Chapter 4
Psychopathology in the Paradigm of the 'Primitive'

Like the fields of developmental psychology and ethnology reviewed in the previous chapters, psychiatric studies of the early twentieth century relied on analogical thinking. However, instead of equating indigenous peoples or children with humanity in its original state, the analogy concerned the mentally ill, and in this way it constructed the third figuration of the 'primitive' addressed in this book. The premise that the 'primitive' was present in schizophrenics – who suffered from "*the* artistic malady of the 1920s"[1] – and that their experience and thought corresponded to that of prehistoric humans formed the cornerstone of mental health research during the 1910s and 1920s.

Paul Schilder's *Wahn und Erkenntnis* (Delusion and Knowledge, 1918), for example, aims to "delineat[e], in sharper fashion, the essential lines common to the delusion of the [mentally] ill and the thinking of 'primitive man.'"[2] In regard to the latter, the book's scope is limited to beliefs in magic and animism, which – in light of the works of Frazer, Wundt, Preuss, and Vierkandt – Schilder considers essential aspects of 'primitive thinking.' Accordingly, he sets out to identify such beliefs and the thought mechanisms underlying them in schizophrenics and paranoiacs (who suffer from a "closely related disease"[3]).

Schilder proceeds by presenting an array of case histories, each of which is followed by a summary and analytical remarks stressing the patient's proximity to 'primitive thinking.' The first case concerns a woman identified as Anna H., who suffers from the delusion that she is under the spell of a black hand exercising control through "little wishes" (*Wünschelchen*); this condition, Schilder contends, exemplifies the indigenous belief in "magic-as-substance" (*substantiell gedachte zauberische Substanz*) – that is, *mana* or, in this instance, the "*orenda* of the Iroquois."[4] In the next case, the patient Helene K. is convinced that her thoughts are all-powerful, which Schilder declares to conform to 'prim-

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1 Bettina Gockel, *Die Pathologisierung des Künstlers. Künstlerlegenden der Moderne* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), 13.

2 Paul Schilder, *Wahn und Erkenntnis* (Berlin: Springer, 1918), 87. The author refers to Felix Krueger's 1911–1912 lectures in ethnology at the University of Halle, as well as to the writings of Freud and Jung (see below).

3 Schilder, *Wahn und Erkenntnis*, 60.

4 Schilder, *Wahn und Erkenntnis*, 62.

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itive thinking.' The third case, of Hans Felix K., illustrates the author's claim that the mentally ill share the indigenous belief in the magic power of words. In the fifth case, Schilder takes the wish expressed by the next patient, Rudolf B., to undergo a "testicular cross section" as a resurrection of archaic puberty rites.[5]

On the whole Schilder's analysis does not focus on mental structure so much as content. He devotes little analysis to the logic of his patients' delusions (for instance, the way heterogeneous entities are grouped together on the basis of chance similarities). Instead, he traces them back to a putative imaginary complex from long ago. Only in his concluding remarks does he acknowledge that an emotional logic is at work in 'primitive' and pathological thought.

> The worldview that places the magical in the foreground, whether among primitives or the mentally ill, is a worldview constructed in decisive measure by the affective element. [...] One could say that part of the primitive or insane person's drives have turned into his object.[6]

Schilder describes correlations between 'primitive' and paranoid (or schizophrenic) thinking in detail. However, he does not offer nuanced explanation of what kind of correspondence is at issue.

Addressing this shortcoming is the aim of Alfred Storch in *Das archaisch-primitive Erleben und Denken der Schizophrenen* (1922; *The Primitive Archaic Forms of Inner Experiences and Thought in Schizophrenia*, 1924). Storch also adopts a purely "phenomenological" approach at the outset, revealing the peculiarities of schizophrenic experience and thought. In turn, he places these observations in a developmental psychological context. This added step involves taking a "genetic psychological viewpoint" meant to reveal how "corresponding to all the processes and structures in adult man, lower and less perfect forms are met with in men at lower cultural levels, in children, and in animals."[7] In other words, Storch sets up a series of developmental stages. At the bottom of the scale are animals, "peoples of nature" (*Naturvölker*), and children; the top is occupied by "civilized man" (*der Kulturmensch*). This scaling enables him to understand correspondences between the thinking of "peoples of nature" and schizophrenics as evidence that they belong to the same (low) rung of development. For Storch, schizophrenics think on the same level as indigenous peoples

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5 Schilder, *Wahn und Erkenntnis*, 76–77.

6 Schilder, *Wahn und Erkenntnis*, 100.

7 Alfred Storch, *The Primitive Archaic Forms of Inner Experiences and Thought in Schizophrenia: A Genetic and Clinical Study of Schizophrenia*, trans. Clara Willard (New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1924), ix.

(or as children even, as he repeatedly declares): "We have thus, in […] analysis […], stumbled upon an abundance of peculiar tendencies and motivations […] which all alike have parallels in the primitive levels of thought."[8]

The *Poèmes* of Psychology

Storch hardly reflects on how or why this state of affairs has come to be. In lieu of theoretical discussion, he uses four complexes of metaphors to attempt to figuratively capture the relationship between the mentally ill and 'primitive thinking.' Storch states at some points that the patient's thinking "sinks back"[9] to a lower stage and at others that the 'primitive' mental and emotional world is "breaking forth."[10] Both representations of the psyche are based on an imaginary topography relegating earlier forms of consciousness to the bottom and newer ones to the top, where a step downward can also represent a movement backward.[11] Significantly, however, Storch's figurative representations remain incongruous with one another inasmuch as the first case pictures activity emanating from the subject, and the second from the 'primitive' world of emotion. Accordingly, resistance appears comparatively low in the first case and quite high in the second: the image of a soft surface of water is set in opposition to a hard crust that must be broken through by force. In terms of psychoanalysis, the first metaphorical complex comes quite close to regression, and the second approaches that of repression (he also speaks of "a breaking forth of emotional currents which had been dammed back"[12]) – I will address both in due course.

The two other metaphorical complexes employed by Storch, which occur less frequently but likewise contradict each other, concern "substitution" and "undercurrents." At times, archaic experience is viewed in terms of "the undercurrent of the waking thoughts of the day"[13] affecting all human beings at all times. Alternatively, it is described as a building block that fills in the gaps that result when a developed consciousness falls apart: "Using this comparative genetic method we discover […] that in schizophrenia certain mental conditions which are stable in highly developed minds […] are replaced by more primitive

8 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms*, 4.
9 E. g., Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms*, 25, 96.
10 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms*, 59, 83.
11 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms*, 99.
12 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms*, 59.
13 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms*, 105.

mental conditions."[14] Storch clearly reserves greater sympathy for the first notion. It lays the foundation not just for the metaphorical complexes of sinking and eruption, but also for the hymn-like rhapsody concluding his study:

> All the dams which reason has erected [...] give way and the psychic experiences unfold themselves unimpeded in the boundless sphere of the unconditioned. From the substrata archaic elements swell up, an intoxicating Dionysiac cosmic consciousness, a grandiose world phantasy; the person [...] becomes [...] God.[15]

Storch exposes this bearing as "Promethean temerity" and prophesies its imminent collapse, but all the same he grants the patient the status of an ancient hero. However, in contrast to the standard narrative of Enlightenment, rebellion against the gods does not represent an appeal to innate human reason so much as a liberation from it and an abandonment of oneself to experience and thought guided by emotion.[16]

The positive evaluation of schizophrenic thought resounding in this hymnic conclusion contradicts the study's scientific claim. At the same time, however, it agrees with Storch's use of metaphors, which do not act as mere rhetorical ornamentation but constitute an integral element of his reflections on operations of the 'primitive mind.' On this score, his reflections also express a certain affinity with 'primitive thinking' as he himself defines it, namely as being based on literal interpretations of figurative language.[17]

This poses the question of the *poème*-like character of the studies already mentioned, a quality that is also pronounced in the literary cast of Schilder's case studies. Inasmuch as typography sets the case studies apart from the rest of the text, a certain independence is already in evidence. Over the course of each chapter, the case studies grow longer and longer. The last two are some five pages each, which makes it easy for the reader to get lost in them – especially since the narrative distance between the doctor and the patient progressively

14 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms,* xii.

15 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms,* 106.

