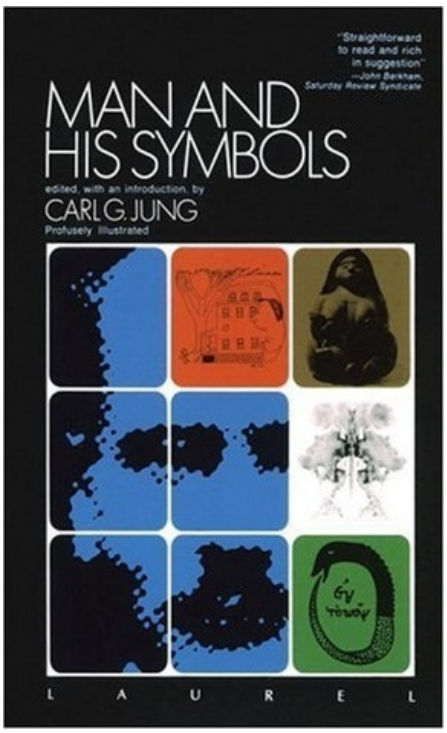

Man and His Symbols

C.G. Jung , Joseph L. Henderson , Aniela Jaffé , Jolande Jacobi , John Freeman (Introduction) , Marie-Louise von Franz

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Man and His Symbols C.G. Jung , Joseph L. Henderson , Aniela Jaffé , Jolande Jacobi , John Freeman (Introduction) , Marie-Louise von Franz
Illustrated throughout with revealing images, this is the first and only work in which the world-famous Swiss psychologist explains to the layperson his enormously influential theory of symbolism as revealed in dreams.

Man and His Symbols Details

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Genre	:	Psychology, Nonfiction, Philosophy, Fantasy, Mythology, Science

From Reader Review Man and His Symbols for online ebook

hayatem says

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Ahmad Sharabiani says

Man and His Symbols, C.G. Jung
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Jimmy Ele says

If you want to get an idea of Jungian philosophy and method of analysis especially when it comes to dream interpretation then I highly recommend this book. To Jung, dreams carry significant meaning for each individual person. Every symbol in Jungian dream analysis can mean something different for each individual. Jung believes that our dreams are rich with great clues that lead to revelations about what is needed to balance our psyche. For instance, if one has been an introvert, but one's new method of action is calling for the person to become extroverted, then our dreams will give us images of repressed extroverted personalities that need to be utilized in our conscious life.

The repressed extroverted personality that the individual is capable of will show up in the dream as an "outlaw" or "criminal" figure denoting that the extroverted personality of said individual has been left to marinate in the dark recesses of the subconscious. By no means do these dreams denote that the person should become an outlaw or criminal but rather that the symbol for this underutilized aspect of the psyche (extroversion) has become a taboo subject in the person's conscious life and therefore shows up associated with an outlaw or criminal (the symbol of the outlaw and criminal signifying the "taboo" form that extroversion has taken on for the individual introverted dreamer).

I found this book to be particularly enlightening as to some of the shadow figures that show up in dreams as well as the wisdom behind the symbols that constantly show up in dreams. Only the first part of the book is written by Carl Jung. The other parts of the book are written by: Joseph L. Henderson, M.L. Von Franz, Aniela Jaffe, and Jolande Jacobi.

The first part is called "Approaching the Unconscious" by Carl G. Gung. The second part is called "Ancient Myths and Modern Man" by Joseph L. Henderson. The third part is called "The Process of Individuation" by M.L. Von Franz. The fourth part is called "Symbolism in the Visual Arts" by Aniela Jaffe. The fifth part is called "Symbols in an Individual Analysis" by Jolande Jacobi.

Believe me when I say that this book is a very great read. It helped me to understand the way that our dreams signify very important things for each of our individual lives.

I could go on more in detail about the information in this book, but it would be a very long and daunting task to summarize the material in this dense book and would most likely not do the deep subjects justice.

