

Modern Man in Search of A Soul

by Cal Jung

Chapter Five: The Stages of Life

To discuss the problems connected with the stages of human development is an exacting task, for it means nothing less than unfolding a picture of psychic life in its entirety from the cradle to the grave. Within the narrow frame of this essay the task can be carried out only on the broadest lines, and it must be well understood that no attempt will be made to describe the normal psychic occurrences within the various stages. We shall rather restrict ourselves and deal only with certain "problems;" that is, with things that are difficult, questionable or ambiguous; in a word, with questions which allow of more than one answer--and, moreover, answers that are always open to doubt. For this reason there will be much to which we must add a question mark in our thoughts. And-worse still--there will be some things which we must accept on faith, while now and then we must even indulge in speculations.

If psychic life consisted only of overt happenings which on a primitive level is still the case--we could content ourselves with a sturdy empiricism. The psychic life of civilized man, however, is full of problems; we cannot even think of it except in terms of problems. Our psychic processes are made up to a large extent of reflections, doubts and experiments, all of which are almost completely foreign to the unconscious, instinctive mind of primitive man. It is the growth of consciousness which we must thank for the existence of problems; they are the dubious gift of civilization. It is just man's turning away from instinct-his opposing himself to instinct-that creates consciousness. Instinct is nature and seeks to perpetuate nature; while consciousness can only seek culture or its denial. Even when we turn back to nature, inspired by a Rousseauesque longing, we "cultivate" nature. As long as we are still submerged in nature we are unconscious, and we live in the security of instinct that knows no problems. Everything in us that still belongs to nature shrinks away from a problem; for its name is doubt, and wherever doubt holds sway, there is uncertainty and the possibility of divergent ways. And where several ways seem possible, there we have turned away from the certain guidance of instinct and are handed over to fear. For consciousness is now called upon to do that which nature has always done for her children--namely, to give a certain, unquestionable and unequivocal decision. And here we are beset by an all-too-human

fear that consciousness--our Promethean conquest--may in the end not be able to serve us in the place of nature.

Problems thus draw us into an orphaned and isolated state where we are abandoned by nature and are driven to consciousness. There is no other way open to us ; we are forced to resort to decisions and solutions where we formerly trusted ourselves to natural happenings. Every problem, therefore, brings the possibility of a widening of consciousness--but also the necessity of saying good-bye to childlike unconsciousness and trust in nature. This necessity is a psychic fact of such importance that it constitutes one of the essential symbolic teachings of the Christian religion. It is the sacrifice of the merely natural man--of the unconscious, ingenuous being whose tragic career began with the eating of the apple in Paradise. The biblical fall of man presents the dawn of consciousness as a curse. And as a matter of fact it is in this light that we first look upon every problem that forces us to greater consciousness and separates us even further from the paradise of unconscious childhood. Every one of us gladly turns away from his problems; if possible, they must not be mentioned, or, better still, their existence is denied. We wish to make our lives simple, certain and smooth--and for that reason problems are tabu. We choose to have certainties and no doubts--results and no experiments--without even seeing that certainties can arise only through doubt, and results through experiment. The artful denial of a problem will not produce conviction; on the contrary, a wider and higher consciousness is called for to give us the certainty and clarity we need.

This introduction, long as it is, seemed to me necessary in order to make clear the nature of our subject. When we must deal with problems, we instinctively refuse to try the way that leads through darkness and obscurity. We wish to hear only of unequivocal results, and completely forget that these results can only be brought about when we have ventured into and emerged--again from the darkness. But to penetrate the darkness we must summon all the powers of enlightenment that consciousness can offer; as I have already said, we must even indulge in speculations. For in treating of the problems of psychic life we perpetually stumble over questions of principle belonging to the private domains of the most different branches of knowledge. We disturb and anger the theologian no less than the philosopher, the physician no less than the educator; we even grope about in the field of the biologist and of the historian. This extravagant behavior is not to be charged to our arrogance, but to the circumstance that man's psyche is a unique combination of factors which also make up the

special subjects of far-reaching lines of research. For it is out of himself and out of his peculiar constitution that man produced his sciences. They are symptoms of his psyche.

If, therefore, we ask ourselves the unavoidable question: "Why does man, in obvious contrast to the animal world, have problems?"--we run into that inextricable tangle of thoughts which many thousands of incisive minds have brought about in the course of centuries. I shall not perform the labours of a Sisyphus upon this masterpiece of confusion, but will try to present quite simply my contribution towards man's attempt to answer this basic question.

There are no problems without consciousness. We must therefore put the question in another way: In what way does consciousness arise? Nobody can say with certainty; but we can observe small children in the process of becoming conscious. Every parent can see it, if he pays attention. And this is what we are able to observe: when the child recognizes someone or something--when he "knows" a person or a thing--then we feel that the child has consciousness. That, no doubt, is also why in Paradise it was the tree of knowledge which bore such fateful fruit.

But what is recognition or knowledge in this sense? We speak of "knowing" something when we succeed in linking a new perception to an already established context in such a way that we hold in consciousness not only the new perception but this context as well. "Knowing" is based, therefore, upon a conscious connection between psychic contents. We cannot have knowledge of disconnected contents, and we cannot even be conscious of them. The first stage of consciousness, then, which we can observe consists in a mere connection between two or more psychic contents. At this level, consciousness is merely sporadic, being limited to the representation of a few connections, and the content is not remembered later on. It is a fact that in the early years of life there is no continuous memory; at the most there are islands of consciousness which are like single lamps or lighted objects in the far-flung darkness. But these islands of memory are not the same as those initial connections between psychic contents; they contain something more and something new. This something is that highly important series of related contents which constitutes the so-called ego. The ego--quite like the initial content-series--is an object in consciousness, and for this reason the child speaks of itself at first objectively, in the third person. Only later, when the ego-contents have been charged with energy of their own (very likely as a result of

exercise), does the feeling of subjectivity or "I-ness" arise. This is no doubt the moment when the child begins to speak of itself in the first person. At this level the continuity of memory has its beginning. Essentially, therefore, it is a continuity in the ego-memories.

In the childish stage of consciousness there are as yet no problems; nothing depends upon the subject, for the child itself is still wholly dependent upon its parents. It is as though it were not yet completely born, but were still enclosed in the psychic atmosphere of its parents. Psychic birth, and with it the conscious distinction of the ego from the parents, takes place in the normal course. of things at the age of puberty with the eruption of sexual life. The physiological change is attended by a psychic revolution. For the various bodily manifestations give such an emphasis to the ego that it often asserts itself without stint or measure. This is sometimes called " the unbearable age."

Until this period is reached the psychic life of the individual is essentially governed by impulse, and few or no problems are met with. Even when external limitations oppose the subjective impulses, these restraints do not put the individual at variance with himself. He submits to them or circumvents them, remaining quite at one with himself. He does not yet know the state of inner tension which a problem brings about. This state only arises when what was an external limitation becomes an inner obstacle; when one impulse opposes itself to another. Resorting to psychological terms we would say: the state induced by a problem--the state of being at variance with oneself--arises when, side by side with the series of ego-contents, a second series of equal intensity comes into being. This second series, because of its energy-value, has a functional significance equal to that of the ego-complex; we might call it another, second ego which in a given case can wrest the leadership from the first. This brings about an estrangement from oneself--the state that betokens a problem.

With reference to what was said above we can epitomize as follows: the first stage of consciousness which consists of recognizing or "knowing" is an anarchic or chaotic state. The second--that of the developed ego-complex--is a monarchic or monistic phase. The third is another step forward in consciousness, and consists in the awareness of one's divided state; it is a dualistic phase.

And here we take up our actual theme, namely the question of the stages of life. First of all we must deal with the period of youth. It extends roughly from the years just after puberty to middle life, which itself begins between the thirty-fifth and fortieth year.

I might well be asked why I choose to begin with the second period of human existence. Are there no difficult questions connected with childhood ? The complex psychic life of the child is of course a problem of the first magnitude to parents, educators and physicians ; but when normal, the child has no real problems of its own. It is only when a human being has grown up that he can have doubts about himself and be at variance with himself.

