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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF IMMANUEL VELIKOVSKY

John M. MacGregor
Lecturer in Art and Psychiatry
Ontario College of Art

In that all of us come from different academic disciplines it seems necessary for me to identify myself and to explain my interest in Dr. Velikovsky's research. I am an art historian specializing in the application of psychiatry and psychoanalysis to the study of art. I also work as a psychotherapist which explains the involvement you will see in the paper with case material, although I have avoided individual cases with which I am working because most of them are not reaching the depth of material that I will be discussing today.

It was my interest in the application of psychoanalysis to historical reconstruction that brought me for the first time into contact with Dr. Velikovsky. In Princeton, as some of you know, he is a bit of a legend, if not a *bête-noire*. The origin of this particular bit of research dates to an afternoon in April 1971, which I spent with Dr. Velikovsky discussing the psychological aspects and implications of his work and his personal involvement with psychoanalysis and Freud. At that particular time Dr. Velikovsky was deeply involved with research for the book *Mankind in Amnesia*. He was filled with questions about Freud's and Jung's conception of what we call inherited racial memory, and I left Dr. Velikovsky that day with the intention of assisting him by investigating this topic in the writing of Freud and Jung, and thereby clarifying for both of us exactly what the views of these two men were on the possibility of inherited mental contents. My remarks today should be seen as a belated and certainly partial effort to fulfill that intention.

The fact that Dr. Velikovsky is a psychoanalyst has tended to be obscured. The enormous range of his later investigations have covered over his original orientation. He himself has pointed out

on several occasions the importance of the psychoanalytic viewpoint and also its clinical procedures, in guiding and stimulating his approach to the reconstruction of history. In the Princeton lecture of 1953 he stated:

I came upon the idea that traditions and legends and memories of genetic origin can be treated in the same way in which we treat in psychoanalysis the early memories of a single individual [1].

And in the preface to *Worlds in Collision* Dr. Velikovsky characterized the work that he was going to undertake as an "analytic experiment on Mankind." [2]

I have a feeling that when Dr. Velikovsky first published *Worlds in Collision* he may have chosen to conceal that he was an analyst. Although he talks about using an analytic method, he never really points to the fact that this was his training. I am not sure why that might have been, but the following quotation explains the way he saw the work he was going to do:

The task I had to accomplish was not unlike that faced by a psychoanalyst who, out of dissociated memories and dreams reconstructs a forgotten traumatic experience in the early life of an individual. In an analytic experiment on mankind, historical inscriptions and legendary motifs often play the same role as recollections (infantile memories) and dreams in the analysis of a personality [3].

Dr. Velikovsky can and should be seen as a member of the third generation of Vienna-trained analysts. He knew Freud and met with him on a few occasions, and of course he published in the psychoanalytic journals of the time and Freud would have known his work. His own analytic training was carried out under Wilhelm Stekel, who was a close co-worker for some years with Freud. Dr. Velikovsky went on to practice for a number of years in Israel as a psychoanalyst.

The ability of this man as an analyst is commonly ignored. The psychoanalytic community as a group has been, probably deliberately, reticent about according him his rightful place as one of the more brilliant minds to come out of the Vienna circle. I hope that Dr. Velikovsky will forgive me if I quote from a

letter which to some extent corrects this omission on the part of his analytic contemporaries. This letter was written in 1947 by Dr. Lawrence Kubie, a major American analyst who recently died, and in it he quotes Dr. Paul Federn, certainly one of the most prestigious followers of Freud, as follows:

A genius. A great man. An excellent psychoanalyst. An M.D. member of the Palestine group. Some revolutionary scientific ideas that some people think are crazy, but he is a genius. Would not consider him for a teacher, but as an analyst I have sent him some of my most difficult cases [4].

If you are interested in understanding Dr. Velikovsky as a psychoanalyst, the unusual perceptiveness which he has is best displayed in the essay which he published in 1941 in the *Psychoanalytic Review* entitled "The Dreams Freud Dreamed." [5] In that essay he presented some very interesting speculations about Freud's attitudes toward religion, and explored certain problems that Freud may have had concerning his personal relationship to Judaism. Those of you who know the Jones biography of Freud will know that Jones attacked Dr. Velikovsky on this point, totally irrationally. The essay is actually a brilliant piece of analysis. Dr. Velikovsky then went on to continue his observations about Freud in the chapter in *Oedipus and Akhnaton*, entitled "A Seer of our Time." That brief chapter represents the most insightful analysis of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* which has been published to date. In it he points to Freud's curious failure to utilize psychoanalytic theory in his analysis of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, Akhnaton. Dr. Velikovsky's own writings have not avoided that challenge. He has cautiously applied psychoanalytic theory throughout his work. In the chapter in *Worlds in Collision* entitled "A Collective Amnesia" he put forth a series of speculative and highly controversial psychological hypotheses, some of the implications of which I want to look at with you today.

Psychology, and psychoanalysis in particular, can contribute in a number of ways to the study of Dr. Velikovsky's work. His theories, if they are looked at seriously, raise profound psychological problems. It is odd that so little has been written about the psychological implications of Dr. Velikovsky's theories. In *Pensée* for example there are very few articles that

concern themselves with a psychological examination of the Velikovsky hypotheses. One exception to that is Dr. William Mullen, who in his article entitled "The Center Holds" points out that if Dr. Velikovsky's psychological observations are correct, and that of course depends on the rest of the cataclysm theory, then his contribution to psychology would represent by far the most urgent aspect of his work [6]. know that in recent years Dr. Velikovsky has never failed in lecturing to discuss the psychological implications of his work. He has also told me that in the response he gets from his audiences (letters, discussions with him and soon), it is the psychological aspects of his work which holds the most interest for them.

As has been pointed out a number of times today, the reaction of the scientific community and others to Dr. Velikovsky's proposals obviously provides a worthwhile topic for psychological investigation in itself. As a psychoanalyst, Dr. Velikovsky could have predicted in advance that his findings would have awakened the most intense resistance. I think it strange that so much fuss is made about the strange behaviour of the scientific community. It was and is perfectly predictable and understandable in terms of the very psychological theories that are being proposed. The resistance would have to be intense if indeed a collective amnesia is involved.

