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## **Mission Statement**

*Phanês: Journal for Jung History* (ISSN 2631-6463, online; ISSN 2631-6455, printed) is an annual, peer-reviewed, open-access journal, dedicated to publishing high quality, scholarly articles related to the life and work of C.G. Jung and the wider history of analytical or complex psychology. *Phanês* publishes original articles that address these topics from a critical perspective. Contributions are accepted in English, French, German and Italian.

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## *Incipit Phanês*

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was one of the most prominent psychologists in the twentieth century. His work was at once foundational for depth psychology, and pivotal for intellectual, cultural and religious history. During the course of his career, he attempted to establish an interdisciplinary science of analytical psychology (or, as he preferred to call it, complex psychology), and apply its insights to psychiatry, criminology, psychotherapy, personality psychology, anthropology, physics, biology, education, the arts and literature, the history of the mind and its symbols, comparative religion, alchemy, contemporary culture and politics, among other fields. Many of these have in turn been decisively marked by his thought, though not always acknowledged as such: in 1963, Henry Murray pungently described Jung's work as 'a trough at which unconscionable plagiarists are wont to feed' (Murray 1963: 469). At the same time, Jung's work continues to have a wide general readership, and analytical psychology has an established presence in the psychotherapeutic world. However, serious historical study of Jung and his psychology has, until relatively recently, lagged significantly behind that of comparable figures. This is despite the fact that Jung could be considered the most historically minded of twentieth century psychologists, as attested by the vital role of cultural history as a resource for a phylogenetic psychology in *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* of 1912, his lectures on the history of psychology at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in 1933-4, his seminars on the history of dream interpretation between 1936 and 1941, through to his late studies of religious and alchemical symbols and collective psychological transformations through time (Jung 1912; 1933-34). As he put it to Aniela Jaffé, 'it became clear to me that without history there can be no psychology' (Jung/Jaffé 1962: 205). Indeed, in a letter to Christiana Morgan, Jung wrote of the existence of a responsibility to history (C. G. Jung Papers Collection, ETH Zurich University Archive). In the terms of Jung's personal cosmology, such responsibility could be understood as a means of attending to the legacy of the dead. Likewise, historical study is in turn one means of attending to Jung's legacy.

In 1947, Jung wrote to a correspondent, 'I can soon say with Schopenhauer: legor et legar (I am read and shall be read)' (to Jolande Jacobi, 8 July 1947. In Adler 1972: 470). Not only read, but also studied

‘as a cultural historical phenomenon’ (to use the title of his 1934 article on Freud) (CW 15: §§44-59). There are a number of indications that Jung knew that his work would one day be the subject of historical study: such as his presentation of the history of the development of his own conceptions as an introduction to analytical psychology in 1925 (Jung 1925), his positive reception in the 1950s of Ira Progoff’s doctoral dissertation on his work (Roelli de Angulo 1952: 205-218), his careful preservation of manuscripts and drafts, correspondences, the manuscript corpus of the *Black Books* and *The Red Book* and his wishes that the latter be placed in an archive for future study,<sup>1</sup> as well as his complex engagement with the biographical projects of E. A. Bennet, Lucy Heyer and Aniela Jaffé (Shamdasani 2005).

However, the very range of the fields traversed by Jung through his career raises the question of where Jung history sits. The historical study of his work has justly been considered part of the histories of medicine, science, psychology and religion. Indeed many important contributions, as well as methodological approaches, have come from scholars primarily working in these fields. This very dispersal makes it hard to find one’s way in this labyrinth and keep abreast with current developments. It suggests the desirability of a dedicated organ of and for Jung history. However, this is not an attempt to autonomise the field in the interests of disciplinary formation, or to separate it from adjacent domains of historical study, rather the contrary: to recognise the maturation of Jung’s work as a subject of historical study from a variety of disciplinary vertices, and one which can reciprocally contribute to its intersecting disciplines. It is to furthering this that the emergence of *Phanês* is dedicated.

This project emerged out of a series of meetings in London at the Health Humanities Centre in UCL and at the Maison Interdisciplinaire des Sciences de l’Homme at the University of Strasbourg, organised by Christine Maillard and myself. We would like to thank the UCL Global Engagement Office, and the Research Unit ‘Mondes germanique et nord-européens’ for their essential support, which has enabled this to come into being.

*Sonu Shamdasani*

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<sup>1</sup> On 31 October 1957, Aniela Jaffé informed Jack Barrett of the Bollingen Foundation that Jung had suggested that *The Red Book* and *The Black Books* be given to Basle University Library under restriction for ‘about 50 or 80 years, or a longer period of time’ (Bollingen archives, Library of Congress). Jaffé gave a similar account to Kurt Wolff mentioning 30, 50 or 80 years as the possible restriction (undated, received, 30 October 1957), (Kurt Wolff Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University).

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**‘CRUSH THE HEAD OF THE SERPENT  
AND IT WILL BITE YOU IN THE HEEL’:  
A RECONSTRUCTION OF JUNG’S  
INTERPRETATION OF THE POISONOUS  
SERPENTS IN *ZARATHUSTRA* THROUGH  
*LIBER NOVUS***

*GAIA DOMENICI*

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**ABSTRACT**

The psychological interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* given by C. G. Jung in a specifically dedicated seminar in years 1934-1934 comes across as obscure, somewhat mysterious and philosophically distant from Nietzsche's work. Such interpretation, however, remains consistent in Jung's later works. One of the most striking aspects of Jung's interpretation of *Zarathustra* concerns the animals: in most cases, Jung delivers long and detailed explanations, drawing on mythological, as well as alchemical material, to analyse some animal figures that do not play any relevant part in Nietzsche's text. This is particularly remarkable in the case of the serpent hanging from the shepherd's mouth in chapter 'Of the Vision and the Riddle', closely related by Jung to the adder biting Zarathustra's throat in chapter 'Of the Adder's Bite'. The same connection will come back later in 1952, in *Symbols of Transformation*. Interestingly, most of Jung's later interpretation of *Zarathustra* can be re-contextualised and understood if compared with Jung's own *Liber Novus*, serving as a proper lens to observe and analyse the evolution of Jung's confrontation with Nietzsche. Reading Jung's marginalia on his own copy of *Zarathustra*, it is clear that he interpreted the work as a sort of Nietzschean *Liber Novus*, so to speak—both being understood by Jung as 'visionary' works. This paper will explore Jung's understanding of *Zarathustra* chapters 'Of the Vision and the Riddle' and 'Of the Adder's Bite' in the 30's and 50's, and will then reconstruct such understanding based on *Liber Novus*.

**KEYWORDS**

Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, *Liber Novus*, *The Red Book*, Serpent, Heel, Visionary Works

In 1934-1939, Jung analysed Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* [*Also sprach Zarathustra*, 1883-1885] in a seminar given at the Psychological Club in Zurich. Apparently, the proposal did not come from him, but rather from the enthusiastic participants in his previous seminar on Christiana Morgan's visions, wishing to take on a similar analysis on Nietzsche's work. Jung accepted the challenge and spent five years analysing *Zarathustra* meticulously. The official language was English, and the chosen translation was by Thomas Common, with the only exception of chapter 'The Night Song', which Jung decided to leave in German, quoting from his *Kleinoktav-Gesamtausgabe*, 'because it is of such a musical quality that it expressed something of the nature of the unconscious which is untranslatable' (Jung, SNZ II:1142). The interpretation emerging from such seminar sums up Jung's overall understanding of Nietzsche from the 30's onwards and might be regarded as controversial if directly related to Nietzsche's work. In particular, the parodistic aspect of *Zarathustra* seems to be neglected by Jung (Nill 1988; Liebscher 2002). However, a certain—both conceptual and stylistic—similarity between Nietzsche and Jung has been highlighted in a few studies over the past decades, and must not be forgotten, despite the lack of historical investigation of some of those studies (Bishop 1995b; Dixon 1999; Huskinson 2001). Moreover, as Martin Liebscher has pointed out, in opposition to the reductionism of a purely psychological point of view, from a Nietzschean standpoint, Jung's interpretation can open up a new perspective on *Zarathustra*, keeping loyal to the multiperspectival purpose of the book and enriching its understanding (2012:155-164). For this reason, therefore, Jung's seminar on *Zarathustra* cannot be just dismissed as a misreading of Nietzsche's philosophy.

According to Jung's interpretation, Nietzsche represents a case of 'inflation' with the archetype of the spirit, symbolised by the character of Zarathustra, and the whole story is understood as an example of Nietzsche's failed individuation. In this sense, Jung links *Zarathustra* to Nietzsche's final madness: not being able to break free from his identification with Zarathustra, Nietzsche would not be able to let a new god be born again either (so he would not be able to realise the self), therefore he would be caught by an *enantiodromia* turning his conscious attitude into its very opposite, which would then lead him towards his final *Dionysian* folly. From an introverted, intuitive type, Nietzsche would then become dominated by the Dionysian extraversion, that, from some point around the middle part of *Zarathustra*, would accompany the philosopher through his becoming

mad in January 1889, and then till his very last days in August 1900.

Interestingly, Jung dwells a lot on exploring the meaning of the symbolical constellation of the animals in *Zarathustra*, even when such animals do not play any relevant role for a correct philosophical understanding of Nietzsche's book. This is quite striking in the case of the serpent that bites Zarathustra's throat in chapter 'Of the Adder's Bite', then related by Jung with the serpent hanging from the shepherd's mouth in chapter 'Of the Vision and the Riddle'.<sup>1</sup> In his comment on 'Of the Adder's Bite', Jung claims: 'crush the head of the serpent and it will bite you in the heel' (Jung, SNZ I:755). The same correlation appears again in Jung's re-edition of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, in 1952, alongside the same motif of the heel-biting serpent. Referring to 'Of The Vision and the Riddle', Jung will make the following statement: 'If you want the serpent to bruise your heel you have only to tread on its head' (Jung [1952], CW 5: §586, translation modified). Both statements sound as obscure as they sound fascinating, since there are no references to any heel in either of Nietzsche's chapters.

Many of the peculiarities of Jung's reading of *Zarathustra*—in particular those referring to the animals—can be re-contextualised within the framework of the development of Jung's thinking through the lens of *Liber Novus* (The 'Red Book'). Not only does Nietzsche appear frequently in *Liber Novus*, both implicitly and explicitly; the visions described in *Liber Novus* happened to Jung a few months before, during, and two years after deciding to read *Zarathustra* for the second time (November 1914). Moreover—and above all—in Jung's own personal copy of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* (available for consultation at Jung's library in Küsnacht)<sup>2</sup> are several, significant annotations referring to his own *Liber Novus*. In this sense, the reference to the heel in Jung's comments on 'Of the Adder's Bite' and 'Of the Vision and the Riddle' can be contextualised better, when compared with some chapters from *Liber Novus*, which present relevant stylistic similarities with *Zarathustra*. In particular, in 'First Day' and 'The Magician', the heel motif occurs precisely in the sense of Jung's later understanding of *Zarathustra*, and can be considered one of the keys to

<sup>1</sup> Another significant example is given by the constellation 'desert-lion-child', drawn from *Zarathustra*, and used by Jung as a prism to analyse Nietzsche's psychology both in his published writings and in his private annotations on Nietzsche's works (Domenici 2015).

