



The Origins and History of Consciousness



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II

TRANSFORMATION, OR OSIRIS

THE AIM of the extraverted type of hero is action: he is the founder, leader, and liberator whose deeds change the face of the world. The introverted type is the culture-bringer, the redeemer and savior who discovers the inner values, exalting them as knowledge and wisdom, as a law and a faith, a work to be accomplished and an example to be followed. The creative act of raising the buried treasure is common to both types of hero, and the prerequisite for this is union with the liberated captive, who is as much the mother of the creative act as the hero is its father.

The third type of hero does not seek to change the world through his struggle with inside or outside, but to transform the personality. Self-transformation is his true aim, and the liberating effect this has upon the world is only secondary. His self-transformation may be held up as a human ideal, but his consciousness is not directed in the narrower sense to the collective; for in him centroversion expresses a natural and fundamental trend of the human psyche, which is operative from the very beginning and which forms the basis not only of self-preservation, but of self-formation as well.

We have followed the birth of ego consciousness and of the individual all through the archetypal stages whose climax was reached in the hero's fight with the dragon. In this development a constant increase of centroversion can be detected, tending toward the consolidation of the ego and the stabilization of consciousness. It gives rise to a standpoint, indeed a rallying point, from which to combat the dangerous fascination of the world and the unconscious—a fascination that lowers the level of consciousness and disintegrates the personality. Both attitude

types, introversion as well as extraversion, can easily succumb to this danger. Centroversion, by building up the conscious ego and by strengthening the personality, tries to protect them and to counteract the danger of disintegration. In this sense, the growth of individuality and its development are mankind's answer to the "perils of the soul" that threaten from within, and to the "perils of the world" that threaten from without. Magic and religion, art, science, and technics are man's creative efforts to cope with this threat on two fronts. At the center of all these endeavors stands the creative individual as the hero, who in the name of the collective—even when he is a lonely figure standing out against it—molds it into shape by molding himself.

Before we examine the psychological side of this process, namely the formation of personality, we shall have to turn our attention to the myths which are its archetypal repositories.

Stability and indestructibility, the true goals of centroversion, have their mythological prototype in the conquest of death, in man's defenses against its power, for death is the primordial symbol of the decay and dissolution of the personality. Primitive man's refusal to recognize death as a natural occurrence, the immortalization of the king among the ancient Egyptians, ancestor worship, and the belief in the immortality of the soul in the great world-religions—all these are but different expressions of the same fundamental tendency in man to experience himself as imperishable and indestructible.

The best example of centroversion and its symbolism is to be found in ancient Egypt, in the cults and myths that cluster round the figure of Osiris. The story of Osiris is the first self-delineation of this process of personality transformation, whose counterpart is the visible emergence of the spiritual principle from the natural or biological principle. It is no accident that in the figure of Osiris we can see a matriarchal life-affirming world changing into a patriarchal one, where the accent falls on spirit. Thus the Osiris myth throws light on an important chapter in the early history of mankind, but it also furnishes the clue to a chief aspect of the hero myth, namely the transformation resulting

from the fight with the dragon, and the relation of the hero son to the father figure.

Osiris is a many-sided figure, but in his most original form he is unquestionably a fertility god. We have seen how, in the matriarchal phase of fertility ritual, the Great Mother predominated, and how the bloody dismemberment of the young king guaranteed the earth's fertility. The regeneration of Osiris through Isis belongs to this stage. As we read in the Pyramid Texts:

Thy mother has come to thee, that thou mayst not perish away; the great modeler she is come, that thou mayst not perish away. She sets thy head in place for thee, she puts together thy limbs for thee; what she brings to thee is thy heart, is thy body. So dost thou become he who presides over his forerunners, thou givest command to thy ancestors and also thou makest thy house to prosper after thee, thou dost defend thy children from affliction.¹

Or, in the lament of Isis for Osiris:

Come to thy house, come to thy house, thou pillar! Come to thy house, beautiful bull, Lord of men, Beloved, Lord of women.²

Although derived from a late papyrus, this is the age-old lament for the dead known as the "Maneros Lament," the lament for the loss of the "living phallus," which is why the symbol of the pillar, the *djed*, emblem of Osiris, is found in conjunction with the bull. The identification of Osiris with the ithyphallic Min was later transferred to Horus, but the significance of the chthonic Osiris, the beloved and Lord of women, is age-old. This same Osiris, as Horus the son of Isis, is called the "bull of his mother," just as in Heliopolis he is invoked as the "son of the white sow."³ The lower Osiris belongs to the matriarchal sphere of fertility, and so in all probability did the *sem* priest who, with the leopard skin and long tail, was called the "pillar of his mother."⁴

¹ Spells 834 f., in Sethe, *Pyramidentexte*.

² Kees, *Aegypten*, p. 29.

³ Metternich stele, in Roeder, *Urkunden*, p. 90.

⁴ Budge, *Book of the Dead*, intro., p. c [100].

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The signification of Osiris as the living phallus connects him with Mendes, another place where he was worshiped, and with the sacred goat. It is no accident that the cult assigned a special role to a certain queen whose image was set up in the temple and bore the name "Arsinoë Philadelphos, beloved of the goat."⁵ The sexual union of the divine animal with one of the sacred priestesses was an ancient rite, so once more we find ourselves back in the old sphere of matriarchal fertility with its phallic deities.

This phase is ruled by the Earth Goddess and by Osiris as a corn god. The grain significance of fertility gods is widespread, likewise the analogy of their death and resurrection with the "corruption and resurrection" of the seed grain. In the coronation ceremony of the Egyptian kings the significance of the grain formed the most ancient element: Osiris, the grain, is "threshed" by his enemy Set:

Barley is placed on the threshing floor and trodden by oxen. The oxen represent the followers of Set and the barley Osiris who was thus cut in pieces. There is a play here on the words *i-t*, "barley," and *i-t*, "father," both **ḠCWT** in Coptic. As the oxen were driven round the threshing floor, an act equated with Horus' smiting of the followers of Set, Horus says: "I have smitten for thee (Osiris) them that smote thee." The threshing over, the corn was carried away on the backs of asses. This symbolized the ascent of Osiris into heaven, supported by Set and his confederates.⁶

This interpretation of Blackman's is undoubtedly correct, at least as far as the last sentence about Osiris' resurrection. In the Book of the Dead, too, we find Set identified with the sacrificial oxen, but this identification, although predynastic, probably does not derive from the oldest level. The oldest may well be that in which Set, as well as Isis and Osiris, appears as a pig or boar.⁷ Frazer has pointed out that originally the grain was trodden into the earth by swineherds; this would seem to be the

⁵ Erman, *Religion*, pp. 362 f.

⁶ Blackman, in Hooke, *Myth and Ritual*, p. 30.

⁷ See *supra*, p. 85.

earliest form of the killing of Osiris by Set, while the threshing is perhaps the second form.⁸

As we have seen, Osiris is killed twice over by Set in the myth: firstly he is drowned in the Nile or shut up in a chest, and secondly he is hacked to pieces, the equivalent of threshing by being trodden underfoot.

The dismemberment of the corpse and the burial of its parts in the fields is the magical analogy of inseminating the earth with grain, a ritual that may have been connected with the original mode of interment practiced by the predynastic inhabitants of Egypt, who dismembered the dead body.⁹

Another characteristic of the matriarchal fertility rites has assumed the greatest significance. In all probability the phallus of the dismembered king was mummified as a symbol of male potency and preserved until the death of his successor. Frazer

⁸ On account of the taboos surrounding it, the part played by the pig in Egypt is exceedingly obscure. The fact that no early representations of pigs treading the corn have been discovered does not prove that this operation was originally undertaken by sheep, and by pigs only in the New Kingdom. It is always possible that pigs were only represented in the New Kingdom because the taboo did not relax its hold until then. The association of the savage boar with the enemy and destroyer of the young god, who, as Attis, Adonis, Tammuz, and Osiris, was a corn god, seems to indicate that the pig played a negative role in the ritual. It is true that in the early coronation ceremonies oxen and asses took over the role of an enemy (Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 30), but in the Book of the Dead, Set still appears both as a boar and as an ox.