16 Doris Kaufmann speaks of a "pronounced concept of schizophrenia" in the cultural-scientific discourse of the 1920s ("Kunst, Psychiatrie und 'schizophrenes Weltgefühl' in der Weimarer Republik. Hans Prinzhorns Bildnerei der Geisteskranken," in *Kunst und Krankheit. Studien zur Pathographie*, ed. Matthias Bormuth, Klaus Podoll, and Carsten Spitzer [Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007], 57). Likewise, in her discussion of Binswanger and Jaspers, Gockel points out that during the same period mental illness went from being seen as a degenerative phenomenon to counting as a sign of election, especially in the context of art (Gockel, *Die Pathologisierung des Künstlers*, 83–103).

17 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms,* 98–99.

decreases. Thus, in the first case history, the grammatical mood switches from the subjunctive to the indicative: "She [thinks she] stands under the spell of the black hand" (*Sie stehe im Bann der schwarzen Hand*) becomes "The black hand has now, through the little wishes, stuck something in her throat" (*Die schwarze Hand hat ihr jetzt vermittels der Wünschelchen etwas in ihren Hals gesteckt*).[18] In subsequent case histories, more direct discourse from patients is included – their writings, for instance, or remarks made in conversation. A tripartite dramaturgy is also evident: the patient being admitted to care, progress (or lack thereof), and, finally, his or her discharge.

The tendency to give case histories a literary cast has a pendant in Storch's practice of not always distinguishing between real and fictional examples.[19] Thus, in the chapter entitled "The Schizophrenic Consciousness of Self: A Structure Belonging to a More Primitive Psychological Level" – he shares a dream from Gottfried Keller's *Der Grüne Heinrich* (1854, 1879; *Green Henry*, 1960) (an example previously used by Ludwig Klages) in order to shed light on the actual case of a patient from the St. Georg Hospital in Hamburg.[20] The literary nature of the study also comes out in the use of metaphor I have been discussing. Giving up analytical and conceptual terminology in favor of imagistic language to illustrate the relationship between schizophrenic and 'primitive thinking' corresponds to the author's advocacy (in line with the methodological considerations of developmental psychologists) for the researcher's "emotional participation and sympathetic understanding" of the schizophrenic mind, which, being engaged in an emotional and irrational process, is "only imperfectly accessible to rational analysis." Thus, Storch calls for "entering deeply [...] into the life of the schizophrenic, on the one hand, and into the ethnographical material, on the other."[21] This bearing does not represent a scientific approach so much as a literary aesthetics of empathy.

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18 Schilder, *Wahn und Erkenntnis*, 60 – 61.

19 Breuer and Freud's *Studien über Hysterie*, (1895; *Studies on Hysteria*, 1936) is well known for the literary cast given to cases. For a recent discussion, see Achim Geisenhanslüke, *Das Schibboleth der Psychoanalyse* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008).

20 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms,* 21 – 22.

21 Storch, *Primitive Archaic Forms,* x. Cf. Werner, *Einführung in die Entwicklungspsychologie*, 30, who writes that one should mentally assume the psychopath's position.

The Analogy of Regression

The theoretical paradigm for schizophrenia advanced by Schilder and Storch follows the principle of analogy insofar as schizophrenics and prehistoric humans are equated under the category of the 'primitive.' Both authors refer to Freud, whose *Totem und Tabu* (1913; *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics,* 1919) is one of the first works to have pointed out affinities between the mentally ill (neurotics, in this case) and prehistoric humanity. But unlike Schilder and Storch, Freud's theory of regression seeks to account for how such affinities come about, or more precisely, why more than a mere analogy is at stake.[22] Regression (not survival or recapitulation) is the temporal model that his argument follows.

Freud first developed his ideas about a different way of thinking – one that is possibly archaic and perhaps also found in children – by attempting to explain the phenomenon of dreaming. A few comments on this aspect of his studies are in order before I turn to the theory of regression, properly speaking.[23] In *Traumdeutung* (1899; *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1913), Freud develops a model of "dream-work" that informs subsequent theorists' (e. g., Piaget and Jung) conceptions of another way of thinking. Freud stresses that dream-work differs from waking thoughts in that the former does not form new thoughts so much as transform existing dream-thoughts[24] in a manner that is "irrational"[25] by the standards of daytime life. The process occurs by means of "condensation" (when two images are fused into one), "displacement" (when one image is replaced by another that is similar or connected by association), and "conditions of representability" (i. e., visualizing things or making use of symbols). Moreover, logical connections can transform into temporal ones (e. g., rendering a logical connection as simultaneity or a causal relation as succession) or can simply

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22 For an "analysis of the emergence and diffusion of the theory of schizophrenic regression," cf. Andreas Heinz, *Anthropologische und evolutionäre Modelle in der Schizophrenieforschung* (Berlin: VWB, 2002), 5. The author provides an overview from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth, but often devotes too little space to individual theories. See also Peter Geissler, *Mythos Regression* (Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2001), who deals with theories both by psychoanalysts and researchers in other fields but also in too cursory of a manner.

23 Cf. Gardian (*Sprachvisionen,* 94 – 121) for a discussion of psychopathological primitivism in the writings of Freud, Jung, and Kretschmer.

24 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 510.

25 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 601.

be disregarded.[26] Through these processes (compounded by "secondary revision"), the dream-work defamiliarizes latent dream thoughts into the dream's manifest content, which, bypassing mental censorship, finally gains admission to consciousness.

Significantly, Freud avoids speaking of dream-work as a different, other, or alien way of thinking. For the most part, *The Interpretation of Dreams* discusses mental operations in the sense of waking life, and his subsequent studies do too. Thus, in "Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens" (1911; "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," 1925), Freud defines thought as a reaction to the formation of the so-called reality principle: conjectural activity that serves to postpone the immediate gratification ("motor discharge" of excited states) that the so-called pleasure principle demands.[27] The state of sleep, on the other hand, is described as the "likeness of mental life as it was before the recognition of reality"; accordingly, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the processes of dream-work are described as "primary" processes of the "psychical apparatus,"[28] serving the pleasure principle exclusively – hence, they cannot be considered thinking or thought at all.[29] Freud nevertheless still refers to dreams as "a particular *form* of thinking, made possible by the conditions of the state of sleep" in a footnote added to *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1925.[30] However, since he is discussing dream-work as an autonomous process, it is clear that the dream *itself* does not think; rather, it *presents* thoughts in a foreign form.

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26 The only exception to the overall distortion of logic, according to Freud, is the treatment of similarity, which "is capable of being represented in dreams in a variety of ways" (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 335).

27 Sigmund Freud, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: W.W Norton, 1989), 303. Fantasy stands apart as a form of thinking devoted to the pleasure principle. Before the reality principle sets in, Freud argues, the object of desire (or thought) is hallucinatory.

28 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 601.

29 Cf. Carl Gustav Jung on Freud's definition of thinking: "Freud finds that the hallmark of waking thought is *progression:* the advance of the thought stimulus from the systems of inner or outer perception through the endopsychic work of association to its motor end, i. e., innervation. In dreams he finds the reverse" (Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, vol. 5, *Symbols of Transformation*, trans. Gerhard Adler and R.F.C. Hull [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976], 21). Emphasis in original.

30 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 510.

In *Totem and Taboo*, his examination of the 'primitive worldview,'[31] Freud again takes up the hallucinatory premises of desire along lines bound to the pleasure principle – the same structure that governs dreams (or, more precisely, hallucinatory dreams[32]) and the mental lives of children[33] and psychotics.[34] Here, he focuses on animism as a "system of thought"[35]: as the "doctrine of spiritual beings" teeming everywhere in the world, which are held to be responsible for natural processes and to infuse not only animals, plants, and inanimate things with life, but also human beings by means of those entities.[36] Unlike the English ethnologists he cites, Freud does not trace such belief back to prescientific curiosity so much as look for its psychological cause. As he argues apropos of magic (which he deems a technique of animism), animism follows from attaching excessive value to purely mental processes, which is expressed in magic by satisfying a wish through "motor hallucinations" (which represent the wish in question as having been fulfilled). Hereby, "things become less important than ideas of things: whatever is done to the latter will inevitably also occur to the former": "the principle governing magic, the technique of the animistic mode of thinking, is the principle of the 'omnipotence of thoughts.'"[37] Freud goes on to observe that this principle shapes the worldview of neurotics, whose compulsive actions are likewise "magical."[38] What's more, neurotics and "savages" share the condition of being stuck at an early stage of sexual development, namely childhood narcissism.