We are all thoroughly familiar with the sources of the problems which arise in the period of youth. For most people it is the demands of life which harshly put an end to the dream of childhood. If the individual is sufficiently well prepared, the transition to a professional career may take place smoothly. But if he clings to illusions that contradict reality, then problems will surely arise. No one takes the step into life without making certain presuppositions-and occasionally they are false. That is, they may not fit the conditions into which one is thrown. It is often a question of exaggerated expectations, of under-estimation of difficulties, of unjustified optimism or of a negative attitude. One could compile quite a list of the false presuppositions which give rise to the earliest, conscious problems.

But it is not always the contrast of subjective presuppositions with external facts that gives rise to problems; it may as often be inner, psychic disturbances. They may exist even when things run smoothly enough in the outer world. Very often it is the disturbance of the psychic equilibrium by the sexual impulse; and perhaps just as often it is the feeling of inferiority which springs from an unbearable sensitivity. These inner difficulties may exist even when adaptation to the outer world has been achieved without apparent effort. It even seems as if young people who have had to struggle hard for their existence are spared inner problems, while those for whom adaptation for some reason or other is made easy, run into problems of sex or conflicts growing from the sense of inferiority.

People whose own temperaments offer problems are often neurotic, but it would be a serious misunderstanding to confuse the existence of problems with neurosis. There is a marked distinction between the two in that the neurotic is ill because he is unconscious of his

problems; while the man with a difficult temperament suffers from his conscious problems without being ill.

If we try to extract the common and essential factors from the almost inexhaustible variety of individual problems found in the period of youth, we meet in nearly all cases with a particular feature : a more or less patent clinging to the childhood level of consciousness -a rebellion against the fateful forces in and around us which tend to involve us in the world. Something in us wishes to remain a child; to be unconscious, or, at most, conscious only of the ego; to reject everything foreign, or at least subject it to our will; to do nothing, or in any case indulge our own craving for pleasure or Power. In this leaning we observe something like the inertia of matter; it is persistence in a hitherto existing state whose level of consciousness is smaller, narrower and more egoistic than that of the dualistic stage. For in the latter the individual finds himself compelled to recognize and to accept what is different and strange as a part of his own life-as a kind of " also-I."

It is the extension of the horizon of life which is the essential feature of the dualistic stage-and to which resistance is offered. To be sure, this enlargement--or this diastole, to use Goethe's expression-had started long before this. It begins at birth, when the child abandons the narrow confinement of the mother's womb; and from then on it gains steadily until it reaches a critical point in that phase when, beset by problems, the individual begins to struggle against it.

What would happen to him if he simply changed him. self into that other, foreign, " also-I," and allowed the earlier ego to vanish into the past ? We might suppose this to be a quite practicable course. The very aim of religious education, from the exhortation to put off the old Adam, backward in time to the rebirth rituals of primitive races, is to transform a human being into a new-a future-man, and to allow the old forms of life to die away.

Psychology teaches us that, in a certain sense, there is nothing in the psyche that is old; nothing that can really, definitively die away. Even Paul was left with a sting in his flesh. Whoever protects himself against what is new and strange and thereby regresses to the past, falls into the same neurotic condition as the man who identifies himself with the new and runs away from the past. The only difference is that the one has estranged himself from the past, and the other from the future. In principle both are doing the same thing; they are salvaging a

narrow state of consciousness. The alternative is to shatter it with the tension inherent in the play of opposites-in the dualistic stage-and thereby to build up a state of wider and higher consciousness.

This outcome would be ideal if it could be brought about in the second stage of life-but here is the rub. 'For one thing, nature cares nothing whatsoever about a higher level of consciousness; quite the contrary. And then society does not value these feats of the psyche very highly; its prizes are always given for achievement and not for personality-the latter being rewarded, for the most part, posthumously. This being so, a particular solution of the difficulty becomes compulsive: we are forced to limit ourselves to the attainable and to differentiate particular aptitudes, for in this way the capable individual discovers his social being.