<sup>2</sup> I would like to take the opportunity to thank the *Stiftung der Werke von C. G. Jung*—in particular Thomas Fischer, Andreas Jung and Bettina Kaufmann—for allowing me to consult Jung's library a few times: without their help, this research would not exist.

interpret such understanding correctly. It should not be forgotten that, in 1930, when Jung defines *Zarathustra* as a ‘visionary’ work in *Psychology and Literature* (Jung [1930], CW 15: §§133-162), he implicitly suggests a common tradition for *Zarathustra* and *Liber Novus*, so his reading of *Zarathustra* four years later can be thought of as a sort of investigation on what Jung would probably define as Nietzsche’s *Liber Novus*.

In following sections, Jung’s interpretation of the serpent motif in regard to Nietzsche will be looked at more closely. Starting from the seminar on *Zarathustra*, Jung’s interpretation in *Symbols of Transformation* will be explored, and compared with *Liber Novus*, in which Nietzsche’s presence will be also investigated.

### **JUNG’S SEMINAR ON NIETZSCHE’S ZARATHUSTRA**

#### **The Logos, The Anima And Nietzsche’s Inflation: ‘Of The Adder’s Bite’**

*Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-1885) is composed of four parts, each of them published as separate ‘books’, plus a ‘prologue’ published with the first ‘book’ and functioning as an introduction. In the ‘prologue’, *Zarathustra*, a fictional representation of the historical character of Zoroaster, the inventor of Mazdayasna—hence representing the creator of moral dualism and therefore the only person entitled to bring it to an end by spreading the opposite message—struggles to find the right audience for his ‘discourses’ and the right disciples for his ‘doctrine’. Such discourses, however, are delivered throughout the four ‘books’ and heard by an audience sometimes called ‘disciples’ [Jünglinge], other times ‘brethren’ [Brüder] or ‘friends’ [Freunde]. On top of that, *Zarathustra* is constantly awaiting his ‘kids’ [Kinder].<sup>3</sup> In the middle of the first ‘book’, we read that *Zarathustra* gets his throat bitten by an adder while asleep. Towards the beginning of the third ‘book’, *Zarathustra* has a vision of a sleeping shepherd, from whose mouth a serpent is hanging. In his vision, *Zarathustra* invites the shepherd to bite the head of the serpent; the shepherd obeys, the serpent is killed, its head spat out. The shepherd is ‘no longer a man—a transformed being, surrounded with light, *laughing!* Never yet on earth had a man laughed as he laughed!’ (Nietzsche 1969:180).

On 11 December 1935, in his analysis of ‘Of the Adder’s Bite’, Jung

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<sup>3</sup> As I have shown elsewhere, the tension between *Zarathustra*’s ‘doctrine’ and his apparent failing as a ‘teacher’ has to be contextualised in the broader discourse of Nietzsche’s ‘transvaluation’ (Domenici 2016).

points out that ‘the anima is represented as woman above and serpent below, as the serpent in paradise is often represented with a woman’s head; the snake element is always connected with the anima problem’. Then he adds: ‘It is a coldblooded animal with a non-human psychology; one can establish a sort of *rapport* with almost any warmblooded animal but with snake there is no parallel feeling’. In fact, due to its representing our sympathetic system, to fear a serpent means to have troubles with the acceptance of one’s own body:

And that is the secret of the anima, human on the one side and that most paradoxical and incomprehensible thing on the other. On the one side she is an inferior woman with all the bad qualities of a merely biological woman, an intriguing and plotting devil who always tries to entangle a man and make a perfect fool of him; yet she winds up with the snake’s tail, with that peculiar insight and awareness. She is a psychopompos, and leads you into the understanding of the collective unconscious just by the way of the fool. So wherever you touch upon that anima business you will have a paradoxical picture [...] (Jung, SNZ I:748-51).

Following this interpretation, Jung proposes to link the ‘bite’ to Nietzsche’s *inflation*. According to Jung, Nietzsche appears identified with the character of Zarathustra, namely a representation of the archetype of the wise old man, one of the figures of the *spirit*. In his identification, Nietzsche, an introverted, intuitive thinker, tends to constantly deny and repress his inferior functions, namely sensation and feeling, that, remaining on an unconscious level, try to be accepted and integrated throughout the book. In addition, by affirming the ‘death of God’ (see *The Gay Science* 125, Nietzsche 1967— vol. 3:480), Nietzsche appears to Jung as denying the independence of the unconscious over the ego, thus denying any possibility of a realisation of the self. *Zarathustra* is indeed understood by Jung as a literary representation of Nietzsche’s faulty individuation; Jung sees continuity between the second half of *Zarathustra* and Nietzsche’s last works, letters and final madness. In accordance with this idea, Jung portrays the anima as the only prospective source for the overcoming of Nietzsche’s inflation. By letting the viper kill Zarathustra, the identification with the spirit could be indeed ended. Drawing on the Egyptian myth of Ra, ‘the sun god, the king of the two Egypts’ that ‘was making his way over the heavens’ and got bitten by a ‘sand viper’ sent by Mother Isis to weaken him, Jung concludes:

It is a dangerous catastrophe when a man falls into a trap laid by the anima. To be caught by the heel is the usual fate of a man.  
*Crush the head of the serpent and it will bite you in the heel.*  
 This is a regular occurrence and it can finish a man's career, his hopes, or even his life (Jung, SNZ I:754-755, italics added).

The throat is said to represent the *logos*, and by getting it bitten, Zarathustra would lose his speech skills, thus permitting Nietzsche to interrupt the inflation. 'The same motif comes again later', Jung adds, in 'Of the Vision and the Riddle', 'so we must assume that the throat region is the active organ'. In fact, 'Zarathustra is very obviously the *logos*, and you cannot reach the *logos* with the feet because it has none; you can only reach it by the throat where the words come from' (ibid:755-756).<sup>4</sup> In 1932, in his seminar on Kundalini Yoga, Jung had defined *Viśuddha*, the throat *chakra*, as the divide between our collectivity (represented by the first four *chakras*), and the sense of individuality coming about through the expression of psychical experiences (Jung 1996:42-52). Precisely in this sense, Jung's comment on 'Of the Adder's Bite' is to be understood: the adder's bite could bring Nietzsche back to the collectivity of the material world, interrupting his identification with the spirit, by allowing him to reunite with his inferior functions, made accessible through the anima.

### **The Hero As The Ouroboros: 'Of The Vision And The Riddle'**

On 18 May-15 June 1938, Jung analyses *Zarathustra* chapter 'Of the Vision and the Riddle' (Jung, SNZ II:1256-1311). In the May sessions, the first part of Zarathustra's vision is analysed, namely, Zarathustra's dreamlike, uncanny encounter with a dwarf that suggests the hypothesis of the 'abysmal thought' of the eternal return for the first time in the book. Jung interprets the dwarf as another unconscious attempt to compensate for Nietzsche's unilateral attitude, stop the inflation and reveal the self, so that his individuation can be accomplished. Nietzsche's rejection of the dwarf and the truth he is revealing is understood as another case of Nietzsche's negation of the unconscious and refusal to interrupt his inflation. Throughout the rest of the sessions, Jung and the participants of his seminar dwell upon the second part of Zarathustra's vision, and its riddle to be solved. In Nietzsche's text, this starts off

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<sup>4</sup> In *The Significance of the Father in the Destiny of the Individual*, Jung interprets the dreams of a boy, where a black serpent bites his face. He explains: 'The serpent's attack on the boy's face, the part that "sees", represents the danger to consciousness (blinding)'" (Jung [1909/1949], CW 4: §737, translation modified).

with the serpent hanging from the shepherd's mouth, and ends with wondering who the shepherd is and what the whole scene represents.

On 8 June 1938, Jung's focus is on finding a parallel of the vision of the serpent hanging from the shepherd's mouth, in order to interpret its psychological significance. Quite interestingly, Mrs. Jung asks her husband whether one could 'say that Christ crushing the head of the snake was a similar motif'. Even more interesting is the answer provided by Jung: 'Crushing the head is similar to biting off the head, but it is not quite the idea of swallowing it or the interpenetration of the two. The descent into hell would be a parallel if hell were represented by a dragon's belly' (Jung, SNZ II:1281). Jung's opinion is indeed about Zarathustra's unique vision, turning the traditional symbol of the hero upside down: typically it is the hero that gets swallowed by the serpent or the dragon; in *Zarathustra*, the serpent is partially swallowed by the shepherd. After making comparisons with the Hindu and Buddhist *Nagas*—the protective serpents—, the Hopis snake dance—in which the dancers 'put the snakes into their mouths'—and the symbolic interpretation of the Greek rituals of *Aischrologia* during the Eleusinian mysteries—which 'have never been quite understood because we have no text or any other exact evidence of what happened there' but were represented with the initiates 'kissing or fondling a pretty big snake'—Jung explains that 'the serpent represents the magic mana in the earth which has to be brought up for man to again establish communication with that fertile power'. So, all of the serpent cults or rituals were 'originally fertility rites' (ibid:1284). However, '[t]he hero himself has qualities of the snake'. In *Zarathustra*, the 'interpenetration' of the two opposite aspects of the symbol of the hero—namely, its original form and its serpentine inversion—can be thought of as a representation of the *ouroboros*, the alchemical symbol of the self-devouring serpent, or of two animals eating each other simultaneously: the shepherd 'is apparently swallowing the snake, but the snake is attacking him at the same time, penetrating him' (ibid:1285-7).

The *ouroboros* is also linked to the figure of the dwarf at the beginning of Zarathustra's vision and explained in relation to the eternal return: just as the dwarf was part of Zarathustra himself, trying to reveal the truth concerning the centrality of the moment, so too the serpent represents another unconscious appendix of Zarathustra's, which attempts to steer him towards the same conclusion. However, according to Jung, Nietzsche always fails to read the signs brought in front of his eyes by the unconscious: 'if he takes this moment that has been emphasised by both the dwarf and himself in mutual collaboration, as a unique moment, with

no return, no repetition, then he would be forced to realise it completely', but Nietzsche gets rid of the content of the revelation and keeps its form only. Jung's understanding of Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return is all about Nietzsche's skipping his main responsibility: 'So when Nietzsche says that the moment will repeat itself and has already repeated itself many a time, he makes it into a thing we are used to; it is an ordinary day, an ordinary hour, so why bother about?'. By contrast, 'the full realisation of the here and now is a moral accomplishment which is only short of heroism: it is an almost heroic achievement' (ibid:1288-9).

Similarly, the final vision of the shepherd and the serpent represents 'the whole impossibility of Nietzsche's situation': the 'black disgusting' serpent is seen by Jung as Nietzsche's 'other side', and the shepherd's obligation 'to bite off the serpent's head' seems to be pointless, since, as Jung remarks, the 'head had bitten itself fast in the sleeper's throat. The snake bit first and has such a hold that Zarathustra cannot pull it out of the shepherd's mouth'. Also, although Nietzsche does not inform his readers that the serpent is poisonous, 'one is almost forced to assume that such an awful black serpent would be poisonous', indeed 'the poison seems to belong to this picture'. Quite interestingly, Jung points out that despite all the questions that Zarathustra asks himself about the meaning of the vision and the sense of the riddle to be solved, 'there is no question of what the serpent may be. [...] The serpent is the other side and he is not interested in that other side'. Finally, the transformation of the shepherd into *Übermensch*, after biting off the serpent's head, is regarded by Jung as corresponding to the transformation into a god, to be placed on the same tradition as the Egyptian mythological accounts, since 'the serpent represents also the god'. After proclaiming God's death, Nietzsche's 'god appears here as a demoniacal power in the old way—when the god appears from below he is a snake. Even the lord Jesus is a serpent, as you know from the Evangel of John [...] ' (ibid:1293-6).