The suppression of Set, the boar, and the pig is consistent with the suppression of the Great Mother and all her rites and symbols. Whereas in the patriarchate the pig was a favored animal sacred to the great mother goddesses Isis, Demeter, Persephone, Bona Dea, and Freya, in the patriarchate it became the epitome of evil. The "great god" Set was still associated as a boar with Isis, the white sow. But, whereas the boar originally represented the wild, destructive, chthonic power of the Great Mother (A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Licht des Alten Orients*, p. 331), it now stood for Set in his role of the murderous maternal uncle, and finally became identified with everything evil.

The statement (Hall and Budge, *Guide to the Fourth, etc., Rooms*, p. 114) that pigs were thought to be extremely sacred and therefore unclean, and were on that account not eaten in Egypt until the Christian era, can hardly be reconciled with the fact that one of the princes who lived in the Eighteenth Dynasty possessed 1500 pigs and only 122 oxen (Erman and Ranke, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben*, p. 529). The economic importance of the pig in Egypt remains uncertain; it is possible that pigs, like fish, were the staple diet of the people but, being sacred and unclean, were not eaten in the best society.

⁹ Budge, *Book of the Dead*, Intro., pp. xix and cxx.

has given numerous examples of the last vestiges of this ceremony, showing that the spirit of vegetation, in the shape of a sheaf of grain or something similar, was preserved until the next sowing or harvest and was regarded as a sacred object.¹⁰ The fertility king or his substitute—an animal, sheaf of grain, etc.—suffers a double fate. In the first place he is killed and cut up, but a portion of him, the sacred phallus, or the thing representing it, “remains.” This remainder is stored “in” or “under” the earth, like the seed or the corpse; its “descent” into the underworld is accompanied by a threnody for the dead. The descent, or *katagogia* as it is called in the peasant festal calendar, corresponds to the hiding of grain in subterranean chambers¹¹ for future sowing. Descent and entombment, therefore, are not only identical with the burial of the dead and the insemination of the earth, but amount to a rite for the “perpetuation of fertility.” He who “remains” was originally represented by the permanent mummified phallus of the slain fertility king, or by corresponding phallic symbols which were preserved underground with the buried seed, i.e., with the dead, until the “resurrection festival” of the young grain.

From the very beginning, however, Osiris was not identical with these young fertility gods. Very early stress was laid not so much upon the transitoriness of the youthful figure as upon his “everlasting” nature. Worshipped as vegetation, grain, and in Byblos, as the tree, he is a god of fertility, earth, and nature, thus combining in himself the characteristics of all the divine sons of the Great Mother; but he is also water, sap, the Nile—in other words, he is the animating principle of vegetation. Whereas in the Gardens of Adonis, for instance, Adonis stands only for growth, the ceremonial effigy of Osiris with stalks growing out of him proves that he is more than the grain; he is in fact the moisture and the prime cause whence the grain springs. He is not just the god who dies to rise again; he is the god who does

¹⁰ *The Golden Bough* (abridged edn., 1951), pp. 438 ff.
¹¹ Van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*.

not die, who remains for ever—a paradox indeed, for he is the “mummy with the long member.”¹²

It can easily be shown that this cognomen expresses the essential nature of Osiris. It accords with certain peculiar features of the myth which have never been sufficiently emphasized, much less understood. The myth says that when the dismembered portions of Osiris were put together again, the phallus could not be found; that Isis replaced it by a wooden or cult phallus, and that she was made pregnant by the dead Osiris. So, although lacking a phallus, or equipped only with a wooden one, Osiris became the father of Horus—an exceedingly remarkable feature in a fertility god.

In all matriarchal fertility rites castration and fertilization, phallic worship and dismemberment, are interrelated parts of a symbolic canon. The problem of Osiris, however, goes deeper than that and demands interpretation on many more levels. To understand the fertility of Osiris only as the lower, phallic fertility of the earth, as water, as the fertilizing Nile, as the living verdure of vegetation, and as the grain, is to limit the range of his action; indeed the whole nature of Osiris lies in transcending this lower fertility.

The higher as opposed to the lower nature of Osiris can be conceived as a transformation, or as a new phase of his self-revelation. Both natures are connected with the same object, the cult phallus.

The death of the original fertility king led, as we saw, to two distinct ceremonies: the dismemberment of the body and the “induration” of the phallus. Dismemberment, sowing, and threshing are equivalent to destroying the personality and breaking down the living unit. Such was originally the fate meted out to the dead body of Osiris. The principle opposed to this found embodiment in the mummification of the phallus, to make it hard and everlasting; and the symbol of everlastingness is Osiris, “the mummy with the long member.”

¹² “From the Prayers of One Unjustly Prosecuted,” in Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 304.

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This paradoxical double significance of Osiris, evidently present right from the beginning, forms the basis of his development in Egyptian religion. On the one hand, as the dismembered god, he is the bringer of fertility, the young king who passes away and returns; on the other hand, as the procreative mummy with the long member, he is everlasting and imperishable. Not only is he the living phallus, but he retains his potency even as the mummified phallus. As such he begets his son Horus and thus, as a spirit, as the dead man who "remains," his fertility is imbued with a higher meaning. In this mysterious symbol of the fertile dead, mankind has unconsciously stumbled on a vital factor which it projected outside itself, because no clearer formulation of it was then possible: the everlastingness and fruitfulness of the living spirit as opposed to the everlastingness and fruitfulness of nature.

The great antagonist of Osiris was symbolized by Set, the black boar, whose emblem is the primeval flint knife, the instrument of dismemberment and death. This Set is the epitome of darkness, evil, destructiveness; being twin brother to Osiris, he is the archetypal "antagonist," not only in the cosmic sense in which he stands for the "powers of darkness," but also in the historical sense, for he represents the matriarchate and the destructive side of Isis against which Osiris is fighting as founder of the patriarchy.

Dismemberment, whose symbols are the "knife of Set," the Apopis serpent and the whole demonic horde of scorpions, snakes, monsters, and gorillas, is the danger that threatens the dead.¹³ It is the danger of psychophysical decay and extinction. The most vital parts of the Egyptian religion, and the whole of the Book of the Dead, are devoted to averting this danger.

Homage to thee, O my divine father Osiris, thou hast thy being with thy members. Thou didst not decay, thou didst not become worms, thou didst not diminish, thou didst not become corruption, thou didst not putrefy, and thou didst not turn into worms. I am the god Khepera, and my members shall have an everlasting existence. . . . I shall have my being; I shall

¹³ Budge, *op. cit.*, figs. to Chs. 28 and 149.

live; I shall germinate; I shall wake up in peace; I shall not putrefy; my intestines shall not perish; I shall not suffer injury; mine eye shall not decay; the form of my visage shall not disappear; mine ear shall not become deaf; my head shall not be separated from my neck; my tongue shall not be carried away; my hair shall not be cut off; my eyebrows shall not be shaved off; and no baleful injury shall come upon me. My body shall be stablished, and it shall neither fall into ruin nor be destroyed on this earth. [Ch. 44.]

The fundamental trend of centroversion—the conquest of death through everlastingness—finds its mythological and religious symbol in Osiris. Mummification, the preservation and eternity of the body's shape, as the outward and visible sign of its unity—this gives living expression to the anti-Set principle of Osiris.