For Freud, childhood narcissism is the actual source of the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts. The lacking reference to an external love-object, which defines narcissism, corresponds mentally to a devaluation of external reality compared to the products of inner life: "intellectual narcissism and the omnipotence of thoughts."[39] Indigenous or prehistoric cultures and children, he claims, occupy this same developmental level, and neurotics return to it through

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31 For an examination of Freud in the context of artistic primitivism, see David Pan, *Primitive Renaissance* (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 83–97. On Freud's reading of Frazer, cf. Ronald E. Martin, *The Languages of Difference: American Writers and Anthropologists Reconfigure the Primitive, 1878–1940* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 91–131.
32 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 544.
33 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 533.
34 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 114, 533.
35 Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. James Strachey (London: Routledge, 2001), 90.
36 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 88.
37 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 99.
38 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 98.
39 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 105.

regression. Or, more precisely, part of the native or archaic bearing has remained within them through fixation (i. e., an arrested development in the course of childhood), and another part of their mindset is reactivated by the sexualization of thought processes. In the paradigm of the 'primitive,' neurotics suffer from a double – ontogenetic and phylogenetic – regression: they repeat a behavior that is both childlike and archaic.

In this context, Freud speaks of animism as a "system of thought," of the "animistic mode of thinking," as well as of "sexualized thinking." He comes close to conjecturing that a different mode of mental life exists, which, however, is not characterized by another quality of thinking so much as by the attachment of a higher value to the products of thinking over actual reality. If thinking is actually supposed to obey the reality principle, then here its higher evaluation puts it into the service of the pleasure principle. A certain proximity of this thinking to fantasy results, which Freud, in "Formulations on Two Principles of Mental Functioning," defines as mental activity subordinate to the pleasure principle:

> With the introduction of the reality principle one species of thought-activity was split off; it was kept free from reality-testing and remained subordinated to the pleasure principle alone. This activity is *phantasying*, which begins already in children's play, and later, continued as *day-dreaming*, abandons dependence on real objects.[40]

Consequently, the main difference between fantastic thinking and non-fantastic thinking is that the former does not test its thoughts against reality, that is, it does not distinguish between imagination and reality – and inasmuch as it considers products of imagination to be real or constitutive of reality, it is less bound to the laws of logic. Sully had already argued along similar lines to explain children's magical thinking. And Jung will take up this affinity in *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912; *Psychology of the Unconscious: A Study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido*, 1916), where he posits the existence of fantastic thought (as I will show in detail below).

The affinities of dream-work to theories of 'primitive thinking' developed in the fields of contemporary ethnology and developmental psychology are plain. Freud remarks as much in *The Interpretation of Dreams* when he describes dreams as "regression to the dreamer's earliest condition, a revival of his childhood, of the instinctual impulses which dominated it and of the methods of expression which were then available to him"; he expresses the hope of eventually discerning "behind this childhood of the individual [...] a picture of a phylogenetic childhood – a picture of the development of the human race":

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40 Freud, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," 303.

> Dreams and neuroses seem to have preserved more mental antiquities than we could have imagined possible; so that psycho-analysis may claim a high place among the sciences which are concerned with the reconstruction of the earliest and most obscure periods of the human race.[41]

Freud describes this double recourse as "regression." But what, exactly, does he mean by this term? The understanding presented in *Interpretation of Dreams* refers, for one, to a reversed course of motion within the psychic apparatus: the normal path leading from sensory organs to motor operations turns around so that the latter (or, at any rate, certain thoughts) provoke sensory stimuli – hallucinations, in other words. However, Freud goes on to stress that "regressive thought transformation" (mental activity that turns into physical sensation) can also occur in waking life under pathological conditions. This reversal is not brought about by the dream state but eased by it. Instead, it is triggered by the connection between thoughts and repressed or unconscious (for the most part infantile) memories.[42] Freud writes that these memories pull the thoughts associated with them into regression, as it were, for infantile memories generally resemble hallucinated or sensory perception. But in addition to the force of attraction exercised by memory, a force of resistance works against the penetration of such thoughts into consciousness. Regression is the result of these two conflicting aspects of mental life.

In a 1914 addition to *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud distinguishes between three kinds of regression: The first is topical, the reversed course of the psychic apparatus described above. The second is temporal, when *older* mental formations such as infantile memories are reactivated. The third is formal regression, when 'primitive' modes of expression replace those otherwise in place. All three are interrelated: "what is older in time is more primitive in form and in psychical topography lies nearer to the perceptual end."[43] In a sense then, Freud reconfigures the topography of the psychic apparatus along allochronic lines and formalizes its differences: the system of perception no longer stands at the beginning of a direction of motion only in a spatial sense; it also simultaneously reestablishes itself in the temporal distance, in the ontogenetic past, and therefore is distinguished by a less developed language of forms.

"General Theory of the Neuroses" (1917), one of Freud's *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,* revisits the topic of regression in the context of developmen-

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41 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 550.
42 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 539–549.
43 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 549.

tal abnormalities. Here, he at first distinguishes between regression and inhibited libido:

> I will therefore declare without more ado that I regard it as possible in the case of every particular sexual trend that some portions of it have stayed behind at earlier stages of its development, even though other portions may have reached their final goal. […] Let me further make it clear that we propose to describe the lagging behind of a part trend at an earlier stage as a *fixation* – a fixation, that is, of the instinct.

Regression, on the other hand, does not involve getting stuck at a particular stage. Instead, more advanced components of the psyche *revert* to an earlier stage of development. Freud clarifies, however, that this process depends on fixations that have previously occurred: "The stronger the fixations on its path of development, the more readily will the function [i.e., attaining the means of gratifying the sexual urge] evade external difficulties by regressing to the fixations."[44] The latter have weakened the function and made the possibility of reversion more appealing. Freud locates "infantile sexual experiences" as the sites of fixation to which regression leads.[45] Two factors are at work here: For one, this is where inborn drives manifest themselves, which Freud deems "after-effects of the experience of an earlier ancestry"; accordingly, he also speaks of "prehistoric experience." Second, accidental experiences during childhood – external influences – are at least equally responsible for the emergence of fixations: "fixation of the libido in the adult […] falls, for our purposes, into two further parts: the inherited constitution and the disposition acquired in childhood."[46]

Phylogenetic Regression

The works concerning regression treated up to this point assign a much greater role to childhood than to the archaic past. However, the theoretical reflections by Freud I have just discussed open the prospect of regression reaching back much further – a possibility Freud explicitly expresses in the already mentioned addition to the 1919 edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. For him, dreaming as a whole is understood as a regression not just to one's own childhood (that is, to instinctual stirrings and modes of expression stored in the unconscious), but to the phylogenetic past repeated during every childhood. It follows that dreams

44 Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1989), 423.
45 Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 451.
46 Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 450.

provide the analyst with knowledge of the archaic inheritance of humankind. Freud emphasizes this point in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* when discussing the "archaic traits and infantilism" that constitute both the formal and the material properties of dreams. Not only is a "primitive" form of expression realized in dreams, but, as in childhood, the "dominance of the id" and early (from an adult perspective, "perverse") sexual impulses are also reestablished. At the same time, symbolic relations, which comprise the "intellectual endowment" of early humans, are revived.[47]

In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud had already hinted that "agreements" between the mental lives of neurotics and "savages" amount to more than a mere analogy. While wary of drawing the conclusion of "any internal relationship"[48] between them, he simultaneously stresses that neurotics "may be said to have inherited an archaic constitution as an atavistic vestige,"[49] associating it thus with development that was suspended at an earlier phylogenetic stage. Elsewhere in the study, Freud describes the behavior of neurotics in terms of regression to a narcissistic stage shared with indigenous peoples and children.[50] Finally, at the end of the work, he ventures the "bold" claim that a mass-psyche is handed down from one generation to the next, which he justifies by arguing that otherwise "there would be no progress in this field and next to no development."[51] Nonetheless, he leaves open the question of how transfer of this kind might take place. Freud's thesis here is more idealistic than materialistic, i.e., he assumes that later generations take up the feelings of earlier ones by inheriting customs, ceremonies, and statutes that carry deposits of their emotional life.[52]