What has emerged from Jung's seminar on *Zarathustra* is Jung's association between these two different chapters and linking of them with Nietzsche's inflation. At this stage, Jung refers to the biblical motif of the heel while commenting on 'Of the Adder's Bite' only; however, in *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung will apply the same hermeneutics to 'Of the Vision and the Riddle'. As will be explored in the next section, in 1952, Jung will merge these two chapters from *Zarathustra*, and interpret them in relation to Nietzsche's failed individuation, as anticipated in the seminar.

**FROM WANGLUNGEN UND SYMBOLE DER LIBIDO TO  
SYMBOLS OF TRANSFORMATION**

**The Serpent As ‘Introverting Libido’**

In the chapter ‘The Dual Mother’ of *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung describes a few dreams of his patients’, concerning serpents. The last one he talks about consists of a ‘serpent [...] stuck in [his patient’s] throat’. Jung comments by stating that ‘Nietzsche uses this symbolism in his “vision” of the shepherd and the serpent’, and quotes the final part of ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’ entirely. Here is how Jung interprets the text, based on what he has previously argued, as follows:

[T]he serpent represents the unconscious psyche which, like the serpent-god in the Sabazio mysteries, crawls into the mouth of the celebrant, i.e. Nietzsche himself as the ποιμήν or ποιμάνδρης, the shepherd of souls and preacher, firstly to stop him from talking too much, and secondly to make him ἔνθεος—“enthused”, filled with God”. The serpent had already bitten fast, but fear was swifter and more violent: it bit off the serpent’s head and spat it out. *If you want the serpent to bruise your heel you have only to tread on his head.* The shepherd laughed on getting rid of the serpent—a wild hysterical laughter, because he had dished the compensation from the unconscious. He could now reckon without his host, and with the well-known consequences: one has only to read the passages in Zarathustra where Nietzsche speaks of laughing and laughter. Unfortunately, everything happened afterwards just as if the whole German nation had paid heed to Nietzsche’s sermon. The unconscious insinuates itself in the form of a serpent if the conscious mind is afraid of the compensating tendency of the unconscious, as is generally the case in regression. But if the compensation is accepted in principle, there is no regression, and the unconscious can be met half-way through introversion. It must be admitted, however, that the problem as it presented itself to Nietzsche was insoluble, for nobody could expect the shepherd to swallow down a serpent under such circumstances. We are confronted here with one of those fatal cases, by no mean uncommon, where the compensation appears in a form that cannot be accepted and could only be overcome by something that is equally impossible for the patient. Cases of this kind occur when the unconscious has been resisted for too long on principle, and a wedge violently driven between instinct and the conscious mind (Jung [1952], CW 5: §§585-587, italics added, translation modified).

In this comment, the reference to the serpent biting the heel which is crushing its head—that was originally directed towards ‘Of the Adder’s Bite’—is now referred to ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’, which is again understood by Jung as another unconscious attempt to stop Nietzsche’s inflation and help him realise the self. The link between this chapter and ‘Of the Adder’s Bite’ is made clear by Jung in his statement ‘the serpent [...] crawls into the mouth of the celebrant [...], firstly to stop him from talking too much, and secondly to make him ἐνθεος—“‘enthused’, filled with God”’. As previously mentioned, in his seminar on *Zarathustra*, Jung had interpreted ‘Of the Adder’s Bite’ as a possibility of Nietzsche interrupting his identification with the logos by letting Zarathustra be killed by the serpent: due to his propensity for making speeches, Zarathustra was indeed regarded as a symbol for the logos itself. On that occasion, Jung had also anticipated that ‘the same motif [would come] again later’, implicitly suggesting a common thread with ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’ (Jung, SNZ I:756).

In 1912, in the first draft of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, however, Jung’s comment on ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’ was quite different, as the serpent was regarded as representing the ‘introverting libido’; there was no mention of compensation or of Nietzsche’s final madness. Only the inspirational element of introversion was highlighted by Jung: ‘through introversion one is fertilised, inspired, regenerated and reborn from the God’ (Jung [1912]:415).

In both versions, continuing his discourse, Jung makes an interesting parallel with the Hindu myth of Prajapati, ‘the unknown creator of all things’. Based on Nietzsche’s friend and famous Indologist Paul Deussen’s interpretation, Jung states that ‘As Hiranyagarbha (the Golden Gem), Prajapati is the self-begotten egg, the cosmic egg from which he hatches himself’. This perfectly incarnates Jung’s idea of introversion, for ‘self-incubation, self-castigation, and introversion are closely related ideas. Immersion in oneself (introversion) is a penetration into the unconscious and at the same time asceticism. The result, for the philosophy of the Brahmanas, is the creation of the world, and for the mystic the regeneration and spiritual rebirth of the individual, who is born into a new world of the spirit’ (Jung [1952], CW 5: §§588-591).

Jung’s discourse on the serpent motif is far more complex than this and cannot be fully understood without looking at its evolution from the 1912 version to the 1952 one. In order to do that, the same analogy hero-serpent that Jung presented in the seminar on *Zarathustra* will have to be examined in the context of *Wandlungen*. This time,

however, Jung's interest will concern Nietzsche's *Dionysos Dithyramps*.

### **The Hero, the Anima and the Mother-Image**

After the comparison with the myth of Prajapati, already in the 1912 version of this text, Jung had made use of a few dithyramps by Nietzsche, to explain the process of the libido withdrawing inwards during introversion. At that time, Nietzsche had sounded like a prophet, as well as a forerunner of Jung's idea; some 40 years later, Jung will instead stress the pathological side of Nietzsche.<sup>5</sup> In both versions, Jung describes the path of the hero 'renewing the world' as a personification of 'the world-creating power which, brooding on itself in introversion, coiled round its own egg like a serpent, threatens life with its poisonous bite, so that the living may die and be born again from the darkness'. To find a precursor of such vision, Jung quotes from Nietzsche's poem 'Glory and Eternity' [Ruhm und Ewigkeit]: 'How long already have you sat on your misfortune? / Give heed, lest you hatch me / An egg, / A basilisk egg / From your long travail' (Nietzsche 1967— vol. 6: 402; translation by thenietzschechannel.com). So Jung states that 'the hero is himself the serpent, himself the sacrificer and the sacrificed, which is why Christ rightly compares himself with the healing Moses-serpent, and why the saviour of the Christian Orphites was a serpent, too' (Jung [1952], CW 5: §§592-593; translation modified).<sup>6</sup> In 1912, to stress the 'divine mystery of renewed rebirth in the maternal world', Jung had quoted an entire stanza from Nietzsche's dithyramb 'On the Poverty of the Richest' [Von der Armut des Reichsten], which was then ejected from his revisited version in 1952 :

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<sup>5</sup> However, Jung's opinion on Nietzsche as a prophet will persist not only in *Symbols of Transformation* but in all of Jung's later works. At the core of Jung's interpretation from the seminar onwards is indeed the idea of Nietzsche representing a prophet of WWII and European totalitarianisms. Such an idea recurs in all of Jung's later writings—the most popular ones being *Wotan* (1936) (CW 10: §§370-399) and *After the Catastrophe* (1945) (ibid: §§400-443; see Liebscher 2001).

<sup>6</sup> This is an implicit reference to another of Nietzsche's *Dionysos Dithyramps*, namely, 'Between Birds of Prey' [Zwischen Raubvögeln], just mentioned by Jung in a previous section of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, to argue that the image of the 'sacrifice of God'—that can also be found in the idea of the crucified Christ—'is not a torment which comes from without, which befalls mankind'; rather '[Zarathustra] himself is the hunter, murderer and sacrificial knife' (Jung [1912]:327-8). In 1952, Jung will make a similar comment on the same poem: 'That the torment which afflicts mankind does not come from outside, but that man is his own huntsman, his own sacrificer, his own sacrificial knife, is clear from another poem of Nietzsche's, where the dualism is resolved into a psychic conflict' (Jung [1952], CW 5: §446).

Ailing with tenderness, just as the thawing  
 wind,  
 Zarathustra sits waiting, waiting on his hill,  
 Sweetened and cooked in his own juice,  
 Beneath his summits,  
 Beneath his ice he sits,  
 Weary and happy,  
 A Creator on his seventh day.  
 Silence!  
 It is my truth!  
 From hesitating eyes—  
 From velvety shadows  
 Her glance meets mine,  
 Lovely, mischievous, the glance of a girl.  
 She divines the reason of my happiness,  
 he divines me—ha! What is she plotting?  
 A purple dragon lurks  
 In the abyss of her maiden glance.  
 Woe to thee, Zarathustra,  
 Though seemest like some one-sidedness  
 Who has swallowed gold,  
 Thy belly will be slit open (cited in Jung  
 [1912]:418).

So, Jung had argued, ‘in this poem nearly all the symbolism is collected which we have elaborated previously from other connections’, and he goes on listing various myths where ‘the primitive identity of serpent and hero are still extant’ (ibid:418-9).

Finally, in both texts from 1912 and 1952, Jung considers Nietzsche’s dithyramb ‘Amongst the Daughters of the Desert’ [Unter der Töchter der Wüste] as another example of the identity hero-serpent. However, whereas in the 1912 version, Jung had emphasised only the universal character of Nietzsche’s symbology, in the 1952 text, major focus will be directed towards Nietzsche’s incapability to compensate for his unilateral attitude. Both in 1912 and 1952, in the following lines by Nietzsche, Jung sees a rephrasing for the eternal image of ‘the mother who secretly lays a poisonous serpent in [the hero’s] path to undo him’:

[...] Here I am swallowed down  
 By this smallest oasis.

Yawning it opened  
 Its lovely lips—  
 All hail to that whale  
 If he provides thus  
 For his guests's welfare!

Hail to his belly,  
 If it is  
 Such a lovely oasis belly!

The desert grows; woe to him who hides  
 deserts!  
 Stone grinds on stone, the desert gulps and  
 strangles.  
 Monstrous Death, glowing under his tan,  
 Stares and chews ... his life is his chewing  
 ...  
 O man burnt out by lust, do not forget:  
 You are the stone , the desert, and the  
 death's— head (cited in Jung [1952], CW  
 5: §§596-597, translation modified).

