

THEORIES OF SYMBOLISM

Transcendent Symbols

A butterfly with orange and black wings is shown from a top-down perspective, resting on a pond. The water around the butterfly is disturbed, creating concentric ripples that spread outwards. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural setting. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent white rectangular area that serves as a background for the title text.

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TRANSCENDENT SYMBOLS

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TRANSCENDENT SYMBOLS

TRANSCENDENT (MYTHIC) SYMBOLS

Transcendent symbols are cryptic representations, which are interpreted by devout believers to be manifestations of the transcendent immanence of deity in all things. The words and powers of gods are thought to be conveyed to man by the manifest forms of transcendent symbols. On the strongest level of belief these symbols are thought to have deistic forces as their source, to the exclusion of a contribution from the brain. Danielou (1991) presented the beliefs of those who respond to the power given to images by transcendent symbolism succinctly. He said, "True symbolism, far from being invented by man, springs from nature . . . itself. The whole of nature is but a symbol of a higher reality." (p 4) The unbelieving observer of the believer calls such symbols "Mythic Symbols". These are thought by said observers to be consensually validated culture elements that are used to shape the interpretation of new perceptions and reality to conform to culturally mandated preconceptions. In essence transcendent symbols can be seen to be poetic symbols that have been linked to a sacred imprimatur and handed down.

Religion is the realm of transcendent symbols. They are thought to be bearers of a higher truth and believed to represent absolute reality by devout believers. They have deep spiritual impact. Transcendent symbols at root differ in purpose and strength from such basic symbolic forms as simple, poetic, and psychoanalytic symbols. An exception exists in those situations in which the latter symbols are secondarily harnessed for spiritual representation.

Belief in the transcendence of symbols gives believers the strength to overrule, persuade and forgive fate. This strength is derived from belief in platonic dualism (See page 34.), a philosophy that sees the world as consisting of two components. These are an aimless materialism and a god guided world of the spirit. Transcendent symbols serve the latter formulation.

Transcendent symbols represent the world and works of the spirit. The world of the spirit represented by transcendent symbols is a product of the creative power of gods. It explains the

persistence of fate, and it enforces the schedules of doom that steer the material world. The sense that such representations are real is enhanced if the observer believes in the ancient principle of *simulata pro veris*, (representation is reality). This belief supports the transubstantial contention that properly sanctified images are themselves the "god".

The point of view that transcendent symbols exist as free agents, which are independent of the mind of man and carry universal expressions of the spiritual realm, is conveyed by the following quote from Andrae (1933). "He who marvels that a formal symbol can remain alive not only for millennia, but that it can spring to life again after an interruption of thousands of years, should remind himself that the power from the spiritual world, which forms one part of the symbol is eternal . . . It is the spiritual power that knows and wills, and manifests itself when and where its due time comes. (page 169¹)." The theory of the multilocal origin of symbols (V.I), (as opposed to the idea that symbols have a single earthly place of origin and then migrate), is supported by Andrae's description of the sustaining habitat of origin of the transcendent symbol. The symbol is presented as a universal expression of the spiritual realm. Coomaraswamy (1977) applauded Andrae's ". . . idea of the symbol as a living thing, having a power in itself that can survive no matter what vicissitudes . . ." (p 345) The frequent observations that there is a universality of form to transcendent symbols are seen as evidence of an origin independent of the brain.

The latent contents behind spirits and gods are at first metaphors that explain the world. When conscious metaphor is denied a place in interpretations of natural processes for true believers in vital and young religions, manifest symbols lose their ability to function as representations. Instead they are interpreted to be core realities and the symbols in consciousness themselves are held to be gods.

