

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

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In considering spontaneous phenomena we are concerned with situations in which something has happened *sua sponte*, which may be miraculous, and for which no apparent cause can be found. With apparitions, for example, we are unable to think of causality in the proper sense of the term, so that natural science furnishes no hope of providing a satisfactory answer.

However, the psychological background of spontaneous phenomena if properly investigated can be interesting and helpful in providing clues as to the direction in which to look for more information. An acute inner problem, a block in one's development, may provide a clue. Any such problem is bound to stir emotions—mostly unpleasant—which we may try to suppress or forget. Whether repressed or not the dynamics of emotion, apart from affecting the body, produce images or fantasies which may or may not remain unconscious. C. G. Jung has shown that these images sometimes hint at the solution of the problem in question. If in dream form it may not suffice, since we are not used to attaching importance to dreams. Emotional reactions always result from situations we are not quite "up to," and the images seem to be the plus or minus equivalent for the emotions. It thus seems as if nature had all the answers up her sleeve, but delivered them only as blueprints, whereas the activities needed for realization of the project are left to the conscious human spirit. These images, therefore, have often the quality of anticipation or pre-figuration and serve the purpose of tuning one in with the

reactions that will be taking place, or with the so far unknown actions to be taken.

There are differences as well as a parallel between spontaneous phenomena and hallucinations. Hallucinations frequently seem to have the function of driving home a certain truth to the patient—something he tries to “forget about” at all costs and which must therefore be reiterated and “rubbed in” in a most conspicuous and unpleasant manner.

It seems that the sequence: dream-vision-hallucination-spontaneous phenomenon is linked by an ever growing degree of tangibility or reality, in the naïve sense of the word. Reciprocally the truth is that the frequency of occurrence in this sequence decreases—dreams are frequent and spontaneous phenomena rare.

Behind most cases of spontaneous phenomena is what in Jungian psychology is called an Archetype constellated. Jung thinks we have an Archetypal situation even in Prof. Rhine's experiments. To ask a person being tested to tell what he could not possibly know, and which nobody knows as yet may produce an emotional tension, accompanied by the feeling of not being “up to” the situation—the very emotion present in most premonitions of imminent death. When crisis apparition is attributed to ESP-Projection, this fails to explain anything but rather corroborates the psychologist's view. In such a situation, which I call *symmetric*,* things “fall into place”—which apparently can amount to paranormal phenomena. In such a case an Archetype is constellated and, with emotional tension gripping the subject because of an obstacle seemingly insuperable, nature provides a means by which the pattern is completed; external objects are arranged to create the pattern. The difference between hallucination and paranormal phenomena is one only in degree, as reality is continually arranged by the Archetypes which underlie it.

*cf. *Dialectica* 32, 302, 1954