I will touch upon one last subject in the book that I really liked. When Aniela Jaffe expounds on "Symbolism in the Visual Arts" she really made me view art in a new way. What I have been noticing is that in many of the books that I love, there is usually some way that the author connects the subject to art. I love it when scientific, philosophical, or spiritual religious revelations in a field lead to advances or drastic changes in art. The mood and the soul of man at particular times is summed up perfectly in our art.

There are various other reasons why I loved this book, but I will leave it at that so as not to spoil anything for the curious reader.

Omid Kamyarnejad says

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Ali says

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Trevor says

I have a strange love / hate relationship with Jung. There are so many things about him that I find utterly fascinating and then others that I think are just crazy. I would rather think one thing or the other, but since he was obsessed with dualities, perhaps he would be happy with my conflicting and opposite feelings towards him.

There are things about his ideas that I find incredibly appealing. A personal story might help make that clear. I started reading this book a while ago now – before I started Uni this year – and one of the things that made me continue with it was the idea of what I would call ‘metaphorical illnesses’. I’ve forgotten what Jung called them, but since my name is better than his could possibly be (no matter what it was) we will go with that. The idea is that sometimes in life you have an ‘illness’ which has symptoms which mirror the psychological conditions you are suffering from. You may not be able to walk, for example, but this has little to do with your legs, but much to do with how you feel trapped in a particular relationship in which you feel you can’t escape from, even though on a deep level you know escaping would be the right thing to do. So, it is as if your mind has said, ‘if you can’t walk away from this then don’t walk at all’.

Now, I’m the first to tell you that I would find such metaphorical illnesses a bit over the top and hard to believe being possible in any but the most troubled and deeply psychotic – I mean, can you really ‘make yourself’ blind because your ‘unconscious mind’ is ‘trying to tell you something’? Does this really sound likely? Well, possibly not. But then again, last year I left an intolerable job, but while I was there I found I had developed terrible headaches, or at least, not headaches as such, but more a scorching pain across the top of my head. This, I found out, was caused by the clenching of my teeth in my sleep. This year has been incredibly busy and often quite stressful, in many ways as stressful as anything I put up with last year. I’ve had more reading than I can keep up with and more work to do than can be done – both of which I guess are good predictors of stress – and yet the thing that has surprised me is that I haven’t been grinding my teeth at all this year (trust me, I would know if I had been).

This had been one of those little facts about life that had fallen into the ‘isn’t that odd’ category until I read this book and learned of Jung’s metaphorical illnesses. The whole time I was working at the union – at least for the last four or so years – I felt unable to say anything about the direction in which the union was heading. I think Jung would have had no trouble in diagnosing my night time teeth grinding. As someone ‘unable’ to talk during the day, the fact I kept my jaw clenched tight shut at night was clearly a sign from my sub-consciousness of my own self-imposed voicelessness.

Of course, the things that are nice about that story are also the things that make we feel uncomfortable about Jung in general. It is all too neat. There are lots of stories in this book and these stories are joined with lots of explanations of what certain symbols mean – but one of the things that I’ve learnt in life is that people love to hear good explanations of what something vague and obscure MEANS. If someone tells you their dream and in it there is a naked black man walking about the streets of Paris (as there is, for example, in one of the dreams described in the book) it might well be that the people in the country of the man having this dream do associate Paris with a certain kind of sexual liberation and relaxed mores and perhaps associate nudity with the ‘naked truth’ and even intend the black man in the dream to represent the inverse of the white man who is dreaming the dream – or it could all just be an example of homo-erotica – or it could be an example of lawlessness – or it could be that dreams in themselves aren’t actually all that meaningful.

How could we ever really know?

I think we find it quite appealing to believe that people are more or less like books, in that they have plots and themes and characters and that we can somehow become the perfect book reviewer with people’s dreams and lives and thereby judge and explain people in much the same way we might judge and explain The Da Vinci Code. The problem is that really no one is summed up by the face they present to the world – no, not even the dumb people – and no one is so shallow as to have dreams that have only one meaning and that the meaning a therapist helps you find. Repeatedly during this book we are told that symbols mean different things depending on the meaning they acquire within the context of the dream and the life in which they appear. And this is to the good, but also time and again we see the therapist tell the patient how to interpret a particular symbol (like the number four) in a single way from the therapist's ‘deep’ knowledge and understnding of how symbols ‘mean’. For Jung the number four is the number of completeness – I believe in Chinese it is the number for death, although this is not the kind of completeness Jung is talking of, I feel. I worry when people are reduced to texts that can be studied and interpreted and understood on the basis of a subtext that is not apparent to the character, but is clear and unambiguous to the reader.