A manuscript from 1915, *Übersicht der Übertragungsneurosen* (*Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 1987) returns to the themes of *Totem and Taboo*. This document, rediscovered by Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, makes it perfectly clear that regression extends back to phylogeny for Freud. In contrast to the former publication, this text provides a precise biological explanation for this extension. Describing regression as "the most interesting factor and instinctual vicissitude," he once again discourses on "problems of fixation and disposition" and traces regression back to "a fixation point in either ego or libido development,"

47 Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,* 262.
48 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 158.
49 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 77.
50 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 120.
51 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 183.
52 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 31.

which for him represents the tendency toward neurosis.[53] As before, Freud stresses that fixation can be ascribed either to experiences from early childhood or genetic constitution, which he understands as the "acquisitions of our ancestors."[54] In so doing, he arrives at the hypothesis that the "phylogenetic disposition" can be used to elucidate neurosis. From here, he sketches a "phylogenetic playlet in two acts and six scenes"[55]: In the first act, "prehistoric man" must contend with the catastrophe of the Ice Age, which had abruptly ended their carefree existence under paradisiacal conditions. In reaction to the catastrophe, human beings grow anxious and introduce a prohibition on reproduction; consequently, their unused libido is sublimated and applied to intellectual tasks, specifically to an "animistic world view and its magical trappings."[56] Freud then associates these three types of behavior to the three transference neuroses that he identifies as plaguing his contemporaries (anxiety hysteria, conversion hysteria, and obsessional neurosis). By explaining the neuroses as regressions to corresponding phases of human history, he assigns a phylogenetic disposition to them. The same scheme holds for the narcissistic neuroses (dementia praecox, paranoia, melancholia-mania) that he assigns to the next three stages of development in the culture of the "second generation."[57] Here, Freud contends, the decisive events are the jealous patriarch's castration of his sons, the sons forming a homosexual fraternity, the communal grief experienced when they murder the primal father, and then the joy when the latter is resurrected. That these relations between primordial culture and modern neurotics constitute more than a mere analogy for Freud becomes especially prominent in his extensive discussion of how inheritance could be conceived in a homosexual society: "It is evident that the castrated and intimidated sons do not procreate, therefore cannot pass on their disposition."[58] Freud solves this problem with the youngest son, who (in the scenario envisioned) has not been castrated by the father or banished, but who witnesses the fate of his older brothers and their alternative community. Through this son, Freud surmises, acquisitions originally belonging only to men are passed on: "next to those men who fall by the wayside as infertile, there may remain a chain of others, who in their person go through the vicissitudes of

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53 Sigmund Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, ed. Ilse Grubrich-Simitis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 9.
54 Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 10.
55 Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, "Metapsychology and Metabiology," in Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy*, ed. Ilse Grubrich-Simitis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 89.
56 Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 15.
57 Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 17.
58 Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 19.

the male sex and can propagate them as dispositions." Through this line, acquisitions initially made only by men pass down to women, too: "We are spared the grossest difficulty by observing that we should not forget human bisexuality. Thus women can assume the dispositions acquired by men and bring them to light in themselves."[59]

Passages like this – especially given that Freud stood in active correspondence with Sándor Ferenczi during the First World War – indicate that he, like Ferenczi, was convinced that the psychic maladies of his contemporaries could be explained in phylogenetic terms and that he assumed traumatic experiences and their cultural consequences could be inherited. It follows that regression reaches back to phylogenetic points of fixation. Indeed, according to Freud it even extends into the inorganic realm, that is, to the earliest state of phylogenesis. In *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* (1920; *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1922), he defines instincts as regressive:

> *It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things.* [...] Let us suppose, then, that all the organic instincts are conservative, are acquired historically and tend towards the restoration of an earlier state of things. It follows that the phenomena of organic development must be attributed to external disturbing and diverting influences. The elementary living entity would from its very beginning have no wish to change. [...] Every modification which is thus imposed upon the course of the organism's life is accepted by the conservative organic instincts and stored up for further repetition. [...] It would be in contradiction to the conservative nature of the instincts if the goal of life were a state of things which had never yet been attained. [...] '*the aim of all life is death.*'[60]

Here, regression appears as the necessary outcome of the death instinct.[61]

One of Freud's letters to Ferenczi credits the latter as the originator (*Urheberrecht*) for developing the phylogenetic theory elaborated in *Overview of the Transference Neuroses.*[62] As Grubrich-Simitis has documented in detail, the two psychoanalysts maintained close contact when Freud was writing his meta-

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59 Freud, *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses,* 20.

60 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), 31–32. Emphasis in original.

61 In contrast to the texts discussed earlier, Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* does not explain neuroses as regressions to an earlier phylogenetic stage. Instead, he develops a new theory of instinct, in which regression is a necessary expression of the death instinct. In this respect, it is not to be classified as pathological per se – it only becomes so if it lacks its counterpart, the urge to develop, which is triggered by the life instincts.

62 Freud to Ferenczi, 12 July 1915, in *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 95.

psychological studies. In particular, Freud appreciated Ferenczi's *Entwicklungsstufen des Wirklichkeitssinnes* (1913; *Stages in the Development in the Sense of Reality*, 1916), which contains initial speculations on the formative role of geological catastrophes for anthropogenesis and the genetic transmission of collective memories to individuals.[63] Still greater influence, in my estimation, was exercised by Ferenczi's efforts to devise a "bio-analysis" on the basis of a new theory of coitus. The results would appear in *Versuch einer Genitaltheorie* (1924; *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality*, 1968), but Ferenczi and Freud had already been corresponding about the matter at length for years. The works of Lamarck occupy a central position in these exchanges, and Freud followed his colleague's lead and immersed himself in them. The two men even planned a joint work on Lamarck with which, as Freud wrote to Ferenczi, psychoanalysis would "[leave] its calling card with biology." The direction the project would have taken is indicated by Freud's remark that research by "psycho-Lamarckists such as [August] Pauly" risked leaving them with "little to say that is completely new."[64] (According to Pauly, physiological demands and the organism's efforts to meet them are what actually fuel the course of evolution, and organic adaptations are inherited.[65]) Although the collaborative work never materialized, Ferenczi's *Theory of Genitality* represents the outcome of the exchange. As Grubrich-Simitis has shown, it contains numerous reflections developed together, as revealed, for instance, in Ferenczi's request to include "assumptions about Lamarckism" in his own book that had been constructed jointly with Freud.[66]

The second part of *Theory of Genitality* traces the "individual experience of the catastrophe of birth and its repetition in the act of coitus" back to the emergence of humankind's distant forebears from the water: "What if […] birth itself [were] nothing but a recapitulation on the part of the individual of the great catastrophe which at the time of the recession of the ocean forced so many animals, and certainly our own animal ancestors, to adapt themselves to a land existence?" In this way, Ferenczi invokes Haeckel's fundamental biogenetic law to explain the repetition of phylogeny not just in the embryo but also in the "devel-

63 Cf. Grubrich-Simitis, "Metapsychology and Metabiology," 79–81. The following draws on Grubrich-Simitis's reflections in this essay.

64 Freud to Ferenczi, 28 January 1917, in *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 94.

65 Cf. August Pauly, *Darwinismus und Lamarckismus. Entwurf einer psychophysischen Teleologie* (Munich: E. Reinhardt, 1905).

66 Ferenczi to Freud, 25 July 1917, in *A Phylogenetic Fantasy: Overview of the Transference Neuroses*, 95.

opment of the means of protection of the embryo."[67] Nascent life in the amniotic fluid of the uterus repeats the conditions of existence of human beings' most remote ancestors: fish in the primeval sea. Ferenczi also enlists Lamarck's thesis that characteristics, acquired during the organism's adaptive reaction to internal needs and external forces, can be inherited – and does so in order to formulate a theory of inherited trauma. He begins with the premise that "memory traces of all the catastrophes of phylogenetic development accumulated in the germplasm." In other words, experiences of disaster in the early history of humankind might be stored in biological material and passed on to future generations:

> What we call heredity is perhaps [...] only the displacing upon posterity of the bulk of the traumatically unpleasurable experiences in question, while the germplasm, as the physical basis of heredity, represents the sum of the traumatic impressions transmitted from the past and handed on by the individual.

In subsequent generations, this genetic material causes the "perpetual repetition of the painful situation" on a physical level, albeit in mutated and weakened form so that, over the course of time, "unpleasurable tension" diminishes.[68] Applied to Ferenczi's hypothesis, this means not just that each individual birth repeats the traumatic expulsion of humankind's primordial ancestors from the water but also that this expulsion represents the biological cause for the emergence of uterine and natal conditions. The germ plasma, with its mnemic charge, is compelled to repetition, forming an organ and physical process that renews traumatic experience, which can be dismantled over the generations.