Dr. Velikovsky identifies somewhat with Freud in assuming the responsibility of confronting mankind with information which provokes profound anxieties and defensive reactions. if the Velikovsky hypotheses are correct, these violently negative responses Are part of an understandable pattern urgently in need of change. If he is wrong, and of course, if he is wrong he is dramatically, gorgeously wrong, then the irrationality of the scientific community's response still demands a psychological explanation, except then the nature of the explanation would be quite different.

Freud, speaking of the equally violent irrationality of Darwin's critics, offers some words of solace to the belaboured bearer of unwanted reality. I quote:

The new truth awoke emotional resistances; these found expression in arguments by which the evidence in favour of

the unpopular theory could be disputed; the struggle of opinions took up a certain length of time; from the first there were adherents and opponents; the number as well as the weight of the former kept on increasing until at last they gained the upper hand; during the whole time of struggle the subject with which it was concerned was never forgotten. We are scarcely surprised that the whole course of events took a considerable length of time; and we probably do not sufficiently appreciate that what we are concerned with is a process in group psychology [7].

Freud, of course, was speaking from agonizing painful experience of the same kind.

There is a second direction in which psychology could be applied to the work of Dr. Velikovsky and that is in the area of psychobiographical investigation of Dr. Velikovsky himself. So far this particular approach has only been used in the vituperative attack on Dr. Velikovsky, confined to the somewhat unscientific goal of declaring him "crazy." But whether Dr. Velikovsky is right or wrong, and probably particularly if he is wrong, his life and work will eventually be the subject of intensive psychobiographical scrutiny.

As you will probably notice, the psychotic delusions of cataclysmic destruction of the world, which I am going to discuss briefly, could easily be turned against Dr. Velikovsky's theories and particularly against his personality. Should he be in error, this will unquestionably be the punishment history will inflict upon him.

The task of the psychobiographer I prefer to leave for the future. It is always easier to get away with when the subject under scrutiny is far away, usually in Heaven.

Now, I mentioned earlier, the curious lack of critical discussion of Dr. Velikovsky's psychological observations. I think that this can be explained not so much in terms of psychological resistance, although that plays a part, but as deriving from the fact that psychology is unsuited and at present unable to offer any decisive support for, or evidence against, the cataclysmic hypothesis. Nevertheless, it can contribute material which enlarges the scope of the discussion and stimulates enquiries in

new directions. But be warned: nothing that I am going to say will help to decide the case for or against cataclysmic hypothesis. I want to turn now to a brief examination of three points at which psychology enters into Dr. Velikovsky's reconstruction of history.

The suggestion that the earth was involved in a series of violent near collisions with its neighbours in space, as recently as -686, excites considerable skepticism in historians and archaeologists. The writing of history was, of course, fairly well developed by this time, and far less significant events managed to find their way into historical records. Dr. Velikovsky has indicated that there-are, in fact, a large number of texts which can be understood as detailed accounts of the cataclysmic events, which he feels he has rediscovered. Nevertheless, the failure of a series of such terrifying experiences to leave more of an impression on the memory and behaviour of mankind demands explanation. Such events cannot possibly have been merely forgotten; and Dr. Velikovsky is well aware of this, as he points out:

If cosmic upheavals occurred in the historical past, why does not the human race remember them, and why was it necessary to carry on research to find out about them [8]?

To account for this suspicious failure of memory, Dr. Velikovsky has suggested a collective amnesia, preventing these traumatic experiences from reaching consciousness.

It is a psychological phenomenon in the life of individuals as well as whole nations that the most terrifying events of the past may be forgotten or displaced into the subconscious mind. As if obliterated are impressions that should be unforgettable. To uncover their vestiges and their distorted equivalents in the psychical life of peoples is a task not unlike that of overcoming amnesia in a single person [9].

In extending findings, derived from individual psychology to mankind as a whole, Dr. Velikovsky follows in the footsteps of Freud of *Moses and Monotheism*. It is a jump which even Freud made with some hesitancy. In the chapter of *Moses and Monotheism* entitled "The Analogy," he "invites the reader to take the step of supposing that something occurred in the life of the human species similar to what occurs in the life of the

individuals." [10] To proceed from the traumatic experience of the individual, to the suggestion of a collectively experienced trauma and a collective repression of painful memory is a considerable jump, with massive implications for both history and, as well, for social psychology.

One wonders, for example, to what extent the memories of the Nazi death camps or the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have undergone what could truly be called repression. It can't be doubted that many individuals have dealt with these agonizing memories by utilizing this mechanism of defence, but to presume that a massive act of repression can occur, an act of repression so complete that it interferes with the conscious collective memory of mankind in general, is a step which should be undertaken with considerable trepidation. It can be asked whether the entire historical reconstruction proposed by Dr. Velikovsky depends on this defensive operation having occurred. (It should be stressed that when we talk of repression we are talking about an unconsciously activated mechanism, totally distinct from the conscious suppression of unpleasant memories. The only evidence for repression of material having occurred would be an unexplainable vacuum in the mind in connection with vitally important experiences which might be expected to have left profound traces in the memory.) I believe that Dr. Velikovsky is correct in suggesting that the failure of such historical events to be remembered in elaborate detail would demand a psychological explanation. In short, if a collective repression of these memories didn't occur then there were no such events! The hypothesis of a collective repression is a crucial underpinning of the wider theory. The repression of events which he is postulating was neither instantaneous nor complete. The existence of numerous historical records which Dr. Velikovsky understands as references to a series of very specific worldwide cataclysmic occurrences indicates an effort on the part of at least some people in the human race to come to grips with this traumatic experience on a conscious level. As he has indicated, repression in this situation is not so much suggested by the absence of memories in the form of written history, as by the inability of later civilizations to comprehend the meaning of these quite specific and detailed accounts, or to their tendency to see them as allegorical images that mean

something quite different. And it is true that repression frequently operates as something of a psychological blind spot, rendering us unable to understand certain things which should be quite evident. A second psychological hypothesis which Dr. Velikovsky has put forward is far more controversial. He is of the opinion that the effect of the repeated experience of cataclysm was so intense that it was implanted in the human mind permanently, and in his view, the memories of these experiences are present to this day in the human unconscious mind, transmitted presumably by heredity.

The collective human memory retained an inexhaustible array of recollections of the time when the world was in conflagration; when sea engulfed land; earth trembled; celestial bodies were disturbed in their motion, and meteorites fell [11].