Osiris is the Self-Perfected, he who has overthrown Set and escaped the threat of dismemberment. Whereas on the matri-archal level he is reborn of the animating wind-breath through his mother-sister-spouse, or, in the Pyramid Texts, has his head restored to him by the Mother Goddess Mut as a symbol of unity,¹⁴ he is finally worshiped precisely because he renews himself. We read in the Book of the Dead:

I have knit myself together; I have made myself whole and complete; I have renewed my youth; I am Osiris, the Lord of Eternity.¹⁵

The evident fact that the archaic custom of cutting up the corpse for burial was repudiated, indeed anathematized, by a later tribe of settlers is, as so often happens, only the historical reflection of a much deeper psychic change. Dismemberment of the dead is practiced only among primitive peoples who have no consciousness of personality, and for whom the deciding motive is their fear of revenants. In Egypt, however, the intensification of ego consciousness and the development of centroversion are particularly clear; in these circumstances dismemberment would obviously be regarded as the supreme danger, and the preservation of a man's bodily shape, through embalming, the supreme good. The mummified Osiris could become the legitimate exponent of this tendency because, even in the

¹⁴ Sakkara pyramids; cf. Budge, intro., p. cxx.

¹⁵ Ibid., Ch. 43.

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earliest times when the matriarchal fertility cult held sway, he had been the bearer and representative of the cult phallus and, as such, he who "remains."

The earliest Osiris symbol is the *djed*, and his earliest place of worship, Dedu, the old Busiris on the Nile delta. The interpretation of the *djed* pillar has remained a puzzle to this day. Generally the *djed* is taken to represent a tree trunk with the stumps of branches projecting to either side at the top. In the cult, at all events, it was as bulky and heavy as a tree trunk, as can be seen very clearly from the illustrations of the erection of the *djed* at the festivals. Moreover the Osiris myth fully indicates that the *djed* pillar was a tree trunk. Isis fetched the body of Osiris from Byblos in Phoenicia, enclosed in a tree trunk which the king of that place, husband of "Queen Astarte," had used as a pillar in the hall of his court. Isis "cut the coffer out of the tree,"¹⁶ but the tree she wrapped in fine linen and anointed, and right down to Plutarch's day it was still worshiped in Byblos as the "wood of Isis." We have already discussed the tree cult in Byblos and its relation to Isis and Osiris, in connection with the son-lover and the Mother Goddess. Here we would only draw attention to the significance of timber for Egypt. The religious and cultural links between Egypt and Phoenicia are extremely ancient.¹⁷

Trees, and particularly very big trees like the cedars of Lebanon, offer a powerful contrast to the fleeting life of vegetation, which in a treeless land like Egypt comes and goes with the season. They are the things that endure, so it is understandable that in early times the tree became the symbol of the *djed*, signifying duration: for the tree is a fully grown thing that nevertheless endures. To the primitive Egyptian, wood symbolized organic, living duration as opposed to the inorganic, dead

¹⁶ Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

¹⁷ If the unlikely proposition that Osiris was originally the Sumerian god Asar and reached Egypt via Mesopotamia (cf. Winlock, *Basreliefs from the Temple of Rameses I at Abydos*, p. 7 n) proves to be correct, then Byblos becomes even more important as a cultural crossroads. At the time of the matriarchal fertility cult Egypt seems to have been culturally dependent upon Byblos, as hinted by the myth when it says that Isis brought Osiris from Byblos to Egypt.

duration of stone and the ephemeral life of vegetation.¹⁸ In the Canaanite sphere of culture centering upon Byblos, the tree trunk was sacred to the Great Mother, "Queen Astarte," in the form of a post with hewn-off lateral branches;¹⁹ at all events it comes under the broad category of sacred trees and posts.

Another salient point is the identity of the tree trunk and the wooden sarcophagus, the most important item in the Egyptian rites for the dead.

The mythical entombment of Osiris in a tree coffin by his brother Set, and the Byblos episode, bring out his *djed* nature, both as a god in the form of a pillar, and as a mummy. But the mummy and the coffin are a means for making the corpse everlasting, and Osiris, whether as tree, pillar, or mummy, is identical with the wooden cult phallus which replaced the embalmed phallus of the seasonal King.

According to the Egyptian belief, which held that the dismembered portions of Osiris were distributed among the various places of worship, the backbone was buried in Dedu; and in view of its articulated structure the *djed* pillar lends itself to such a conception. The pillar is composed of two segments. Derived originally from the trunk of a tree, the upper segment, corresponding to the treetop with its four lateral branch stumps, finally came to be correlated with the neck and head region of Osiris, while the lower segment, corresponding to the trunk, was correlated with the backbone. Like many another Egyptian fetish, the *djed* pillar shows us very clearly how the original figure became humanized. First it sprouted arms, as on the west wall of the temple at Abydos, then the eyes were painted in,²⁰ and finally the pillar was equated with the entire figure of Osiris.



In what manner the *djed* pillar arose has, so it seems to us,

¹⁸ A. Jeremias, op. cit., fig. 125.

¹⁹ Carpentry, too, as a sacred process, belongs to this canon. Wood, like milk and wine, was thought to be a life-principle of Horus-Osiris (cf. Blackman, op. cit., p. 30), and cedar oil with its preservative and hardening qualities played an important part in embalming. [The wood symbolism recurs in the story that Jesus was a carpenter: cf. Coomaraswamy, *The Bugbear of Literacy*.—TRANS.]

²⁰ Budge, op. cit., figs. to pp. 73, 77, 121.

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been demonstrated with the utmost clarity by Budge.²¹ From a comparison of the paintings he has established that it was formed by combining Osiris' sacrum, the lowest joint in the spinal column, with the tree trunk dedicated to the old god of Busiris, upon which it was erected: . The ordinary *djed* symbol is a stylization of this combination: .

Three components enter into conjunction here. The first is phallic, since the sacrum is "the lower part of the backbone of Osiris which was believed to form the seat of his virility." The second component is the aforesaid "duration." The fact that the sacrum, a bony structure, is used here instead of the phallus serves, like the pillar, to emphasize the character of "everlastingness." For this reason the *djed* symbol and the image of the tree with branch stumps could easily coalesce, both as regards their form and their content.

But the third and, for us, the most important factor is the "erection," i.e., the fact that the sacrum was set on the top of the tree trunk.

In this way the "everlasting begetter," the "erected" or "higher" phallus, becomes the head, which proves its character as a "spermatic" or spiritual symbol.²² Like the solar phallus—another spiritual symbol—the "head" of the tree begets and brings forth in the tree birth; but neither the everlasting begetter nor the begotten stands for the "lower" principle; on the contrary they are "erected," that is, "raised up," as the ritual itself shows.²³

Because the "sublimation,"²⁴ the erection, and transformation of the lower principle into the higher was the most important component of the *djed* symbol, its upper segment was later identified with the head of Osiris.

I am Osiris, the Lord of the heads that live, mighty of breast and powerful of back, with a phallus which goeth to the remotest men and women. . . . I have become a spirit, I have been judged, I have become a divine being,

²¹ Budge, *Guide to the Fourth, etc., Rooms*, p. 98.

²² See *infra*, pp. 247 f.

²³ See *infra*, pp. 242 f.

²⁴ See *infra*, pp. 242, 248.

I have come, and I have avenged mine own body. I have taken up my seat by the divine birth-chamber of Osiris, and I have destroyed the sickness and suffering which were there. [*Book of the Dead*, Ch. 69.]

This reuniting of the head with the body, for the purpose of producing a whole figure and nullifying the dismemberment, is one of the main features of the Osiris cult. A chapter in the *Book of the Dead* is entitled "The Chapter of Not Letting the Head of a Man Be Cut Off from Him in the Underworld."²⁵ The restoring of the head was absolutely essential if Osiris was to be put together again,²⁶ and what we know of the mystery cult at Abydos confirms this. In the "reconstitution of the body of Osiris" we are told that "the crowning scene was erection of the backbone of Osiris and the placing of the head of the God upon it."²⁷ Thus the *djed* pillar symbolizes the reunited Osiris, the everlasting, who can say of himself: "I have made myself whole and complete."