For Ferenczi, the womb, intrauterine existence, and the process of reproduction provide biological proof of a "thalassal regressive trend," i.e., a "striving towards the aquatic mode of existence abandoned in primeval times."[69] This view reproduces Freud's radical thesis that life seeks to return to an inorganic state. Ferenczi considers rest in the womb and in orgasm not only to be a return to life in the sea, but at the same time also to the "repose of the era before life originated, in other words, the deathlike repose of the inorganic world."[70] More importantly, this claim represents the extreme of a biological view of regression – as implied by Freud's discussion of heredity in *Overview of the Transference Neuroses* and made explicit in his effort in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to prove

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67 Sándor Ferenczi, *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality*, trans. Henry Alden Bunker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 45.
68 Ferenczi, *Thalassa*, 66.
69 Ferenczi, *Thalassa*, 52.
70 Ferenczi, *Thalassa*, 63.

that the death instinct already prevails at the level of germ cells. Ferenczi takes on directly what Freud leaves relatively open-ended, namely how fixations are passed from one generation to the next. His answer is radically materialistic: this inheritance is stored in the germ plasm and takes place through the formation of certain organs and the physical processes tied to them. Thus, for Ferenczi, it is ultimately the body that permits regression to earlier phylogenetic conditions and simultaneously the repetition and overcoming of ancient *traumata*. Ferenczi conceives of regression biologically then. In terms of the paradigm of the 'primitive,' this means that schizoprenics are viewed as 'primitives' because they regress to an earlier phylogenetic stage where a fixation once took place, which has been passed on biologically from generation to generation ever since.

Ferenczi's speculations go far beyond what Freud had imagined. At the same time, they display a tendency that, as we have seen, is also evident in the latter's work. In *Freud, Biologist of the Mind,* Frank J. Sulloway points out, "from the discovery of spontaneous infantile sexuality (1896–1897) to the very end of his life, Freud's endorsement of biogenetic and Lamarckian viewpoints inspired many of his most controversial psychoanalytic conceptions."[71] Among other things, Sulloway shows how Freud ties neuroses and regression to one another through phylogenetic scenarios:

> Freud resolved the problem of the choice of neurosis in the following manner. Ontogenetically, a particular illness was linked to a particular stage of libidinal fixation, to which the libido has later regressed. Freud assumed that both the initial fixation point and the later process of regression were favored by organic predispositions – neuroses once experienced by the race. Such inborn predispositions served, he concluded, as the basic "schema" for ontogenetic development, remodeling many childhood experiences in phantasy according to the universal guidelines of phylogeny.[72]

In *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, Stephen Jay Gould describes Freud's belief in biogenetic constitution and stresses the difference between the latter's notion of a *mental* recapitulation and Haeckel's understanding of a *physical* one: "Physical recapitulations are transient stages […]. But the stages of mind can coexist. […] The earlier stages are characteristically repressed in the healthy adult, but they need not disappear."[73] This difference forms the precondition for Freud's theory of neurosis, which is based on the possibility of regression that is built into mental recapitulation.

71 Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind* (London: Burnett, 1979), 498.
72 Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind*, 391.
73 Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 157.

The manuscript, “Overview of Transference Neuroses,” substantiates Sulloway and Gould’s claims about the influence of biogenetic theory on Freud. In her essay accompanying the published manuscript, Grubrich-Simitis also documents in detail Freud’s close collaboration with Ferenczi as well as the heavy impact of Haeckel and above all Lamarck on his work. She explains how Lamarckian schemes – to which Freud adhered all his life – form a “bracket between two stages in the development of Freudian theory.”

> The traumatic real experience in Freud’s early conception of the etiology of hysteria appears in fully developed psychoanalytic theory set back into the distant past of the prehistory of the species, that is, transposed from the ontogenetic to the phylogenetic dimension.

According to Grubrich-Simitis, the Lamarckian-Haeckelian

> postulate helped Freud bridge “the gulf between individual and group psychology.” At the same time he hoped to bridge the gulf that “earlier periods of human arrogance had torn too wide apart between mankind and the animals,” because he saw in the archaic inheritance of *Homo sapiens* the analogue to the instinctual equipment of animals. And he probably harbored the hope of overcoming yet another gulf, the one between the natural sciences and the humanities.[74]

After all, Grubrich-Simitis justly observes, Freud was

> radical in two directions: in the impetus of his analysis of civilization, critical of society and religion, and in his relentless insistence on the final anchoring of all human behavior in the pleasure-creating, mortal biological-organic substrate.[75]

Finally, Laura Otis argues that Freud’s writings represent one of the most important lines of transmission for the biological theory of organic memory: “By the 1940s, relatively few reputable biologists relied on Lamarck’s and Haeckel’s thinking [...]. In psychoanalysis, however, the claim that one ‘remembered’ not only one’s infancy, but the experiences of one’s ancestors, appeared much more reasonable.” Accordingly, she points to a conflict. On the one hand, Freud was convinced of the theory of organic memory:

> The individual acquired new characters: those stimuli that had sufficient impact or that were repeated frequently enough created an impression upon the nervous system and eventually upon the germ plasm and thus could be passed on to subsequent generations. Each

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74 Grubrich-Simitis, “Metapsychology and Metabiology,” 99. The quotes within this passage are from Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*.

75 Grubrich-Simitis, “Metapsychology and Metabiology,” 105.

> individual bore in his or her unconscious the heritage of ancestral impressions and added to it with personal experiences.[76]

On the other hand, Otis notes, Freud was more aware than contemporary biologists that the theory of organic memory was based on a mere analogy, i. e., on the psychologist’s interpretation.

The biogenetic and Lamarckian bias that scholars have noted in Freud’s works holds implications for my purposes here not only because it made the model of regression appeal to authors like Robert Müller and Gottfried Benn (whose works will be examined in detail later on), but also because it connects so clearly with the two models discussed in the previous chapters. The analogies that ethnology, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis drew between ‘prehistoric man’ and indigenous peoples, children, and the mentally ill are based on three temporal models: survival, recapitulation, and regression. Survival involves the persistence of the archaic into the present, and it is modeled after atavism. Just as organs that no longer serve a purpose may be retained in rudimentary form, this theory holds that aspects of ancient cultures may be preserved even if cultural evolution is believed to have long since reached a far ‘higher’ level of development.

In the process of recapitulation, by contrast, a primal development is repeated. This model, with its return to the biogenetic foundation, is even more obviously understood in biological terms. Already for Haeckel, physical development proceeds hand in hand with psychic development. Thus he assigns single-cell organisms with a “cell-soul” whose function is to store the memory of earlier sensations. This memory is materially realized in a specific change to the germ plasma and then all the way to the development of certain organs. The hypothesis suggests that phylogenesis is repeated through ontogenesis both physically and mentally, and from this derives the work of many developmental psychologists and psychopathologists. But if, in this course of development, inhibitions arise – that is, a developmental standstill at a given phylogenetic/ontogenetic level – this may trigger a survival phenomenon whereby an adult behaves like a child or a contemporary ‘civilized’ individual exhibits archaic behavior. Accordingly, Freud’s example for the inhibition of development is atavism:

> As you know, […] in the highest mammals the male sex-glands, which are originally situated deep in the abdominal cavity, we find in a number of male individuals that one of these paired organs has remained behind in the pelvic cavity, or that it has become permanently

76 Laura Otis, *Organic Memory: History and the Body in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 183.

> lodged in what is known as the inguinal canal, through which both organs must pass in the course of their migration.[77]

Finally, regression does not refer to the persistance of an archaic substance, nor to the repetition of phylogenesis; instead, it involves a turn back from a later stage of development to an earlier one. Whereas in the case of survival the enduring element is intrinsically old and never has reached a higher level, Freud applies the concept of regression to his contemporaries, whose pathologies result from their fall back to earlier stages. Freud sees inhibition as one reason for such backsliding, i.e., a fixation at an earlier level of development, which in the case of phylogenetic fixation can be passed on through organic memory to later generations.