One source of transcendent symbol meanings is experience, believed to have taken place during and between former lives. Impressions gleaned from such primordial experiences are held by believers to have been carried forth across the generations through the eternal memory that is implied by the presence of transmigrating souls. As Taimni (1980) described it, ". . . symbolism is the art by the help of which truths of religion and philosophy can be represented. "(p 16). The knowledge used for interpretation of these representations is an inherited structure, "which is the repository, between successive incarnations, of all the impressions of previous experiences. . ." (P 29)

Not all transcendent symbol theorists exclude a role for the brain in their formation. There are theories that the brain contributes prior experience and interpretation to the brain held memory elements that are used for deciphering symbols. Schwaller de Lubicz (1978) describes a theory that relates the characteristic of universality found in transcendent symbols to origins in the world of the spirit. He tells of the views of Heron of Alexandria² and other Greek philosophers, "They acknowledged that inscribed in the soul was the universal knowledge that the exterior object awakens in the senses." (P 41) "Universal knowledge" supports the concept of origins for transcendent symbolic forms within human experience, in addition to deistic origins. Recall of human natural experience, as well as events said to have been observed during metempsychotic transmigrations and implied inherited memory can influence the interpretation of transcendent symbols. This portal for content is consonant with Freud's idea of the inherited unconscious with its emphasis on the inheritance of acquired characteristics, and the collective unconscious of Jung (V.I.), which holds the brain to be the carrier of "... archetypes ..." which are inherited in the structure of the brain, as well as Plato's³ belief, here quoted, that natural objects can remind one of forms experienced before incarnation. "... process of reason [is] ... simply the recollection of the things which our soul once perceived when it took its journey with a god ..." (p 55).

Shared structures in the brain that explain universal reactions to transcendent symbols are postulated by Freedberg (1998) who noted that there is "... a basic level of reaction that cuts across historical, social, and other contextual boundaries." "... which pertains to our psychological, biological, and neurological status as members of the same societies ..." (P 22) This point of view will be explored in more depth in Unit 3, Section B, Chapter 6 "The Power in the Symbol".

MEN AND THEIR SYMBOLS

Symbol theories tend to be separated from one another by sharp divisions. These consist primarily of hypothesized differences in the nature and source of latent content. Psychoanalytic latent contents are related to derivation from repressed memory elements. Poetic symbols have latent contents derived from new awarenesses. Transcendent symbols represent gods.

All symbol theories agree on the nature of simple generic symbols. However when it comes to cryptic symbols, theorists tend to become parochial. Emphasis goes to one's own symbols with the

importance of other symbol types either reduced or denied. It is not unusual to read denials of the existence of psychoanalytic symbols in their work by artists (Magritte) and those who believe that "Earthly events are knotted to the cosmic."⁴

THE LIMITS OF THEORIES OF SYMBOLISM

All types of symbols, have realities beyond theory that appear to contradict the theory, confound the theorist and support his detractors.

Theories do not create symbols. They only provide approximate descriptions. The manifest symbol may be sufficiently removed in form from the shape of the latent symbol, for the manifest symbol to seem to stand alone, free of referent and prone to a "realistic" explanation. As a result the unconscious meanings of dreams can be denied; poems can be enjoyed for their rhythms alone and their meanings ignored; and the manifest forms of gods can take on new lives based on local antecedents and fresh adventures, which then become the basis for creating new mythic contexts and beliefs. God kings can be erased from temple walls and lost to history, making way for newer gods. Immortality is all too mortal.

Beyond theory but in actual function, manifest symbols can contain elements of simple and complex symbolic forms. The presence of one mode does not exclude the use of a manifest symbol in another mode. Thus a religiously informed dream may contain a forgiving deity whose psychoanalytic symbolic latent content is the father of the dreamer. (see Unit 3, Section B, Chapter 5) Poems of fear of blood in battle can relate to fear of menarche. (V.S. child's poem in Unit 1, Section A, Ch. 3). The usefulness of the form and meaning of a manifest symbol belongs to the eyes and attitude of the beholder far more than to the content and form of the symbol. With the exception that a few verbal, musical and visual images have the power to recommend themselves as symbols or as conveyors (evokers) of affect, the use of symbols is arbitrarily shaped by the mind of the beholder and his views of what a symbol is and can be.

