

FOREWORD

Everyone who has had practical experience of psychotherapy knows that the process which Freud called "transference" often presents a difficult problem. It is probably no exaggeration to say that almost all cases requiring lengthy treatment gravitate round the phenomenon of transference, and that the success or failure of the treatment appears to be bound up with it in a very fundamental way. Psychology, therefore, cannot very well overlook or avoid this problem, nor should the psychotherapist pretend that the so-called "resolution of the transference" is just a matter of course. We meet with a similar optimism in the treatment of "sublimation," a process closely connected with the transference. In discussing these phenomena, people often talk as though they could be dealt with by reason, or by intelligence and will, or could be remedied by the ingenuity and art of a doctor armed with superior technique. This euphemistic and propitiatory approach is useful enough when the situation is not exactly simple and no easy results are to be had; but it has the disadvantage of disguising the difficulty of the problem and thus preventing or postponing deeper investigation. Although I originally agreed with Freud that the importance of the transference could hardly be overestimated, increasing experience has forced me to realize that its importance is relative. The transference is like those medicines which are a panacea for one and pure poison for another. In one case its appearance denotes a change for the better, in another it is a hindrance and an aggravation, if not a change for the worse, and in a third it is relatively unimportant. Generally speaking, however, it is a critical phenomenon of varying shades of meaning and its absence is as significant as its presence.

In this book I am concerned with the "classical" form of transference and its phenomenology. As it is a form of relationship, it always implies a vis-à-vis. Where it is negative or not there at all, the vis-à-vis plays an unimportant part, as is gen-

erally the case, for instance, when there is an inferiority complex coupled with a compensating need for self-assertion.¹

It may seem strange to the reader that, in order to throw light on the transference, I should turn to something so apparently remote as alchemical symbolism. But anyone who has read my book *Psychology and Alchemy* will know what close connections exist between alchemy and those phenomena which must, for practical reasons, be considered in the psychology of the unconscious. Consequently he will not be surprised to learn that this phenomenon, shown by experience to be so frequent and so important, also has its place in the symbolism and imagery of alchemy. Such images are not likely to be conscious representations of the transference relationship; rather, they unconsciously take that relationship for granted, and for this reason we may use them as an Ariadne thread to guide us in our argument.

The reader will not find an account of the clinical phenomena of transference in this book. It is not intended for the beginner who would first have to be instructed in such matters, but is addressed exclusively to those who have already gained sufficient experience from their own practice. My object is to provide some kind of orientation in this newly discovered and still unexplored territory, and to acquaint the reader with some of its problems. In view of the great difficulties that beset our understanding here, I would like to stress the provisional character of my investigation. I have tried to put together my observations and ideas, and I recommend them to the reader's consideration in the hope of directing his attention to certain points of view whose importance has forced itself upon me in the course of time. I am afraid that my description will not be easy reading for those who do not possess some knowledge of my earlier works. I have therefore indicated in the footnotes those of my writings which might be of assistance.

The reader who approaches this book more or less unpre-

¹ This is not to say that a transference never occurs in such cases. The negative form of transference in the guise of resistance, dislike, or hate endows the other person with great importance from the start, even if this importance is negative; and it tries to put every conceivable obstacle in the way of a positive transference. Consequently the symbolism so characteristic of the latter—the synthesis of opposites—cannot develop.

pared will perhaps be astonished at the amount of historical material I bring to bear on my investigation. The reason and inner necessity for this lie in the fact that it is only possible to come to a right understanding and appreciation of a contemporary psychological problem when we can reach a point outside our own time from which to observe it. This point can only be some past epoch that was concerned with the same problems, although under different conditions and in other forms. The comparative analysis thus made possible naturally demands a correspondingly detailed account of the historical aspects of the situation. These could be described much more succinctly if we were dealing with well-known material, where a few references and hints would suffice. But unfortunately that is not the case, since the psychology of alchemy here under review is almost virgin territory. I must therefore take it for granted that the reader has some knowledge of my Psychology and Alchemy, otherwise it will be hard for him to gain access to the present volume. The reader whose professional and personal experience has sufficiently acquainted him with the scope of the transference problem will forgive me this expectation.

*Although the present study can stand on its own, it forms at the same time an introduction to a more comprehensive account of the problem of opposites in alchemy, and of their phenomenology and synthesis, which will appear later under the title *Mysterium Coniunctionis*.² I would like to express my thanks here to all those who read my manuscript and drew attention to defects. My particular thanks are due to Dr Marie-Louise von Franz for her generous help.*

C. G. JUNG

Autumn, 1945

² [Translated as Vol. 14 of the *Collected Works* (1963).]

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE TRANSFERENCE

INTERPRETED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
A SET OF ALCHEMICAL PICTURES

*Quaero non pono, nihil hic determino dictans
Coniicio, conor, confero, tento, rogo. . . .*

(I inquire, I do not assert; I do not here
determine anything with final assurance; I
conjecture, try, compare, attempt, ask. . . .)

—Motto to Christian Knorr von Rosenroth,
Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae

