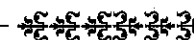


proach to the Dogma of the Trinity."<sup>26</sup> To put it very briefly, the three is generally connected with the flow of movement and thus with time, because there is no time without movement. There are the three Norns, which represent past, present, and future. Most of the gods of time are triadic. The three has always the symbolism of movement in it, because for movement you need two poles and the exchange of energy between them—for instance, the positive and negative electric pole and the current which equalizes the tension.

Often in mythology there is one figure accompanied by two acolytes (followers): Mithras and the Dadophores, Christ between the two thieves, and so on. Such triadic mythological formations stand for the oneness and its polarity, the one thing which unites, and the opposites as the two poles between which the uniting center appears. A certain difference has to be made between three things of the same kind, or a group of three where the one in the middle is really the whole thing and the two opposites are represented as a kind of illustration of what is within, of that wholeness. Or there is a dualism and a connecting third thing, but basically you never run off the main line if you keep in mind that the three has to do with movement and time, mostly an inexorable unilateral movement of life. That is why in fairy tales the story, the peripetia, is often divided into three phases, and then comes the fourth as a lysis or catastrophe. The fourth leads into a new dimension, which is not comparable to the three previous steps.

## “THE THREE FEATHERS” COMPLETED



Dummling now brings home his bride, who, sitting in her carrot carriage, has turned into a beautiful princess. But again when they arrive at the king's court the two elder brothers will not accept the solution and ask for a fourth and last test. A ring is suspended from the ceiling in the hall, and all three brides have to jump through that. The peasant women whom the two other brothers have brought jump but fall, breaking their arms and legs. But the youngest son's bride, probably on account of her past life as a frog or a toad, jumps through the ring with great elegance, so that now all protest is abandoned and the youngest son gets the crown and reigns for a long time in wisdom.

Earlier in the story we had the ring as a symbol of union. In its positive meaning, it stands for a consciously chosen obligation toward some divine power, that is, toward the Self; in its negative aspect it means fascination, being caught, being bound, with a negative connotation: for instance, being caught in one's complex or in one's emotions, being caught in a "vicious circle."

Here we have yet another motif—jumping through a ring. This comprises a double action since it means jumping high and at the same time being able to aim accurately at the center of the ring to get through it. In folklore there is mention of the old spring festivals in German countries, when, riding on horseback, the young

men had to strike through the center of a ring with a spear. It was a spring fertility rite and at the same time an acrobatic test for the young men on their horses. There again is the motif of aiming at the center of the ring in a contest. This brings us closer to the meaning of aiming at, or through, the center of the ring. Though it seems rather remote, a connection can also be made with the Zen Buddhist art of archery, where the idea is to aim at the center, not in the extraverted way Westerners would do it, by physical skill and conscious concentration, but by a form of deep meditation by which the archer puts himself inwardly into his own center (what we would call the Self), from whence, naturally, he can hit the outer target. Thus, in their highest performances, with their eyes shut and without aiming, Zen Buddhist archers can effortlessly hit the target. The whole practice is meant as a technical help to find the way to dwell in one's own inner center without being diverted by thoughts and ambitions and ego impulses.

Now jumping through a burning ring is not practiced, as far as I can discover, except in the circus, where it is one of the most popular tricks. Tigers and other wild animals have to jump through burning rings. The more undomesticated the animal, the more exciting it is to see it jump through a ring, a motif to which I will return later.

Aiming accurately through the center of the ring is not so difficult to interpret. We could say that, although exteriorized in an outer symbolic action, it is the secret of finding the inner center of the personality and is absolutely parallel to what is attempted in Zen Buddhist archery. But there is a second difficulty. The person who jumps has to leave the earth—reality—and get at the center in a movement through midair. So the anima, the princess figure, when she goes through the center of the ring, is hovering in midair; it is specially emphasized that she could do this well. The peasant girls, however, were so heavy and awkward, the story says, that they

could not do it without falling and breaking their legs, the gravitation of the earth being too strong for them.