The personal interpretations of the believing beholder of the transcendent symbol places the sources of the transcendent symbol's meaning in a spiritual plane outside the mind of the person who experiences the symbol. Cassirer (1953), a Columbia University professor of philosophy, remarked that ". . . every sensuous symbol is the vehicle of a purely spiritual signification . . .". (p 132) Such an

interpretation of the nature of symbols places their referents in a zone beyond the personal and divests the symbol of any connection to personal psychological referents. What is created is a representation, which though totally syncretic with its manifest symbolic form has no other referent than a message from a god. Jaspers, K. (1947) a philosopher, who began his career as a psychiatrist, proclaimed in support of "transcendence" (p75) that ". . . the reality of God is the measure of all things". (p 72) For Jaspers transcendence informs symbols with ". . . the infinity of the essentially real, . . .". (p62), while "Psychoanalytic interpretations on the whole turn into a grimace . . . suited to an era lacking faith." (p 55)

Foremost amongst the students of dualism as expressed in transcendent symbolism, who recognized the basic infrastructure of the psychoanalytic symbol but did not categorize it as a distinct entity were Weiskel and Eliade. Weiskel (1976) devoted himself to a study of the romantic sublime (see below) of Longinus. His wife described the sublime as ". . . that moment when the relation between the signifier and the signified breaks down and is replaced by an indeterminate relation." (p xiii) (Weiskel died early. His wife wrote an introduction to his book.) The experience of the sublime is a response to symbolic forms in the environment that threaten the dissolution of the self. Sublime symbolic forms transmute awesome elements into pleasant entities. This is a form of sublimation. Repression is recognized by Weiskel to be a mechanism involved in the creation of sublime elements. (p 41, p 185) He is obviously talking about entities identical with psychoanalytic symbols. A sharp pursuit of the latter concept is deferred in support of a seeking ". . . to expose the structure implicit in the act of 'joining' with the great" (p 11) and to delineate the ". . . structure beneath the vast epiphenomenon a of the sublime" (p 11), whose complexity invited elaboration inspired by the ". . . sense that something large and grand and sacred informed the world . . ." (p xiv).

Eliade (1991) was guided by a sympathy with the psychology of C.G. Jung (p 14). For Eliade symbols carry the impress of an ". . . imprinted memory of a richer, a more complete and beatific existence". The memory to which he refers is a nonhistorical archetype (p 120). It is derived from ". . . a paradisiacal stage of primordial humanity . . .", informs dreams and symbols and opens ". . . a spiritual world that is infinitely richer than the closed world of (one's) own 'historic moments'." (p 13) "Transcendent symbols are part and parcel of the human being, and it is impossible that they should not be found again in any and every existential situation of man in the Cosmos." (p 25)

ARE TRANSCENDENT SYMBOLS UNIVERSAL?

Transcendent symbol theorists see in the transcultural appearance of a manifest symbolic context, a blurring of cultural boundaries. Such blurring supports the idea of an universal referent with origins in the monocultural world of the spirit. One example of a universal theme is the presence of a vulnerable spot on the body of an otherwise invulnerable hero. (i.e. Achilles' heel, Samson's hair, the soles of Krishna's feet, and Siegfried's back.) Such universal similarity is the characteristic of transcendent symbolism that gives support to the idea that transcendent symbols are entities independent of the viewer, with an origin in a zone of sources independent of a brain based memory. (See Volume 3 Chapter 3.)

Best known among the symbol theorists who recognized the existence of universal symbols and mythologies were Freud and Jung. Each created a theoretical literature that placed this easily observed phenomenon in the context of his own theory. Freud, as an Aristotelean monist was confronted with the task of bringing the universal symbol into the realm of natural phenomena. In essence his thinking ignored the existence of transcendent symbolic forms. Jung, as a Platonic dualist, set about finding as many confirming examples, of the influence on transcendent symbol formation, of a flow of thought independent of the mind of an individual man (i.e. archetypes) as possible. He searched myth, culture, dreams, and art, throughout the world in pursuit of this quest.

