, there seems to have been a *clamo ergo sum* long before the *cogito ergo sum*. The very first cry with which the newborn child establishes contact with the outside world supports this view. Also, the constant babbling of the same short "melody," which seems to produce the same sense of well-being in the infant as it does in primitive man, probably does so because in this singsong the meeting of mental desire with physical action is immediately realized, and, moreover, realized as bone-vibration as well as movement. The mental wish thus is not only physically gratified but, by the physical counterplay itself, again directly influenced, made rhythmic and regular. The singsong actually affects a rhythmicization of the antinomy and a psychophysiological relaxation by which rigid antitheses dissolve in fluid movement and can even be transformed into play. In the adult, too, a feeling of balance and relaxation is created by the rhythmicization of the sounding breath, but only when his singing-power rises from the true center, that is, the acoustic power center of the network of the sun, called by the Taoists the "area of the elixir of life."

In the face of these facts it seems safe to assume that the sounding symbol had from the beginning also a therapeutic meaning. The silent symbol of later cultures probably had this meaning to a much lesser degree, because there, apparently, the purely intellectual meaning of the symbol stood much farther in the foreground than the purely psychophysiological channeling power. In fact, we can probably count as true stream-beds only those later symbols, the contours of which man is able to imitate with his body (certain animals, pillars, trees, the cross, the trapezoid, etc.), since man can, in part at least, still enter into a physical feeling for these forms on the basis of his own physique.

But even these living symbols remain empty channels as long as they are not flooded with the vibrating breath of language or song, i.e., the singing-power, by which man (between body and intellect) is immersed in the stream of the subconscious. It is therefore also highly probable that the fabulous animals which we have rediscovered through the investigation of ancient civilizations were really only sacral images of practiced ritual acts. In this case they were not themselves the stream-guide but only shadows of those ritual attitudes and disguises with which the priests as living symbols actually carried out their cult. We know from the old as well as the new literature that the priests also imitated the appropriate animal voices.

The only form in which the later symbols (already more or less separated from the idea of sound) could become true channels of a given force might have been the mystical contemplation of them. By this attitude, man seems, after lengthy preparatory chanting, to have been able to travel through the whole border area of acoustical substance, reliving it psychophysically, in order to penetrate to pure nothingness or complete emptiness—to reach the soundless non-being of highest reality. But for the very reason that this way became harder and harder to travel and became passable only for a few predestined men at the same rate as the decisive aid of the acoustic phenomenon was being more and more ignored, the idea of the symbol as acoustic stream-bed probably retreated gradually before that purely intellectual attitude which asked only for meaning and not at all for the real manner in which the symbol operated as a tool.

4. PHILOSOPHY OF SOUND AND CONCEPT OF THE UNIVERSE

There can be no doubt about the central meaning of the sounding-power as antinomic cosmic foundation and lower stratum of the human dream-world as it is described in the cosmographies, the rituals, and the dream-philosophies of Megalithic cultures.⁸ It is an important feature of the myths of creation in these cultures that the world always emerges from the non-material. In the beginning there was the soundless wish of the highest spirit to create the world. To this end he causes first the empty world space to emerge from his breath, by dreaming up the prime formulas of the world in the shape of supercomprehensible and inaudible syllables. This takes place in the deepest dark of the far north. Then the highest spirit breathes out an inaudible hymn of thanks, and from this hymn the body of the actual creator of the world is born who is to transmit the prime sounds to a new dream-existence, independent from the spirit of the highest being.

Now, when at the dawn of the east the creator, quietly and without passion, sounded the inaudible wish of the highest spirit, he grew like a singing tree or cloud of moist sounds into the empty space and filled it with his sound. This ends the first purely acoustic phase of creation. Then, when the creator (who was probably the singing prime-sun) traveled farther eastward, his songs, at first only ethereal and faintly

8. Schneider, "Le rôle de la musique dans les civilisations non-européennes."

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sounding, began to glow. This brings us to the second period of creation, in which the dreamed prime sounds became visible songs. These ethereal sounding pictures were the “names” of the gods and of all future creatures.