This interpretation of the union of head and backbone in the *djed* is also confirmed by the prayer which had to be spoken while laying a golden *djed* upon the neck of the dead man:

Rise up, O Osiris, thou hast thy backbone, O Still Heart, thou hast the ligatures of thy neck and back, O Still Heart. Place thyself upon thy base.²⁸

There are thus two determining motifs running through the Egyptian belief in a future life, both connected with Osiris. The first is perpetual duration, the preservation of the body's shape, and therefore of the personality, in the funeral rites by means of embalming, and by safeguarding the mummies in pyramids; the second is resurrection and transformation.

The figure of Osiris is from the very beginning bound up with the principle of ascension. The earliest picture of him shows him

²⁵ Budge, *Book of the Dead*, Ch. 43.

²⁶ See supra, p. 222.

²⁷ Budge, op. cit., intro. to Ch. 43.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Ch. 155. The dead man is promised that he shall become a perfected spiritual being, a *khu*, and that at the New Year festival he shall join the attendants of Osiris. This gives us an important clue to the significance of the *djed* pillar at the New Year festival, to be discussed later.

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as "the God at the Top of the Staircase."²⁹ He is the ladder from earth to heaven, and those who could not be buried in Abydos itself tried at least to set up a stone there at the "staircase of the great God."³⁰ Budge writes:

This ladder is referred to in the Pyramid Texts. It was made originally for Osiris, who by means of it ascended into heaven. It was set up by Horus and Set, each of whom held one side while they assisted the God to mount it; in the tombs of the Ancient and Middle Empires several models of ladders have been found.³¹

Osiris the dismembered fertility god who overcomes his dismemberment, Lord of the Ascent and the Heavenly Ladder, is, on the cosmic level of mythology, the same as Osiris the Moon-God.

Briffault has put together a mass of material proving that the kingship of Osiris was originally of a lunar character.³² This association is archetypal. In the matriarchate, the fertility-kingship of the adolescent lover is always connected with the moon, which is "quartered" and reborn, and thus guarantees fertility. It is, however, important to note how significantly the figure of Osiris rises above these matriarchal associations.

By ascending from earth to heaven³³ and conquering death and dismemberment, Osiris becomes the exemplar of transformation and resurrection. In the Book of the Dead, the dead man who is identified with Osiris says, "I set up a ladder to Heaven among the gods, and I am a divine being among them." His ascension and resurrection reflect a psychic transformation which is mythologically projected as the union of the lower, earthly Osiris with the higher, or the union of the dismembered but reconstituted body of Osiris with the higher "spiritual soul" and "spiritual body." This self-transformation, resurrection and sublimation, which is at once a union with the self, is described

²⁹ Petrie, *The Making of Egypt*, Pls. X, LII.

³⁰ Erman, *Religion*, p. 265.

³¹ Op. cit., intro. to Ch. 98.

³² *The Mothers*, Vol. II, pp. 778 f.

³³ Pyramid Texts, spells 472, 974, in Erman, *Religion*, p. 219.

as the union of Osiris, God of the Underworld, with the Sun-God, Ra.

The ascent of Osiris is depicted in the Book of the Dead³⁴ as the rising of the Horus Sun—signifying life—out of the *djed* pillar, and the pillar itself is shown placed between the twin mountain peaks of sunrise and sunset. The *djed* is therefore the “material body” that gives rise to the Sun Soul. On the other hand, at the Memphis festival the mummy was worshiped with a *djed* for its head;³⁵ in other words, it was worshiped as the whole body to which the head had been restored.

Dedu Busiris, the oldest shrine of Osiris, is situated in a nome whose emblem was of great importance for the development of Osiris symbolism. We can trace the development of the basic symbols as the Osiris cult moved from Busiris to Abydos. Osiris took over the symbols of the old reigning god Anzti, the original Lord of Busiris, which were the scourge and the scepter. The Anzti symbol consisted, besides these, in a body shaped like a post, or fasces, surmounted by a head with two ostrich plumes,³⁶ and it is clear that Osiris was able to assimilate both symbols, the fasces and the head.

The same thing happened when the Osiris religion assimilated the Abydos symbols. Here as well the old symbols, together with the local cult of the “First among the Western Ones,” i.e., a god of the dead, accommodated themselves with the greatest ease to the nature of Osiris.

After Osiris had established himself in Abydos, the local emblem—likewise a fasces bearing a kind of head with two ostrich feathers and a sun—was equated with the Anzti symbol and the head of Osiris (*illus.* 28). An ancient model shows this Abydos pillar, surmounted by the head-relic with its sun and feathers, “planted in the mountain hieroglyph.”³⁷

The relation to the sun becomes all the stronger when we note that, at the foot of the Abydos emblem, the pillar is supported

³⁴ Budge, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 73, 77.

³⁵ Erman and Ranke, *Aegypten*, p. 318.

³⁶ Moret, *The Nile*, p. 58.

³⁷ Winlock, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

on both sides by two lions, the *akeru*, symbolizing the morning and evening sun, yesterday and today. In the vignettes they are shown flanking both the rising and the setting sun.³⁸ The Osiris symbol in Abydos was—a fact overlooked by Winlock—the sinking sun; the local god was worshiped like Osiris as the “First among the Western Ones,” that is, as the evening sun and god of the dead, and in later times Abydos was considered to be the place where the head of Osiris was buried.

If we now sum up this “syncretistic” development, we shall see that the symbolism is extremely significant. Osiris, Osiris’ head, and Osiris the sun all go together, for sun and head reflect his spirituality. The head of Anzti, the Abydos head, and the head of Osiris are one. But since Abydos lies “to the west,” it became the place where Osiris was worshiped as the evening sun and god of the dead, and where “the head of Osiris rests.”

Osiris, however, is not just the sinking sun; the Abydos emblem is also held to symbolize the “Head Soul” of Ra, and his worshipers are depicted as Horus-headed and also as jackal-headed demons, indicating that they worship the morning as well as the evening sun.

Osiris has two shapes: he is the Western God of the Underworld, Ruler of the Dead, and equally he is the Everlasting, Lord of Heaven. Originally he was the Ruler of the Earth and the Underworld who reigned in the West, while Ra, the Lord of Heaven, reigned in the East, but before long these two figures came together in the double structure of Osiris, to form the double soul:

Thy material body liveth in Dedu (and in) Nif-Urtet and thy soul liveth in Heaven each day.³⁹

The mythological statement about the double nature of Osiris, the unity of Osiris and Ra, corresponds to the psychological statement about the union of the heart-soul (*ba*), which is the transpersonal body-center, with the spiritual soul or subtle body (*khu*). In this union lies the mystery of Osiris:

³⁸ Budge, *op cit.*, figs. on pp. 81 and 94.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 666.

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I am the divine soul which dwelleth in the divine Twin Gods. Question: Who is this? Answer: It is Osiris. He goes to Dedu and findeth there the soul of Ra. Each god embraces the other and the divine Souls spring into being within the Divine Twin Gods.⁴⁰

The same chapter contains other formulations of this double nature, such as:

Yesterday is Osiris and Today is Ra on the day when he shall destroy the enemies of Osiris and when he shall establish as prince and ruler his son Horus.

I know the god who dwelleth therein. Who then is this? It is Osiris or (as others say) Ra is his name, (or) it is the Phallus of Ra, wherewith he was united to himself.

Again in the "Book of Things Which Are and of Things Which Shall Be," we read:

Who then is this? It is Osiris; or (as others say) it is his dead body or (as others say) it is his filth. The things which are and the things which shall be are his dead body; or (as others say) they are eternity and everlastingness. Eternity is the day and everlastingness is the night.

The god who begets himself is depicted more particularly as the *khepri*, the scarab or dung beetle. Because he rolls a ball of dung before him, this beetle was venerated as the sun-moving principle. Even more significant is the fact that, his task completed, he buries the sun-ball in a hole in the ground and dies, and in the following spring the new beetle creeps out of the ball as the new sun, risen from under the earth. He is thus a symbol of the "Self-Begotten" and is deemed "Creator of the Gods."⁴¹ Budge says:

He is a form of the rising sun and his seat is in the boat of the Sun-god. He is the god of matter which is at the point of passing from inertness into life, and also of the dead body from which a spiritual and glorified body is about to burst forth.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid., Ch. 17.