Achievement, usefulness and so forth are the ideals which appear to guide us out of the confusion of crowding problems. They may be our lode-stars in the adventure of extending and solidifying our psychic existences-they may help us in striking our roots in the world; but they cannot guide us in the development of that wider consciousness to which we give the name of culture. In the period of youth, at any rate, this course is the normal one and in all circumstances preferable to merely tossing about in the welter of problems.

The dilemma is often solved, therefore, in this way whatever is given to us by the past is adapted to the possibilities and the demands of the future. We limit ourselves to the attainable, and this means the renunciation of all other potentialities. One man loses a valuable piece of his past, another a valuable piece of his future. Everyone can call to mind friends or schoolmates who were promising and idealistic youngsters, but who, when met with years later, seemed to have grown dry and cramped in a narrow mould. These are examples of the solution given above.

The serious problems of life, however, are never fully solved. If it should for once appear that they are, this is the sign that something has been lost. The meaning and design of a problem seem not to lie in its solution, but in our working at it incessantly. This alone preserves us from stultification and petrification. So also with that solution of the problems of the period of youth which consists in restricting ourselves to the attainable: it is only temporarily valid and not lasting in a deeper sense. Of course, to win for oneself a place in

society and so to transform one's nature that it is more or less fitted to this existence, is in every instance an important achievement. It is a fight waged within oneself as well as outside, comparable to the struggle of the child to defend his ego. This struggle, we -must grant, is for the most part unobserved because it happens in the dark; but when we see how stubbornly childish illusions, presuppositions and egoistic habits are still clung to in later years we are able to realize the energy it took to form them. And so it is also with the ideals, convictions, guiding ideas and attitudes which in the period of youth lead us out into life for which we struggle, suffer and win victories: they grow together with our own beings, we apparently change into them, and we therefore perpetuate them at pleasure and as a matter of course, just as the child asserts its ego in the face of the world and in spite Of itself-occasionally even to, spite itself.

The nearer we approach to the middle of life, and the better we have succeeded in entrenching ourselves in our personal standpoints and social positions, the more it appears as if we had discovered the right course and the right ideals and principles of behaviour. For this reason we suppose them to be eternally valid, and make a virtue of unchangeably clinging to them. We wholly overlook the essential fact that the achievements which society rewards are won at the cost of a diminution of personality. Many--far too many--aspects of life which should also have been experienced lie in the lumber room among, dusty memories. Sometimes, even, they are glowing coals under grey ashes.

Chapter Seven: Archaic Man

The word "archaic" means primal--original. While it is one of the most difficult and thankless of tasks to say anything of importance about civilized man of today, we are apparently in a more favorable position with regard to archaic man. In the first case we try to reach a commanding point of view, but actually are caught in the same presuppositions and blinded by the same prejudices as are those about whom we wish to speak. In the case of the archaic man, however, we are far removed from his world in time, and our mental capacities are more differentiated than his. It is therefore apparently possible for us to occupy a point of vantage from which we can overlook his world and the meaning it held for him.

This sentence delimits the subject to be covered in the present essay. Save by restricting myself to the psychic life of archaic man, I could hardly paint his picture in so

small a space. I shall confine myself to the task of making this picture sufficiently inclusive, and shall not consider the findings of anthropology with regard to primitive races. When we speak of man in general, we do not have his anatomy-the shape of his skull or the colour of his skin-in mind, but mean rather his psychic world, his state of consciousness and his mode of life. Since all this belongs to the subject matter of psychology, we shall be dealing here chiefly with archaic or primitive mentality. Despite this limitation it turns out that we have actually widened our theme, because it is not only primitive man whose psychic processes are archaic. The civilized man of today shows these archaic processes as well, and not merely in the form of sporadic "throwbacks" from the level of modern social life. On the contrary, every civilized human being, whatever his conscious development, is still an archaic man at the deeper levels of his psyche. Just as the human body connects us with the mammals and displays numerous relics of earlier evolutionary stages going back even to the reptilian age, so the human psyche is likewise a product of evolution which, when followed up to its origins, shows countless archaic traits.