In both comments, Jung draws a parallel with Wagner's *Siegfried*. Here, as Jung puts it, 'it is not the mother who lays the poisonous worm in our path, but life itself, which wills itself to complete the sun course, to mount from morn to noon, and then, crossing the meridian, to hasten towards evening, no more at odds with itself, but desiring the descent and the end' (ibid: §598). However, whereas in *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, Nietzsche's and Wagner's images seem to go hand in hand and to complete each other, in *Symbols of Transformation*, Wagner seems to somehow redeem the pathology of Nietzsche's unilateral interpretation of the mother-image. Albeit similar to Nietzsche's concept of the *amor fati*, Wagner's approach to Siegfried's relationship to Brünnhilde seems to suit Jung's idea better. Indeed, Siegfried appears to Jung 'more cautious' than Nietzsche's *Übermensch*: whereas the latter 'tries to be always one jump ahead of fate', the former acknowledges the identity of the 'mother-*imago* [...] with the *anima*', representing 'the feminine aspect of the hero himself'. The mother does not just represent destruction but also love, depths and rebirth (ibid: §§598-611).

Interestingly, while interpreting Miss Miller's fantasies in 1912,

Jung had written that ‘the serpent which killed the horse and the hero voluntarily sacrificing himself, are primitive figures of phantasies and religious myths streaming up from the unconscious’ and had put in a footnote the following quotation from Genesis 49:17: ‘Dan will be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse’s heels so that its rider tumbles backward’ (Jung [1912]: 456-7, footnote 17). In *Symbols of Transformation*, the footnote misses, although Jung’s comment remains (Jung [1952], CW 5: §645).

What such a confrontation between Jung’s making use of Nietzsche’s images in 1912 *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* and 1952 *Symbols of Transformation* can clearly show, is Jung’s shifting his interpretation of Nietzsche from an interesting forerunner of some of his own ideas—or, more generally, one of those poets capable of recreating and putting into words universal motifs of the human mind—to a case study representing a failed attempt at individuating. To answer the question as to where such a shift comes from, a quick look at *Liber Novus* is essential. Here, not only does Jung implicitly and explicitly refer to Nietzsche and *Zarathustra* throughout, Nietzsche appears as a real character in a fantasy from January 1914. Even more, if in all of Jung’s fantasies prior to January 1914 Nietzsche recurs in the second layer of *Liber Novus*—namely in Jung’s retrospective comments or stylistic choices—exclusively; from January 1914, Nietzsche appears in both layers of fantasies and style, and his appearance is more and more important for the development of *Liber Novus*. 1914 is also the year of Jung’s second reading of *Zarathustra*, and has to be considered as the actual divide within Jung’s understanding of Nietzsche. What is documented by *Liber Novus* around that time, is indeed Jung’s confrontation with Nietzsche and his madness. Before 1914, Jung was both fascinated and scared by Nietzsche—he was fascinated with Nietzsche’s insight and creativity and scared by the possibility of ending up in a lunatic asylum like Nietzsche, due to the seeming closeness of Jung’s inner experiences with *Zarathustra*. After a 2-year inner confrontation with Nietzsche (with a one-year gap from summer 1914 to summer 1915, during which Jung read *Zarathustra* for the second time), from 1916 onwards, Jung was no longer scared by Nietzsche, as he thought he had found the way to avoid madness. Jung’s remedy against folly, as will be explored in the next section, lies in what Nietzsche had been incapable of doing after killing his god: allowing a new god to be born again.

**JUNG'S CONFRONTATION WITH NIETZSCHE IN *LIBER NOVUS*****The Encounter with Nietzsche: 'Divine Folly', 'Nox Secunda', 'Nox Tertia'**

As anticipated, around January 1914, Jung meets Nietzsche in one of his fantasies, documented in *Liber Novus* throughout three chapters: 'Divine Folly', 'Nox Secunda', 'Nox Tertia'. Firstly, Jung's 'I'—namely the protagonist of Jung's visions—enters a library and asks for a copy of Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ (Imitatio Christi)*, thus engaging in a conversation with the librarian on Nietzsche and 'the collapse of religion'. The librarian's point of view is that of Nietzsche interiorising 'man exceptionally well', thus providing a perfect substitution 'for the loss of opportunity for prayer' caused by such collapse. By the side of Nietzsche, the librarian places Goethe and his *Faust*. Jung's 'I' disagrees on such judgement on Nietzsche, for he 'can't help feeling that Nietzsche speaks to those who need more freedom, not to those who clash strongly with life, who bleed from wounds, and who hold fast to actualities'. As opposed to the librarian's position, Jung's 'I' argues that some people 'need inferiority, not superiority', or maybe 'resignation, a word that one used to hear a lot of, but seldom anymore'. As the librarian points out, 'resignation' also 'sounds very Christian', to which Jung's 'I' replies: 'there seem to be all sorts of things in Christianity that maybe one would do well to keep. Nietzsche is too oppositional. Like everything healthy and long-lasting, truth unfortunately adheres more to the middle way, which we unjustly abhor' (Jung, RB:293).

Here begins Jung's actual confrontation with Nietzsche, understood as one of those 'prophets' of our contemporary area, in which Christianity seems to be lost and hard to restore (*ibid*). Jung's vision continues and he sees himself entering another room, apparently a kitchen, willing to read his book, but in reality falling asleep after a few pages. Here another vision starts, in which Jung's 'I' finds himself in an asylum, surrounded by doctors diagnosing his disease as a case of 'religious paranoia': 'nowadays, the imitation of Christ leads to the madhouse'. There seems to be nothing left for Jung's 'I' but facing madness, arguably his biggest fear: 'The problem of madness is profound. Divine madness—a higher form of the irrationality of the life streaming through us—at any rate a madness that cannot be integrated into present-day society—but how? What if the form of society were integrated into madness? At this point things grow dark, and there is no end in sight' (*ibid*:295). Jung's 'I' is now ready to start his confrontation with the other, forgotten side of religion, i.e. what is refused

and condemned by modern Christianity, in opposition to its origins. By so doing—so Jung interprets his vision—all *the dead*, namely all those who cannot find their place in a Christian living, could be finally redeemed. The number of the dead has now become greater than that of the living, i.e. of those who can be considered saved by Christ and his teaching. It is highly significant that, in the *Draft* version of *Liber Novus*, Jung implicitly refers to Nietzsche as a ‘prophet’ who on the one hand has tried to defend and revalue the dead’s rights, and on the other hand has been driven mad by being ‘their blind spokesman’. Since Jung realises, however, that the dead are a part of himself, he also recognises the importance of being ‘alone with the dead’, to accept the lowest and the ‘chaos’—therefore his madness (ibid:297-8; Shamdasani 2009: footnote 183).

What happens next is accounted in chapter ‘Nox Tertia’ and dated 18 January 1914. Jung’s ‘I’ is still in the asylum, and the patient sleeping next to him suddenly stands up and cries out: ‘Something worse happened to me, it’s five years now that I’ve been here. [...] But I am Nietzsche, only rebaptised, I am also Christ, the Savior, and appointed to save the world, but they won’t let me’. So the dialogue goes on:

I: “Who won’t let you?”

The fool: “The devil. We are in Hell. But of course, you haven’t noticed it yet. I didn’t realise until the second year of my time here that the director is the devil.”

I: “You mean the professor? That sounds incredible.”

The fool: “You’re an ignoramus. I was supposed to marry the mother of God long ago. But the professor, that devil, has her in his power. Every evening when the sun goes down he gets her with child. In the morning before sunrise she gives birth to it. Then all the devils come together and kill the child in a gruesome manner. I distinctly hear his cries.”

I: “But what you have told me is pure mythology.”

The fool: “You’re crazy and understand nothing of it. You belong in the madhouse [Irrenhaus]. My God, why does my family always shut me in with crazy people? I’m supposed to save the world, I’m the Saviour!” [...] (ibid:298).

It can be helpful to notice what Nietzsche has written at the beginning of *Zarathustra*, in the fifth paragraph of the ‘prologue’, and Jung has marked in his own copy: ‘No herdsman and no one herd. Everyone wants the same thing, everyone is the same: whoever thinks otherwise goes voluntarily into

the madhouse [Irrenhaus]' (Nietzsche 1969:46). Returning to *Liber Novus*, after saying these words, the fool returns to his usual apathetic state, leaving Jung's 'I' alone and with a new vision. Now he sees a red sun rising above the horizon line, with a cross from which an undefinable animal-shaped figure (serpent, bull or an ass) is hanging. Looking at the symbol more carefully, Jung's 'I' wonders whether that might not represent himself, as Christ crucified, who is actually hanging down from the cross and wearing a crown of thorns: 'The sun of martyrdom has arisen and is pouring bloody rays over the sea'. The higher the sun rises, the hotter it 'burns down white on a blue sea', whose 'salty smell' reminds Jung's 'I' of a 'charitable and quiet summer'. Suddenly a wave 'breaks on the sand with a dull thunder and returns incessantly, twelve times, the strokes of the world clock—the twelfth hour is complete. And now silence enters. No noise, no breeze. Everything is rigid and deathly still' (Jung, RB:299). This significant passage offers a multitude of themes recurrent in *Zarathustra* and elsewhere in Nietzsche's writings, that cannot be exhausted here—due to the brevity of the paper—but that show how relevant Nietzsche's presence in *Liber Novus* becomes from this very moment onwards. Nietzsche as a character is gone, Jung's 'I' will soon wake up, realising that he has never left the library and everything was just a dream; however, Nietzsche as an element of confrontation will recur increasingly until the end of Jung's fantasies.

### **Poisonous Serpents and Heels: 'Resolution', 'First Day', 'The Magician'**

As already stated, Nietzsche does not appear in layer 1 of *Liber Novus* until 1914. However, in Jung's retrospective comments on his fantasies, references to Nietzsche and stylistic similarities with *Zarathustra* are quite recurrent from the very beginning. One of such cases concerns the image of the serpent, as used at the very end of *Liber Primus*, one month before the asylum fantasy. Interestingly enough, the final chapters of *Liber Primus*, and in particular chapters 'Resolution' and 'Mysterium Encounter' share a variety of symbolical elements with 'Of the Vision and the Riddle', such as the presence of a dwarf, the 'gloomy' [düster] atmosphere, the allusion to 'dreadful riddles' (Jung, RB:246), and the presence of a 'crater' [Krater] (ibid:248).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The 'Blissful Islands' from where Zarathustra is leaving on board of a ship are characterised by the presence of a 'volcano' [Feuerberg], as accounted in chapter 'Of Great Event' (Nietzsche 1969:152). Jung referred to 'Of Great Events' in his doctoral thesis, indicating it as an example of *cryptomnesia*. To support his hypothesis, Jung had a brief correspondence with Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, Nietzsche's sister, that

Towards the end of *Liber Primus*, Jung's 'I' comes across the characters of Elijah and Salome. Elijah is an old man, namely the biblical prophet, and Salome, a blind girl, is said to be his daughter. The former is said to represent 'forethinking'; the latter 'pleasure', and it is also revealed that she loves Jung's 'I'. A 'third principle' is then represented by a serpent, necessary to keep these two principles united; for the 'earthly' element of serpents is 'a stranger to both principles although it is associated with both'. It 'has the weight of the earth in itself but also its changeability and germination from which everything that becomes emerges', and through its connection with 'longing', reminds one of life and reunifies the opposites (Jung, RB:247).