FREUD AND THE UNIVERSAL SYMBOL

Freud used the term "Psychoanalytic Symbol" as defined by Jones (V.S.) in describing the development of primary and secondary process thinking. In most of his other uses of the word "symbol", Freud limited the definition of symbol to universally appearing manifest forms, which represent latent content based on ancient human experience. For instance Freud (1900) noted that "Things that are symbolically connected today were probably united in prehistoric times by conceptual and linguistic identity." (P. 352). Freud called universal dream elements "archaic remnants", suggesting that they are a part of an inherited unconscious containing psychic elements surviving in the human mind from ages long ago. (see 1915-6 P. 167) Such universal symbols were understood to be used, but not created by, the "dream work".

The "dream work" included those functions of the personality that produce dream symbols. The dream work is akin to those ego functions that produce fantasy distortions of reality, and neurotic symptoms. In Freud's writings one must differentiate between "universal symbols" and the products of ego functions that mask meanings. Freud understood the universal symbol to be a component used by but distinct from the dream work. In modern usage, psychoanalysts follow the approach of Jones (1916) who postulated a symbolizing function, which used repression, condensation, and displacement in the creation of psychoanalytic symbols. Within this orientation, the existence of a symbol whose meaning is universal and transcends the boundaries of place and language is understood to be derived from universally shared human experiences in childhood.

A symbolizing function, which in early childhood processes the content of the personal past, was described in 1901. Freud noted, "We must not suppose that dream-symbolism is a creation of the dream work; it is in all probability a characteristic of the unconscious thinking which provides the dream-work with the material for condensation, displacement and dramatization." (p685) The latter defenses are forerunners of the concept of a non-cognitive ego.

Psychoanalytic symbol creation was seen by Freud to be the result of two processes. One entailed the delivery of the products of early life repression and denial, to the dream work for condensation, displacement and symbolization. The second consisted of a contribution to the symbolizing function of elements of memory whose origins were ancient.

The existence of static impersonal inherited universal symbols with roots in ancient days was fixed in theory by calling them universal symbols. The recognition of a mechanism for the processing of affect charged universal symbols, personal experience and memory opened the way for focusing of attention on dream symbols and their conferees, fantasy and symptoms at a distance from universal symbols. Dream-symbols could be viewed as dynamic products of ego functions, which along with symptoms and behavior could be traced to the functioning of an ego informed by memory of experiences with origins in the life of the person. This organization of observations and redistribution of definitions became the basis for an ego psychology that made possible a broad understanding of the influence of early life experience, personality structure, and defenses on adult mental functioning.

Freud sought to limit the reach of the envelope of possibility for the sources of symbol content to his concept, based on Aristotelian monism, that symbols are hereditarily derived from mankind's historical experience and retained in the brain. He attributed the characteristic of universality to symbolic forms based upon the following observation (1911)⁵ ". . . dreamers speaking the same language make use of the same symbols . . . (683-84) . . . universal ones (p 684) . . . (which) extend beyond the use of the same language. (684) This implied that universal symbols had historical roots, extending back centuries before patients' individual experience began. Under the influence of the then current Lamarckian evolutionary theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics, it was possible to postulate a source of contemporary symbol content in the experiences of ancestors. Freud supported this conclusion with his observation that there was an innate inherited structure to symbol meanings themselves. He noted (1900) that ". . . symbols are stable translations, . . ." (P 151), an (1915-16) ". . . old intellectual endowment . . . about which, ". . . analytic experience has forced on us a conviction that even particular psychical contents, such as symbolism⁶, have no other sources than hereditary transmission." Symbols have a ". . . genetic character . . ." (p352). Symbols are (1915-1916) ". . . an ancient but extinct mode of expression of which different pieces have survived in different fields . . ." (p 166). Thus Freud created the concept of an inherited unconscious. As late as 1938, he attributed the origin of the linkage between the manifest symbol and its referent to ". . . an ancient verbal identity . . ." (p 166). Undimmed was his belief expressed in (1900) that, "Things that are symbolically connected today were probably united in prehistoric times by conceptual and linguistic identity. The symbolic relation seems to be a relic and a mark of former identity." (P352) . . ."the ultimate meaning of the symbolic relation (is that) it is of a *genetic character*" (italics in the original).(p352) He felt that the existence of inherited fixed universal unconscious symbols gives an innate structure to symbol meanings.