Here again Dr. Velikovsky is touching on a highly controversial hypothesis of Freud's, enunciated in its clearest form in *Moses and Monotheism*. My constant references to that book are not accidental. Dr. Velikovsky's work can be understood in many ways as a continuation and revision of that late publication of Freud. Anyone who is interested in Dr. Velikovsky's book would do well to read the essay *Moses and Monotheism*. Dr. Velikovsky came to America in 1939, the year of publication of the complete form of *Moses and Monotheism*, and the year of Freud's death, interestingly, and he came to do research on Freud in relation to Moses, Akhnaton and Oedipus.

It is little realized that Freud felt compelled to accept the idea of inherited racial memories. He usually used the term phylogenetic inheritance, but he means by this term the inheritance of collective memories. He was well aware that such mental contents would be collective in nature; a shared, inborn knowledge of the past history of the race, or, at least, of crucially important aspects of that history.

This Lamarckian conception of inherited experience is totally ignored by all current psychoanalytic theorists, in fact, one could go so far as to say that it has been suppressed by the Freudian group. There are few articles published by Freudians on the concept of inherited racial memory. They would prefer to forget

that Freud ever thought about this problem, or else they consider it an aberration on his part. On the other hand, Carl Jung based an entire psychology on the description of such inherited collective contents.

Again we can raise the question as to whether the phylogenetic hypothesis is an essential aspect of Dr. Velikovsky's general theory. I personally feel that it is not. But, it has tremendous usefulness, as you just saw in Professor Wolfe's lecture, in explaining the occurrence over all the earth over hundreds of years, of certain legends and images which seem to have exerted a curious fascination on the human mind.

Finally, in recent years, Dr. Velikovsky has begun to stress the possibility that unconscious memories (if they do indeed form a potent content of the collective mind of present day man) could be reactivated as a result of the compulsion to repeat. This powerful irrational tendency to act out or reexperience a traumatic event was described by Freud in his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) where he characterized it in terms of the individual patient.

He is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of ... remembering it as something belonging to the past [12].

In recent years Dr. Velikovsky has become deeply concerned that unless awareness of the cataclysmic events can be restored to consciousness, mankind may be compelled by unconscious forces to stage its own 'Weltuntergang man-made cataclysm on a near cosmic scale. It is this possibility which lends some urgency to the consideration of his theories. In this context, his psycho-historical reconstruction can be seen to have a therapeutic goal. More than merely a psychoanalytic experiment on mankind, it aims at rescuing mankind from its very obvious self-destructive tendencies. It is probably not without significance that the conception of *Worlds in Collision* took place during the Second World War when mankind was very actively involved in its own destruction.

I want to consider in slightly more detail the concept of inherited racial memory as it occurs in the writings of Freud. It is of

considerable interest to trace the evolution of this hypothesis from "Totem and Taboo" in 1912 where it first appears, to Freud's final and more elaborate discussion of it in 1939. It is usually suggested that Freud invented the idea of inherited racial memory because he needed it to support his speculative forays into the fields of anthropology and pre-history. In short, that the idea of inherited racial memory is the creation of Freud the novelist, rather than Freud the psychologist. Careful reading of all Freud's psychological oeuvre would quickly dispel this notion. The concept of phylogenetically inherited material is found everywhere in Freud and this despite the fact that he had an inherent resistance to the idea.

Writing to Jung in 1911, he displayed this ambivalence very nicely: "If there is phylogenetic memory" and then he goes on "which unfortunately will soon prove to be so" (he was prepared to admit it but he didn't like it one bit) [13].

In a meeting of the Vienna Psycho-Analytic Society in 1911, he spoke of the idea of inherited memory content with considerable reserve.

The influence of a phylogenetic inborn store of memories is not justified as long as we have the possibility of explaining these things through an analysis of the psychical situations. What remains over after this analysis of the psychical phenomena of regression could then be conceived of as phylogenetic memory [14].

It is highly probable that Jung's influence was a crucial factor motivating Freud to consider the possibility of inherited memory. As you know, the break between Freud and Jung occurred in 1912. Until that time Jung's ideas stimulated Freud to an examination of many areas which he might otherwise not have explored.

Less well known is the fact that Freud continued to consider Jung's theories even after they broke off relations. In 1912 we find Freud using the term 'collective mind,' a term which he thereafter avoided in his writings to avoid confusion with the Jungian term which carries implications far beyond what he or his followers could accept.

No one can have failed to observe ... that I have taken as the basis of my whole position the existence of a collective mind, in which mental processes occur just as they do in the mind of an individual [15].

In 1917, long after they were no longer friends, Freud read Jung's important essay, *The Psychology of Unconscious Processes*, and the next year, writing about the Wolfe Man case, he stated:

I fully agree with Jung in recognizing the existence of this phylogenetic heritage; but I regard it as a methodological error to seize on a phylogenetic explanation before the ontogenetic possibilities have been exhausted [16].

As he puts it,

All that we find in the prehistory of neuroses is that a child catches hold of this phylogenetic experience where his own experience fails him. He fills in the gaps in individual truth with prehistoric truth; he replaces occurrences in his own life by occurrences in the life of his ancestors [17].

As you will see presently, this tendency, if it exists, to replace individual experiences with experiences derived from the history of mankind could possibly represent a confirmation of the Velikovsky hypotheses. But Freud's warning must continue to sound in our ears:

... I regard it as a *methodological error* to seize on a phylogenetic explanation before the ontogenetic possibilities have been exhausted [18].

Elsewhere he warns against "mystical overvaluations of heredity." [19] What motivated Freud to suggest this idea of inherited racial memory? Certainly it was on the basis of experience derived from his work with patients. He pointed out, first of all, that the common heritage of symbols which he kept encountering, symbols in the unconscious which seemed to be shared by all men throughout history, pushed him in the direction of thinking about the possibility of some kind of collective inborn mental content. "it seems to me that symbolic connections, which the individual has never acquired by

learning, may justly claim to be regarded as phylogenetic heritage." [20] Then the structure and the content of certain kinds of phobic conditions seemed to point in a similar direction.

Among the contents of the phobias there are a number which, as Stanley Hall insists, are adopted to serve as objects of anxiety owing to phylogenetic inheritance [21].

The most significant factor which led Freud to postulate the existence of mental contents which are not derived from individual experience is the occurrence of what he termed "primal phantasies"; phantasies of castration, incest, cannibalism, parental intercourse, etc., in children whose actual experience precludes any possibility of acquaintance with such events.