I guess it is inevitable that Jungian psychology might come about given the rise of literary criticism over the last couple of hundred years – for isn’t that as good a definition of Jungian psychology as any other? The search for the sub-textual meaning in the lives of people when read as texts. My problem is that it is very difficult to know if the ‘reading’ by the psychologist is a valid or accurate reading, if this reading does in fact really illuminate something essential in the life of the person being read and finally just how efficacious such a reading is in ‘treating’ someone’s neurosis. All of these are problems that are not helped by the fact that it is highly questionable if there is any such thing as a ‘sub-conscious’ in the first place.

To me, the idea of there being a hidden driver of our actions, one who can’t speak to us directly but who knows the truth of our situations and leaves before us Sybil like clues and riddles as answers to our deepest troubles seems remarkably unlikely. That this veiled women who lurks in the depths of our psyches can only speak to us in dreams and is invariably right about how we should live out lives seems a hypothesis that would be impossible to prove. Even if our sub-conscious did exist, how could we ever be certain that it only ever meant to offer us clues to help us live our lives? Why couldn't our sub-conscious be occasionally as destructive as our consciousness clearly often is. Like that wonderful story of Apollo who after being repeatedly asked by someone if they should invade a city finally says yes because it will mean they will be killed and hence finally shut up and not ask him stupid questions any more.

The problem that needs answered first is whether or not the images thrown up in dreams are any more meaningful than those elicited from ink blots. And if not, how can we know if our interpretation of these symbols is any more than ‘an’ interpretation. Unfortunately, as much as I enjoyed some of the interpretations described in this book, I was left feeling very uncomfortable by the idea that people were being reduced to characters in books. And while I understand (possibly all too well) the power our narratives have in framing our lives, I also understand that like all truly great books there simply are more than one reading that is both satisfying and meaningful to any cluster of symbols. I would recommend hesitating when coming to conclusions based on the images thrown up at us from the sub-conscious – much more hesitation than we might expend in coming to conclusions on the sub-textual elements in a novel.

Natacha Pavlov says

This was my first book on Jung and it had me hooked. The introduction states that this book was written with the simple, typical reader in mind—which makes this particular volume easy to read. I’m definitely keen on wanting to read more of Jung’s work now, however I’ve heard that his writing can be very difficult to process due to advanced language and/or abstract concepts. I can only hope that it won’t be anything too strenuous once I get there!
Given that I’ve been interested in the study of dreams for over a year now, I feel this book on Jung was a highly satisfying place for me to start. Although only the first chapter was written by him, it may not matter much seeing as all the others follow the Jungian perspectives and analysis of dreams (and were also edited by Jung).

Many of the symbols discussed are ancient in origin and are therefore difficult to ‘trace.’ As such, they’re symbols that we all subconsciously know but which can be hard to understand, especially if we’ve lost touch with them. This is especially true in light of the fact that primitive societies have remained a lot more in touch with their intuition and significant archetypal images than our modern societies have. The essays in this compilation show—through different mediums like ancient myths and visual arts—how bridging the gap and reconciling the unconscious with our conscious states can prove beneficial and healing to us all.

Something that had initially stood out to me with this dream book was that the dreams seemed to pertain mostly to future events. There were no references whatsoever to the possibility of witnessing past life events through dreams—something which figures quite a bit in Edgar Cayce dream materials I’ve read. I found this puzzling and wondered if perhaps Jung didn’t believe in past lives/reincarnation. Ironically enough, I got a kind of ‘answer’ soon after as I read The Search for Omm Sety, in which the last chapter comments on the fact that Jung likely did believe in it, but chose not to bring it up out of concern that (his) society wasn’t ready for it yet.