However, serpents have a double meaning and double colour in *Liber Novus*: by the side of their healing power, they also preserve the destructive force of their poison; next to the 'black' serpent, the 'white' one is always necessary to solve the tension. Besides the similar tone of these two episodes, what seems to really link Nietzsche with the serpent symbol in *Liber Novus*, is its poisonous aspect indeed, recalling Jung's later understanding of 'Of the Adder's Bite' and 'Of the Vision and the Riddle'. Precisely this aspect recurs in *Liber Secundus* significantly. On 8 January 1914, in chapter 'First Day', Jung's 'I' has a dialogue with Izdubar, coming from the East and ignoring most of the Western costumes and values. Later in the book, Jung will find out that this strange figure was his god. In the aforementioned dialogue, Izdubar compares science to a poison and adds: 'You call poison truth? Is poison truth? Or is truth poison? Do not our astrologers and priests also speak the truth? And yet theirs does not act like poison'(ibid:278). Interestingly, in *The Gay Science* 113, 'On the doctrine of poisons', Nietzsche expresses the same analogy between scientific thinking and poison. According to him, the former is originated by the union of different impulses which, each of them being unilateral, act exactly like poisons on the whole organism of life. In fact, they prevent the organism from realising how important a cooperation of science with 'artistic energies' and 'practical wisdom of life' would be (Nietzsche 1967 — vol. 3:473-474). Furthermore, again during the same *Liber Novus* dialogue, Jung explains that because of the importance given to science in Western culture, Western man remains 'dwarfish' [zwerghaft]—therefore suggesting another allusion to 'Of the Vision and the Riddle'. Even more important, the same reference

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confirmed his idea (Jung [1902], CW 1: §§140-142; [1905], ibid: §§180-184; Bishop 1993; Bishop 1995a:280-281). In Jung's own copy of *Zarathustra*, the chapter presents some reading marks and annotations.

becomes clearer through another couple of passages. The first one is this:

I: “Now you perhaps see that we had no choice. We had to swallow the poison of science. Otherwise we would have met the same fate as you have: we’d be completely lamed, if we encountered it unsuspecting and unprepared. This poison is so insurmountably strong that everyone, even the strongest, and even the eternal Gods, perish because of it. If our life is dear to us, we prefer to sacrifice a piece of our life force rather than abandon ourselves to certain death” (Jung, RB:279).

Science is not only poisoning but also to be swallowed; similarly, the serpent in the shepherd’s mouth described by Nietzsche in ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’ has to be bitten, or, according to Jung’s interpretation, swallowed.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the capacity of killing ‘the eternal Gods’ through the poison of science can be thought of as another implicit allusion to Nietzsche. The other passage to be noticed appears in Jung’s retrospective reflection on the same vision:

So the path [Pfad] of my life led me beyond the rejected opposites, united in smooth and—alas!—extremely painful sides of the way which lay before me. I stepped on them but they burned and froze my soles. And thus I reached the other side. *But the poison of the serpent, whose head you crush, enters you through the wound in your heel;* and thus the serpent becomes more dangerous than it was before. Since whatever I reject is nevertheless in my nature. I thought it was without,

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<sup>8</sup> The swallowing motif in relation to Nietzsche has fascinated Jung in several occasions. Nietzsche had indeed a dream of his hand becoming transparent and a toad resting on it. In his dream, he then felt an irresistible impulse to swallow the toad, which is what he did. Jung recalls that dream in both editions of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (Jung [1912]:490; [1952], CW 5: §47, footnote 1), in *On the Psychology of the Unconscious* (Jung [1917-1943]: §37), as well as in the seminar on *Zarathustra* (Jung, SNZ I:255). In all of these occasions, Jung relates the toad with Nietzsche’s inner self. In both editions of *Wandlungen*, Jung identifies the dream with a revelation of Nietzsche’s syphilis: ‘Sitting beside a young woman, he tells her that something terrible and disgusting has happened to his transparent hand, something he must take completely into his body. We know what disease caused the premature ending of Nietzsche’s life. It was precisely this that he had to tell his young lady, and her laughter was indeed out of tune’. In his other writings, it is Nietzsche’s incapability to swallow what the toad represents in his concrete life to be emphasised by Jung—namely his darkest instincts, what Jung calls the ‘shadow’ in his more technical vocabulary.

and so I believed that I could destroy it. But it resides in me and has only assumed a passing outer form and stepped toward me. I destroyed its form and believed that I was a conqueror. But I have not yet overcome myself (ibid, italics added).

The meeting with the dwarf happens to Zarathustra on a mountain ‘path’ [Pfad]. The same path will then be used to exemplify the traditional view of time, and to introduce the idea of the eternal return: a ‘gateway’, representing the present ‘moment’, divides the ‘long lane’ into two paths, symbolising both sides of eternity, namely past and future. Recognising the eternal return means to stop considering time as a continuative line, giving value and responsibility to the moment instead. For what is happening right now, not only has already happened infinite times in the past, but has still to be eternally *repeated*. In order not only to admit that possibility, but also to accept it, Zarathustra’s vision goes on with the shepherd scene, where ‘a heavy, black serpent’ is hanging from the shepherd’s mouth, causing him convulsions and torment. As anticipated, the only solution for him to be safe is to bite the serpent’s head and tear it off. From Nietzsche’s perspective, the serpent symbolises the heaviest and darkest side of the ‘abysmal thought’, i.e. the initial ‘disgust’ [Ekel] to life of the eternal return; once accepted, however, it offers a redeeming, lighter view. Exactly in this sense, the shepherd turns himself into ‘a transformed being, surrounded with light, *laughing*’ (Nietzsche 1969:180, translation modified).

All these elements collected together create a strong link between *Liber Novus* ‘First Day’ and *Zarathustra* ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’. In particular, the sentence ‘But the poison of the serpent, whose head you crush, enters you through the wound in your heel; and thus the serpent becomes more dangerous than it was before’ explains Jung’s later understanding of ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’ and ‘Of the Adder’s Bite’: 20 years later, Jung will arguably interpret *Zarathustra* in the same way that he interpreted his own *Liber Novus*. So the serpents represent the opposites, to accept and unite, but to whose poison it is impossible not to succumb. However, it is necessary to incorporate such poison in order to reach ‘the other side’, which, translated into Jung’s later technical vocabulary, means individuation.

Towards the very end of *Liber Secundus*, in chapter ‘The Magician’, the biting-heel-serpent motif occurs again, in a quite similar context. Here Philemon states:

I continue on my way; accompanied by a finely polished piece of steel, hardened in ten fires, stowed safely in my

robe. Secretly; I wear chain mail under my coat. Overnight I became fond of serpents, and I solved their riddle. I sit down next to them on the hot stones lying by the wayside. I know how to catch them cunningly and cruelly; those cold devils that prick the heel of the unsuspecting (Jung, RB:317).

Again, the serpent motif is accompanied by the riddle motif, suggesting another allusion to 'Of the Vision and the Riddle'. Most significantly, the importance of embracing a balanced (non-one-sided) vision is stressed, as it was in 'First Day', and as it will be in Jung's seminar on *Zarathustra*: serpents are symbols of wisdoms but also poisonous creatures, 'cold devils that prick the heel of the unsuspecting'.

Ultimately, it is important to stress the biblical component of the symbolical constellation heel-serpent-bite. As is often the case in *Liber Novus*, Jung makes use of specific biblical images to pursue his psychological victory over Nietzsche and, hence, over his own fear of becoming mad. Many times he chooses indeed to quote from Luther's Bible in the same way that Nietzsche did; several biblical elements are drawn directly from Nietzsche and not from the Bible itself. What emerges from Nietzsche's presence in *Liber Novus* is his double link with folly and the 'death of God': by refusing the possibility of a rebirth of God, one inevitably falls into madness. Jung's confrontation with Nietzsche is thus centred on proving him wrong on the one hand and, consequently, saving himself from the fear of mental illness on the other. Such an abundance of biblical quotations, therefore, belongs to a silent, yet consistent, dialogue with Nietzsche, aiming at transvaluing Nietzsche's own transvaluation by promoting a return to a certain form of Christianity.

## CONCLUSION

Starting from a seemingly unfit comment of Jung's on Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, the history of such a comment has been reconstructed through *Liber Novus*, serving as a lens to explore Jung's confrontation with Nietzsche. What has emerged is a shift in Jung's opinion on Nietzsche, from a like-minded poet—gifted with prophetic insight into the human mind—to the most effective example of the consequences of a failed individuation process. *Liber Novus* can be considered a long war between Jung and his daemons; the predominant battlefield of Jung's war concerns religion, which ends up becoming not only Jung's

lifeline but also the explanation provided to justify Nietzsche's failure. In Jung's opinion, Nietzsche's refusal to let a new god be born after killing the old one would lead him to his madness; by contrast, Jung's very own new born god would save him from madness, by allowing him to make peace with reality. At the end of his life, Jung will define his counterbalancing the horror of succumbing to his fantasies as a necessity to 'return wholly to reality' (Jung/Jaffé [1962]:188), and will make a comparison between his experience of *Liber Novus* and Nietzsche's:

It was most essential for me to have a normal life in the real world as a counterpoise to that strange inner world. My family and my profession remained the base to which I could always return, assuring me that I was an actually existing, ordinary person. The unconscious contents could have driven me out of my wits. But my family, and the knowledge: I have a medical diploma from a Swiss university, I must help my patients, I have a wife and five children, I live at 228 Seestrasse in Küsnacht these were actualities which made demands upon me and proved to me again and again that I really existed, that I was not a blank page whirling about in the winds of the spirit, like Nietzsche. Nietzsche had lost the ground under his feet because he possessed nothing more than the inner world of his thoughts which incidentally possessed him more than he it. He was uprooted and hovered above the earth, and therefore he succumbed to exaggeration and irreality. For me, such irreality was the quintessence of horror, for I aimed, after all, at this world and this Me. No matter how deeply absorbed or how blown about I was, I always knew that everything I was experiencing was ultimately directed at this real life of mine (ibid:189).

After *Liber Novus*, Nietzsche will appear to Jung as someone that succumbed to the unconscious and rejected the realisation of the self. This is why, thinking about *Liber Novus*, Jung adds the allusion to the heel when commenting on the serpents of 'Of the Adder's Bite' and 'Of the Vision and the Riddle': such a realisation of the self has to get through the acceptance of the opposites first, but Nietzsche's one-sidedness prevented him from accepting and incorporating his opposite, so he could never cope with the poison of the serpent, which eventually took over. Translated into archetypes, this opposite to be integrated is the anima, as thoroughly pointed out by Jung during the seminar,

with Jung drawing on alchemical and mythological symbolism to enrich his interpretation even more. In his seminar on Kundalini Yoga, Jung introduces Kundalini—represented as a serpent—as ‘the anima’ indeed. Referring to *svādhiṣṭhāna*, the second *chakra*, he adds: ‘[t]hat is the very reason why I hold that this second centre, despite the Hindu interpretation of the crescent being male, is intensely female, for the water is the womb of rebirth, the baptismal fount’ (Jung 1996:22). Similarly, in *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* (1934/1954), Jung introduces the anima as ‘the serpent in the paradise of the harmless man with good resolutions and still better intentions’ (Jung [1934/1954], CW 9, 1: §59).