I believe these primal fantasies are a phylogenetic endowment. In them the individual reaches beyond his own experience into primaeval experience at points where his own experience has been too rudimentary [22].

The behaviour of neurotic children towards their parents in the Oedipus and castration complex abounds in such reactions, which seem unjustified in the individual case and only become intelligible phylogenetically - by their connection with the experience of earlier generations [23].

Perhaps you remember that Dr. Velikovsky in his book *Oedipus and Akhnaton* has raised the interesting possibility that there may be an historical truth underlying the deeply rooted human resistance to incest:

... is the Oedipus legend based on historical occurrence? If the latter is true, its hold on the imagination of the literati through the ages could be explained as a real experience that has been echoed in the dark recesses of many human souls [24].

By 1937 Freud was prepared to make a leap of faith and to extend the concept of inherited mental contents quite far. He did so despite the very active opposition of Ernest Jones who warned him of the danger of accepting what Jones saw as an outdated Lamarckian biology. Freud, with extreme forthrightness and some humility, stated:

On further reflection I must admit that I have behaved for a long time as though inheritance of memory-traces of the experience of our ancestors, independently of direct Communication and of the influence of education by the setting of an example, were established beyond question. When I spoke of the survival of a tradition among a people, or of the formation of people's character, I had mostly in mind an inherited tradition of this kind and not one transmitted by communication. or at least I made no distinction between the two and was not clearly aware of my audacity in neglecting to do so

And then the crucial words:

I must, however, in all modesty, confess nevertheless that I cannot do without this factor in biological evolution; ...The archaic heritage of human beings comprises not only dispositions but also subject matter - memory traces of the experience of earlier generations. if we assume the survival of these memory-traces in the archaic heritage, we have bridged the gap between individual and group psychology [25].

Of course you wonder under what circumstances material experienced by our ancestors becomes transmittable, through heredity, or whatever. Freud suggests two possibilities or at least two situations in which this might occur. First, if the event occurred often enough:

The experiences of the ego seem at first to be lost for inheritance, but, when they have been repeated often enough and with sufficient strength in many individuals in successive generations, they transform themselves, so to say, into experiences of the id, the impressions of which are preserved by heredity [26].

(This is the process which Dr. Velikovsky has challenged to some extent in his suggestion that typical and commonly repeated events do not provide a basis for the creation of myth.) Then, secondly, and of much more importance for the theory of collectively experienced cataclysms, Freud suggests that a memory may enter the archaic heritage of mankind if it was of sufficient strength, a traumatic and collective experience of the human race;

An essential part of the construction is the hypothesis that the events I am about to describe occurred to all primitive men, that is, to all our ancestors [27].

As to when these events occurred Freud is very vague. At times he talks about "the childhood of the race," a very difficult era to locate, although I think we can be quite sure that he wasn't referring to the Bronze age or later. In *Moses and Monotheism* he places the events in the period when language developed, again a rather vague moment. Freud recognized that if there was mental content in the mind which was not individually acquired but which was inherited and which reflected our experience as a race, then that phylogenetic content could serve as a source of material for the investigation and reconstruction of the early history of the human race. He suggested, in fact, using dreams for this purpose:

The prehistory into which the dream-work leads is of two kinds: on the one hand, into the individual's prehistory, his childhood; on the other, in so far as each individual somehow recapitulates in an abbreviated form the entire development of the human race, into phylogenetic history - too. Shall we succeed in distinguishing which portion of the latent mental processes is derived from the individual prehistoric period and which from the phylogenetic one? It is not, I believe, impossible that we shall [28].

Psychoanalysis may claim a high place among the sciences which are concerned with the reconstruction of the earliest and most obscure periods at the beginning of the human race [29].

At no time does Freud ever refer to evidence of cataclysmic experience in material derived from his dream studies or from the psychoanalytic treatment of patients. He encountered no such contents. The phylogenetic memories that he referred to have nothing to do with memories of cosmic disturbance or violent natural events. I remember asking Dr. Velikovsky a few years ago whether he had himself encountered memories suggestive of such phylogenetically derived experience in his own analysis or in his analytic practice, and he was unable to recall anything of this sort. It is therefore of particular interest to investigate case

material in search of references to cataclysmic destruction, and such cases are not lacking, as you will see.

For the remainder of this discussion I want to accept two hypotheses as facts, and to go on to consider what would be the implications of these hypotheses.

First, let us assume (and many people here do more than assume), that a series of cataclysms on the scale suggested by Dr. Velikovsky did occur, that mankind was exposed to these terrible events and that some of them lived to deal with the consequences, particularly the emotional consequences. Second, let us assume that after a time memories of the experience, as well as the intense feelings stirred up by these memories underwent repression and yet survived, not only in the unconscious of the victims who actually lived through these traumatic events, but in the unconscious of their descendants up to the present day. I am suggesting that we tentatively accept Freud's hypothesis of phylogenetically inherited memory, and specifically, the possibility which Freud would not have put forward that one of the chief fragments or complexes in the mind is a derivative of the overwhelming experience of cosmic upheaval.

If such repressed memories are present in the collective unconscious of mankind now, we can expect them to reveal themselves in a number of more or less predictable ways. Remember that we owe what knowledge of the unconscious we possess, and it is very little, to the relative failure of repression and to the fact that unconscious contents frequently break through to the surface, or at least disturb the surface of the mind in characteristic ways, which tell us something about the underlying strata.

1. Amnesia

Repression, of course, as Dr. Velikovsky has pointed out, implies an amnesia of limited extent. Parts of the mind are withdrawn or "blanked out," not only the actual traumatic memories themselves, but, through the associational chains which connect the contents of the mind, this amnesia could be

expected to extend over considerable areas. In terms of the feeling aspect of our humanness, repression could be reflected in a precarious emotional coldness or unresponsiveness to whole areas of human experience. In terms of thought, it precipitates an inability to think about certain topics and a curious lack of curiosity about whole areas of human experience and knowledge. if you are interested in that aspect of repression, Freud's *Leonardo essay* provides a remarkable discussion of how intellectual curiosity can be "blacked out" in certain areas [30]. The failure of scholars to recognize the connectedness and significance of historical and mythological accounts of cataclysmic occurrences would be an example of repression interfering with the normal functioning of the intellect. if they have looked at this material over generations and haven't seen the implications that Dr. Velikovsky sees, it could be explained as a result of this 'blacking out' of the intellect.