This points to a very subtle problem in connection with the realization of the anima. Men who know nothing about psychology tend simply to project the anima onto a real woman, experiencing her entirely outside. But if through psychological introspection they realize that the attraction exerted upon them by the anima is not only an outer factor but is something they carry within themselves—an inner image of a feminine being which is the true ideal and the soul guide—then often, as a next problem, the ego raises a pseudo-conflict between the inner and the outer realms by saying, "I don't know if this dream figure is my anima inside or if it concerns the real woman outside. Shall I follow up an anima fascination in the external world, or shall I introject it and take it as purely symbolic?" When people use that phrase, there is a slight "nothing-but-purely-symbolic" undercurrent. With our strong disbelief in the reality of the psyche, people usually add something like, "Must I only realize it within? May I not have something outside and concrete as well?" There you see that consciousness, with its extraverted bias, gets caught in a false conflict between concrete outer and symbolic inner realization and in this way cuts the phenomenon of the anima artificially in two.

This only occurs if a man cannot lift his anima away from the earth, if she is not capable of jumping as the frog lady can, if she is like a peasant idiot. To get into this conflict indicates a lack of feeling-realization; it is a typical conflict, raised not by the feeling function but by thinking, which makes an artificial contrast between inside and outside, between ego and object. Actually the answer is that it is neither the outside nor the inside because it has to do with the reality of the psyche per se, and that is neither outside nor inside. It is both and neither. It is precisely *the anima* which has to be realized as a reality per se. If she, the anima, likes

to come from outside, she has to be accepted there. If she likes to come from within, she has to be accepted there. The task is not to make any artificial and clumsy difference between the two realms. The anima is one phenomenon, the phenomenon of life. She represents the flow of life in a man's psyche. He has to follow up its tortuous ways, which move very specifically just between the two borders of inside and outside.

Another aspect of this pseudo-conflict is: "Must I think of my anima with spiritual devotion? For instance, pray to the Virgin instead of looking at a beautiful woman's legs and loving her sexually?" There is no such difference! The upper and lower are one and, like all contents of the unconscious, have a whole range of what we would call spiritual and instinctual manifestations. Basically in their archetypal appearance there is a oneness of those two factors, and only consciousness cuts these aspects apart. If a man has really learned to contact his anima, then this whole problem collapses, for then the anima will manifest immediately, and he will always remain concentrated on her reality and look away from such a pseudo-conflict which arises around her. To put it in very plain and simple words, he will try constantly to follow his feeling, his Eros side, without considering any other elements, and in that way walk through seemingly incompatible worlds on the razor's edge. Keeping to what Jung calls *the reality of the psyche* is an achievement like that of an acrobatic test, because our consciousness has the natural tendency always to be pulled into unilateral interpretations, always formulating a program or a recipe instead of simply keeping between the opposites with the flow of life. There is only one loyalty or constancy within all that: a loyalty to the inner reality of the anima, and this is beautifully expressed in the jumping through the ring, the anima in a midair position, accurately in the center and moving through it.

Another typical anima conflict raised by the unconscious to

force a man to differentiate his Eros is the marital triangle. When he gets into this conflict, he is liable to say, "If I cut off the other woman, I am betraying my own feeling for the sake of conventionality. If I run away from my wife and children with the woman on whom my anima projection has fallen, then I am behaving irresponsibly and following a mood that will collapse fairly soon, as one always knows. I cannot do both, and also I cannot prolong an impossible situation forever." (If the anima wants to impose herself upon a man's consciousness, she often brings about such a conflict.) His wife's animus will say, "You must make a decision!" And the girlfriend's animus goes up in the air and says, "I cannot just hang on like this!" Everyone and everything push him toward wrong decisions.

There again loyalty to the reality of the psyche gives the only possible solution, and generally the anima tends to maneuver a man into a situation which is *meant to be without issue*. Jung said that to be in a situation where there is no way out or to be in a conflict where there is no solution is the classical beginning of the process of individuation. It is *meant* to be a situation without solution: the unconscious wants the hopeless conflict in order to put ego consciousness up against the wall, so that the man has to realize that whatever he does is wrong, whichever way he decides will be wrong. This is meant to knock out the superiority of the ego, which always acts from the illusion that it has the responsibility of decision. Naturally, if a man says, "Oh well, then I shall just let everything go and make no decision, but just protract and wriggle out everywhere," the whole thing is equally wrong, for then naturally nothing happens. But if he is ethical enough to suffer to the core of his personality, then generally, because of the insolubility of the conscious situation, the Self manifests. In religious language you could say that the situation without issue is meant to force the man to rely on an act of God. In psychological language the situation