The models of survival, recapitulation, and regression are thus interrelated. Against the background of the theory of recapitulation, developmental inhibitions can arise in the course of ontogenesis, corresponding to phylogenetic fixations or reactivating the latter. These inhibitions give rise to survivals, which are perceived in successfully evolved contexts as atavisms, rudiments of the ancient past. Conversely, regression can pass from a later stage of development to an earlier one, where an inhibition had occurred during the course of phylogenesis (or in the process of ontogenesis, which recapitulates the latter) and was then transmitted in the organic memory. Three figures – indigenous people, children, and the mentally ill – are understood to be the expressions of these three models.

From the differences between these models arise the various fantasies attached to the three figures: Even though survival presents something archaic, it at the same time is delegated to the realm of indigenous peoples outside of Europe, who are thought to embody the origins of European culture but are seen by the latter as being at a significant temporal and developmental remove. The model of recapitulation in turn draws attention to the conviction that those who belong to 'civilized' societies repeat phylogenesis ontogenetically; however, they are assured that the developmental heights they have achieved separate them from these beginnings. In brief, when looking at indigenous peoples and children, the European spectator says, "we" can see who "we" were and also confirm who "we" no longer are.[78] In contrast to both of these models, the concept of regression means that for even the healthiest adult there is apparently still a possibility of slipping back to the primal state. Consequently, analogies be-

77 Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 473.
78 On the history of this figure of thought, see Gess, "Sie sind, was wir waren," *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 56 (2012). Schiller, "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry," 180–181.

tween schizophrenic thinking and dream-thoughts and other, scattered states of consciousness were especially unsettling for those invested in distancing themselves from the 'primitive.'[79] For these analogies make clear that everything the schizophrenic does applies in milder form also to the self-declared rational Modern and that therefore categorical borders cannot be drawn between the two.[80] The same holds for the opposite evaluation of 'primitive thinking.' Those critics of rationality who lamented the loss of such thinking or who searched for origins and deeper modes of thought found encouragement in the model of regression because it offered hope that origins and 'primitive thinking' could be recuperated by not only schizophrenics but anyone. In this way, the distinction between the ill and the healthy was questioned, and the schizophrenic was depathologized and framed instead as the discoverer of true being.

Ontologization

Freud understands regression as a psychic process that initially provides subjective relief to the person affected, but ultimately proves highly detrimental to his or her mental health. The aim of therapy must therefore be to eliminate the current causes and historical preconditions of the underlying regression.[81] A healthy psyche does not regress. The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung parted ways with his teacher and arrived at a different – and, in the end, an appreciative – view of regression. For Freud, the phylogenetic and ontogenetic development proceeds in determinate stages, and, if undisturbed, this procedure ultimately guarantees mental equilibrium. None of the phases is judged as having greater value than any other, but each one must occur at the right time and give way to the next. Jung thinks otherwise and assigns a different value to developmental stages. He interprets their course of development ontologically; in other words, he seeks the essence of a person all the way back in the origins of his or her de-

79 Cf. Kretschmer, *Textbook of Medical Psychology*, 125.

80 Accordingly, Eugen Bleuler points out the disastrous consequences that the direct translation of "autistic thinking" into action can have on healthy people and its ruinous effects in world history (for instance, "hounding peoples and classes against each other into a gruesome struggle for annihilation") ("Das autistische Denken," *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* 4.1 [1912]: 34).

81 On the "harmful aspects [of regression], as a dangerous form of resistance, as a symptom of the compulsion to repeat, and finally as the most important clinical example of the death instinct," cf. Michael Balint, "Freud und das Regressionsthema," Chapter 19, in *Therapeutische Aspekte der Regression: Die Theorie der Grundstörung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1970).

velopment in order to find indications of that person's true *type*. In this way, regression comes to mean a path to truth and therefore acquires a positive value for Jung.[82]

It is conceivable that Freud's "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" prompted Jung to call a specific mode of thinking described in *Symbols of Transformation* "fantasy-thinking."[83] At any rate, the work refers frequently to Freud's writings – especially *The Interpretation of Dreams* – in order to propose a theory of "two kinds of thinking."[84] The first is "directed or logical": "thinking that is adapted to reality, by means of which we imitate the successiveness of objectively real things, so that the images inside our mind follow one another in the same strictly causal sequence as the events taking place outside it." Such mental operations require language; their substance is material, linguistic, and oriented toward communication; evaluating and reworking propositions is also a matter of language. Jung also calls it "*thinking in words*."[85] The other, opposite mode he calls "dreaming or fantasy-thinking." Such thought does not follow a directed course – or, if it does, its objective remains unconscious – so much as it proceeds by association, quickly leading from reality to fantasy. Thinking along these lines largely defies language. Instead, it relies on a rapid succession of images and feelings to gratify desires:

> We have, therefore, two kinds of thinking [...]. The [first] operates with speech elements for the purpose of communication, and is difficult and exhausting; the [second] is effortless, working as it were spontaneously, with the contents ready to hand and guided by unconscious motives. The one produces innovations and adaptation, copies reality, and tries to act upon it; the other turns away from reality, sets free subjective tendencies, and, as regards adaptation, is unproductive.[86]

Jung traces back to the origins of this thinking by way of the products of the unconscious mind,[87] childhood, and even the medieval and ancient worlds, all the way to the prehistoric past: "infantile thinking and dream-thinking are simply

82 Cf. Martin, *The Languages of Difference,* 91–131.
83 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 18, 28, 29.
84 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*. The chapter, "Two Kinds of Thinking," had already appeared independently (1911) in *Jahrbuch psychoanalytischer und psychopathischer Forschungen*, the same journal that published Freud's "Formulierungen über die zwei Prinzipien des psychischen Geschehens" (1911) and Bleuler's "Das autistische Denken" (1912).
85 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation,* 11. Emphasis in original.
86 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 18.
87 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation,* 24, 30: "All this shows how much the products of the unconscious have in common with mythology."

a recapitulation of earlier evolutionary stages."[88] Thus he applies what holds for infantile thinking to the "fantasy-thinking" available to adults "all through [their] lives": it "corresponds to the antique state of mind."[89]

However, primordial thinking and its products are not directly accessible. Jung takes a metaphor from geology and speaks of the stratification of the psyche. The oldest mental strata, which correspond to the unconscious, come to light in the course of regression (such as occurs in schizophrenia, which Jung understands to be a process of "introversion").

> We should therefore have to conclude that any introversion occurring in later life regresses back to infantile reminiscences which, though derived from the individual's past, generally have a slight archaic tinge. With stronger introversion and regression the archaic features become more pronounced.[90]

Tying fantasy back to archaic thought, Jung advances the thesis that the symbols current in fantasy-thinking possess merit collectively and independently of history, since they come from a vanished age when they had held "legitimate truth."[91] At the same time Jung assumes that such "products" have persisted because they "express the universal and ever-renewed thoughts of mankind."[92] Thus, when a person in the present day is confronted with a desire that she or he cannot give conscious form, fantasy-thinking will step in and reach for an appropriate archaic symbol to express the wish and facilitate the person's indirect reflection on it. Like the human beings of mythical prehistory who thought in fantastic terms, Jung takes symbols much more seriously than Freud – that is, in a sense, more literally. Ultimately, he attributes them not to individuals but to human groups with distinct ethnic psychologies and histories ("every Greek of the classical period carries in himself a little bit of Oedipus, and every German a little bit of Faust").[93] Possessing authority underwritten by antiquity and collective experience, the symbol expresses "the universal [...] thoughts of mankind." In this framework, Freud's notion that interpreting dreams means dispelling illusion and accounting for mechanisms of distortion retreats to the background. Thus, Jung concludes his analysis of the Abbé Oegger's Judas fantasy (found in Anatole France's *Le Jardin d'Épicure* [1895; *The Garden of Epicurus, 1908]*) by de-

88 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 23.
89 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 28.
90 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 31.
91 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 27.
92 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 31.
93 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 32.

claring, "*he* was the Judas who betrayed his Lord;"[94] in this case, identifying the fantasizing person with the fantasized symbol replaces interpretation.