2. Anxiety

The crucial factor which enables the psychologist to identify areas of repression in a patient is the anxiety which is triggered when the repressed areas are touched upon. This can vary from hardly noticeable anxiety responses, such as you obtain on the word association test, to massive reactions approaching panic or shock. The danger represented by such occurrences is the so-called "awakening of the repressed." You have come too close to the repressed material. Any event which duplicates the originally traumatic event can be expected to produce deeply irrational responses including stark terror. Typically, the person to whom this thing is happening would not know why he is reacting with terror to a situation which may very well be completely harmless. The recent visit of the comet Kohoutek might have been expected to produce such responses in terms of the Velikovsky hypothesis. Shortly after it was announced, I wrote to Dr. Velikovsky to point out that it would be very worthwhile to collect and study the variety of responses to this event as they developed over the course of weeks. it would happen in some people, but by no means all. If he is right you could expect panic, flight reactions, religious frenzy of various kinds, obsessional rituals and insanity. On a considerable scale all of this could be predicted with some certainty if this

hypothesis is correct. The reaction to Halley's Comet can be seen as supportive of the Velikovsky hypothesis, though by no means conclusive evidence. On the other hand, absence of any strong response beyond intellectual curiosity would, I think, represent fairly conclusive proof that there are no such inherited contents present in the human mind. Unfortunately, the fact that Kohoutek turned out to be such a dud tended to ruin the experiment. Nevertheless, it was interesting to observe the efforts that were made by a number of religious groups to try to artificially stimulate reaction, particularly among young people. We encountered them on the streets trying to convince everybody that the end was near.

3. Acting Out

The acting out response also involves an emergence of repressed content. It is rather strange that the human mind should contain a drive to re-experience those traumatic events which were once so painful, and yet, this seems to be the case. Motivated by an urge which Freud termed the repetition compulsion, the human psyche can create actual situations in the real world which duplicate the originally unbearable experience. Of course in so doing it goes against the usually dominant pleasure principle and even bypasses the self-preservative instinct to the point that self-destruction is a very real possibility. This tendency to act out memories in reality rather than allowing them to enter consciousness in the form of memories is extremely dangerous. When you have a patient who is doing this it presents serious difficulty. Instead of understanding the past and allowing themselves to know what happened, they will go out and try to relive it, which can be suicidal. It is this particular form of the emergence of the repressed which causes Dr. Velikovsky to warn of the danger of a man-made cataclysm, purposely designed, though unconsciously, to reflect as closely as possible the experience of cosmic destruction of the planet.

4. In Dreams

Freud, as I mentioned earlier, pointed to dreams as a source of information concerning phylogenetic memory traces. The study of cataclysm dreams would provide an extremely fertile field of

investigation in the search for cataclysmically induced memory fragments. In fact, there is a typical nightmare, which many of you probably know, in which the dreamer witnesses or experiences the destruction of the world, lives through the horror of the last moments, and the final explosion, and then awakens at that very instant with a start. Of course, it is not enough to point to such dreams. It would be necessary to examine them in detail to discover both their source and their typical structure as well as common associations to them. It would be of particular importance if there were no associations to dreams of this type. This would be a strong indication that there could be phylogenetic memory underlying them. Let me give you just one example of a dream of this kind. The dreamer, a woman of middle age, in psychoanalytic treatment, dreamt as follows:

On a palisade of bricks I saw reflected a white meteor,
which was about to fall and blow up the earth [31].

You are aware that dreams usually require interpretation before their meaning can be understood, and, presumably, interpretation of this dream would lead us away from the cosmic spectacle and into the patient's personal world. But it is worth inquiring why she chose to embody that inner reality in a cosmic framework, why she experienced whatever it was in her inner life that she was dreaming about in terms of meteors and the explosion of the earth. Perhaps it is merely a residue from the previous day. If so you could find out very quickly. But it is interesting that internal emotional conflicts are so often projected into the sky.

5. Symptoms and Symbols in Neurotic Illnesses

Some neurotic patients do project their emotional conflicts into outer space, not in the form of delusions but seemingly as a means of externalizing a painful inner reality in terms of more comfortable symbols and images. (Plate 1). This painting is the work of a 30-year old Canadian male who utilized painting and drawing as an aspect of his therapy. To assume that a painting such as this represents phylogenetic content would be foolish. Obviously, one would have to attend to the patient's associations to the painting, which in this, as in most cases, leads immediately away from outer space and into inner space. This analogy, by the way, is of crucial importance in understanding

the predominance of cosmic imagery. At most one would expect the phylogenetic content to influence the choice of symbols in which the patient embodied his personal reality. In this particular case, the patient's associations led to his identifying the planets with his family. He saw the blue planet as his father, the brown one as his mother and the small black one as himself. He was trying to talk about his family and how he saw the dominance in that family. He also saw that the influence of these cosmic

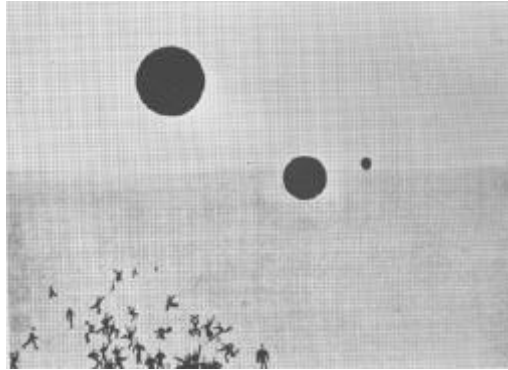


Plate 1

parents is seen on the figures below in the form of an astrological dominance of one parent planet or another. The different individuals are dressed in different colours relating to the planets above them. The figures could be in some kind of panic state, but actually, if you look closely at them, they appear to be much happier than that: they are dancing and turning somersaults. Since this painting fails to suggest anything of interplanetary collision or destruction, it would be unwise to push the phylogenetic interpretation into the foreground.