Eastern and Western, as well as pagan and spiritual motifs merge together in Jung’s depiction of the anima as a serpent. However, archetypes become effective only when projected onto that concrete world that Jung calls ‘reality’. So one could now wonder whom Nietzsche might have projected the anima onto according to Jung; that is, who might have saved Nietzsche from his inflation, or caused that very inflation instead, as a reaction to the uncontrollable power of the archetype. Quite ironically, when analysing ‘Of the Adder’s Bite’ in the seminar, Mrs. Sigg stated that ‘When Nietzsche wrote this part of *Zarathustra* he had just had five months of daily discussion with Lou Salomé’, to which Jung responded: ‘Ah, there he met the serpent, that is quite certain’ (Jung SNZ I:755).

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**ON THE SERVICE OF THE SOUL:  
C.G. JUNG'S *LIBER NOVUS* AND  
DANTE'S *COMMEDIA***

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**ABSTRACT**

Approximately nine years have passed since the publication of Jung's *Liber Novus* [New Book]. This event has dramatically changed the study of Jung's life and work, setting forth an exceptional number of paths to explore within the history of Jung's thought. Many of these have not been undertaken yet and call for fresh research. Jung's inspiring understanding of Dante's *Commedia*, embedded within Jung's in-depth fascination for the Middle Ages in *Liber Novus* is certainly one of these. This paper represents a first effort to delineate how Jung's approach to Dante has been crucial to the elaboration of *Liber Novus* at historical and hermeneutical levels.

**KEY WORDS**

C.G.Jung, *Liber Novus* (The Red Book), complex and analytical psychology, Dante Alighieri, visionary works

*Anyone who has in any degree the faculty  
of vision will know that the so-called  
personifications are real and not artificial.  
Dante's precision both in the Vita Nuova and  
in the Commedia comes from the attempt to  
reproduce exactly the thing which has clearly  
been seen. Ezra Pound (1970:126).*

The way in which the masterpiece of Italian medieval poetry, after six centuries, has come to exert a primary role in C.G.Jung's *Liber Novus* [New Book], is a multifaceted subject matter. Besides the legendary prophecy according to which Dante Alighieri's (1265-1321) *Commedia* [*Divine Comedy*] would be understood only after nearly seven centuries from its composition (c. 1308-1320), Shamdasani offers in the only extant publication on the topic (2016) a more stable point of departure for exploring the field: 'It is clear that the *Divine Comedy* has inspired Jung in his journey both from an existential and a literary angle' (Shamdasani 2016:46). I intend to prove and develop further this point of departure, by taking Jung's understanding of Dante as a springboard from which to examine Jung's personal and theoretical concern about the nature and meaning of visionary experiences.

The role played by Dante throughout the years of Jung's self-experimentation and later, can be traced by following the intersection of three axes of interpretation: historical, hermeneutic, and symbolic. The first level intends to illustrate Jung's encounter with Dante through a particular historical evolution having *Liber Novus* as its divide. The second level clarifies how the *Commedia* furnishes Jung with a primary hermeneutical inspiration for the successful undertaking of his journey. The third level introduces an intellectual discussion contemporary to *Liber Novus*, which, based upon the tradition of the esoteric reading of Dante's *Commedia*, sees Jung coming into close proximity to fellow researchers exploring the roots of symbolic thinking and creative or poetic imagination.

The results of this intersection form the basis of this paper, which I intend to divide into two parts. This choice aims to echo at once the dynamic structure of Dante's *Commedia* and the progression of Jung's

experiment. The first part reflects a moment of bewilderment corresponding to Jung's vision of Hell; the second a moment of psychological renewal corresponding to Jung's attempted foundation of a hermeneutics of visions.

As to the content, in the first section I will begin by focusing on Jung's understanding of Hell in *Liber Novus* via its relationship with the model of Dante's *Inferno*. I will place the emphasis on three major characteristics of Dante's descent to Hell (Christian, medieval and esoteric) that are especially relevant for Jung's experiment. This will allow me to establish Dante's particular place within Jung's category of 'visionary works', while following the development of Jung's theory of dreams and mythological thinking occurring during the turn from *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* [*Transformations and Symbols of the Libido*] to *Liber Novus*. In parallel, I will highlight a line of interpretation within Dante studies that considered the symbolism in Dante's *Commedia* in a similar cultural vein to Jung's inspiration for *Liber Novus*. Personal research in this direction will allow me to demonstrate a historical connection between Jung and the esoteric reading of the *Commedia*.

In the second section, I will attempt to move out of Hell and illustrate the way in which Dante's hermeneutics has inspired Jung to progress in his journey. I will prove this by examining closely a few relevant passages from *Liber Novus* and by taking into account the entries from Dante's *Commedia* to which Jung refers at the beginning of his experiment in 1913. This will furnish me with the material for developing parallels between Dante's *Commedia* and Jung's *Liber Novus* at both literal and symbolic levels. In particular, I will advance a confrontation between the symbolic representations of masculine and feminine principles in Dante and Jung, through a close analysis of the episode of Jung's encounter with Elijah and Salome occurring in *Liber Novus*.

## **PART I**

### **Into Hell**

Shortly before the undertaking of the experiment that became the basis of *Liber Novus*, Jung was the first president of the then newly founded International Psychoanalytical Association (1910), a lecturer at the University of Zurich, and a highly esteemed psychiatrist, mainly due to his experiments on associative reactions and emotionally stressed complexes at the Burghölzli asylum. The first part of Jung's career culminated in the publication of *Wandlungen und Symbole der*

*Libido* (1911-1912), a comparative study of the myth-creating function of the mind encompassing an exceptional amount of mythological and anthropological material, previously assembled by Jung in a voluminous private collection. Among the variety of symbols, dreams and mythologies discussed extensively there by Jung, the work focuses on the psychological understanding of the hero, representing the birth of the individual out of the powers of nature. As pointed out by Jung in the 1925 Seminar, the hero is

a most ideal image whose qualities change from age to age, but it has always embodied the things people value the most. [...] The hero is a very perfect man, he stands out as a human protest against nature, who is seeking to rob man of that possibility of perfection (Jung 2012:30).

At the end of the work, Jung feels extraordinarily engaged with the ancestral material he raised through his study, and driven by the fear of being overwhelmed by its psychic stream.

In a first moment, significant dreams reveal to Jung a profound psychological transformation of his work and life, beyond his capacities to understand it. Later, this critical moment is brought to light by inner voices, hallucinatory episodes and waking visions of an apocalyptic nature, beginning on a train journey to Schaffhausen in October 1913 (Jung, RB:198). In a period stretching from 1913 to the late 20s, Jung's reaction to this tangled situation is to embark on a process of self-exploration, which resulted in a unique overcoming of conventional boundaries between psychology, visionary literature, visual arts and esoteric practices. The records of this effort coalesce into *Liber Novus*, and represent in Jung's own words, 'the most difficult experiment of my life' (Jung, RB:198).

The origin of Jung's journey 'on the service of the soul' (RB:234) triggers the very opening lines of *Liber Novus*, where Jung remarks that in the fortieth year of his life the desire for 'honor, power and every human happiness' suddenly ceased and 'horror came over' him (Jung, RB:232). The passage echoes a biblical line from Isaiah 38:10, 'Ego dixi in dimidio dierum meorum: vadam ad portas inferi',<sup>1</sup> which inspired the illustrious beginning of Dante's *Commedia*, arguably a more familiar reference to the modern Western reader:

Half way along the road we have to go,

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<sup>1</sup> 'I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave' (Carroll and Prickett 2008:799).

I found myself obscured in a great forest,  
 Bewildered, and I knew I had lost my way  
 (Dante 2008 [c.1308-1320]: 47, *Inferno*, I,  
 1-3).

The motif of the thirty-five years' 'radical mental changing' (*Lebenswende*), which the ancient Greeks called *metánoia*, occupies Jung in a variety of his scientific works. Jung's most recurrent examples are Dante, Nietzsche, Christ, Zarathustra, but, surprisingly, not Buddha Shakyamuni. How Jung's mid-life turning point, as presented in *Liber Novus*, entails a Dantesque connotation more than any other, can be understood through a careful observation of the psychological and symbolic background of the first lines of Dante's *Commedia*.

Let us briefly review the story. In his juvenile years, Dante falls in love with a woman from Florence whose name is Beatrice Portinari, and whom Dante met for the first time at the age of nine. In the *Vita Nova*, Dante describes his lifelong love for Beatrice and recounts the tremendous suffering caused by her death, followed by the determination to 'write of her that which has never been written of any other woman' (Dante 2008 [c.1292-1294]:84). Contrary to this intention, however, in the following years Dante commits himself to philosophical work and controversial political vicissitudes, completely abandoning his promise. It is only around the thirty-fifth year of his life that Dante experiences a threatening state of despair that he describes as finding himself in a *selva oscura* ('dark forest'). Hence, he decides to embark on a journey to find the beloved Beatrice in a different realm from the corporeal. For her sake, he ventures with the help of the Roman poet Virgil into the worlds of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, corresponding the three parts of Dante's *Commedia*.

Dante takes as a model for his own existential crisis the *metánoia* of Christ (Dante 1990 [c.1304-1307], *Convivio*, xxiii, 10), whose crucifixion at the age of thirty-three is narrated in the New Testament, and is supposed to have happened at the stroke of noon on Good Friday. So it is recalled in Jung's *Liber Novus*: 'This is really Good Friday, upon which the Lord died and descended into Hell and completed the mysteries' (Jung, RB:304). In the *Commedia*, the commencement of Dante's journey in the forest (Friday) reflects the beginning of the passion of Christ, whereas the days of His death (from Friday to Sunday) mirror Dante's visit to Hell. Interestingly, both Jung and Dante refer to the left as the side of the descent to Hell. Dante's circular journey to the dead occurs by keeping to the left and Jung refers to the visions from the left, as the side of the 'unholy, unknown or

inauspicious' (Jung, RB:249, n190, n197). Even Dante's Ulysses, when leaving Penelope to cross the sea toward the Southern Hemisphere, enters the open sea leaving behind Ceuta and Seville, and turns toward the left.

Christ's *katábasis* to Hell is traditionally mentioned in the *Symbolum apostolorum*, which says that after his death Christ 'Mortuus, et sepoltus, descendit ad *inferos*, tertita die resurrexit a mortuis [*Italics added*]' (2005:90).<sup>2</sup> The Christian understanding of the passage introduces a theological distinction between '*Inferno*' ('Hell'), which allegedly indicates the sinners' fate in the afterlife, and '*inferos*' ('hell'), which alternatively represents the land of the Dead, the Hell of the Old Testament, the Hebrew 'Sheol', the Greek 'Hades', the underworld of Odysseus, Aeneas and the heroes of Jewish and Graeco-Roman mythology inherited by European literature.

Hence, '*inferos*' is supposedly the place into which Christ descends for three days, albeit unlike the cases of Odysseus or Aeneas, no details are provided in the Christian canonical texts concerning the events occurring during his visit. For the benefit of the curious, however, Christ's descent into Hell is described in great detail in several apocryphal gospels and in particular in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the earliest extant paleo-Christian description of Hell. The *Apocalypse of Peter* is widely accepted by Christian writers throughout the history of Christianity, and above all, this text supplies in large measure the pandemonium of demons, tortures and visions described in Dante's *Inferno*, where the combination of Christian and ancient representations of Hell attains its medieval apogee (Shamdasani 2016; James and Elliot 1993:594-595). Presenting a radically different conception of the experience of evil from the theological doctrine of *privatio boni* ('absence of good'), the apocryphal works are an abiding interest in Jung's intellectual research concerning the meaning and experience of Christianity (Jung, RB:243, n135). The model of Dante's journey offers him a significant counterpart to the apocryphal writings, whilst binding the apocryphal content to the mind-set of the Middle Ages, where the lost piece of European religious experience has, according to Jung, to be rediscovered. This parallel is most explicitly developed by Jung in his writings about alchemy, where he juxtaposes Dante and the apocryphal Christ, as analogous examples of necessary descents into Hades, where the hero recognises and accepts the evil counterpart, wins back the power of darkness and gains a state of inner renewal (Jung 1936, CW12:§61, n2).