Needless to say, my interest has definitely been peaked and I found this book very hard to put down due to its very interesting and enlightening content.

Leila says

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A. says

Ultimately, never forget what Jung himself admitted : *“There is no Archimedean point from which to judge, since the psyche is indistinguishable from its manifestations. The psyche is the object of psychology, and - fatally enough- also its subject. There is no getting away from this fact.* "Psychology and Religion" (1938). In CW 11: Psychology and Religion: West and East. P.8”

Condensed 60 years of Jungian insight on Man and his so-called "collective unconscious" as a part of everyday life and symbols through Jung's knowledge, professional and personal experience. It also shows what modern man and pure materialist thought has lost ignoring an unquestionable part of us and pushing it inside a drawer. Nevertheless, there are many whom I think handle symbolism in much better ways than Jung and his apprentices - having a more global perspective and being somehow closer to it's source (like Guénon, Titus Burckhardt, Coomaraswamy...)

Now a quote from Man and His Symbols which I found quite funny (it's not the bulk of the book or the main points, merely a funny thing):
"I myself found a fascinating example of this in Nietzsche’s book Thus Spake Zarathustra, where the author reproduces almost word for word an incident reported in a ship’s log for the year 1686. By sheer chance I had read this seaman’s yarn in a book published about 1835 (half a century before Nietzsche wrote); and when I found the similar passage in Thus Spake Zarathustra, I was struck by its peculiar style, which was different from Nietzsche’s usual language. I was convinced that Nietzsche must also have seen the old book, though he made no reference to it. I wrote to his sister, who was still alive, and she confirmed that she and her brother had in fact read the book together when he was 11 years old. I think, from the context, it is inconceivable that Nietzsche had any idea that he was plagiarizing this story. I believe that fifty years later it has unexpectedly slipped into focus in his conscious mind."

John Kulm says

I love this book, although the used "Dell" edition I bought is falling apart. I'll have to buy another copy. The book has much to say about dreams and art. I'm adding some quotes from the book to the review I posted a few days ago.

If you think about the following quote while viewing paintings, you might find insights about artists who often, unconsciously, express their conscious attitude to the right of the canvas and their unconscious attitude on the left: “Among other things ‘right’ often means, psychologically, the side of consciousness, of adaptation, of being ‘right,’ while the left signifies the sphere of unadapted, unconscious reactions or sometimes even something ‘sinister.’” - Marie-Louise von Franz

Another quote applies this left/right idea while examining a subject’s dream: “Henry is a ‘lonely wanderer’ on the narrow path. But (perhaps thanks to the analysis) he is already on his way down from inhospitable heights. To the left, on the side of the unconscious, his road is bordered by the terrifying depths of the abyss. On the right side, the side of consciousness, the way is blocked by the rigid caves (which might represent, so to speak, unconscious areas in Henry’s field of consciousness) there are places where refuge can be found when bad weather comes – in other words, when outside tensions become too threatening.” - Aniela Jaffe

The text below was posted earlier:

Man and His Symbols covers a lot of territory, with four authors: C.G. Jung, Joseph L. Henderson, Marie-Louise von Franz, Aniela Jaffe, and Jolande Jacobe. I picked up the book because I'm interested in understanding symbols in dreams, but it deals with symbols in a wider sense than that, as well as in dreams.

I'm going to post a few quotes from M-L von Franz about the anima and the animus because that always interests me. I want to understand the feminine, whether it's the feminine in my own psyche or in some confusing woman! Also, it's interesting to read about the animus within a woman's psyche and see whether it helps me understand that aspect of a woman, or learn more about masculinity as an aspect of my own psyche. It's all such a mystery!