When first we come into contact with primitive peoples or read about primitive mentality in scientific works, we cannot fail to be deeply impressed with the strangeness of archaic man. Levy-Bruhl himself, an authority in the field of the psychology of primitive societies, never tires of insisting upon the striking difference between the "pre-logical" state of mind and our conscious outlook. It seems to him, as a civilized man, inexplicable that the primitive should disregard the obvious lessons of experience, should flatly deny the most evident causal connections, and instead of accounting for things as accidents or on reasonable grounds, should simply take their "collective representations" to be valid offhand. By "collective representations" Levy-Bruhl means widely current ideas whose truth is held to be self-evident, such as the primitive ideas regarding spirits, witchcraft, the power of medicines, and so forth. While it is perfectly understandable to us that people die of advanced age or as the result of diseases that are recognized to be fatal, this is not the case with primitive man. When old persons die, he does not believe it to be as a result of age. He argues that there are persons who have grown much older. Likewise, no one dies as the result of disease, for there have been other people who recovered from the same disease, or never contracted it. 'To him, the real explanation is always magic. Either a spirit has killed the man' or sorcery has done so. Many primitive tribes recognize death in battle as the only natural death. Still other tribes regard even death in battle as unnatural, holding that the adversary who brought it about must either have been a sorcerer or have used a charmed weapon. This grotesque idea can on

occasions take an even more impressive form. For instance, two anklets were found in the stomach of a crocodile shot by a European. The natives recognized the anklets as the property of two women who, some time before, had been devoured by a crocodile. At once the charge of witchcraft was raised; for this quite natural occurrence, which would never have aroused the suspicions of a European, was given an unexpected interpretation in the light of one of those presuppositions which Levy-Bruhl calls "collective representations. The natives said that an unknown sorcerer had summoned the crocodile and had bidden it to bring him the two women. The crocodile had carried out the command. But what about the anklets in the beast's stomach? The natives maintained that crocodiles never ate People unless bidden to do so. The crocodile had received the anklets from the sorcerer as a reward.

This story is a perfect example of that capricious way of accounting for things which is a feature of the "pre-logical" state of mind. We call it pre-logical, because to us such an explanation seems absolutely illogical. But it only strikes us in this way because we start from assumptions wholly different from those of primitive man. If we were as convinced as he is of the existence of sorcerers and of mysterious powers, instead of believing in so-called natural causes, his inferences would seem to us perfectly reasonable. As a matter of fact, primitive man is no more logical or illogical than we are. His presuppositions are not the same as ours, and that is what distinguishes him from us. His thinking and his conduct are based on assumptions other than our own. To all that is in any way out of the ordinary and that therefore disturbs, frightens or astonishes him, he ascribes what we should call a supernatural origin. For him, of course, these things are not supernatural; on the contrary, they belong to his world of experience, We feel we are stating a natural sequence of events when we say: this house was burned down because the lightning struck it. Primitive man senses an equally natural sequence when he says : a sorcerer has used the lightning to set fire to this particular house. There is nothing whatever within the experience of primitive man-provided that it is at all unusual or impressive that will not be accounted for on similar grounds. In explaining things in this way he is just like ourselves: he does not examine his assumptions. To him it is an unquestionable truth that disease and other ills are caused by spirits or witchcraft, just as for us it is a foregone conclusion that an illness has a natural cause. We would no more lay it down to sorcery than he to natural causes. His mental activity does not differ in any fundamental way from ours. It is, as I have said, his assumptions alone that set him apart from ourselves.