In *Liber Novus*, a remarkable passage indicates Jung's own *metánoia* as being conceived along similar premises:

<sup>2</sup> 'Descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the Dead'. See 2005. 'Apostles' Creed', *Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

After his death Christ had to journey to Hell, otherwise the ascent to Heaven would have become impossible for him. [...] No one knows what happened during the three days Christ was in Hell. I have experienced it (Jung, RB:243).

Hades in *Liber Novus* forms a precinct to host the threatening side of Jung's psychic exploration, a completely reversed order of reality opening the author's first dreadful glimpse of deeper levels of the mind. The movement forward to the 'rise to heaven', or a psychological illumination, would be impossible to the apocryphal Christ as it would be for Dante, Jung argues, if, before ascending to the nine skies of Paradise he had not plunged, level by level, through the nine circles of Hell.<sup>3</sup> As pointed out convincingly by Maud Bodkin,

The horror of Dante's Hell is made bearable for the reader by the fact that interest is concentrated upon a forward moment. The torments of the damned are described as unending, but they have their effect as incidents in a journey—a transition from darkness to light, from the pangs of death to new life. [...] Opening the way of the pilgrim through the depth of Hell toward the light of Heaven, appears as the supreme motif of the story (Bodkin 1951 [1934]:136).

As much as Dante's *Inferno*, Jung's Hell also 'has levels' (Jung, RB:265) and a distinct medieval appearance, illustrating the understanding of Hell not as an after-place of punishment and regret arbitrarily fixed in a dogmatic meaning, but as a transformative condition of psychic purification.

### Visionary Works

Jung's approach to Dante demands the discussion of those peculiar works of art that, according to Jung, incorporate under the aesthetic guise a substantial closeness to primordial psychic experiences. Jung defines them as 'visionary works' (Jung, 1930/1950, CW15:§139) and distinguishes between a 'psychological' and a 'visionary' faculty of imagination. The 'psychological' appears characterised within

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<sup>3</sup> Dante's Hell is depicted as nine concentric circles located within the Earth. Correspondingly, Dante's Paradise is depicted as a series of nine concentric spheres or skies surrounding the Earth.

the limits of the intelligible and familiar, as deriving mainly from man's conscious life. On the contrary, while dwelling on preferred examples such as Dante, William Blake, Gustav Meyrink, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and the second part of Goethe's *Faust*, Jung's category of the 'visionary' indicates a forceful stream of inspiration where

the experience that furnishes the material for artistic expression [...] derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind, as if it had emerged from the abyss of prehuman age, or from a superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness. It is a primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding and to which he may easily succumb (Jung, CW15:§141).

Exceeding no less the sense of aesthetic criteria than of psychological commentaries, the shattering power of a Dionysian experience of this sort, Jung continues, 'arises from timeless depths and [...] bursts asunder our human standards of value [...], a terrifying tangle of eternal chaos, a *crimen laesae majestatis humanae*', or 'a revelation whose heights and depths are beyond our fathoming, or a vision of beauty which we can never put into words' (Jung, CW15:§141). Jung argues in a similar vein that the visionary content is as well the true inspiration of Dante's poetic material:

The public for the most part repudiates this kind of literature, unless it is crudely sensational, and even the literary critic finds it embarrassing. It is true that Dante and Wagner have made his task somewhat easier for him by disguising the visionary experience in a cloak of historical or mythical events, which are then erroneously taken to be the real subject-matter. In both cases the compelling power and deeper meaning of the work do not lie in the historical or mythical material, but in the visionary experience it serves to express (Jung, CW15:§143).

Similarly, Dante himself, 'who is certainly better qualified than anyone else to inform us of his own intentions' (Guénon 2001 [1925]:2), indicates to his protector Cangrande Della Scala (Jenaro-MacLennan 1974, Ep, XIII, 7-10) how the *Commedia* entails a precise heterogeneity of senses: literal, allegoric, moral, and anagogic, otherwise gathered in literal and allegoric, or, to put it with René Guénon (1925), 'apparent' and 'hidden' levels of interpretation. In the Middle Ages, the subdivision into layers of meaning was applied exclusively to the study of the Holy

Scripture under the religious authority of the Church. Dante's indications transfer for the first time this competence to the secular experience of the poet and ascribe the *Commedia* to the genre of a 'sacred poem', as his author first indicates in Paradise, XXV, 1 (Dante 2008:459). The extraordinary historical importance of this event deals with establishing the place of poetic works within the tradition of Christian sacred literature. In this regard, Dante's *Commedia* questioned in a unique manner the barriers between poetic and religious discourse, assigning to the poet a favorite role in spiritual matters. This discussion has persistently characterised the study of Dante's work and is still echoed in contemporary literary criticism. Harold Bloom, among others, sees the *Commedia* as a primary sacred text within the European canon, zealously remarking that 'Dante's poem is a prophecy and takes on the function of a third Testament in no way subservient to the Old and the New' (Bloom 1994:76-104).

The medieval distinction into layers of interpretation is crucial to the unconventional, symbolist reading of Dante's journey arising in the very early decades of the twentieth century within Dante studies. The cross-disciplinary search for a new epistemology, which elevates the faculty of imagination as the leading source for self-knowledge goes, at the time, hand in hand with a new and consistent emphasis on Dante as the master visionary of European literature. The symbolist reading takes the imagery of Dante's journey as the inspiration of a majestic pilgrimage to the lower and upper worlds of the mind, presenting significant analogies with Jung's own account of 'visionary works', and in a close cultural spirit to the composition of *Liber Novus*.

The symbolists dismiss both literary and transcendently oriented readings of the *Commedia*, which, according to them, make of Dante's journey to the muse and lost beloved Beatrice no more than a literary, yet illustrious, creation inserted within a morally oriented, yet exceptionally refined, theological construction. This approach remains, the symbolists argue, substantially foreign to the *raison d'être* of Dante's visionary poetry. Therefore, instead of framing Dante's visions as a glorious literary text of Christian revelation, the symbolists retain Dante's work as the result of a spiritual self-experiment, at once symbolic and existential, elicited by the psychic mediumship of Beatrice's love.

Starting with the works of Eugène Aroux (1854) and Francesco Perez (1869), the crucial texts of the symbolists appear in a period of time stretching from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth (Rossetti 1887; Pascoli 1898, 1902, 1912; Guénon 1924, 1954; Valli 1928; Cerulli 1949; Corbin 1955). In 1928, the Italian philosopher Luigi Valli

(1878-1931) writes *Il linguaggio segreto di Dante e dei Fedeli d'Amore* [*The Secret Language of Dante and the Poets of Love*], arguably the most influential book within the symbolist literature on Dante. In short, Valli's thesis is that the poetry of love in the Middle Ages celebrates under the names of different historical women, such as Beatrice for Dante, Giovanna for Guido Cavalcanti or Laura for Petrarch, a higher experience of wisdom channelled by the inner feminine revealing itself through poetry. The perennial tradition of the divine feminine, in Goethe's *Faust* 'das Ewig-Weibliche' (the 'eternal feminine'), ascribes to the symbolic guidance of the inner woman the role of the erotic medium and spiritual vehicle, permitting the reawakening of divinity in the human soul. In the context of the Middle Ages, this tradition intermingles largely with the parallel tradition of the mystery of the Grail. Valli concludes that Dante and the poets of love would disguise an esoteric research under a literary form, in order to communicate to each other the results of their quest for wisdom and spiritual elevation.

Valli's thesis becomes soon especially appreciated beyond the boundaries of Dante scholarship. It is largely commented on by a variety of intellectuals who share the view of Dante as a master of Western spirituality (Dante 'Shakya of the West', according to the Italian poet Giovanni Pascoli), and who conceive the *Commedia* as a primary reading within the research concerning the esoteric or visionary tradition in European culture. René Guénon dedicates an entire project to this argument (1925), in addition to a variety of consistent references throughout his writings. Henry Corbin criticises a few aspects of Valli's visions, yet he maintains the leading points of the symbolist angle and juxtaposes them with the sources of Sufi and Persian metaphysical poets (1955). Julius Evola even extends Valli's ideas by establishing a parallel between the visionary experiences of Dante and the Italian poets of love in the Middle Ages, and tantric aspects pertaining to the Eastern spiritual current of Shaktism (1958). Ezra Pound comes to know of Valli thanks to his friend from the London's Theosophical Society, George Robert Stowe Mead (Pound 1993:55). Despite Pound's general negative response to Valli's theory (but not to the tradition of the esoteric reading of the *Commedia*), he returns to him repeatedly, granting his work the merit of a major historical contribution to the visionary understanding of Dante's life and poetry (Pound 1954).

Hence, as I was exploring Jung's library in search for information concerning his understanding of the *Commedia*, coming across Valli's book as the only major commentary on Dante which Jung possessed, was more than an exciting finding. Jung had a copy of Valli in German translation (*Die Geheimsprache Dante und der Fedeli d'Amore*, 1930)

and favourably refers to the work on various occasions. In a letter to Werner Kaegi (*Letters*, November 7, 1932, vol.1:102), Jung depicts Valli's work as an accurate illustration of the psychic 'backdoors of the Renaissance'. Furthermore, Jung uses Valli's book to discuss the significance of the mystic rose in medieval symbolism (Jung, CW12:§235, n115), which according to Valli was at that time a widespread symbol known 'from Hindustan to the Loire' (Valli 2014 [1928]:475). This comparative perspective is familiar with Jung's standpoint, and in his lectures at the ETH, Jung advances a discussion concerning mandala representations, where Dante's contemplation of the rose in the Empyrios is juxtaposed to the sacred lotus of Buddhist symbolism (Jung 2018).<sup>4</sup>

This finding is meaningful at both historiographical and hermeneutical levels. Since no references to Dante are present at all in Jung's published works prior to *Liber Novus*, and a number of about thirty appear after *Liber Novus* (excluding the references in the unpublished works), Jung's interest for Dante may be observed along three main chronological moments: (i) two entries copied together by Jung from Dante's *Purgatorio* appear in the earliest draft of *Liber Novus*, the *Black Books*, indicating a first reading of the *Commedia* in 1913 (Jung, RB:202, n93); (ii) the different layers of *Liber Novus* echo Jung's intent to develop a hermeneutical method in close analogies to Dante's idea of the plurality of senses of interpretation. At the same time, Dante and Eckhart occupy a primary space of discussion in the fifth chapter of the *Psychologische Typen*, 'The Type Problem in poetry' (Jung 1921, CW6:§§ 375-433); (iii) from the reading of Valli onwards (1930), Jung's turn to alchemy goes with the beginning of an intellectual period where Dante becomes an increasing interest in Jung's late scientific works.<sup>5</sup>

### The Remains Of The Hero

Intriguingly, in one of the earliest commentaries on Dante's *Inferno* ever written (late XIII AD - XIV AD), Guido Da Pisa suggests a singular, dreamlike reading of Dante's journey: 'half way along our life, that one of sleep state, he finds himself in a dark forest' (Da Pisa 1974). Da Pisa associates the visionary way of dreaming and reverie with the opposite domain of waking up,

<sup>4</sup> The Empyrios is according to Catholic Medieval theology the uppermost among the heavenly skies, where the physical perception of the divine would be manifested.