I'm not actually finished reading this book. I'm very caught up in it and I'll probably post more quotes later. Anyway, all these quotes are from von Franz :

The Anima:

"The number four is also connected with the anima because, as Jung noted, there are four stages in its development. The first stage is best symbolized by the figure of Eve, which represents purely instinctual and biological relations. The second can be seen in Faust's Helen: She personifies a romantic and aesthetic level that is, however, still characterized by sexual elements. The third is represented, for instance, by the Virgin Mary – a figure who raises love (eros) to the heights of spiritual devotion. The fourth type is symbolized by Sapientia, wisdom transcending even the most holy and the most pure. Of this another symbol is the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon. (In the psychic development of modern man this stage is rarely reached. The Mona Lisa comes nearest to such a wisdom anima.)"

"But what does the role of the anima as guide to the inner world mean in practical terms? This positive function occurs when a man takes seriously the feelings, moods, expectations, and fantasies sent by his anima and when he fixes them in some form – for example, in writing, painting, sculpture, musical composition, or dancing. When he works at this patiently and slowly, other more deeply unconscious material wells up form the depths and connects with the earlier material. After a fantasy has been fixed in some specific form, it must be examined both intellectually and ethically, with an evaluating feeling reaction. And it is essential to regard is as being absolutely real; there must be no lurking doubt that this is 'only a fantasy.' If this is practiced with devotion over a long period, the process of individuation gradually becomes the single reality and can unfold in its true form."

The Animus:

"…the animus is sometimes, like the anima, a demon of death. For example, in a gypsy fairy tale a handsome stranger is received by a lonely woman in spite of the fact that she has had a dream warning her that he is the king of the dead. After he has been with her for a time, she presses him to tell her who he really is. At first he refuses, saying that she will die if he tells her. She insists, however, and suddenly he reveals to her that he is death himself. The woman immediately dies of fright.

"Viewed mythologically, the beautiful stranger is probably a pagan father-image or god-image, who appears here as king of the dead (like Hades's abduction of Persephone). But psychologically he represents a particular form of the animus that lures women away from all human relationships and especially from all contacts with real men. He personifies a cocoon of dreamy thoughts, filled with desire and judgements about how things 'ought to be,' which cut a woman off from the reality of life."

“Like the anima, the animus does not merely consist of negative qualities such as brutality, recklessness, empty talk, and silent, obstinate, evil ideas. He too has a very positive and valuable side; he too can build a bridge to the Self through his creative activity. The following dream of a woman of 45 may help to illustrate this point:

“Two veiled figures climb onto the balcony and into the house. They are swathed in black hooded coats, and they seem to want to torment me and my sister. She hides under the bed, but they pull her out with a broom and torture her. Then it is my turn. The leader of the two pushes me against the wall, making magical gestures before my face. In the meantime his helper makes a sketch on the wall, and when I see it, I say (in order to be friendly), ‘Oh! But this is well drawn!’ Now suddenly my tormenter has the noble head of an artist, and he says proudly, ‘Yes indeed,’ and begins to clean his spectacles.

“The sadistic aspect of these two figures was well known to the dreamer, for in reality she frequently suffered bad attacks of anxiety during which she was haunted by the thought that people she loved were in great danger – or even that they were dead. But the fact that the animus figure in the dream is double suggests that the burglars personify a psychic factor that is dual in its effect, and that could be something quite different from theses tormenting thoughts. The sister of the dreamer, who runs away from the men, is caught and tortured. In reality this sister died when fairly young. She had been artistically gifted, but had made very little use of her talent. Next the dream reveals that the veiled burglars are actually disguised artists, and that if the dreamer recognizes their gifts (which are her own), they will give up their evil intentions.

“What is the deeper meaning of the dream? It is that behind the spasms of anxiety there is indeed a genuine and mortal danger; but there is also a creative possibility for the dreamer. She, like her sister, had some talent as a painter, but she doubted whether painting could be a meaningful activity for her. Now her dream tells her in the most earnest way that she must live out this talent. If she obeys, the destructive tormenting animus will be transformed into a creative and meaningful activity.”

“As in this dream, the animus often appears as a group of men. In this way the unconscious symbolizes the fact that the animus represents a collective rather than a personal element. Because of this collective-mindedness women habitually refer (when their animus is speaking through them) to ‘one’ or ‘they’ or ‘everybody,’ and in such circumstances their speech frequently contains the words ‘always’ and ‘should’ and ‘ought.’”