In sum Freud viewed the characteristic of universality in symbolic forms to be a manifestation of a fixed internal hereditary mental structure. The contents of this memory structure persist without regard to variations in languages. They are constant in meaning. They are a spotty remnant of a once wider field of symbolic linkages. They are inherited remainders of a primitive language consisting of early manifest forms whose referents had been known, not latent.

Freud restricted his use of the word symbol to universally inherited manifest contents with universal latent meanings. These psychological products of the mind were he felt an archaic heritage

derived from the experiences of primal man.

JUNG AND HIS SYMBOLS

Jung used the word "symbol" when referring to many symbolic forms. These included symbols associated with repression, poetic symbols, psychoanalytic symbols and transcendent symbols. Jung (1964) felt that all symbolic forms have the potential to be manifestations of spiritual power. Jung regarded all symbolic forms as possible consistent manifestations of spiritual power which color or give universally shared form to all the symbols of mankind. He called these manifestations archetypes. He also recognized a specific symbolic form which he "... preferred to call ..." motifs ... that are typical and often occur. Among such motifs are falling, flying, being persecuted ... etc." (p 53)

Jung (1964) viewed cryptic symbol formation as a primarily unconscious process He saw a need for poetic symbols, "Because there are innumerable things beyond the range of human understanding, we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend. This is one reason why all religions employ symbolic languages or images. But this conscious use of symbols is only one aspect of a psychological fact of great importance. Man also produces symbols unconsciously and spontaneously in the form of dreams." (P 21)

He saw a need for poetic symbols, "Because there are innumerable things beyond the range of human understanding, we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend. This is one reason why all religions employ symbolic languages or images." (p 21) He recognized the unconscious nature of psychoanalytic dream symbols, for the conscious use of symbols is only one aspect of a psychological fact of great importance. Man also produces symbols unconsciously and spontaneously in the form of dreams." (p. 21) He saw dream symbolism as an area of expression for images and ideas from zones of experience that transcend the experiences of individual lives. He noted that representations found in dreams cannot possibly be based on memory alone. (P 38)

THE COLLECTIVE SYMBOLS OF JUNG

Jung (1964) noted that "There are many symbols that are not individual but *collective* (italics Jung's) in their nature and origin. These are chiefly religious images. The believer assumes that they are

of divine origin and that they have been revealed to man. The skeptic says flatly that they have been invented. Both are wrong. It is true as the skeptic notes that religious symbols and concepts have for centuries been the object of careful and quite conscious elaboration. It is equally true, as the believer implies, that their origin is so far buried in the mystery of the past that they seem to have no human source. But they are in fact "collective representations", emanating from primeval dreams and creative fantasies. As such these images are involuntary spontaneous manifestations and by no means intentional inventions." (p. 55) Jung's (1918) concept of a «suprapersonal . . . collective unconscious" (p 10) had the following characteristics: there are no such things as inherited ideas (italics Jung's) . . ." only the " . . . innate possibilities of ideas . . ." which provide a " . . . definite form to contents that have already been acquired." They are the archetypes. As " . . . a part of the inherited structure of the brain, they are the reason for the identity of symbols and myth-motifs in

all parts of the earth."(p. 10) They are (1939) "... a wave that crashed on the shore of time and left a strip of foam." (p 526).