⁴¹ The self-renewing character of the *khepri* is of primary importance here. Whether, as Briffault thinks, an originally lunar significance has been transferred to the sun is irrelevant in this context.

⁴² Op. cit., p. 4 n.

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The *khepri* also symbolizes the Heart (*ab*). But Osiris, even though he is likened to the heart-soul which animates the body, and of which it is said "My Heart, my Mother," is something suprapersonal. The heart is shown in the shape of the self-getting scarab; it is the seat of the powers of conscience which appear as the Assessors at the Judgment of the Dead, and, in the creation myth of Memphis, the creative organ par excellence:⁴³

It is the Heart which makes all that results to come forth, and it is the tongue which repeats (expresses) the thought that the Heart created. . . . The demiurge who created all the gods and their *kas* is in his Heart.⁴⁴

The hieroglyph for "thought" is written with the ideogram for "heart," which indicates that the heart-soul is a spiritual principle. At the same time it is the libido principle of all earthly life; hence the phallic form of Osiris, the he-goat or ram of Mendes (*ba*), is identified with the heart-soul (*ba*).

However, Osiris is not only the lower phallic principle, but the higher solar principle as well. He is the *benu* bird, the Greek phoenix:

Thou art the Great Phoenix that was born in the branches of the tree at the great House of Princes in Heliopolis.⁴⁵

Self-renewal and tree-birth—the "higher" nativity—go together. The Osiris who is born of the tree is born of himself in the precise sense of one risen from his coffin, for Osiris, tree, and coffin are one and the same (*illus. 31*). Hence the tree-birth is identical with rebirth: Osiris is the sun rising out of the tree,⁴⁶ just as he is the sign of life rising out of the *djed* pillar. This vignette illustrates one of the oldest chapters in the Book of the Dead, the fourteenth, whose opening words sum up all the essential points in the mystery of Osiris:

I am Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, and I have the power to be born a second time; I am the divine hidden soul who created the gods.

⁴³ See supra, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Moret, op. cit., p. 376; Kees, op. cit., p. 11.

⁴⁵ Metternich stele, in Roeder, op. cit., p. 90.

⁴⁶ Budge, op. cit., fig. to p. 211.

The problem of death was originally solved by the simple device of regarding the next world as a continuation of this. The change in point of view that resulted in a spiritual instead of a materialistic answer to this question—a change also reflected in the transformation of Osiris—can be seen very clearly in a dialogue between the dead Osiris and Atum, a species of creator god. The latter says:

I have given glorification in place of water, air, and gratification of the senses, and a light heart in place of bread and beer.

And he ends with this promise:

Thou shalt exist for longer than a million million years, an era of millions. But I shall destroy all that I have created. The earth shall appear once more as the primeval ocean, as the flood of waters that was in the beginning. I am that which shall remain, together with Osiris, after I have changed myself back into a serpent, which no man knoweth, which no God seeth.⁴⁷

Atum's answer passes beyond the next world; it is an eschatological answer that holds a promise of perpetuity even when the world has reverted to the uroboric state. "Together with Osiris"—this is a promise that the soul shall be the deathless companion of the creator. The identity of Osiris, the human soul, and the prime creative force amounts to identity with the creativity of godhead. In this sense, too, we can understand the mysterious saying of the dead man who describes his transformation into Osiris as an initiation into the mystery of metempsychosis:

I have entered in as a man of no understanding, and I shall come forth in the form of a strong spirit, and I shall look upon my form which shall be that of men and women for ever and ever.⁴⁸

False theories abound, all trying to prove that the symbolic contents of this passage express a later spiritualization. But, characteristically enough, it does not belong to a late chapter at all; it is taken from an exceedingly solemn text that sums up

⁴⁷ Ibid., Ch. 175; Kees, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴⁸ Budge, op. cit., Ch. 64.

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the essence of the Book of the Dead in a single chapter, the shorter version of which is ascribed to the First Dynasty.⁴⁹

Osiris of the double soul, then, is the luminary of the Upper and Lower Worlds, the self-unifier, preserving and yet changing his shape, conqueror of death, the self-begotten, holder of the secret of resurrection and rebirth, through which the lower power is transformed into the higher.

The Pharaoh, too, in imitation of Osiris, is at his death changed into a spirit dwelling in heaven;⁵⁰ he undergoes an "Osirification" which consists in the union of his soul parts, and the first condition of this is the preservation of the mummy and its magical resuscitation. The whole purpose of the ritual in the Book of the Dead is to make the earthly body immortal by uniting the parts and preventing it from being dismembered.

Preservation of the body through embalming, its purification, also the purification of the *ka*, the ghost-soul belonging to the body, these are the preliminaries that lead up to the grand Osirian mystery, namely the germination⁵¹ of the spiritual body

⁴⁹ It is immaterial whether we date the First Dynasty with Petrie, at 4300 B.C., or with Breasted, at 3400 B.C. In either case we are back at the beginning of the historical epoch.

⁵⁰ Pyramid Texts, spells 370-75, in Sethe, *Pyramidentexte*.

⁵¹ A question which cannot be answered at present is whether the significance of grain in its many permutations, particularly as a symbol of spiritual transformation in the mystery religions, may not originally have been connected with the phenomenon of fermentation and the brewing of intoxicating liquor. For Osiris is not a corn god only, he is also a wine god; moreover the Feast of Epiphany, on January 6, when the changing of water into wine at the marriage of Cana is commemorated, is also the anniversary of the water-wine transformation performed by Osiris (Gressmann, *Tod und Auferstehung des Osiris*). Intoxicating spirits and fertility orgies were always associated with one another in the ancient world, and still are, in primitive societies. Indeed, the transformation of grain into spirit must have struck mankind everywhere as one of the most astonishing instances of natural change. The basis of the liquor, whether it be grain, rice, maize, tapioca, etc., is invariably a fruit of the earth, an "Earth Son" who occupies a central place in fertility ritual. Through its strange transformation this earthly product acquires an intoxicating spirit-character and becomes a sacrament, mediating revelation, wisdom, redemption. This age-old basis of the mystery is still transparent, not only in the Dionysian and Christian wine symbolism, but wherever sacramental intoxication plays a part. It would be surprising if the secret doctrines of transformation which flourished in the ancient world right down to the time of the alchemists were not connected with this elementary phenomenon. The *prima materia* as the dead body, its sublimation and the ascent of

from the mummified corpse.⁵²

The heart-soul (*ba*), a human-headed falcon who is the life principle of the body and the mummy, is connected with the spiritual soul (*khu*),⁵³ which is the life principle of the spiritual body (*sahu*). Whereas the *khu* is immortal, its companion heart-soul is material and immaterial according to its pleasure. *Ba*, *khu*, and *khepri* (heart) are all co-ordinated.

Naturally these part souls or soul parts are mythological projections and cannot be defined more closely. The crucial task is their transformation and unification, resulting in the production of the deathless double being, Osiris-Ra; this is the "great work" which Osiris accomplishes, and which Pharaoh accomplishes after him.

The *ka* soul has a particularly important part to play in this process. It is extraordinarily difficult for us to understand what is meant by the *ka*, because the *ka* soul corresponds to no concept in our modern consciousness, and is an archetypal entity. The Egyptians conceived it as a man's double, as his genius or guardian angel, as his name and as that which nourished him; it was eternally youthful, for which reason "to die" was the same as "*aller vivre avec son 'ka'.*"⁵⁴ Moret sums up its meaning in these words:

Sous ce nom de Ka il faut donc entendre non pas seulement le principe de vie du Pharaon, des dieux et des hommes, mais l'ensemble des forces vitales et la nourriture qui alimente, et sans laquelle dépérit tout ce qui existe dans l'univers.⁵⁵

The same authority writes:

the spirit, liberation of the spirit from the body, transubstantiation, etc., are all processes which have their place in the mystery of intoxication and illustrate at the same time the spiritual history of the Earth or Corn Son, so that these images may well be the symbolic prototypes of spiritual transformation. Such associations, being archetypal, are not confined to the West; for instance in Mexico we find the same connection between the young corn god and intoxication, here represented by the pulque deities.