However, the same patient followed this drawing with another which carries his analogy still further (Plate 2). I should mention that these drawings were made prior to the publication of *Worlds in Collision*. Here we see the earth, identified by the lines of longitude and latitude, in a rather unusual view. Seen from outer space, it appears to be flooded since the normal land masses are missing or submerged and the patient stands on an island reaching upwards, perhaps in distress. Above the earth is what appears to be a mass of land with mountains and rivers, perhaps a continent hovering in the air. To the left is an oddly shaped spherical mass, the moon, or perhaps a meteorite. The patient

described that large continental mass above as a sheet of ice. While admitting the inevitable personal significance of such a drawing, perhaps we are justified in noticing that the imagery bears at least some relationship to the cataclysm theory. The symbols which the patient has chosen to embody his individual perception of his existential situation seem rather specific; a fantasy product that may well extend beyond the realm of personal experience, in the same way that the primal fantasies referred to by Freud did. But remember, we cannot be sure because these are not the fantasies of an infant but the drawing of an adult capable of utilizing experience and imagery drawn from an infinite variety of sources. Such drawings provide no proof, but merely parallels worth noting.



Plate 2

Another drawing by the same patient reveals how the idea developed (Plate 3). I have made no effort whatever to discuss the possible interpretation of these drawings because I feel that to do so would take us away from the problem of their phylogenetic component, if any. A Jungian analyst would proceed directly into an interpretation, which would involve very specific references to primordial experience and would have not the slightest doubt that the chief content of the pictures is a phylogenetic derivative. The patient himself had very few associations to any of the visual images that he produced, "he simply felt that he had to draw it like that." [32]

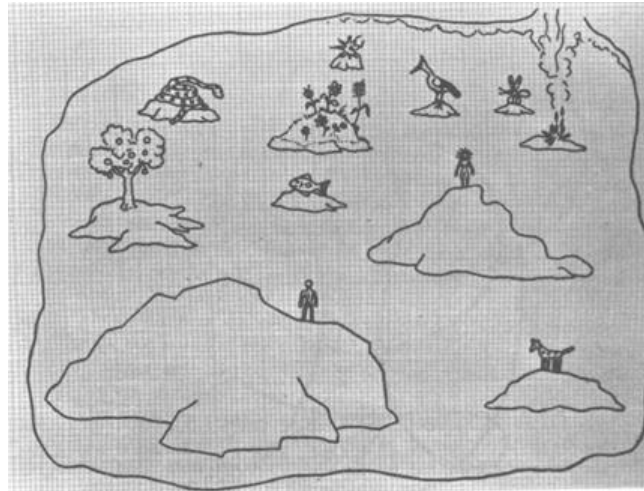


Plate 3

If phylogenetic memories of cosmic upheaval are postulated as present in the unconscious, then we would expect to encounter them in an almost pure form in the mental productions of psychotic patients. In such cases the defense mechanisms of the Ego are no longer sufficiently strong to inhibit the emergence of repressed mental contents. Although this material is still somewhat distorted and disguised, it provides our clearest insight into the nature of unconscious mental contents, including material from strata of the psyche not usually encountered in psychoanalytic therapy. Very few psychoanalyses reach this level of material. Such patients frequently develop complicated delusional systems which either completely obliterate their prior understanding of reality, or less frequently, these ideas form clearly circumscribed, or contained, delusional systems which are able to co-exist with normal behaviour and with more typical views of reality. Among these delusional beliefs, one that is very commonly encountered is the conviction that the world is about to end, or has already met its destruction. The patient has lived through this experience. I am not referring here to the religious fanatic who with amusing regularity predicts the world's demise, though they are also worth study, because in many instances their delusional beliefs are shared by a group of people so that they are particularly relevant to the Velikovsky theory.

Plate 4 is a painting called "The Explosion of the World" by a very seriously disturbed young boy. Psychotic individuals who are preoccupied with world cataclysm, either past, or to come,

usually develop very elaborate descriptive ideas about the details of this terrifying event, an event in which they commonly play a very central role. In fact at times they are themselves the cause of the cataclysm. A manic-depressive patient during the depressive phase of his illness wrote as follows:

If I could only kill myself, it might blow up the whole universe, but at least I would get out of eternal torture and achieve the oblivion and nothingness for which my soul craves [33].



Plate 4

His description of his experience is entitled *The Universe of Horror and the Universe of Bliss*, which gives some indication of the way in which the over-whelming experience of a psychosis appears, in the patient's point of view, to include the destruction of the whole universe, not only of himself. There is no question that the experience of psychotic illness does involve such drastic change in one's perception of reality that the world does really seem to have undergone violent, even cataclysmic change. The same patient said, "At times the whole Universe seemed to be dissolving about me." [34]

Let me read another account by a psychotically depressed patient which conveys very strongly the feeling associated with overall destruction of the world and what it is like to live through:

There was even a day when I stood by the table in my room. It was a sunny day, the curtains were flapping, and the daffodils were all out in the grass below when I had a sudden vision of the end of the world, a catastrophe caused solely by my fate ... As in some monstrous cosmic general strike, all mankind was engulfed, all movement ceased, I could see the steamships stopping in the middle of the ocean, while invisible waves of horror encircled the world [35].

In some cases other planets are involved, as in the following account:

Shortly after I was taken to the hospital for the first time in a rigid catatonic condition, I was plunged into the horror of a world catastrophe. I was being caught up in a cataclysm and totally dislocated. I myself had been responsible for setting the destructive forces into motion, although I acted with no intent to harm ...

Perhaps you notice I am quoting from the patient's own feelings, his own statements about what he felt. Notice also that if there were such a cataclysm, the people who lived through it would probably appear to feel that they were to blame, that they were personally responsible for what had happened. They are overwhelmed with guilt.

... Part of the time I was exploring a new planet, (a marvelous and breathtaking adventure) but it was too lonely... The earth had been devastated by atomic bombs and most of its inhabitants killed. Only a few people myself and the dimly perceived nursing staff, had escaped. At other times I felt totally alone on the new planet ... At times when the universe was collapsing, I was not sure that things would turn out alright. I thought I might have to stay in the endless hell-fire of atomic destruction [36].