Jung (1964) described the archetypes or primordial images that occur in dream symbolism as "... elements that are not individual and that cannot be derived from the dreamer's personal experience." (p 67) They are "... representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern." when they "... form representations of a motif ".(p. 67) In reports of clinical situations, there is clearly to be seen manifest imagery that appears to be preformed and intrusive into fantasy in people living centuries apart. Such findings could support Andrae's (VS) concept of an extracorporeal repository of symbols that is independent of the brain and can shape the content of human thought. For instance a man who had had a vision and thought he was insane consulted with Jung. Jung took a 400-year-old tome and showed him an old woodcut depicting his "very vision." Jung said to him, "They knew about your vision 400 years ago." (p 69)

In sum, Jung's reported observations stretch the edge of the envelope of symbol phenomena toward a dualistic concept that includes a spiritual origin both for the latent content and the manifest form of universal symbols. Jung attributed referents and manifest symbols to the contents of primeval dreams and creative fantasies that are independent of individual experiences and "seem to have no human source." Jung viewed the characteristic of universality in symbolic forms to be the product of a fixed

inherited brain structure that persists without regard to variations in language and which contains constant meaning. It is a spotty remnant of a once wider field of inherited reminders based on primitive experiences.

Jung did not limit his use of the word "symbol" to universally inherited manifest contents with universal meanings. He recognized as symbols, representations with psychoanalytic (repression based, poetic expression of new insights) and transcendent (religious symbols expressing the content of spiritual sources) roots. He saw collective symbols as universally inherited manifest contents with universally understood meanings, which were an archaic heritage derived from the experience of ancient man.

VIEWS OF TRANSCENDENT SYMBOLS IN THE WRITINGS OF OTHER SYMBOL THEORISTS

Jones (1916) held that there is a "true symbolism" (P 90), which is to be differentiated from other forms of indirect representation. True symbols are "... re-created afresh out of individual material, and . . . stereotypy (Jones word for universal similarity) is uniformity of the human mind in regard to the particular tendency that furnish the source of symbolism."(p98) He saw the latent contents of all symbols as "... ideas of the self and the immediate blood relatives, or of the phenomena of birth, love and death." (P 102)

Freud, Jung, and Jones were physicians and therefore bound to establish a biological link in the form of brain function in any theory that explains a universal symbol content, which transcends the boundaries between generations. Other theorists are not so bound.

Eliade (quoted by Williamson (1986) spoke strongly about the strength and independence from the influence of man of an universal symbol. He noted that "history cannot basically modify the structure of an archaic symbolism. History constantly adds new meanings, but they do not destroy the structure of the symbol." (Williamson p 27) In keeping with this concept, Williamson (1986) adds "We must relearn something that has been lost for many centuries, the meaning and impact of deeply rooted icons-those symbols that Eliade calls "transconscious" images, ancient and fixed emblems that always remain aspects of the subconscious. Yet when such symbols become conscious, they are inevitably interpreted in the

prevailing genre of each era."(p 41)

The idea that universal symbols are not a product of the mind but independent entities capable of being influenced by man but not of his making, is strongly proclaimed by Bernbaum (1992) in his treatise on the symbolic meaning of mountains. Why mountains? "Because of their awe-inspiring power, mountains are prime places for this kind of encounter with the sacred. He quoted John Ruskin (p XXI) to the effect that «Mountains . . . revealed most clearly the truth that nature is the creation of God» (p 231). —a claim that has led to the use of mountains in the works of painters of transcendence.

"With the rise of the Romantic movement at the end of the eighteenth century, mountains moved to the fore as the principle subjects of paintings designed to awaken the sense of the sacred." (p231) Artists portrayed landscape as symbols of the infinite.

There seems to be no question of this. Huntington (1966) in his study of Frederick Church, the American landscape artist described the artist's deep disturbance at the hands of the ". . . scientific revolution that had by 1880 all but triumphed in the intellectual world. (p 108) In 1883, Church confided that "I wish science would take a holiday for ten years so I could catch up." (p 108) "Origin of Species" had precipitated a fundamental intellectual crisis. "The Manifest Destiny proclaimed . . . in Church's paintings . . . was a faith in a providential plan." "Church's art was premised on a nature of design." Man was made to recognize the sublime and the beautiful in Creation, because the Creation existed for him." ". . . these qualities, . . . were revelations of the transcendence of the universe . . ." (p 109)

Nature as a transcendent symbol permeates a museum label for the picture "The Glory of the heavens" by William Keith 1838-1911 in the M.H. De Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, Ca. The artist describes the process of creating a symbolic painting based upon a spiritual impression.