The first created things, then, were names—meaningful sounds which had detached themselves from the foggy mass of prime sound under the influence of the sun’s bright rhythm. They were sounds which stood between the original nothingness or void and the later concrete objects of which they were the names. They were the word or song with which the creator had formulated aloud the wish of the great spirit. Sound was thus the first substance with which the empty world space was filled, like a vast resonator.

But now the visible creatures wanted to have a concrete body and bodily weight. This they reached in the third phase of creation by hurling themselves with their singing and glowing rhythm into the still formless mass, thus stamping sense and form on it. Thus the planets came to be, moon and earth, and finally plants and the living inhabitants of the world. This ends the dream-period or childhood of the universe. The order of the acts of creation as I have just described it is particularly significant for our investigation: (1) the sound, (2) the light, and (3) the transition of the light-world into a concrete and visible existence. At the beginning is the dark sound, then this sound lights up and becomes visible, and finally the sounding images change to the concrete objects corresponding to their names by throwing themselves into the material mass.

I know of no unequivocal account anywhere of how the materialization of the sounding images took place and who the actual creator of the material world was, unless they were held to be pre-existent. If we seize on the two most frequent solutions to this problem, we find either that the creator himself descended to a partially materialistic form or that he remained pure sound and his mirror-image, i.e., the lord of material substance, is brought in as partner, because of his creatures’ universal clamoring for more corporeality. In any case, in the creation of the concrete world we always find either a single being (but with dualistic tendencies) or a pair of brothers, the dark earthly brother always trying to eavesdrop on his heavenly, light brother for the secret of his singing power, in order likewise to be able to give form to matter. But his efforts are in vain, for the creator’s secret lies in being able to

repeat, high and clear, without passion or arrogance, the syllables of the highest spirit. The dark brother, however, who is only a greedy imitator, can only croak or screech with arrogance. Thus he remains uncreative or brings forth only monsters and disasters.

From this dual aspect of creation, then, the whole nature of the world and of man is explained, man being constructed analogous to the world. The basic structure (ethereal-sounding, spiritual, active, and heavenly) at first was dark, then began to light up, and finally became visible. On the other hand, the material world which joined it only later was passive, lazy, discordant, or mute. But when, in the course of the third period of creation, the first "touching" of these two contrary parts took place, an intermediate world was born—the first material substance in which, however, the spontaneously vibrating spirit was still able to bring the mute mass into swinging motion, so that it was made to sound like a musical instrument. This half-concrete intermediate world thus was created when the spirit, originally only ethereally sounding, lowered himself into the mass and shaped it according to his will. But, since this first matter was still in all its parts finely grained and able to vibrate, it became a musical instrument under the influence of the spirit which penetrated it. This does not, of course, mean a specific instrument—only a world the matter of which was still vibrating strongly and the substance and effectivity of which were purely acoustic or musical. Myths state, for example, that the heroes of this intermediate world traveled inside drums or drank from cymbals. The world in question, then, is one in which force, until now only ethereally ringing, suddenly becomes audible in matter, audible by having created for itself a shell or stream-bed capable of vibrating, in which it can manifest itself without obstacle.

But the denser and harder the material mass became in successive periods of creation, the fainter became again the voice of this singing force. The ideal condition which characterizes the intermediate world was maintained in our material world only in musical instruments or in the human voice. And that is why, for the concrete world, the realm of music is the true area where spirit and matter, or heaven and earth, still overlap; in other words, the realm of ritual, cult, and the true seat of that sounding-power which stands behind all purely earthly concrete phenomena. In the last dream-image (third period of creation) the antinomic quality of spirit and matter and their various manifestations is

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already there as seed but has not yet become irreconcilable contrast, because it is at bottom still a "finely grained" world, i.e., a world primarily effective through the dynamics of sound.