It is often supposed that primitive man has other feelings than we, and another moral outlook--that the pre-logical " state of mind differs from ours in these respects also. Undoubtedly he has a different code of morals. When questioned as to the distinction between good and bad a Negro chieftain declared: "When I steal my enemy's wives, it is good, but when he steals mine, it is bad." In many regions it is a terrible insult to tread upon a person's shadow, and in others it is an unpardonable sin to scrape a seal skin with an iron knife instead of a flint one. But let us be honest. Do we not think it sinful to eat fish with a steel knife, for a man to keep his hat on in a room, or to greet a lady with a cigar in his mouth? With us, as well as with primitive man, such things have nothing to do with ethics. There are true and loyal head-hunters, and there are men who piously and conscientiously practice cruel rites, or commit murder from righteous conviction. Primitive man is no less prompt than we are to value an ethical attitude. His good is just as good as ours, and his evil is just as bad as ours. Only the forms under which good and evil appear are different; the process of ethical judgement is the same.

It is likewise thought that primitive man has keener sense-organs than we, or that they somehow differ from ours. But his highly refined sense of direction or of hearing and vision is entirely a question of his occupations. If he is confronted with situations that are foreign to his experience, he is amazingly slow and clumsy. I once showed some native hunters, who were as keen-sighted as hawks, magazine pictures in which any of our children would have instantly recognized human figures. But my hunters turned the pictures round and round until one of them, tracing the outlines with his finger, finally exclaimed: "These are white men:' It was hailed by all as a great discovery.

The incredibly accurate sense of locality shown by many natives is a matter of practice. It is absolutely necessary that they should be able to find their way in forests and jungles. Even the European, after a short while in Africa, begins to notice things he would never have dreamed of noticing before; he does it out of the fear of going hopelessly astray in spite of his compass.

Nothing goes to show that primitive man thinks, feels, or perceives in a way that differs fundamentally from ours. His psychic functioning is essentially the same--only his primary assumptions are different. Compared to this it is a relatively unimportant fact that he has, or seems to have, a smaller area of consciousness than we, and that he is not very

capable, or is quite incapable, of concentrated mental activity. This last, it is true, strikes the European as strange. For instance, I could never hold a palaver for longer than two hours, since by that time the natives always declared themselves tired. They said it was too difficult, and yet I had only asked quite simple questions in a desultory way. These same natives showed an astonishing concentration and endurance when out hunting or on a journey. My letter-carrier, for instance, could run seventy-five miles at a stretch. I saw a woman in her sixth month of pregnancy, carrying a baby on her back and smoking a long pipe of tobacco, dance almost the whole night through round a blazing fire when the temperature was 95% without collapsing. It cannot be denied that primitive people are capable of concentrating upon things that interest them. If we try to give our attention to uninteresting matters, we soon notice how feeble our powers of concentration are. We ourselves, like them, are dependent upon emotional under-currents.

It is true that primitive man is simpler and more childlike than we, in good and evil alike. This in itself does not impress us as strange. And yet, when we approach the world of archaic man, we have the feeling of something prodigiously strange. As far as I have been able to analyze it, this feeling comes mainly from the fact that the primary assumptions of archaic man differ essentially from ours—that he lives, if I may use the expression, in a different world. Until we come to know his presuppositions, he is a riddle hard to read, but when we know them, all is relatively simple. We might equally well say that primitive man ceases to be a riddle when we have come to know our own presuppositions.

It is a rational presupposition of ours that everything has a natural and perceptible cause. We are convinced of this. Causality, so understood, is one of our most sacred dogmas. There is no legitimate place in our world for invisible, arbitrary and so-called supernatural forces—unless, indeed, we follow the modern physicist in his scrutiny of the minute and secret world of the atom wherein, as it appears, curious things come to pass. But that lies far from the beaten track. We distinctly resent the idea of invisible and arbitrary forces, for it is not so long ago that we made our escape from that frightening world of dreams and superstitions, and constructed for ourselves a picture of the cosmos worthy of rational consciousness—that latest and greatest achievement of man. We are now surrounded by a world that is obedient to rational laws. It is true that we do not know the causes of everything, but they will in time be discovered, and these discoveries will accord with our reasoned expectations. That is our hope, and we take it as much for granted as primitive man