⁵² Budge, *op. cit.*, Chs. 83, 94, 154.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Intro., p. xii.

⁵⁴ Pyramid of Pepi I, in Moret, *Mystères Égyptiens*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

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This *ka* is the father and the being which causes man to live, presides over the intellect and the moral forces, gives spiritual and physical life.⁵⁶

It is connected with *kau*, "sustenance," and is therefore an elementary libido and life symbol:

From this essential and collective *ka*, a primordial substance living in heaven, the gods detach an individual *ka* for the king.

When the *ka* and the body are purified and united, the king—like Osiris before him and every individual after him—is "a complete being who achieves perfection."

The *ka* soul is therefore an archetypal prefiguration of what we know today as the "self"; in its union with the other soul parts, and in the transformation of personality thereby effected, we have the first historical example—in mythological projection—of the psychic process we call "individuation" or the "integration of the personality."

Through this union of soul parts the king becomes a *ba*, a heart-soul who dwells with the gods and possesses the breath of life; he is now an *akh*, a perfect spiritual being:

The king is reborn in the glory of the eastern horizon *akhet*; and he who is born in the east becomes an *akh* (a glorious, shining one).⁵⁷

The archetypal affinities between light, sun, spirit, and soul, all referring to Osiris and his transformation, have seldom been expressed more plainly.

Seen against this symbolical and mythological background, the actual content of the ritual will more readily yield up its meaning.

Our knowledge of the Osiris ritual derives from three sources: the Osiris festivals, in particular the "Erection of the Venerable Djed" on New Year's Day in Dedu Busiris; the coronation ceremonies; and the Sed festival of the Pharaohs, the purpose of which was to strengthen and renew the kingly power.

On more than one occasion we have pointed out the significance of Osiris for fertility, and his connection with the Great

⁵⁶ Moret, *The Nile*, p. 183.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

Mother. This stage, however, had already been passed at the time when the Osiris ritual was celebrated in Dedu at the feast of the New Year; traces of the old seasonal kingship still lingered, but the dominant feature was the idea of "duration" which gave its name to the *djed* pillar and also to the city.

Following the eclipse of his moon character, Osiris came to embody in himself the whole year, as we can see from the 365 lights that accompanied the voyage of the thirty-four little papyrus boats down the Nile on All Soul's Day, the twenty-second of Khoiakh.⁵⁸ The wooden effigy of Osiris which had been buried in the ground the previous year was then dug up and, having been replaced by a new one, was laid upon boughs of sycamore,⁵⁹ as a symbol of the resurrection of the year and the birth of the sun from a tree. The erection of the *djed*, which is the main feature of the festivities, symbolizes the "resuscitation of Osiris," i.e., the coming to life of the dead, and not the resurrection of a young vegetation god.⁶⁰

The festal calendar of Dendera says:

As for the last day of the fourth month of Akhet, the raising of the *djed* takes place in Busiris on that day of the burying of Osiris in the region of Bḥ in the vault under the *išd*-trees; for on that day the divine body of Osiris comes into him after the wrapping of Osiris.⁶¹

The New Year was celebrated on the day following this erection and resurrection; it was the anniversary of Horus of Edfu, also prescribed as the day on which the Egyptian king mounted the throne and on which the Sed feast was celebrated for the periodic renewal of Egyptian kingship.

The original interment of the old King of the Year at his death, and the enthronement of the new, are still perceptible in these ceremonies; the raising of the *djed* corresponds to the embalming of the phallus and the annual killing of the king in the old fertility ritual, as is apparent from the connection between the setting up of the *djed* and the new king's enthronement. In the

⁵⁸ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 436.
⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
⁶⁰ Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

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harvest festival, too, we find that the Horus king cuts a sheaf of grain, symbolizing the old vegetation spirit, with a sickle.

The connection between the Horus king's enthronement and the simultaneous resurrection of Osiris, however, reveals something else, which means more than just the supplanting of the old by the new. In the Osiris myth, the vestiges of the original conflict between the old and the new king, so evident in the fertility rites, are completely overgrown by a new psychic constellation in which the son has a positive relation to the father.

We have seen how the originally matriarchal figure of Isis, and the rites pertaining to her, were superseded by the rule of the Horus kings under the patriarchal protection of Osiris, of whom it was said that "he leaves the son in his father's place." Isis helps him in this: she conducts a lawsuit for the legitimacy of her son and of his claim to the throne, and gets the gods to recognize Horus' paternity, the basis of the patriarchate.

The supersession of the matriarchal by a patriarchal epoch is an archetypal process; that is to say, it is a universal and necessary phenomenon in the history of mankind. We interpret it in this sense, without respect to the possible and even probable overthrow of a predynastic matriarchal Egypt by patriarchal tribes owing allegiance to Horus, and without discussing the possible union of a late Horus sun cult with an earlier Osiris moon cult.

Moret has examined the decay of this matriarchal "uterine system." He speaks of an "evolution of society from the uterine system in which each woman of the clan believes herself impregnated by the totem, to the paternal system in which the husband is the true father," and he associates the transition from clan to family and from the supremacy of the community to that of the individual with this development. We have still to discuss the role of the god-king as the "Great Individual" who, with his heroic consciousness, breaks down the power of the Great Mother. (Cf. Appendices.)

Interestingly enough, traces of this shifting of the center of gravity can still be seen in Egyptian myth and ritual. The early

capitals of Upper and Lower Egypt were cities where two Mother goddesses "of lasting splendor" had reigned from time immemorial: the vulture goddess Nekhbet of Nekhen in Upper Egypt, and the snake goddess Uatchet of Buto in Lower Egypt. In the Osiris myth the city of Buto has a sinister connection with death and dismemberment: Horus was killed there by a scorpion, a creature sacred to Isis, and it was there that the re-discovered body of Osiris was cut in pieces by Set.

Buto and Nekhen are twin cities, also known as Pe-Dep and Nekheb-Nekhen. It is significant that, in the north and south, the Horus cities and the mother cities lie facing one another on opposite banks of the river.

Traces of the age-old conflict between the patriarchal Horus and the ancient matriarchal rulers can still be seen in the ritual. For instance, in the ceremonial performance of the battle between Pe and Dep, Horus first is attacked, but the end shows his victorious incest with his mother, which proves him a hero.⁶² Later, at the time of the historical Dynasties, the vulture and snake symbols of the vanquished female deities occur as emblems in the crown of the Horus kings, and their names form part of the fivefold royal title.

These patriarchal kings, the "sons of Horus" (*illus.* 27) who take over the inheritance of Osiris, necessarily become the avengers of their father and adversaries of the maternal uncle Set, Osiris' deadly enemy. Whether in consequence the role of an "elder Horus" devolves upon a "younger Horus" is of no importance here: the protection that Osiris extends to his son derives from their old battles with Set. In this struggle Horus strikes off Set's testicles; the wound that Horus receives in his eye heals, the dead Osiris is restored to life with the help of this same "eye of Horus," and Horus is thereupon invested with the symbols of power: two scepters in which Set's testicles are incorporated.⁶³ The restoration of Osiris is identical with his resurrection and

⁶² Erman and Ranke, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

⁶³ Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

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transformation, which make him the king of the spirits, and his son king of the earth.

Thus the enthronement and rulership of the son rest upon the spiritualization of the father. The raising of the dead man, which is symbolically identical with the erection of the *djed* pillar and the placing of the previous year's effigy of Osiris upon the sycamore branches, precedes both the enthronement of Horus and the Sed festival every time.

Any interpretation which assumes that these rites merely entreat the dead to help the living is quite inadequate. The close connection between the Osiris ritual, the coronation ceremonies, and the Sed festival makes such a general interpretation impossible.