“The animus, just like the anima, exhibits four stages of development. He first appears as a personification of mere physical power – for instance, as an athletic champion or ‘muscle man.’ In the next stage he possesses initiative and the capacity for planned action. In the third phase, the animus becomes the ‘word,’ often appearing as a professor or clergyman. Finally, in his fourth manifestation, the animus is the incarnation of meaning. On this highest level he becomes (like the anima) a mediator of the religious experience whereby life acquires new meaning. He gives the woman spiritual firmness, an invisible inner support that compensates for her outer softness. The animus in his most developed form sometimes connects the woman’s mind with the spiritual evolution of her age, and can thereby make her even more receptive than a man to new creative ideas. It is for this reason that in earlier times women were used by many nations as diviners and seers. The creative boldness of their positive animus at times expresses thoughts and ideas that stimulate men to new enterprises.”

Owen Spencer says

My university professors never introduced me to Carl Jung. I understand why, I guess, but it's a shame that I didn't read Jung's work until now. Jungian psychology is amazing. It addresses the unconscious and the "self"/"psyche" in a unique and enlightening way. And, unlike most other psychologists, Jung did not shy away from unexplained phenomena and the so-called "paranormal". His theory provides insights into "unexplained" phenomena and is the only major psychological theory that includes the paranormal in a way that doesn't dismiss it as nonsense. I can't recommend this book highly enough. I strongly encourage whoever is reading this sentence to purchase a copy of Man and His Symbols immediately. You won't regret it. It's one of the best books I've ever read. I plan to read the rest of Jung's writings now.

Nandakishore Varma says

This is one of the three books which influenced my literary and mythical outlook (The Hero With a Thousand Faces and The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales being the other two). All my life, I have been fascinated by symbols and their near-universality: the weird way they recur in dreams and the way they keep on popping up in mythologies. I have also been fascinated by journeys in literature, myth and movies.

Jung tied it all together for me, in this collection of essays which is very much accessible to the layman. Especially interesting are the third chapter on the process of individuation and the final one, the case history of one man's dream analysis.

Well worth reading.

Bob Nichols says

This is a collection of essays on Jungian thought. The initial essay was written by Jung, who also approved the other essays (as true to his thinking) shortly before his death in 1961.

The Jungian approach integrates the unconscious and the conscious so that individuals can be whole, which generally involves tapping into our psychic center that is distinct from our conscious ego. Civilization's focus on the ego and denial or ignorance of the unconscious results in all sorts of psychological health and social problems. Regarding the latter, Jung makes a connection, but it is more assertive than clear. The best part of Jung is the emphasis on the instinctual energy within that needs to be recognized and accommodated in some way, and the recognition of our individuality that suggests there is a biological basis for character and temperament that influences how we experience the world. Jung or one of the contributors references the psychic center as the unseen force within that pushes us in certain directions regardless of what our ego says or wants us to do. This is a striking point.

With Jung and his colleagues, dreams and symbols unlock the unconscious, but there seems to be an over interpretation of what's involved in these various expressions. Dreams can express simple, individualized fears without tapping into universal or cosmic level archetypes. Stone grave markers, per se, can be used not as symbols of universal yearnings for eternity but because they best endure over time to mark the memory of a lost one. The last chapter was particularly problematic. In one place, the writer suggests that most modern day concepts of physics "were originally intuitive, semi-mythological, archetypal ideas of the old Greek

philosophers." Off hand, this seems to take too much credit for Jungian thought. Later, the writer says the relationship between the conscious and unconscious is also a form of "compelmentarity" seen in modern physics, and that the unconscious is similar to the "field" concept. To say that there are similarities does not mean that consciousness is a particle and that the unconscious is a wave, and that the unconscious is, itself, a field as understood by physics. It's fair to speculate about the connection between human psychology and physics since we are at least matter and energy, but the type of speculation seen in this last chapter strikes me as overly ambitious on behalf of Jungian thought.

Miss Ravi says

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Mahdi Lotfi says

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