Yet how are symbols like this handed down over generations? In an article that appeared in *Europäische Revue* in 1928, "Die Struktur der Seele" (and then revised and published as the volume *Seelenprobleme der Gegenwart* in 1931; *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, 1960) Jung makes unmistakably clear that his contemporaries have "not acquired" the "immemorial patterns of the human mind" during their own lifetimes (by way of language, for instance). Instead, these features of the mind have been "inherited from the dim ages of the past,"[95] and people share them not just with other human beings, but also with animals.[96] Jung compares the psyche's geological structure – i. e., its levels of experience from different times, some of which are archaic – with that of the body:

> This whole psychic organism corresponds exactly to the body, which, though individually varied, is in all essential features the specifically human body which all men have. In its development and structure, it still preserves elements that connect it with the invertebrates and ultimately with the protozoa. Theoretically it should be possible to "peel" the collective unconscious, layer by layer, until we come to the psychology of the worm, and even of the amoeba.[97]

Jung is convinced that rudiments of both archaic physicality and archaic mentality remain present, and by examining those remaining elements, one can trace both the mind and the body back to the time of origins. As a result, his ideas concerning heredity and the connection between organic and psychic strata reflect his belief that psychic phenomena always rest on a physical substrate. He concludes his discussion by referring to the collective unconscious as "the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual."[98] In his later work, *Die Bedeutung von Konstitution und Vererbung für die Psychologie* (1929; *The Significance of Constitution and Heredity in Psychology*, 1960), he proceeds typologically, on the basis of parallels supposedly

94 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 31.
95 Jung, *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 201.
96 Jung, *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, 204. However, the contents of mental representations do not stand at issue so much as their "possibilities." In a later text (*Constitution and Heredity*), Jung speaks of "forms without content" when referring to the reactive schemata of the imagination.
97 Jung, *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, 212.
98 Jung, *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, 212.

brought to light by physiology and psychology: just as bodily constitution is a matter of heredity, the collective unconscious and its symbols are passed on genetically.

For Jung, regression leads the patient back to an archaic inheritance: fantasy-thinking and its symbols. In contrast to Freud, he considers that such thinking and its elements hold the key to the truth.[99] Instead of leading to points of fixation that might be mitigated by an analytic cure, regression terminates at the core of being, an essence that has remained hidden away in the unconscious until now – or has even been combated. The malady from which the patient suffers, according to Jung, is the result of not accepting (or being unaware of) the core of one's own being; true health can only be achieved inasmuch as it is brought to the level of consciousness and accepted, or lived. In this sense, regression represents to Jung a vital step not just in the process of recovery but in the overall path toward every healthy existence. Only people who know to which archaic type they belong can live in such a way that they will avoid illness. Here the archaic substance is ontologized and thereby also de-temporalized. It serves as the core of being *now* as much as it did *then*.[100] And with that, Jung discards the model on which Freud had based regression. Well-being is not a matter of passing through stages of development correctly so much as a project of self-realization along lines drawn long ago.

In Jung's interpretation of regression, primitivizing the mentally ill means depathologizing them. Freud had already set out on this course by showing that the thought processes of the mentally ill and of those deemed to be in good health do not differ as much as the latter might wish to believe. Indeed, such thinking haunts the dreams of healthy individuals and plays a vital role in both ontogenetic and phylogenetic development. In Jung's writings this depathologization works up to ontologization in that mental illness is understood as the first step, as it were, on the road to recovering an archaic essence. At the same time, he hints that the mentally ill could serve as a model for the collective,

99 As Otis stresses, Jung "stands out among Freud's followers as the one who paid the most attention to the 'anthropological' or phylogenetic dimension of psychoanalysis" (*Organic Memory*, 205).

100 In this sense, Gould writes that "Jung's appeal is not to recapitulation (an ontogenetically ordered series of ancestral stages), but to a general notion of racial memory (the static possession by adults of a complete racial history). As McCormick puts it, 'For Freud, the later problems of life arise during the early period of recapitulation when stages of advance are blocked. But for Jung the important stage is long after this period [...] Recapitulation ceases to be a question of research for Jung because the archetypes exist independently of any individual's development'" (*Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 162–163).

including the one to which he belonged: Germans, according to this diagnosis, have the Faust myth as a collective inheritance. Jung speaks of "typical myths which serve to work out our racial and national complexes,"[101] thereby adhering to nationalist and racist stereotypes and equating individual and collective destiny.[102] In mental illness, the individual finds the symbol that permits him or her to steer the destined course in life, and so does the nation. Jung appreciatively quotes the words of Jacob Burckhardt: "*Faust* is a genuine myth, i.e., a great primordial image, in which every man has to discover *his* own being and destiny in his own way."[103]

These tendencies show up clearly, for example, in Hermann Hesse's references to Jung's conception of regression, which Hesse utilized to justify the First World War as part of a collective destiny.[104] In the novel *Demian. Die Geschichte einer Jugend* (1919; *Demian. The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth*, 1923), which was written toward the end of Hesse's analytical sessions with Jung's pupil J. B. Lang, the protagonist Emil Sinclair causes problems at school and grows increasingly isolated from others ("the change [...] did not bring me any closer to [...] anyone – it only made me lonelier"); in so doing, the young man turns more and more toward a primal, maternal principle of being ("Eve! The name fits her perfectly, she really is like the mother of us all"),[105] led by a series of mythical symbols including the biblical figure of Cain and the Gnostic deity Abraxas. Ultimately he embraces his "destiny" by enlisting to fight in the First World War, which is interpreted as the beginning of a general "world-transformation": "The [...] remarkable thing was that my 'destiny,' this private and solitary thing, would now be shared with so many other people, with the whole world."[106] War is hailed as the proving ground on which the "primal feelings" of humankind can run riot so that the soul, hitherto "divided," will perish before undergoing a miraculous "rebirth": "The bird fights its way out of the egg. The egg is the

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101 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 32.

102 On Jung's affinities with National Socialism and his anti-Semitism, see Heinz Gess, *Vom Faschismus zum Neuen Denken: C.G. Jungs Theorie im Wandel der Zeit* (Lüneburg: Klampen, 1994).

103 Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, 32.

104 For a critical reading of Hesse, see Nicola Gess, "Kunst und Krieg. Zu Thomas Manns, Hermann Hesses und Ernst Blochs künstlerischer Verarbeitung des Ersten Weltkriegs," in *Imaginäre Welten im Widerstreit. Krieg und Geschichte in der Literatur seit 1900*, ed. Lars Koch and Marianne Vogel (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2007), and "Musikalische Mörder. Krieg, Musik und Mord bei Hermann Hesse," in *Literatur und Musik in der klassischen Moderne*, ed. Joachim Grage (Würzburg: Ergon, 2006).

105 Hermann Hesse, *Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth*, trans. Damion Searls (New York: Penguin, 2013), 71–72, 116.

106 Hesse, *Demian*, 131.

world. Whoever wants to be born must destroy a world."[107] In this light, the young, eccentric Sinclair finds his way back to his own destiny, which is also representative of the collective's. This narrative recurs in many variations in Hesse's works, often in connection with the theme of the artist. *Klingsors letzter Sommer* (1919; *Klingsor's Last Summer*, 1970), for instance, describes how the title character – a "mentally ill"[108] and alcoholic painter – encounters in his states of intoxication and madness visionaries and spiritual leaders such as the "Armenian astrologer," who teaches him that downfall and rebirth are not only one and the same, but necessary for individuals and the collective alike (during war).[109] In becoming the painter of his own self, Klingsor embodies the "dying European man who wants to die," "at once Faust and Karamazov," for whom rebirth is indissolubly fused with downfall, just as "progress" is with "retrogression."[110]

The Schizophrenic Artist

The importance of the paradigm of the schizophrenic as a figuration of the 'primitive' not only for depth psychology but also for psychiatry is evident in one of the most influential books of the field (especially for literary authors): Ernst Kretschmer's *Medizinische Psychologie* (1922; *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 1952). As Christoph Gardian observes, Kretschmer "vividly summarizes the accounts of his predecessors (among others, Freud, Wundt, Jung, Bleuler, Storch, Schilder, and Preuss) and combines them in a consistent narrative,"[111] in which the relationship between "primitive races"[112] and schizophrenics and the affinity of 'primitive thinking' to art and the creative process play a central role.