Psychiatric theorists account for these cataclysmic delusions in a number of ways. They point out that the patient's sense of his body and of his ego boundaries is damaged to such an extent that he can no longer differentiate between what is happening to him and what is happening to the Universe. Since he feels destructive processes at work within himself, he assumes that this destruction must extend to the whole universe. Megalomaniac delusions are frequent and cause the patient to

feel that he is literally at the centre of the universe and that his fate must inevitably affect the planets and the stars. Inner processes are projected onto the sky, and the disintegration of the ego is experienced as natural catastrophe. The theme of world flooding and the submerging of continents is usually interpreted by analytically oriented psychiatrists as the inundation of the conscious mind by the contents of the unconscious. Patients threatened by "the rising waters of the unconscious" actually do develop preoccupations with flooding. (Those of you who come from Saskatchewan and Alberta will doubtless be relieved to know that a preoccupation with catastrophic flooding could also be the result of a recent experience of catastrophic flooding). There is a problem there actually. Are we talking about symbolic material in need of interpretation, or are we talking about memory fragments connected with actual historical events? Many analysts would tend to link the recurrent motif of the flood in literature with the shared human experience of birth. You remember Otto Rank's conception of the birth trauma, yet another primordial experience, occurring at the beginning of our own lives.

It is in schizophrenic illnesses that one encounters mental content which inclines one to consider the possibility of a phylogenetic derivation. Careful examination of these very bizarre delusional ideas, and the violent feelings which accompany them, has led to an awareness that despite the intensely private symbolic nature of schizophrenic language and imagery, the ideas represent an accurate reflection of their experience, and at times, they even represent an effort at communication. But what about the form in which these experiences are embodied and the choice of symbols? Could there be an underlying memory of far earlier experiences of terrifying cataclysm? No one doubts that the patient is going through his own personal experience of cataclysm, but is it provoking in him a possible memory of much earlier ones? Freud, referring to the delusional ideas of the insane, says:

We have long understood that a portion of forgotten truth lies hidden in delusional ideas, that when this returns it has to put up with distortions and misunderstandings, and that the compulsive conviction which attaches to the delusion

arises from this core of truth and spreads out on to the errors that wrap it round [37].

He knew there was truth hidden in psychotic ideas, but, of course, he was talking about individual truth. As you know, Freud's experience of psychotic patients was limited because he didn't work in a hospital setting. His most intensive discussion of a psychotic delusional system was based on a published autobiography of Daniel Paul Schreber [38]. Schreber represents perhaps the finest example of a man whose extremely mad ideas eventually came to be organized and limited to a well defined and clearly circumscribed set of delusions which he was able to cope with, living a normal existence out in the world, untroubled by any other signs of mental illness. He was convinced of the correctness of his views, but he was well aware that they were not shared by others and that they caused trouble if they were talked about. He saw his discoveries, as he called them, to be the result of a form of insight which was available only to him. Nevertheless, in generosity he sought to share his convictions about the nature of reality with others by publishing an account of his unique experiences and his systematized delusions in a fascinating book entitled *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. I will quote a few lines from the book in order to give you an impression of the detailed cosmic content of psychotic delusions and of the difficulty of using this material as evidence for historical speculation or reconstruction.

Connected with these phenomena, very early on ... (came) recurrent nightly visions ... of an approaching end of the world, as a consequence of the indissoluble connection between God and myself.

Bad news came in from all sides that even this or that star or this or that group of stars had to be 'given up'; at one time it was said that even Venus had been 'flooded,' at another that the whole solar system would now have to be 'disconnected,' that the Cassiopeia (the whole group of stars) had had to be drawn together into a single sun, that perhaps only the Pleiades could still be saved, etc. etc. While I had these visions at night, in daytime I thought I could notice the sun following my movements; when I moved to and fro in the single-windowed room I inhabited at the time ... It was as if single nights had the duration of centuries, so that within that time the most profound

alterations in the whole of mankind, in the earth itself and the whole solar system could very well have taken place. It was repeatedly mentioned in visions that the work of the past fourteen thousand years had been lost -this figure presumably indicated the duration the earth had been populated with human beings and that approximately only another two hundred years were allotted to the earth. If I am not mistaken the figure 212 was mentioned. ... Later ... I thought this period had already expired and therefore I was the last real human being left. I lived for years. in doubt as to whether I was really still on earth or whether on some other celestial body. Even in the year 1895 I still considered the possibility of my being on Phobos, a satellite of the planet Mars ... and (1) wondered whether the moon, which I sometimes saw in the sky, was not the main planet Mars [39].

The idea that some of this material could have a phylogenetic origin finds support in Schreber's own conception of what was happening to him. He tells us that he was in communion with departed souls from all periods in history. If you were encountering phylogenetic contents, ranging back through time, it would be like an experience of being in contact with departed souls. He describes visionary experiences in which he traveled back in time.

In one of (the visions) it was as though I were sitting in a railway carriage or in a lift driving into the depths of the earth and I recapitulated, as it were, the whole history of mankind or of the earth in reverse order; in the upper regions there were still forests of leafy trees; in the nether regions it became progressively darker and blacker; ... I advanced only to a point 1; point 3, which was to mark the earliest beginning of mankind [40].

On the other hand any suggestion that this delusional material has a phylogenetic origin must take into account the long list of scientific books which Schreber was reading. Prior to his hospitalization he spent a great deal of time investigating the early history of the world and he tells us about a few of the books which he read:

1. Haeckel: *The History of Natural Creation*
2. Caspari: *The Primordial History of Mankind*
3. du Prel: *Evolution of the Universe*

4. Maedler: *Astronomy*

5. Neumayer: *History of the Earth*

Given the list, there is no particular reason to jump to phylogenetic explanations.

Another quite similar case about which we have considerably less information is that of Oskar H. It is a nineteenth century case which has the advantage of excluding experience of the World Wars and the Atom Bomb as the basis for such catastrophic delusions. A recent study has pointed out that the bomb has not in fact entered the repertoire of psychotic productions to any significant extent. Oskar H. was a butler, hospitalized with typical symptoms of schizophrenia. His fame is based on a group of very fine water colour paintings (Plate 5) of delusional materials. This painting is called "Mrs. Gern". Oskar was in the habit of writing lengthy texts to explain the pictures and these texts give us some idea of his delusional system and his preoccupations. He was concerned at this time with a number of scientific matters including, in this painting of Mrs. Gern, references to electro-magnetic currents, hypnosis and magnets. The electro-magnetic currents you can see streaming out of her head. Those things which he mentions are all part of the therapeutic equipment of 19th Century psychiatry.