does his own assumptions. There are also chance occurrences, to be sure, but these are merely accidental, and we have granted them a causality of their own. Chance occurrences are repellent to the mind that loves order. They have a laughable and therefore irritating way of throwing out of gear the predictable course of events. We resent the idea of chance occurrences as much as that of invisible forces, for they remind us too much of Satanic imps or of the caprice of a deus ex machina. They are the worst of enemies of our careful calculations and a continual threat to all our undertakings. Being admittedly contrary to reason, they deserve contempt, and yet we should not fail to give them their due. The Arab shows them greater respect than we. He writes on every letter Insha-allah, "If it please God," for only then will the letter arrive. In spite of our reluctance to admit chance, and in spite of the fact that events run true to general laws, it is undeniable that we are always and everywhere exposed to incalculable accidents. And what is more invisible and arbitrary than chance? What is more unavoidable and more annoying?

It is our assumption, amounting to a positive conviction, that everything has causes which we call natural and which we at least suppose to be perceptible. Primitive man, on the other hand, assumes that everything is brought about by invisible, arbitrary powers in other words, that everything is chance. Only he does not call it chance, but intention. Natural causation is to him a mere semblance and not worthy of mention. If three women go to the river to draw water, and a crocodile seizes the one in the centre and pulls her under, our view of things leads us to the verdict that it was pure chance that that particular woman was seized. The fact that the crocodile seized her seems to us natural enough, for these beasts occasionally do cat human beings. For primitive man such an explanation completely obliterates the facts, and accounts for no aspect of the whole exciting story. Archaic man is right in holding our view of the matter to be superficial or even absurd, for the accident might not have happened and still the same interpretation would fit the case. The prejudice of the European does not allow him to see how little he really explains things in such a way.

Primitive man expects more of an explanation. What we call chance is to him arbitrary power. It was therefore the intention of the crocodiles-as everyone could observe-to seize the woman who stood between the other two. If it had not had this intention it would have taken one of the others. But why did the crocodile have this intention? These animals do not ordinarily cat human beings. This assertion is correct-quite as correct as the statement that there is no rainfall in the Sahara. Crocodiles are really timid animals, and are easily frightened.

Considering their numbers, they kill astonishingly few people, and it is an unexpected and unnatural event when they devour a man. Such an event calls for explanation. Of his own accord the crocodile would not take a human life. By whom, then, was he ordered to do so?

It is on the facts of the world around him that primitive man bases his verdicts. When the unexpected occurs he is justifiably astonished and wishes to know the specific causes. To this extent he behaves exactly as we do. But he goes further than we. He has one or more theories about the arbitrary power of chance. We say: Nothing but chance. He says: Calculating intention. He lays the chief stress upon the confusing and confused breaks in the chain of causation--upon those occurrences that fail to show the causal connections which science expects, and that constitute the other half of happenings in general. He has long ago adapted himself to nature in so far as it conforms to general laws; what he fears is unpredictable chance whose power makes him see in it an arbitrary and incalculable agent. Here again he is right. It is quite understandable that everything out of the ordinary should frighten him. Anteaters are fairly numerous in the regions south of Mount Elgon where I stayed for some time. The anteater is a shy, nocturnal animal that is rarely seen. If one happens to be seen by day, it is an extraordinary and unnatural event which astonishes the natives as much as the discovery of a brook that occasionally flows uphill would astonish us. If we knew of actual cases in which water suddenly overcame the force of gravity, such knowledge would cause us no little anxiety. We know that tremendous masses of water surround us, and can easily imagine what would happen if water no longer conformed to gravitational law. This is the situation in which primitive man finds himself with respect to the happenings in his world. He is thoroughly familiar with the habits of anteaters, but when one of them transgresses the laws of nature it acquires an incalculable sphere of action. Primitive man is so strongly impressed by things as they are, that a transgression of the laws of his world exposes him to unforeseen possibilities. Such an exception is a portent, an omen, comparable to a comet or an eclipse. Since in his view such an unnatural event as the appearance of an anteater by day can have no natural causes, some invisible power must be behind it.