without issue, which the anima arranges with great skill in a man's life, is meant to drive him into a condition in which he is capable of experiencing the Self, in which he will be inwardly open to an interference by the *tertium quod non datur* (the third, which is not given, that is, the unknown thing). In this way, as Jung said, the anima is the guide toward the realization of the Self, but sometimes in a very painful manner. When thinking of the anima as the soul guide, we are apt to think of Beatrice leading Dante up to Paradise, but we should not forget that he experienced that only after he had gone through Hell. Normally, the anima does not take a man by the hand and lead him right up to Paradise; she puts him first into a hot cauldron where he is nicely roasted for a while.

The anima in our story aims at the center, while the peasant women represent an undifferentiated, clumsy attitude which is glued too much to the idea of concrete reality, and therefore they fall short; they cannot stand the test, for they represent a too primitive and undifferentiated feeling attitude.

I would recommend in this connection Jung's talk given in 1939, "The Symbolic Life."<sup>27</sup> He says that we are now all caught in rationalism and that our rational outlook on life includes being reasonable and that this reasonableness excludes all symbolism. He goes on to show how much richer life is for people still embedded in the living symbolism of their religious forms. As Jung himself discovered, one can find the way back to some living symbolism—not to the lost symbolism, however, but to the still-living function that produces it. We get to it by attending to the unconscious and our dreams. By attending to one's dreams for a long time and by really taking them into consideration, the unconscious of modern man can rebuild a symbolic life. But that presupposes that you do not interpret your dreams purely intellectually and that you really incorporate them into your life. Then there will be a restoration of the symbolic life, no longer in the framework of a collective ritual-

istic form but more individually colored and shaped. This means no longer living merely with the reasonableness of the ego and its decisions but living with the ego embedded in a flow of psychic life which expresses itself in symbolic form and requires symbolic action.

We have to see what our own living psyche proposes as a symbolic life form in which we can live. Hence, Jung often insists on something which he did in his own life: when a dream symbol comes up in a dominating form, one should take the trouble to reproduce it in a picture, even if one does not know how to draw, or to cut it in stone, even if one is not a sculptor, and relate to it in some real manner. One should not go off from the analytical hour forgetting all about it, letting the ego organize the rest of the day; rather one should stay with the symbols of one's dreams the whole day and try to see where they want to enter the reality of one's life. This is what Jung means when he speaks of living the symbolic life.

The anima is the guide, or is even the essence of this realization of the symbolic life. A man who has not understood and assimilated his anima problem is not capable of living this inner rhythm; his conscious ego and his mind are not capable of telling him about it.

In the variation from another part of Germany that I mentioned last time, the frog is not transformed into the beautiful woman who appears at court; on the contrary, she appears in a frog shape in the upper world, whereas in the lower world she is a beautiful girl. There is also a final test; namely, the frog calls out: *Umschling mich* (embrace me) and *versenk dich* (immerse yourself). *Versenken* implies the action of lowering something into the water or into the earth. But it also means—especially when it is reflexive, *sich versenken*—to go into deep meditation. It is an expression used in mystical language. Naturally it depicts going down into your inner water or earth—or abyss—going down into your inner depths.

The frog anima makes this mysterious call, and Dummling understands it. He embraces the frog and jumps with her into the pool, and in that moment she transforms herself into a beautiful woman, and they come out together as a human couple. If we take that quite naively, we can say that Dummling has to follow her into *her* kingdom, accepting *her* way of life. She is a frog and jumps constantly into the water, swimming in it and enjoying it. If he embraces her and jumps with her into the water, then he accepts her frog life. So it can be said that the bridegroom follows the bride into *her* home instead of the other way around. Through his acceptance of her as a frog, she is transformed into a human being. Acceptance of the frog and the frog's life implies a jump into the inner world, sinking down into inner reality and there we come again to the same thing—that the anima's intention is to convert rational consciousness to acceptance of the symbolic life, sinking into it without any buts, criticisms, or rational objections but with a gesture of generous acceptance, saying, "In the name of God, whatever happens, I will jump into it and realize it." And that needs courage and naiveté. It means the sacrifice of the intellectual and rational attitude, which is difficult for women, but much more difficult for a man because it goes against his conscious tendencies, especially those of modern Western man.