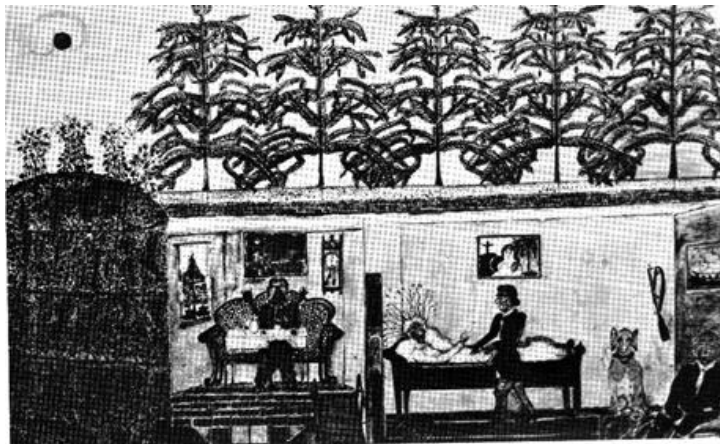


Plate 5

His unique importance for us derives from a series of pictures which he painted of the destruction of the world as a result of the

collision of comets (Plate 6). The text which accompanies this painting reads as follows:

Explanation about end of the world. On 3rd April 2053 in consequence of collisions of the ice comet with comet Biela main comet in indescribable distance on western horizon, sun moon stars darken; drop vertically into endless night. O.H. General Director of Royal Mental Clinic [41].

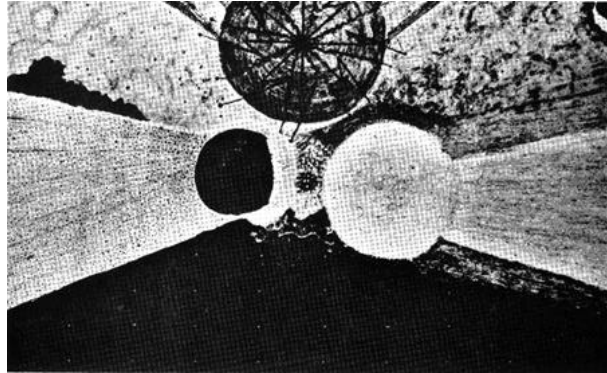


Plate 6

As you can imagine, verification of the Velikovsky reconstruction of history would result in an extremely different understanding of materials such as this, and would in fact involve considerable disturbance in the fields of psychiatry and psychology as it has in other disciplines. Whether any of the material which I have discussed can play a part in contributing to the task of verification of the theory of inter-planetary catastrophe, I leave to Dr. Velikovsky to decide.

Notes (Psychological Aspects of the Work of Immanuel Velikovsky)

1. Velikovsky, Immanuel, *Earth in Upheaval* (Doubleday, 1955), Supplement, page 272); (Laurel Edition, 1968), page 254; (Abacus, 1973), page 338; (Pocket Books, 1977), page 246. This Supplement to *Earth in Upheaval* consists of a lecture delivered by Dr. Velikovsky before the Graduate College Forum of Princeton University on October 14, 1953.
2. Velikovsky, *Worlds in Collision* (Doubleday, 1950), Preface page viii; (Pocket Books, 1977), page 12; (Abacus, 1972), page 9.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Letter to Mr. Clifton Fadiman, dated October 23, 1947.
5. Velikovsky, "The Dreams Freud Dreamed", *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 28 (October, 1941), pages 487-511.
6. Mullen, William, "The Center Holds" *Pensée* 2(2):32-35 (May, 1972); this article has been reprinted in *Velikovsky Reconsidered* (Doubleday, 1976), pages 239-249.
7. Freud, Sigmund, *Moses and Monotheism* (Amsterdam, 1939). Citations from Freud in text are to The Standard Edition, Edited by James Strachey (London, 1964), Vol. XXIII, page 67.
8. Velikovsky, *Worlds in Collision*, *loc. cit.*
9. Velikovsky, *op. cit.*, page 300; 304, 288.
10. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Vol. XXIII, page 80.
11. Velikovsky, *Earth in Upheaval*, *op. cit.*, page 274; 255; 239; 247.
12. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Vienna, 1920), Vol. XVIII, page 18.

13. Freud, *Letter to C.G. Jung*, 1911.
14. Freud, Minutes of the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society, November 8, 1911.
15. Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (Vienna, 1913), Vol. XIII, page 157.
16. Freud, *From The History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918), Vol. XVII, page 97.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Freud, *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* (Vienna, 1937), Vol. XXIII, page 240.
20. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (Vienna, 1917), Vol. XV, page 199.
21. Freud, *op. cit.*, Vol. XVI, page 411.
22. Freud, *op.cit.*, VI, pages 371.
23. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Vol. XXIII, page 99.
24. Velikovsky, *Oedipus and Akhnaton* (New York, 1960), page 20.
25. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Vol. XXIII pages 99-100.
26. Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (Vienna, 1923), page A
27. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Vol. XXIII, page 81.
28. Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, Vol. XV, page 199.
29. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Vienna, 1900), Vol. V, page 549.

30. Freud, *Leonard DA Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (Vienna, 1910), Vol. XI, pages 59-137.

31. The personal meanings of this dream, and the patient's association to it, are discussed in: Garma, Angel, *The Psychoanalysis of Dreams* (New York, 1966), pages 164-166.

32. For a very detailed discussion of this case with reference to the personal and archetypal significance of the drawings, see: Baynes, H.G., *Mythology of the Soul* (London, 1969), pages 515-911

33. Kaplan, Bert, ed. *The Inner World of Mental Illness* (New York, 1964); see Custance, John, "Wisdom, Madness and Folly", pages 56-57.

34. *Ibid*, page 59.

35. *Op. Cit.*, see: Brooks, Van Wyck, "Days of the Phoenix", page 86.

36. *Op. Cit.*, see: Anonymous, "An Autobiography of Schizophrenic Experience", page 95.

37. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Vol. XXIII, page 85.

38. Schreber, Daniel Paul, *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness*, (London, 1955).

39. Kaplan, *op cit.*, from the Schreber case, pages 126-130.

40. *Ibid*, page 128.

41. A discussion of this patient and his art is to be found in: Prinzhorn, Hans, *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (New York, 1972), pages 80-83. A further case of great importance for this discussion, which I omitted because of lack of time, is found in

Jung, C.C., "*A Study in the Process of Individuation*" (Zurich, 1950), Vol. 9, pages 290-354. (Also of value in terms of this discussion is Jung's essay "*Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky*" (Zurich, 1958), Vol. 10, pages 309-433.

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