As for us, we should certainly be alarmed enough if water began to run uphill for unknown reasons, but are not when an anteater is seen by day, or an albino is born, or an eclipse takes place. We know the meaning and the sphere of action of such happenings, while primitive man does not. Ordinary events constitute for him a coherent whole in which he and

all other creatures are embraced. He is therefore extremely conservative, and does what others have always done. If something happens, no matter where, to break the coherence of this whole, he feels there is a rift in his well-ordered world. Then anything may happen-heaven knows what. All occurrences that are in any way striking are at once brought into connection with the unusual event. For instance, a missionary set up a flagstaff in front of his house so that he could raise the Union Jack on Sundays. But this innocent pleasure cost him dear. It was a singular and disturbing action, and when shortly afterwards a devastating storm broke out, the flagstaff was of course made responsible. This sufficed to start a general uprising against the missionary. It is the regularity of common occurrences that assures primitive man of a sense of security in his world. Every exceptional event seems to him the threatening act of an arbitrary power that must be expiated. It is not only a momentary interruption of the ordinary course of things, but also the portent of other untoward events.

This strikes us as nothing less than absurd inasmuch as we forget how our grandparents and our great grandparents still felt about the world. A calf is born with two heads and five legs. In the next village a cock has laid an egg. An old woman has had a dream, a comet appears in the sky, there is a great fire in the nearest town, and the following year a war breaks out. In this way history was always written from remote antiquity on down to the eighteenth century. This juxtaposition of facts, so meaningless to us, is significant and convincing to primitive man. And, contrary to all expectation, he is right to find it so. His powers of observation can be trusted. From age-old experience he knows that such connections actually exist. What seems to us a wholly senseless heaping-up of single, haphazard occurrences-because we pay attention only to single events and their particular causes-is for primitive man a completely logical sequence of omens and of happenings indicated by them. It is a fatal outbreak of demonic power showing itself in a thoroughly consistent way.

Primitive man's belief in arbitrary power does not arise out of thin air, as was always supposed, but is grounded in experience. What we have always called his superstition is justified by the grouping of chance occurrences. There is a real measure of probability that unusual events will coincide in time and place. We must not forget that our experience is not fully to be trusted in this regard. Our observation is inadequate because our point of view leads us to overlook these matters. For instance, in a serious mood it would never occur to us to take the following events as a sequence: in the morning a bird flies into your room, an hour

later you witness an accident in the street, in the afternoon a relative dies, in the evening your cook drops the soup tureen, and, on coming home late at night, you find that you have lost your key. Primitive man would not have overlooked a single item in this chain of events, for every new link would have answered to his expectations. And he is right—he is much more nearly right than we are willing to admit. His anxious expectations are justified and serve a purpose. Such a day, he holds, is ill-omened, and on it nothing should be undertaken. In our world this would be reprehensible superstition, but in the world of primitive man it is highly appropriate shrewdness. In that world man is far more exposed to accidents than we in our protected and well-regulated existence. When you are in the wilderness you dare not take too many chances. The European soon comes to appreciate this.

"Magic is the science of the jungle." A portent effects the immediate modification of a course of action, the abandonment of a planned undertaking, a change of psychic attitude. These are all highly expedient reactions in view of the fact that chance occurrences tend to fall in sequences and that primitive man is wholly unconscious of psychic causality. Thanks to our one-sided emphasis upon so-called natural causation, we have learned to distinguish what is subjective and psychic from what is objective and "natural." For primitive man, on the contrary, the psychic and the objective coalesce in the external world. In the face of something extraordinary it is not he who is astonished, but rather the thing which is astonishing. It is mana-endowed with magic power. What we would call the powers of 'imagination and suggestion seem to him invisible forces which act upon him from without. His country is neither a geographical nor a political entity. It is that territory which contains his mythology, his religion, all his thinking and feeling in so far as he is unconscious of these functions. His fear is localized in certain places that are "not good." The spirits of the departed inhabit such or such a wood. That cave harbors devils which strangle any man who enters. In yonder mountain lives the great serpent; that hill is the grave of the legendary king; near this spring or rock or tree every woman becomes pregnant; that ford is guarded by snake demons; this towering tree has a voice that can call certain people. Primitive man is unpsychological. Psychic happenings take place outside him in an objective way.