This purely ritualistic conception of a dualistic world, consisting only of the mingling of sounds and light-dark shapes and knowing as yet no irreconcilable contrasts, has been treated again and again, and with many variations, by ancient cosmogonies. In order to give these ideas pictorial expression, they showed the play of the cosmic powers (in the last analysis determined only by a purely acoustic antimony) at first by two intersecting or tangential circles. Since the whole world was conceived as anthropomorphic, into each circle a huge couple was drawn. Of these two antinomic pairs, one represented the spiritual, the other the material, world. The inner antinomy of these circles, each already antinomic in itself, was thus indicated by four persons. Each of these two giant couples is shown sometimes back to back, sometimes squatting, sometimes cross-legged, but in the last case in such a way that one head always points up while the other one hangs down. Consequently the two persons touch with their buttocks. In this way one person appears as the mirror-image or counterplayer of the other. Occasionally, the two couples were reduced to one, the upper part of the body filling the spiritual space, while the lower part formed the material. In this case the man stands upright, while the woman stands on her head.

Between these two circles is then inserted another pair of tangential circles into which a third couple is drawn in the same way. This third couple represents the region of that hybrid creature which is sometimes meant to represent the mediator between heaven and earth, sometimes the column supporting the firmament or the tree of life and death. In the four leaves resulting from the intersecting of the four circles lies the intermediate region, and around it the earth and the sea.

Let us examine this anthropomorphic world picture in detail, leaving out the mirror-image and looking only at the upper circle. In the middle rises the backbone, which with its ribs forms the tree and branches of death. In the mirror-image which we shall hence ignore, the backbone corresponds to the tree of life. In the dome of heaven which forms the large resonance-cave of the god of thunder are the lung and heart of the universe. Under the diaphragm (network of the sun) where the spiritual circle meets the material lie gall bladder (dragon's cave) and the so-called nephritic caves of the kidneys. The whole complex, rich

in caves, under the diaphragm is the so-called holy mountain, the center of which forms the navel of the earth, and under its roots (perineum) the two streams of life, Ida and Pingala (connected also with vein and artery), divide into four streams.

This whole cosmic system which emerged by imposing the structure of humans on the universe was, however, not meant to depict our present world. It was solely to point to that ideal intermediate world which in time as well as space formed the transition from the purely spiritual to the material world. Since man and universe are analogous, the development and construction of these finely grained original states of the world continue to live on, even today, in the archaic layer of mankind, particularly in myths, in dreams, and in the deepest unconscious of man, according to Indian teaching. In man, too, under the influence of the bright rhythm, the hazy acoustical basic substance of the unconscious gradually turns into a world of images, the coherence of which is determined not by logical but by musical laws. But since these antinomic images grow out of a dream situation, they have of course only an extremely vacillating meaning or no meaning which can be fixed comprehensibly and unequivocally. All the more does man experience them purely psychically and physically, that is, as motion and real event flowing through him, which he can master only by either forgetting this antinomic stream he seized in his dream or transferring it to a ritualistic symbol. The whole historical sequence (in the beginning an almost completely abstract existence: first in darkness, then in light, and finally in a half-concrete, finely grained state) which we were able to follow in the act of creation thus is repeated in the psyche of man. At first there was the incomprehensible, alogical, audibly or inaudibly sounding darkness of the deepest unconscious. Then the light of the singing dream-images appeared, and finally half-conscious life, i.e., the intermediate world in which our spirit arbitrarily shaped the material mass, not by formal and logical laws, but by irrational and musical ones.

In the twilight of the intermediate world (which is also the world of cult and at the same time the border line between the conscious and the unconscious) the symbol, too, developed. Here the blind dual impetuses, rising to the surface from the dark of the primeval or the depth of the human subconscious as pure sound-images, at last find the finely grained stream-bed formed by our spirit, which allows them to appear and to ring out in sound; for just as the sounding intermediate world

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is still beyond any material splitting-up of force into various manifestations, the symbol, too, can still channel and master any force in its purest form, before the inner unity of the dualistic force dissolves in the light of formal thought and before the acoustical substance splits up into various material phenomena and thus cuts off man's access to it. For the awakened consciousness, however, and for the material world, the symbol is the concrete realization of a form originally expressing a spiritual energy which stood between the rational and the irrational world, between the world of logic and reason and the dynamic-musical world.