"The only thing a poor bewildered artist can do is seize in his mind some flash of sun upon a tree, some light of God in the sky, brood upon it, work it into his soul, and some day—suddenly, before he knows it, he has fixed his thoughts—God's thought he hopes it may be upon the canvass." 8/2/95

Transcendent symbols need not be visual in form. In Modeste Tchaikovsky's 1892 libretto for the opera "Yolanta", The heroine who is born blind tells of the use of symbols other than visual that carry the

message of God.

"No, No for the eternal glorification of God, I need no light. His presence is infinite, without limits. In the night's perfume, in sounds, even in myself there can be found a good and invisible God. Can you see the chirping of a bird in a rose-bush? Or the soft murmur of a quick stream in the sand? . . . to glorify god eternally, It is not light I need." (p 53)

(Condensed and translated from the French by the author.)

Goethe (1779/1796) presented a literary depiction of the universal Dualistic-Platonic Symbol. He says "It is a good thing when we can be justly pleased when inanimate nature provides a symbol of what we like and respect. It appears to us in the shape of a Sibyl who presents in advance a testament of that which has been decreed from the beginning of time but is only to become real in due course." (p37) This quote is not far removed from the philosopher, Susan Langer's (1942) comment that "Nature speaks to us, first of all, through our senses; the forms and qualities we distinguish, remember, imagine, or recognize are symbols of entities which exceed and outlive our momentary experience."

The concept of cross-cultural symbols based on migration rather than universal symbolism, gives an explanation that would put the concept of universal symbolism to rest if it were not that such symbols are keystones for belief systems that people are unwilling to surrender. (For more information about Universal Symbolism, see Unit 3, Section A, Chapter 2)

Goetz (1959), as a cross-cultural art historian, addresses the question of universally shared symbols with a challenge derived from the marked diversity to be found in the culture elements of geographically isolated areas. He noted that:

"Popular slogans like Western individualism and realism versus Eastern mass mentality and mysticism prove to be nonsense when subjected to closer scrutiny. Rather it is a common geographical background which induces them to make use of the same stock of traditional forms and symbols, the same climate which inspires them to similar ways of self expression, however different their reactions may otherwise have been as children of early or modern, younger or decaying nations and civilizations." (P 10)

CONCLUSIONS

Symbols are memory moieties. As such these codifying and truncating abstractions, which reduce the boundaries of that which is recalled to the level of opinions and preconceptions, reduce newly

perceived realities to fit a weathered and antique, somewhat antic mode. Transcendent symbols are complex symbols, which have a potential to represent more than is inherent in their manifest content. Culture uses such a manifest symbol to give universal implied meaning to a thing or percept, in the process creating a door into consciousness for entities of thought.

Simple symbols communicate. Psychoanalytic symbols hide meanings and help in adjustment. Poetic symbols help cultures to grow. Belief in transcendent symbols influences billions of people. Transcendent symbols dominate and control mankind and its view of self, world and cosmos. They feed the content of culture by loading the interpretation of objects, used as manifest symbols, with universal implied meanings.

NOTES

- [1](#) Walter Andrae in "Die Ionische Saule, Bauform oder Symbol?" 1933 Schlusswort. as quoted by Campbell, J., from Ananda Coomaraswamy (1977)Page 346 and Zimmer (1945) Page 169.
- [2](#) Heron of Alexandria Definitions 136, 1-4.
- [3](#) Phaedrus
- [4](#) See page 88 in Giedion (1962).
- [5](#) From "On Dreams" 1901; section 12 from which this is quoted was added in 1911.
- [6](#) Note here the limitation of the use of the word "symbol" to those symbols, which have origins in "hereditary transmission". Psychoanalytic symbols with dynamic origins are assigned by Freud to the dream work.