Kretschmer traces an "Evolution of the Psyche," which he divides into "imagery," "affectivity," and "means of expression."[113] To do so, he draws on research in the fields of ethnology and developmental psychology. He gains insights into the development of pictorial processes by analyzing 'primitive language'. Such language, he emphasizes, lacks both abstract notions and com-

107 Hesse, *Demian*, 76.
108 Hermann Hesse, *Klingsor's Last Summer*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970), 147.
109 Hesse, *Klingsor's Last Summer*, 139.
110 Hesse, *Klingsor's Last Summer*, 213.
111 Gardian, *Sprachvisionen*, 113.
112 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 82.
113 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 81–110.

plex grammatical structures, since only lexical sequence and deictic interjections establish relationships between the "picture-words." In this process, many discrete images are required to express even a simple thought. "New concepts," he writes, must be created by the "agglutination of already existent picture-words."[114] This is the same process at work in mythology and indigenous art, and it follows certain laws. The first concerns "condensation," or "*complex thought* (Preuss)," when, for example, one recognizes animal shapes in geometrical patterns.[115] Like others before him, Kretschmer stresses that, from the modern European perspective, these condensed images may be described as symbols, but "primitive minds" are not aware of their symbolic dimension; instead they are convinced of the *identity* of the image and its meaning. The second law is that of "displacement": the possibility for a part to stand in for the whole.[116] The third law, "stylization," is evident when forms are simplified or repeated in order to underscore what is essential.[117] Finally, the law of "imaginal projection" prevails when distinctions in terms of categories of mental representation and perception grow vague or go missing altogether.[118]

For "primitive people," Kretschmer contends, relationships between objects emerge where strong affect invests mental images:

> Sex, war, and conflict, the longing for rain or the spoils of hunting, above all, illness, fear of death and death itself – these are *foci* for the production of those psychic phenomena termed 'magical thinking.' From these *foci* magical thinking extends to objects, and, later, gradually covers the whole phenomenal world.[119]

In other words, this worldview operates in a "catathymic" manner, that is, by a "transformation of the psychic content by affective influences."[120] Like the German ethnologists, Kretschmer stresses that "the projection of affect" is how the living beings and objects in the "primitive man's" presence are imbued with a soul.[121]

Kretschmer finds many analogies between the early stages of psychic development and the adult mind. In "dreams, hypnosis, hysterical twilight-states, and the disordered thinking met with in schizophrenia," he identifies mental "types

114 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 84.
115 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 86 – 88. Emphasis in original.
116 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 88.
117 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 89 – 92.
118 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 92 – 94.
119 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 95 – 96.
120 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 96.
121 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 96 – 99.

of functioning […] represent[ing] phylogenetic remnants," which he categorizes as "hypnotic mechanisms."[122] Like Freud, Kretschmer understands "dreams"[123] to involve imaging processes that regress to a lower level of development, that is, from the abstract to the concrete, from grammatical propositions to asyntactic series of pictures, from concepts to agglutinated word-images, and from logical to associative connections, all of which are guided by affect.[124] Hereby, the barriers of space, time, and causality are suspended. Also, according to Kretschmer, the boundary between the ego and the outside world dissolves, which is accompanied by the disintegration or splitting of personality (often in the form of identification with outside beings or objects) as well as the inability to distinguish between the inner and outer worlds.[125] On this basis, Kretschmer concludes that our "dream thought" is closer to the "waking thought" of early humans than it is to our own "waking thought." In order to explain what takes place in the unconscious mind, he invokes dreaming:

> Dream events allow us to divine much which occurs in our waking thought in the '*sphaira*' on the frontiers of consciousness, i.e. in those obscure shifting zones which are the wellsprings of all thought, especially intuitive, creative, and artistic thought.

The "sphaira's" productions also take shape through other states of altered consciousness – when one is unfocused or distracted, for instance, or, conversely, in the event of "hypnoidal over-concentration on a single focus."[126] In order to illustrate the proximity of these states to "primitive phylogenetic tendences," Kretschmer points to poetry, which is created in such states and displays the traits of "stylization," "rhythm," concretion, "imaginal agglutination," an absence of logic, and "strong affective currents."[127] Therefore, according to Kretschmer, such poetry does not move readers' intellects so much as their "sphaira."

Likewise, hypnosis and the "*hysterical twilight state*" bear comparison to the "imaginal mechanisms" of dreams for Kretschmer.[128] The only point of difference is that they are more affect-laden and unfold in a more intense and dramatic manner. Comparable states, in milder form, occur in the process of free associ-

122 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 114.
123 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 122.
124 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 124.
125 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 122–124.
126 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 125.
127 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 125–126.
128 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 131.

ation or when one exerts oneself mentally when tired and half-asleep. Under such conditions, the mind tends toward "orderly 'picture-strip thinking'" (as in film) and "fantastically disoriented [thoughts]." Kretschmer describes people able to easily experience such phenomena as "*day-dreamers*" who have a particularly creative potential: his example is the writer E.T.A. Hoffmann.[129]

"Schizophrenic thinking" finally represents an extreme case of regression, to which Kretschmer devotes special attention. Here,

> the imaginal processes are often broken up in such a regressive way that [...] large cohesive features of the primitive world-pictures are made to live again before our eyes [...]. There are no important imaginal or affective mechanisms of the kind found amongst primitive peoples which cannot be found extensively in schizophrenics. As a matter of fact many of the terms used [...] are not derived from folk-psychology but from the psychopathology of schizophrenia and neurosis.

According to Kretschmer, schizophrenics do not exhibit "thought based on causality" so much as "thought based on magic" because, as in fairy tales, whatever is desired immediately takes place.[130] Even though patients often realize that this world of wishes is different from the real world – one patient calls it the "surreal" world – they still grant it a higher degree of truth.[131]

From this, Kretschmer draws further parallels to the production and reception of art, as well as to religion. In his eyes, art and pathological states of mind both arise from the "sphere of the unconscious"; therefore, they necessarily share common features: "Consequently, excessive psychic clarity and logical awareness are often fatal for mental creativity which flourishes best in the sphairal twilight. These matters are of special importance for the understanding of the neuroses and psychoses."[132] The difference between the activity of a healthy person's "sphaira" and the "magical thinking" of the schizophrenic can prove to be rather slight. Kretschmer only insists that, in schizophrenia, "magical thinking" moves in "the central point of the psychic field of vision" instead of remaining hidden at the outer edges of consciousness.[133] The products of the "sphere" emerge from the margins as art. Accordingly, Kretschmer identifies links between the "magical thinking" of schizophrenics and Expressionism: "If we think of our patient's inner 'picture show' as a painting with the title, 'The Infinity of Space,' underneath, we can exactly understand the principles underlying expressionistic

129 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 147. Emphasis in original.
130 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 134.
131 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 135.
132 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 128.
133 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 102.

pictures in which the artist seeks to set down inner feelings and ideas."[134] He writes of one patient's figurative thinking:

> We can immediately observe how the abstract line of thought disintegrates the emerging "Infinity of Space" [...] into the imaginal make up of its sphaira, i.e., into asyntactic, obliquely thrown together conglomerations of images, that [...] symbolize in a dreamlike manner the infinity of space [...].[135] A single example of this kind suffices to provide a clear explanation of the modern tendency in art known as '*expressionism*.'[136]

In his discussions of schizophrenia, Kretschmer frequently makes connections to artists' creativity. Even more than in the writings of developmental psychologists, then, it is evident in Kretschmer's study that for him 'primitive thinking' – which schizophrenia is supposed to manifest most fully – is the key to understanding the creative process. The implicit thesis is that artistic activity takes up this thinking's typical procedures, such as image-agglutination through condensation, displacement, and stylization, as well as the projection of affect and catathymia. Artistic genius, according to Kretschmer, enlists "primitive phylogenetic tendencies" that have persisted in dreams and "psychic twilight":

> Men and women of creative genius, especially artists and poets, have so frequently drawn analogies between dreams and the way in which their creative works came into being, that we may regard that relationship as definitely established. Such creative products tend to emerge from a state of psychic twilight, [...] providing an entirely passive experience, frequently of a visual character, divorced from the categories of space and time, and reason and will. [...] The dreamlike phases of artistic creation evoke primitive phylogenetic tendencies toward rhythm and stylization with elemental violence.[137]

134 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 103. Kretschmer's statement that affinity exists between the art of the mentally ill and that of Expressionists was shared by the latter, for instance the artists associated with *Der Blaue Reiter* and *Die Brücke*; cf. John MacGregor, Chapters 14 and 16 (on Expressionism and Surrealism, respectively) of *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

135 Kretschmer, *Medizinische Psychologie*, 12th ed. (Stuttgart: Georg Thieme, 1963), 142. This passage is not included in the English translation, which was based on the 10th edition (1950). Therefore, this and any other passage where the German edition is cited have been translated for this volume.

136 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 137.

137 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 95.