Thus the symbol is both stream-bed and justification for a force which dares penetrate beyond its own irrational sphere to the region of rational thought. The symbol seems to stand in an alien material world like a fortress sealed up on all sides. But in reality many underground passages lead to this center, from which there are direct paths to the depth of irrational life. The symbol is the protective cloak for all forces which are separated or split up into various forms in their material existence; under this cloak they reappear in their homogeneous basic structure—as the sounding images of the intermediate world or as ritual objects within the material world.

While in the course of this article we have learned to recognize purely pictorial, silent, or unmoving symbols as forms of a later style and sometimes as mere tokens for purely acoustic phenomena of the subconscious, perhaps we have discovered the most archaic and abstract layer of archetypes in the human unconscious and its dream-world. I am referring to that dynamic layer without images which extends from the elementary cry to elementary forms of song of a type found in equal distribution all over the earth, and one which is equally comprehensible to men of all cultures. This is a group of acoustical archetypes which, free from artistic formulation and cultural specialization, hardly attains the formality of melody but in most cases is extraordinarily full of effects. Their structure is usually most elementary, and their real character is determined above all by the psychological overtones which fill the hall, ranging from screams of joy about the singing to lamentations and weeping.

It is in the instability of the phenomenon outlined above that the antinomy of the unconscious is able to attain its most thorough fusion,

blending, or interlacing. Nothing corresponds to the archaic-bestial darkness and the fluid boundaries of the forces of the unconscious so well as the imageless and conceptionless antinomy of the sound phenomenon: the simultaneity or unnoticeable transition from laughing to singing and crying; the consonant or dissonant chords of contrasting (high and low, hard and soft) tones; or the alternation of rhythmic forces with the uninterrupted change of tonal functions.

But even more highly developed music has a place in this connection. It does not, of course, belong in the realm of the cosmic primeval, but it does belong in the intermediate world, in the zone of the half-conscious in which the intellect is already framing and inclosing the life of pure instinct.

Now, so long as sounds are considered the basic substance of all phenomena (cross-section), the tool which we call "symbol" will also have to be a sounding tool. But from the moment in which the image emerging from the sound is considered equivalent with the sound, the acoustic symbol can gradually be supplanted by a sound-image, i.e., a concrete, visible, pictorial symbol.

Among dream-images based on sound and preserved by mythology we have first the dark image of a moist, foggy, murmuring mass out of which rises the sound of the primeval waters, according to Indian lore. In the beginning the sounds of this mass are unstable, fluid shapes which, depending on their relative distances or rhythms, are in consonant or dissonant relation to each other, whenever they do not simply co-exist chaotically. This amorphous dark murmuring, which is considered the zone of death, is ended by the bright rhythm which through alternating arsis and thesis, or short and long, creates order in time and space and stamps a definite form on the mass. There are numerous images in mythology which seem to correspond to the dualistic development of this original sound phenomenon: the dark, amorphous sound is taken as the original form of water and earth or of a female element. Rhythm, imposing order and form, on the other hand, is the prototype of air, bright fire, masculinity. But both parts, sound and rhythm, are again antinomic in themselves: sound by the simultaneity of high and low, rhythm by its floating accent. The acoustic phenomenon, moreover, includes the pre-forms of all later categories: space through the pitch of the tones, time through their duration, intensity through volume,

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quality through tone-color, and changing combinations of tonal functions while maintaining a steady meter.

The central images mentioned most often which are the result of the rhythmic organization and stabilization of the fire-water-mass are the milky way, the volcano, and the singing light-tree or concept of the giant. Closely connected are the pictures of caves, hollow trees, and the prime mother or prime drum, the original acoustical form of which is a non-material precipice or sounding board from which the tone grows up as the first power of cosmic being. The imperative voice, the sound of a waterfall or thunder, becomes the picture of an authoritative person. Noise is turned into fearful or evil shapes. The sounds of nature produce corresponding figures. The most vital characteristics of an animal are combined in the nature of its cry.