When the anima becomes human, it is a meeting of the opposites: he goes toward her and so she comes up toward him. We always see that if the tension between the conscious situation and the too-low level of unconscious contents is too great, any gesture toward one side generally improves the other as well. Very often a man will dream, for instance, that his anima appears as a prostitute, or something like that, and he will say that she is too low down, that he cannot go as far as that; it is against his ethical principles. Generally, if someone overcomes such stiffened prejudices and makes a generous gesture toward the lower part of his personality

and impulses, suddenly there is a change and the anima comes up onto a higher level. One should not, however, tell people that, for it would lessen the merit of the sacrifice which has to be made, courageously and absolutely without calculation. If one has such courage and truthfulness, then generally the miracle happens that this so-called low part of the personality, which has only been banished to that state by the haughtiness of the conscious attitude, comes up onto a human level.

There is a third version of our story which has a short continuation and a different form of the redemption of the frog lady, which also throws new light on what Jung means by the symbolic life. This is the Russian version of our story and is called "The Frog Daughter of the Czar."<sup>28</sup>

There was a czar and his wife. There were three sons, and they were like falcons, beautiful young men. One day the czar called them together and said, "My sons, my falcons, the time has come for you to find wives." He told them to take their silver bows and copper arrows and shoot them into foreign lands, and at whatever door the arrow fell, there each should find his bride. Two arrows fell into other czars' courts, and those men found relatively nice women. But Ivan Czarevitsch's arrow fell into a nearby swamp and there he found a frog with the arrow. He said, "Give me back my arrow." The frog replied, "I will return the arrow, but only on condition that you marry me." So Ivan Czarevitsch returned to the court and cried and related what had happened. The czar said, "Well, that's your bad luck, but you cannot get out of that; you must marry the frog." So the eldest son married a czar's daughter, the second son a prince's daughter, and the third son the green frog from the swamp.

In this story many things are different because there is a feminine influence at the court, so the king is not at all hostile to marriage with a frog; there is not such tension between male and

female, or between acceptance and nonacceptance of frog life. But naturally Ivan is very unhappy. Then one day the czar wants to see which of his daughters-in-law can weave the most beautiful towel. Ivan goes home and cries, but the frog hops after him and tells him not to cry but to lie down and go to sleep and it will be all right. As soon as he is asleep she throws off her frog skin and goes out into the yard and calls and whistles. Her three maids and servants appear and weave the towels. When Ivan wakes up, they are given to him by his frog-wife, who has again assumed her frog skin. Ivan has never seen such towels in his life, and he takes them to the court and everybody is deeply impressed. Then there is another test as to who makes the best cake, and this is again made in the night while Ivan is asleep. The czar then tells his sons to come on a certain day with their wives to a dinner party. Ivan again goes home crying, but the frog-bride says he should not worry but should go on ahead. When he sees rain beginning to fall, he will know that his wife is washing. When the lightning comes, he will know that she is putting on her dress for the court. When he hears thunder, he will know that she is on the way. The dinner party begins and the two other wives are there beautifully dressed. Ivan is very nervous. A terrific thunderstorm begins. They all mock him and ask where his bride is. When the rain starts he says, "Now she is washing," and when there is lightning he says, "Now she is putting on her court dress." He does not believe it and is in despair, but when it thunders he says, "Now she is coming." And at that moment a beautiful coach with six horses arrives, and out of it steps a most beautiful girl—so beautiful that everyone becomes quite silent and shy.

At the dinner table the other two daughters-in-law notice something very strange, for the beautiful girl puts a part of her food into her sleeves. The other two brides think it very odd but that it may be good manners, and they do the same thing. When

the dinner is over there is music and dancing. The former frog-girl dances with Ivan Czarevitsch and is so light and dances so beautifully that she hardly seems to touch the floor. As she dances she waves her right arm and out of it falls a bit of the food, which is transformed into a garden with a pillar in it. Around this a tomcat circles, then climbs up it and sings folk songs. When it comes down it tells fairy tales. The girl goes on dancing and makes a gesture with her left hand, and there appears a beautiful park with a little river in it and on the river, swans. Everybody is as astonished at the miracle as if they were little children. The other sisters begin to dance, but when they throw out their right arm, a bone comes out and hits the czar on the forehead, and when they fling out the left arm, water shoots into his eyes.