One of the basic phenomena of totemism and of all initiation rites is that the totem or ancestor is reincarnated in the initiate, finding in him a new dwelling place and at the same time constituting his higher self. This result can be traced all the way from the sonship of the Horus hero and its connection with the apotheosis of his father Osiris to the Christian Incarnation and the phenomenon of individuation in modern man.

Between the son who regenerates himself as a hero, his divine parentage, and the rebirth of the dead father in the son there exists a fundamental relationship which was formulated as: "I and the Father are one." In Egypt this relationship was mythologically prefigured in the process to which we have repeatedly drawn attention: Horus, as the avenger of his father, becomes the supreme temporal ruler, but at the same time his earthly power is grounded in the spiritual authority exercised by Osiris.

The erection of the *djed* pillar occupies a central position in the enthronement of Horus and in the Sed festival: the succession of the Horus kings is based on this ritual, by which the right of succession of the son, who is always Horus, and the elevation of the father, who is always Osiris, are archetypally established as universal laws. As the generations succeed one another, and yet remain magically connected, the patriarchal line of fathers

and sons is seen to rest upon the spiritual phenomenon of their identity, which transcends their differences. Every king was once Horus and becomes Osiris (*illus. 30*); every Osiris was once Horus. Horus and Osiris are one.

This identity is reinforced by the figure of Isis, who confronts both of them as mother, wife, and sister: mother, because she gives birth to Horus and awakens the dead Osiris to new life (*illus. 29*); wife, because she conceives Horus by Osiris, and the Horus sons by Horus; sister, because—if we equate the function of the sister with the role played by Athene in respect of Perseus and Orestes—she fights for the dynastic rights of the dead Osiris and the living Horus.

As son and heir, the Horus king reigns over the "earthly world" and represents its phallic fertility. The coronation ceremonies show how far he has become the permanent successor to the old fertility king. The original sacrifice of this king was replaced by a fight with his deputy; now the fight with evil falls to the lot of the hero and victorious king. The defeat of Set by Horus, which plays such an important part in the Edfu ritual⁶⁴ and in the coronation ceremonies, and again at the erection of the *djed* during the Sed festival, is the condition of the god-king's triumphant fertility. The identification of Horus with the phallic bull-god of Min and the creator-god Ptah, the victory of the corn god, the annexation of Set's testicles, the sacred marriage with Hathor in Edfu, and the ritual renewal of kingship at the harvest festival are all evidence of this fertility character.

It is now abundantly clear that the Horus king no longer acts the part of a temporary fertility king under the dominance of the Earth Mother; he has become the ever-fruitful patriarch who continually fertilizes the earth and reigns over its progeny.

His function has made itself independent of the natural rhythm which was given sacred expression in the old fertility ritual. But it achieved independence only because it found support in an authority that was itself independent of the natural process and its periodicity. The earthly king, like the divine

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Horus son with whom he identified himself, needed a higher sanction, and this they both found in the spiritual principle of duration, the incorruptibility and everlastingness symbolized by Osiris.

In the matriarchate, death and resurrection occurred on the same earthly plane; death meant the cessation of fertility, and resurrection meant the reappearance of living vegetation. But both poles remained bound to the rhythm of nature.

With Osiris, however, resurrection means realizing his eternal and lasting essence, becoming a perfected soul, escaping from the flux of natural occurrence. The corollary of this is Horus' enthronement as the son of Osiris. As the son of Isis he would be no more than a fleeting god of vegetation, having his roots in the eternal but eternally changing nature of the Great Mother. Now, however, he is conjoined to the father, the everlasting and unchanging spiritual father who rules over the spirits. Like him, he lasts forever; he is at once his avenger, his heir, and the cause of his elevation. When the ladder of Osiris is raised up in the coronation ceremonies, and the erection of the *djed* and elevation of the old king usher in the crowning of Horus, this means that his power is grounded in the higher father and no longer in the lower mother.

We can now understand why it is the *dead* Osiris who begets Horus. This is a primitive, symbolical way of expressing spiritual generation. It is not an earthly generation: the father is the mummy with the long member or, as another image puts it, the scarab with the phallus, eternally potent.

And that, too, is why Osiris, when he rose from the dead, lacked a male organ. Isis replaced the missing phallus by a wooden cult phallus. The eunuch is, so to speak, a "spermatic" eunuch, a not uncommon symbol of spiritual generation which occurs again and again in the mystery religions and secret teachings.

The dead man who begets is a spirit ancestor. He is spermatic spirit, blowing where he listeth, invisible as the wind spirit. The collective unconscious, expressing itself through a modern

psychotic,⁶⁵ and an Egyptian magic papyrus both agree that the seat of this pneumatic principle is the sun. The solar phallus is the source of the wind, they say. But the sun is Ra-Horus and Osiris combined.

The problem of creation and the allied problem of spirit found definitive symbolic formulation in the Osiris myth. "I and the father are one"—Osiris and Horus are, psychologically speaking, parts of a single personality.

The father without a phallus, or to be more accurate, with a spirit phallus, has his counterpart in the chthonic-phallic son: each depends on the other for his creative powers, but Horus addresses himself to the world and is the temporal ruler, while Osiris, the eternal power behind him, rules the spirits. Son and father together are the God of this world and the next. Their relation to one another is analogous to that between the ego and the self in psychology.

The symbolism that gravitates round the figure of Osiris embraces the most primitive levels of man's psychology as well as its highest reaches; it has its source in prehistoric burial customs, and it finally ends with projections of the process known today as integration. If we briefly review the different layers of symbolism which illustrate the transformation of human personality and man's growing awareness of this process, we shall see how clearly the trend of centroversion has been seeking to assert itself in mankind from the very beginning.

The most primitive layer is the recombination of the severed parts, the attempt to make durable and to preserve, but also to "elevate." This is seen in the raising up of the body of Osiris upon the tree, in the symbol of tree birth, the lifting of the buried effigy, the placing of the sacrum upon the tree in the *djed* symbol, and above all in the erection of the *djed* pillar. The *mystique* of erection and ascension is intimately connected with the mystery of wholeness and integration. Reunion of the divided parts, mummification and preservation of the body, form its basis, but

⁶⁵ Jung, "The Structure of the Psyche," p. 150.

THE TRANSFORMATION MYTH: *Transformation, or Osiris*

this primitive ritual soon passes over into the symbolism of ascent and transformation.

The union of body and head then becomes the union of the upper and lower Osiris and finally the union of Osiris and Ra. But this is equivalent to self-transformation, for Osiris unites himself with his Ra soul to form a perfect being. All this is archetypal when played out among the gods, but the process becomes humanized as soon as the role of Osiris is taken over by the Egyptian king who, as Horus, unites himself with Osiris. Once the king is included in the divine drama, mythological processes begin to reveal themselves as psychological ones. The process finally takes the form of psychic unification and psychic transformation, by which the discrete soul parts become integrated and the earthly Horus-ego aspect of the personality combines with the spiritual, divine self. The outcome of both processes—union and transformation on ever higher levels—is the conquest of death, which has always been the supreme goal even in the psychology of primitive man.

The patriarchal father-son relationship ousted the once dominant mother figure, Isis, in the religious, psychological, social, and political spheres. Vestiges of the original matriarchal rule still remained, but in historical times they were already overshadowed by the father-king. The investiture and enthronement of the son are based on the resurrection of Osiris and the defeat of his enemies. Horus' struggle with the principle of evil—Set—is, in a sense, the prototype of "God's holy war" which each of his sons has to wage.

With this, the ring closes and we come back to the hero myth and the dragon fight. Only, we must read the Osiris myth in such a way as to include Horus, the hero, as part of Osiris.