It seems strange to us today that the acoustic phenomenon always was to have preceded the visual. But if we really want to understand the ancient symbols, we have to go back to the beliefs of the old civilizations which created these dream-symbols, whether we like it or not. According to these beliefs, the acoustical always precedes the optical. Chinese cosmology tells us explicitly: first came thunder, then lightning. Behind the view is doubtless the concept that cosmic life since the creation of the intermediate world (seen chronologically, since the climax or noontime of universal life) has gone backward. Consequently, in contrast to the constructive primeval times, all events in our time unroll in the opposite direction. This is the only way in which we can understand the role of the symbol in the ritual. It stands at the noon of creation, i.e., it represents the balance between the rational and the irrational.

All more highly formed music has an equal intermediate position. Gods who ride over the waters as singing feathers or ride through the air on neighing horses or drums, who swing axes which return to them like echoes—all these figures which defy natural laws and have the peculiarity of floating in the air, contrary to the law of gravity, turn out on closer examination to be sound pictures by which the dream, or mythology, makes visual the abstract event of dynamically floating song.

Let us pause a moment to outline once again the two kinds of symbol we have recognized so far. The oldest symbol, we must assume, was

the figure of a singing person who conquers the antithesis of the I and you or of the here and the beyond above all time and space by making himself the immediate carrier (stream-bed) of these antitheses by means of the acoustical border, or dream, substance. By lending his own voice to a magic power, in order to let this power speak through him, he also obtains an immediate share in it.

Another kind of symbol is created when the acoustic phenomenon which, through the act of creation, embodies in germ form and dualistically the substance of all appearances and all antitheses of the psychic and the material world. This occurs when the phenomenon is clothed in dream-images in which the dreamer carries out his actions indirectly, for instance, through a musical instrument or the mythological form thereof (*drum* = body, vessel, ship, sled, horse, chariot; *harp* = hook, ladder; *flute* = bamboo-cane, bamboo-bridge, scepter, phallus. A *strange calling voice* = rope, along which the dreamer feels his way). In this type, man is functioning as symbol, as channeler of the power flowing through him, only in his dream. But when upon awakening he consciously makes a symbol out of the images experienced in his dream, he is no longer himself the stream-bed because now he is looking at his experience objectively and casting it in the form of a symbol outside his own body, a drum for instance. The symbol is now only a tool in his hands; consequently he can feel its power only through an object outside himself.

In order to supply this dead material object created after a dream-image with a truly living symbolic power (conquering antinomy and cross-section), a new factor has to be introduced. The material from which the symbol is made has to be *holy*, and this holiness is what makes it sound. A sacrifice, then, must take place. Whereas, with the sounding symbol, man offers himself as the sacrifice and is made holy by giving his voice (his most valuable substance) as stream-bed to the force to be channeled, the visual dead symbol calls for a material which is the result of a sacrifice already made. A holy stone, the bone of a dead creature, a piece of wood, or a skin inclosing the life of a sacrificed being must be made to sound, for magic power flows only where a sacrifice has prepared the way.

An example of such a material is the Amerasian frame-drum which is supposed to be an image of the whole world. A Chinese myth tells the following tale: A hero is killed in the ritual manner. He is skinned,

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the skin is tanned and dried and stretched over the frame of a drum. And now the singing power which the dead man had during his life-time is changed into one much more powerful—the sound of a drum-skin beaten by a living person. But in this sounding symbol of asceticism and unlimited power the primary thing is no longer the sound but the dried skin from which the sound rises. The drummer is no longer the real stream-bed, or symbol, but only the intermediary who causes the sounding power, latent in the skin, to begin to roll out. For this reason the drum is also regarded as sled, chariot, or riding animal.