Ivan looks in amazement at his wife and wonders how out of a green frog there could emerge such a beautiful girl. He goes into the room where she slept and sees the frog skin lying there. He picks it up and throws it into the fire. Then he goes back to the court and they go on amusing themselves till morning, when Ivan goes home with his wife.

When they get home his wife goes to her room and cannot find her frog skin. At last she calls out and asks Ivan if he has seen her dress. "I burnt it," says Ivan. "Oh, Ivan," she says, "what have you done? If you had not touched it, I would have been yours forever. But now we must separate—perhaps forever!" She cries and cries, and then says, "Good-bye! Seek me in the Thirtieth Czar's Kingdom, in the Thirtieth Strange Kingdom, where there is the Baba Yaga, the great witch, and her bones." And she claps her hands and changes into a cuckoo and flies out of the window.

Ivan grieves bitterly. Then he takes his silver bow and fills a sack with bread, hangs bottles over his shoulder, and goes on his long quest. He walks for many years.

He meets an old man who gives him a ball of thread and tells



him he should follow it to the Baba Yaga. Then he spares the life of a bear, a fish, and a bird. He gets into all sorts of difficulties, but the fish and falcon and bear help him, and finally, at the end of the world in the Thirtieth Kingdom, he comes to an island on which there is a forest and in it a glass palace. He goes into the palace and opens an iron door, but nobody is inside; then he opens a silver door, but there is nobody in the room, so he opens a third door made of gold, and behind this door sits his wife combing flax. She looks so woebegone and careworn that she is dreadful to look at. But when she sees Ivan she falls on his neck and says, "Oh my beloved, how I have longed for you. You have arrived just in time. Had you come out just a little later, you might perhaps never have seen me again." And she cries for joy. Although Ivan does not know whether he is in this world or the next, they embrace and kiss. Then she changes herself into a cuckoo, takes Ivan under her wing, and flies back. When they arrive home she changes again into human form and says, "It was my father who had cursed me and had given me to a dragon to serve for three years, but now I have paid the penalty." So they came home and lived happily together and praised God, who had helped them.

In our Russian version, instead of jumping through the ring, the anima figure performs this fantastic magic with the food which she puts into her sleeve and transforms into the garden with the tomcat who sings songs and tells fairy tales and the paradise which she creates with her left hand. In this way you see even more clearly that the anima creates the symbolic life, for she transforms ordinary food for the body into spiritual food through creating art and mythological tales; she restores paradise, a kind of archetypal world of fantasy. The tomcat represents a nature spirit which is the creator of folk songs and fairy tales. It also shows the close connection of the anima with man's capacity for artistic work and with the

fantasy world. A man who represses his anima generally represses his creative imagination.

Dancing and creating a kind of *fata morgana*, a fantasy world, is a similar motif to jumping through the ring. It is still another aspect of creating the symbolic life, which one lives by following up one's dreams and day fantasies and the impulses which come up from the unconscious, for fantasy gives life a glow and a color which the too-rational outlook destroys. *Fantasy* is not just whimsical ego-nonsense but comes really from the depths; it constellates symbolic situations which give life a deeper meaning and a deeper realization. Here again, the two other figures take this too concretely. Just as the peasant women could not jump through the ring but broke their legs, here they put food in their sleeves for wrong motives, for ambition, and accordingly fall short.

But then there is something else: Ivan makes a mistake by burning his wife's frog skin. This is a most widespread motif to be found in completely different connections in many other fairy tales. The anima first appears in an animal skin, either as a fish or a mermaid, or, most frequently, as a bird, and then she turns into a human being. Generally her lover keeps her former animal skin or bird garment in a drawer. The woman has children and everything seems to be all right, but unfortunately either the husband insults his wife one day, calling her a mermaid or a goose or whatever she was before, and she rushes to her old garment, puts it on again, and disappears, and either he has to go on a long quest to find her again, or she disappears forever and he dies. In such stories one feels that it would have been better if the man burnt the skin, because if she finds it, she disappears in it. But here it is just the opposite. He burns the skin, which would seem to be all right, and it is wrong again! In other fairy tales—for instance, the Grimms' tale called "Hans the Hedgehog," the animal skin is also burnt. A prince has been cursed and turned into a hedgehog and the bride's