We have seen that certain elements of the hero myth belong essentially together. The hero is an ego hero; that is, he represents the struggles of consciousness and the ego against the unconscious. The masculinization and strengthening of the ego, apparent in the hero's martial deeds, enable him to overcome his fear of the dragon and give him courage to face the Terrible

Mother—Isis—and her henchman Set. The hero is the higher man, the “erected phallus,” whose potency is expressed in head, eye, and sun symbols. His fight bears witness to his kinship with “heaven” and to his divine parentage, and sets up a dual relationship: on the one hand he needs the support of heaven in fighting the dragon, and, on the other, he has to fight it in order to prove himself worthy of such support. As one regenerated through the fight, the hero is ritually identical with the father-god, and is his incarnation. The reborn son is child of the divine father, father of himself, and, by fathering the rebirth of the father in himself, he also becomes his father’s father.

Thus all the essential elements of the hero myth are to be found in the myth of Horus and Osiris. There is only one qualification, and that has to do with the patriarchal conquest of the Terrible Mother. The myth contains traces of the terrible Isis,⁶⁶ but the fact that Horus beheads her and commits incest with her in the Memphis festivities is clear proof that she has been overcome.⁶⁷ In general, however, her negative role is taken over by Set,⁶⁸ and Isis becomes the “good mother.”⁶⁹

In this way the hero myth develops into the myth of self-transformation, the myth of man’s divine sonship which is latent in him from the beginning, but can only be realized through the heroic union of the ego (Horus) with the self (Osiris). This union had its first exponent in the mythical Horus, and then in the Egyptian kings who succeeded him (*illus.* 30). These were followed by individual Egyptians—though in their case identification with the king was a matter of primitive magic only—and finally, in the course of further spiritual development, the principle that man had an immortal soul became the inalienable property of every individual.

Everywhere the influence of the Osiris myth has been pro-

⁶⁶ See *supra*, pp. 64 f.

⁶⁷ Herodotus, Book II.

⁶⁸ See *supra*, p. 66.

⁶⁹ The feminine counterpart of the Horus-Osiris myth is the myth of Demeter and the Kore. The relevant material has been put together in Jung and Kerényi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology*.

digious. Traces of it are to be found in the classical mysteries,⁷⁰ in Gnosticism, Christianity, alchemy, mysticism, and even in modern times.

In some of the classical mystery religions there is evidence of initiation rites whose purpose it was to produce the higher masculinity, to transform the initiate into the higher man and so make him akin to, or identical with, God. For instance the *solificatio* of the Isis mysteries stresses identification with the sun god, while in certain others the aim is to achieve fellowship with God by means of *participation mystique*. The path varies, but whether the celebrant is seized with ecstasy and becomes "entheos," or is ritually regenerated, or takes God into his own body through communion with him, always the goal is the higher man, the attainment of his spiritual, heavenly part. As the Gnostics of a later day expressed it, the initiate becomes an "ennoos," one who possesses nous, or whom the nous possesses, a "pneumatikos."⁷¹

A common feature of these mysteries is castration, obviously symbolizing the mortification of lower masculinity in the interests of the higher. When, for example, this happens as a result of the celebrant identifying himself with Attis, or when we find, in the Adonis mysteries, that the couch upon which Adonis rests is strewn with lettuces,⁷² food of the dead and plant of eunuchs which "drives out the generative forces," and that hemlock plays the same role in the Eleusinian mysteries, this only means that the sacrifice of lower masculinity is the precondition of spirituality.

All these ascetic trends are ruled by the uroboros and Great Mother principle, and form part of the *mystique* of the suffering son. Their ultimate goal is the mystic uroboric incest that hides behind castration.⁷³ In terms of stadial development, these

⁷⁰ Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Mysterienreligionen*, pp. 75 f.

⁷¹ Jung, "Concerning Rebirth."

⁷² Merezhkovski, *The Secret of the West*, p. 288. In Egypt, however, lettuces were sacred to the Coptic Min on account of their aphrodisiac powers (cf. Kees, *Götterglaube*, p. 349).

⁷³ See supra, pp. 117 f.

mystery cults have either not yet reached the stage of the hero fight or have remained fixed at that level.

The aim of this fight is to combine the phallic-chthonic with the spiritual-heavenly masculinity, and the creative union with the anima in the *hieros gamos* is symptomatic of this. But, since in the mystery religions the fight with the dragon is conceived only as the fight with the mother dragon, representing the unconscious chthonic aspect, the inevitable result is identification with the spiritual father, so far as the dragon-fight situation is reached at all in the mystery religions. The failure of the fight with the father-dragon, the overwhelming force of spirit, leads to patriarchal castration, inflation, loss of the body in the ecstasy of ascension, and so to a world-negating mysticism. This phenomenon is particularly evident in Gnosticism and Gnostic Christianity. The infiltration of Iranian and Manichaeic influences strengthens the martial component in the hero, but because he is still a Gnostic at heart, he remains hostile to the world, the body, materiality, and woman. Although there are certain elements in Gnosis that strive for a synthesis of opposites, these always fly apart in the end; the heavenly side of man triumphs and the earthly is sacrificed.

Behind the ecstatic afflatus of patriarchal castration there lurks the threat—and the fascination—of uroboric incest.⁷⁴ Uroboros and Great Mother are reactivated. That explains why the mysteries are almost always rebirth mysteries. But there is no active self-regeneration as in the hero myth: here the rebirth is passively experienced by one already dead. In the Phrygian mysteries, for example, the limbs of the dead man are put together again. The awakening of the dead, as a rebirth mystery,⁷⁵ is a very characteristic feature of religion everywhere, but it is important to note whether it is initiated by the mother deity, by the priest who represents the self, or by the ego. The situation as we find it in myth and ritual is that, simultaneously with the ego's experience of its death, a revivifying self appears in

⁷⁴ See supra, p. 187.

⁷⁵ Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

the form of a god. The hero myth is fulfilled only when the ego identifies with this self, in other words, when it realizes that the support of heaven at the moment of death means nothing less than to be begotten by a god and born anew. Only in this paradoxical situation, when the personality experiences dying as a simultaneous act of self-reproduction, will the twofold man be reborn as the total man.

Accordingly, in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, the dead and the dying are summoned to a visionary knowledge of this reproductive act. Likewise the widespread form of mystery in which the celebrant brings the god to life is an early mythological form of self-generation. Where, on the other hand, the celebrant undergoes a symbolical death, but the revivifying god is represented by a priest, there can be no full realization of the likeness between father and son. Already in the Hellenic mysteries we can see how symbolic contents which had once been acted out in the ritual performance of mythical events gradually turn inward, becoming first the sacred experience of the initiate, and finally processes within the individualized psyche.

This progressive interiorization is a symptom of the individualization and intensification of human consciousness, and this same principle, which first promoted the growth of personality, continues to govern the next phase of its development (Part II).

Historically speaking, however, the synthetic path of development—which includes the stage of the hero fight—was never followed in Christianity as it grew up under Gnostic influences, but only in alchemy, the cabala, and above all in Hasidism.

In alchemy, from which the term "uroboros" is borrowed, we discover all the archetypal stages and their symbolism down to the last detail, including even the symbol of Osiris as the basic symbol of the arcane substance, so that the whole process of alchemical change and sublimation can be interpreted as a transformation of Osiris.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Since alchemy actually originated in Egypt, it is not improbable that esoteric interpretations of the Osiris myth are among the foundations of the art. Osiris is one of the symbols for lead, and the transmutation of this into the solar gold of

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Thus the archetypal stages of conscious development have their crowning symbol in the transfiguration of Osiris, an archaic, mythological form of the phenomenon which was destined to reappear thousands of years later as the process of individuation in modern man. But now there comes a new development. As though a Copernican revolution had taken place within the psyche, consciousness faces inward and becomes aware of the self, about which the ego revolves in a perpetual paradox of identity and nonidentity. The psychological process of assimilating the unconscious into our present-day consciousness begins at this point, and the consequent shifting of the center of gravity from the ego to the self signals the latest stage in the evolution of human consciousness.

Ra is the principal object of the "great work." Ascension and sublimation are just as characteristic of Osiris as his connection with Ra.