This material tool, by which man tries to find entrance to a magic power without the direct offering of his own person, brings us to a turning point at which the formation of the silent symbol becomes possible. The next step consists of setting some rite expressing the antinomy of living forces in a concise formula, without regard for the acoustic cross-section of the symbol, leaving it to the intellect to complete the cross-section. The place of the sacrifice is taken by consecration (which is to make the symbol capable of bearing by word or song) and by the custom of ritual-singing in the presence of the symbol. From this moment, however, the symbol is no longer a real psychophysical stream-guide but only a bearer of meaning, composed more or less arbitrarily or developed historically and consequently only more or less accessible to man, depending on his intelligence. Whereas the symbol now acquires a very definite meaning, it is also uprooted from its true alogical sphere; and it is only in this way that we can explain the wealth of meanings, sometimes completely heterogeneous, of many symbols of the later style. The symbol of the old style is an expression of a definite spiritual attitude, not the abstract formulation of an abstract idea.

5. MUSIC AND DREAM

We shall now return to the acoustic primary symbol, in order to pose the question: To what extent is this acoustic primary, or border, phenomenon as basis for the symbol still comprehensible today, despite the historical evolution just mentioned (priority of the optical and intellectual over the acoustic)? I think there is no doubt that even we still hear voices or other¹ more or less definable sounds in our dreams. But the question how far man today experiences this dream-music as the real substratum of his dream-images could only be answered by a corresponding study of dreams. We can certainly still experience a voice in

its primary form, i.e., as the purely acoustic expression of a person, without necessarily connecting it with a visual image of the person. But how far we are able to experience a voice still as a purely psychic condition—having no connection with or reference to a definite person—this, too, only the study of dreams can answer.

Much more common, doubtless, is the obstinate recurrence of a melody and its occasional linkage with an equally obstinate dream-image. In the dreams of primitive peoples, on the other hand, pure sound-images are the usual thing. It is a commonplace notion among primitive civilizations that the dream is, in fact, the source of musical inspiration. The Baule and Duala Negroes assured me again and again that even the pictorial images of the singing dead heard in dreams were at first experienced acoustically and were only gradually seen (dancing to the rhythm of the song). The Dualas say that living men, animals, or trees, even mountains, appear to them in dreams as pure melodies, sometimes light and misty, sometimes oppressive, but always incorporeal and “transparent.” Five individuals whom I asked separately for the meaning of these melodies gave the same answer: “This melody is man, or animal, or tree,” or “The melody is the strength of man, of animal, or of the tree, but it is hard to remember these melodies exactly when one is awake. They also lose their power easily when one sings them before another person.” Still, there is a fairly large repertory of such songs which the composer first heard abstractly in a dream and only later gradually recognized as image.

If for further enlightenment on these processes we again consult the cosmogonies of the East we are led to suspect that the gradual dawning of light in dreams is caused by the desire to tear sound from its dark, objective existence, to make it visible and comprehensible by bright rhythm—yes, even to take possession of it in a palpable way. Just as the gods (sounds) of primeval times became visible and then gradually wanted to become heavy and corporeal as well, so does dreaming man perhaps want to transform the purely acoustic foundation of his unconscious into visible and palpable figures.

However, in our dreams things often appear in a kind of *ostinato* or rondo form, and in a shape or manner of moving which seems to defy all natural laws. Many dream psychologists are of the opinion that these extraordinary forms of motion and figures serve the dreamer as escape from the everyday coercion of physical laws. But in this very

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tendency of the mind to remove a single event from its material conformity the connection of dream-images with their acoustical foundation becomes quite obvious again. It is, in fact, a specific attribute of music to have at its disposal an incredible dynamic and tectonic freedom in the composition and repetition of a melody. Perhaps this freedom of the acoustical dream-substance is what underlies the aesthetics of many modern painters. Melodies, at any rate, can be turned upside-down without loss of individuality or vitality or can return as mirror-image or backward. It is also possible to let any one part, for instance the "head" (first theme), return in the middle or at the end of a movement, even sequentially ebbing and flowing. Moreover, several melodies can sound at once, entwine and cross over or pursue each other as canons and thicken into an inextricable ball. Counterpoint and bitonal parallel voices, i.e., the simultaneity or union of two contrary or analogous voices, are a fundamental law in musical voice-leading. The ambiguity of dream-images, too, finds its counterpart in the changing meaning of tonal functions. The dream-technique of veiling or altering meanings or of connecting quite dissimilar objects on the basis of phonetic similarity (a classical example: "geschickt" means both "sent away" and "physically well-co-ordinated") returns in music as enharmonic or enrhythmic phenomenon. These phenomena, which in normal life at best are considered the product of an extravagant imagination, are in music the natural form of motion.

There is no limit, either, to the variety of individual images which can be produced in the listener by certain tone-colors and forms of motion. Such images may, of course, be the result of the imagination merely playing on the surface of the musical event. But when the sound of the horn breaks in muffled depths and then suddenly appears above us in unsuspected heights and completely changed voice, when the pipes of pan sound as if the wind were rustling in the porous bamboo stalks of a pond, or the drum rhythm seems to rattle down on us like hail, then the formulating powers of our unconscious are sometimes forced to fight for pictorial expression which is not to be confused with the urge to play that I mentioned earlier. Such a picture, which may present itself during a particularly strong acoustic impression, is really due less to a tendency toward sound-painting than to a compulsion to rid one's self of a musical impression of excessive vehemence. Escape into the realm of the optical is often a flight from the incom-

prehensible and primeval of the acoustic impression flooding us, just as awakening can be flight from the impressiveness of a dream.

A short theme is capable of bursting its framework, like a bowl of fruit out of which a melody uncoils, now contracting its body, now stretching it boundlessly like the mythical cloudsnake. No less overwhelming is the music of black magic, the cursing song spreading death and evil spells or calling up the sound substance of amorphous monsters. It is through chaotically ringing, whistling masses of sound and convulsive or torpid rhythms that the creative sound substance is changed into an amorphous event. Noise and screams come to life as horror figures. Unless man tames these chaotic masses in the bright rhythm of the intermediate world, the realm of sound can virtually turn into a prehistoric titanic monster, a dragon with seven heads who lurks with seven dreadful screams in the twilight in a narrow pass between the conscious and the unconscious. It was only because the spirit of man was able to master this mass that he was able to make the primeval world his own.

The chaotic and polyphonic knot which corresponds to the spirit of our unconscious is prevented from unbridled eruption, and can even be turned into redeeming symbol, by well-ordered rhythm, or spirit, which clasps this chaotic mass and forces it into a fruitful partnership.

And yet the forces of the primeval world remain active, for something sinister—the nameless and ambiguous, escaping all comprehensible stabilization—still continues to cling to every specifically musical sound phenomenon. Just like the dream whose inexorable logic is incomprehensible to the logic of our mind, music is the abstract expression of the irrational and apparently chaotic primeval growth and the drive to unlimited multiplication by obstinate repetition.

It is obvious that the acoustic phenomenon we are discussing refers especially to that archaic sound phenomenon which we find particularly in genuine primitive music as uninhibited expression of the unconscious. This expression is accomplished with primitive peoples the more easily, since all possibilities of sound-making and sound-movement are permissible and are not hemmed in by rules of the craft. Not only can shouting, howling, whistling, and imitations of any natural noise be woven into the song; their rhythms, too, move much more freely, are more varied, and more faithful to nature than the formulas codified in constructed music.

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Of course it is also possible for genuinely symbolic sounds to issue from the inspiration of the composer. When Wackenroder refers to such music as the mirror of the soul, this corresponds in large part to the old conception of the sound symbol. But when such music starts from purely spoken diction, or wants to express an idea by sound-painting, then it no longer produces genuine sound symbols but, rather, symbolic sounds, i.e., musical sounds which are to take the place of a pre-existing spoken sentence, a picture, or an idea. With this symbolic sound, music has taken the decisive turn, after which sound is no longer the elementary given substance but has become a secondary incarnation of the picture or idea. Its foundation is no longer the unconscious, smoldering in sound and gradually struggling through to a visual image, but a conscious image searching for a suitable tonal event. Nevertheless, the tonal symbol retains the advantage over silent symbols by using material which is fundamentally closest to the inner substance of every phenomenon and thereby continues to suggest the channeling-power of the ancient symbol.

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