<sup>5</sup> Of the same period, Jung's library enlists also V. Ocampo's *De Francesca à Béatrice. A travers la Divine Comédie* (1926) and H.F. Dunbar's *Symbolism in medieval thought and its consummation in the Divine Comedy* (1929).

and the hero (Dante's 'I') with a *mental traveller* (Blake, 2004 [c.1801-1803]:499), reawakened into the complete reversal of his own being.

Jung's characterisation of a primordial experience of 'contrasting light and darkness' sparking the inspiration of 'visionary works' such as Dante's *Commedia*, echoes what Shamdasani points out to be at the roots of the relationship between the history of modern psychology and the theory and practice of Jung's complex psychology (Shamdasani 2003). The psychic research on subliminal experiences as conducted in the works of William James, Théodore Flournoy and Frederic Myers, conveys essentially an epistemological 'reversal of hierarchy between sleep and waking' (Shamdasani 2003:129), where a symbolic, mythopoeic function of the mind comes to dethrone the alleged superiority of waking or habitual consciousness. The subliminal content is taken as a psychic creative functioning occurring under the *limine* (threshold) of empirical perceptions, an unseen activity channeling the primary functions of the mind and acting as a guidance for the supra-liminal personality. Alongside his crucial reading of Schopenhauer's opposition of the mind to the blind creating will (Jung 2012 [1925]:4-5), Jung builds up the substance of this research and accords to the subliminal psychic material as occurring in dreams the principal function of a biological compensation or a healing correction against the one sided demands of the ego (Shamdasani 2003:129). Therefore, dreams, ecstatic experiences and multiple psychic phenomena as described in the séances do not point in a purely subtractive way to a distortion of waking perceptions to be restored in the ego toward practical ends, but rather they show the individual the way to higher possibilities of creative and transformative powers. Nevertheless, if the reversal of one's waking psyche is indicated by the dream or by altered states of personality only in a fragmentary way, the active embrace of a visionary self-experimentation takes it to its full potential, resulting into two opposite tensions. One is the dreadful reversal of all will to power, honours, wish fulfilments and demands of the individual, the sort of sickness-initiation as outlined by Jung at the undertaking of *Liber Novus* and corresponding to the psychic isolation that encloses the vision of Hell. Again referring to Dante's journey, Bodkin illustrates it in this way:

The hero experiences the anguish that befalls the man who in the midst of a momentous enterprise turns from action and, plunging into the depths of his own being, meets the shock of secret fears that the self-maintenance of his own courage held down while confronting the outer world (Bodkin 1951 [1934]:127).

The other tension is the drive to live the experience of psychic reversal all the way to its opposite side, enacting an upward movement or an inner transformative process leading to a psychological awakening. At a symbolic level, the first tension is outlined by the struggle of the hero to sacrifice the individual will to subjugate life. The second tension entails the sacrifice of the hero as such, heralding a new participation of the individual in life.

In *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, the hero has a burden to sacrifice, essentially represented by the infantile attachment of the son or the ego to the maternal womb. In *Liber Novus*, Jung develops substantially farther the psychological implications of the sacrificial act, due to his own direct involvement with the making and the experience of the sacrifice. At the doors of the mysteries, the hero in Jung endures an intrinsic psychic conflict stemming from an equivocal relation of the individual and the universal, or an at once willing and unwilling demanded sacrifice of the individual to the cosmos.

In the 'Prologue' of Jung's *Liber Novus*, the 'spirit of this time' (*Geist der Zeit*), blinded guardian of the use and values of human pride, speaks to Jung of the sacrifice underpinning his journey to the soul as 'madness' (Jung, RB:230). On the contrary, the 'spirit of the depths' (*Geist der Tiefe*), which 'from time immemorial and for all the future possesses a greater power' (RB:229), speaks to him of sacrifice as wisdom, reading: 'No one can or should halt sacrifice. Sacrifice is not destruction, sacrifice is the foundation stone of what is to come' (Jung, RB:230).

On December 18, 1913, Jung engages in the vision of the murder of Siegfried ('Murder of the Hero', RB, ch. vii). Jung sees himself shooting the German hero and interprets it as the frightful attempt to sacrifice his superior psychological function as an intellectual and a man of science, or in his own words 'my power, my boldness, my pride' (Jung, RB:242). However, the sacrifice of the hero as detailed in the episode of Siegfried is to Jung rather the point of departure than a culmination of his sacrifice to the 'spirit of the depths'. A greater riddle now arises upon the remains of Jung's hero: how can one go into Hell 'without becoming Hell oneself' (Jung, RB:240), as it might have happened to Nietzsche, Jung would have argued, but possibly not to Dante? How can Hell be experienced without the explorer of Hell being overpowered by what the 'spirit of this time' would identify as madness?

## PART II

### A Way To Light

At the gates of Hell the dilemma is that ‘ducunt volentem fatam, nolentem trahunt’,<sup>6</sup> as Seneca phrases it to Lucilium, or ‘some turn away from it, others plunge into it. If we do not see a thing Fate does it to us’ (Jung, RB:232, n32):

No one should deny the danger of the descent, but it *can* be risked. No one *need* risk it, but it is certain that someone will. And let those who go down the sunset way do so with open eyes, for it is a sacrifice which daunts even the gods (Jung, 1952, CW5:§553).

In *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1911-1912) Jung comments largely on the psychological meaning pertaining to the risk and necessity of descending into the underworld. He presents cases drawn from Eastern and Western mythological traditions, such as Theseus and Vishnu, as well as cases of poets and philosophers, such as Hölderlin and Nietzsche. Jung argues that all of these cases represent failed or blind descents into Hell. In other words, he conceives them as examples of a regression of psychic energy that, springing from a lowering of consciousness, eventually takes the subject to a disintegration of the conscious personality or a condition of ‘madness’.

In 1913 Jung’s experiment places himself in front of his own *saison en enfer*. More urgently than a way down to Hell, Jung above all chases a way up out of it, a *via nova* (New Way) to win back Hell towards a reversed order of psychological and spiritual renewal. It is in this respect that Dante’s *Commedia*, unlike the ‘blind’ cases mentioned in *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, is able to equip Jung with a Bardo ship to safeguard the descent to the darker recesses of the mind.

In *Liber Novus*, Jung appears to use a very similar symbolic repertoire as Dante. A large extent of Jung’s material resembles imagery and content of Dante’s *Commedia*: the identity of the soul, the function of the guide, the function of shadows and ghosts, the devil and the integration of the evil counterpart,<sup>7</sup> the ambivalence of fire symbolism

<sup>6</sup> ‘The fates lead the willing and drag the unwilling’ (Seneca 2014: 233, Ep. 107, 11,5).

<sup>7</sup> After *Liber Novus*, Jung consistently draws upon Dante’s *Commedia* to describe the encounter and psychological assimilation of the evil side. In particular, cf. *A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of Trinity* (Jung, 1942/1948, CW11: §252), *The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales* (Jung, 1945/1948, CW9: §425), *The Psychology of the Transference* (Jung, 1946, CW16: §403) and *Paracelsus as a Spiritual Phenomenon*

(purification and transformation), the conical form of Hell, the guidance of the feminine principle, medieval imagery, Christianity, madness and divine folly. Yet the blueprint upon which all of these themes rest in *Liber Novus* is in the first place a Dantesque inspiration for a psychocosmology of the opposites, where each element of regression (or *katábasis*, lit. ‘descent’) is successfully counterbalanced and regenerated by an upward element of psychic progression (or *anábasis*, lit. ‘ascent’).

Although Henri Ellenberger was probably not aware of the fact that Jung actively read Dante at the time of *Liber Novus*, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* contains an excellent note regarding the psychological reception of this idea:

In the Divine Comedy we see Dante and Virgil reaching the deepest point of hell and then taking their first step upward in a reverse course toward purgatory and heaven. This mysterious phenomenon of the spontaneous reversal of regression was experienced by all those who passed successfully through a creative illness and has become a characteristic feature of Jungian synthetic-hermeneutic therapy (Ellenberger 1970:713).

Apart from Jungian terminology *stricto sensu*, these lines aptly illustrate the substance of Jung’s encounter with Dante.

The means of living and overcoming Hell, as outlined in Dante’s *Commedia*, are experienced in *Liber Novus* via the establishing of a science of the visionary material, or a constructive hermeneutics which prepares for an essential part of Jung’s later psychotherapeutic model. To frame it in Dante’s language, this possibility seems to arise from pursuing a continuous creative conversation between the angles of the *viator* (the traveller) and the *auctor* (the author), which Jung ascribes to a mythopoeic and a scientific mode of thinking respectively. Where the intuitive discourse of the traveller describes the experience of living the visionary journey, the constructive discourse of the author recounts the composition of a new science about that journey.

### **Dante In The *Black Books***

The most significant indications regarding Jung’s understanding of Dante are given on December 26, 1913, when Jung copies in the *Black Books* two lines from Dante’s *Purgatorio*. The

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(Jung, 1942, CW13: §177).

first is Dante's celebrated submission to the 'dictator of Love':

I am one who, when Love  
Breathes on me, notices, and in the manner  
That he dictates within, I utter words (Dan-  
te 2008:303, *Purgatorio*, XXIV, 52-54).

The second is part of a passage concerning the nature of the soul and the intellect:

And then, in the same manner as a flame  
Which follows the fire whatever shape it takes,  
The new form follows the spirit exactly  
(Dante 2008:309, *Purgatorio*, XXV, 97-99).

Especially in their appearance together, the entries provide a remarkable poetic synthesis of the making of Jung's *Liber Novus*. The content of the entries indicates in the first place Jung's urgency for 'uttering words', echoing in a prophetic tone the burden to turn the 'dictation within' into a new form that untangles the enigmatic visionary stream. At the same time, the entries present the visionary *himself* as caretaker of the flame, as he is of the same substance of the imaginative fire, being transformed by the medium of imagination into the primary object of a sacred experience. For the sake of Jung's journey, the contact with the 'spirit of the depths' demands a house, a holy precinct, where the encounter of the *viator* and the *auctor* mediates the opposite poles of the experiment, the 'katabasis eis andron' ('descent into the cave') and the 'anandromè eis to voeron eidos' ('new tension towards the intelligible form'). This psychic, liminal space appears significantly close to a theory of the subtle energies of the mind which the French orientalist Corbin later adapts from the ancient Islamic notion of *mundus imaginalis* ('imaginal world'). The *mundus imaginalis* is for Corbin 'an order of reality corresponding to a precise order of perception' (Corbin 1972), where the latter describes mental states of increasing illumination derived from articulated techniques of introspection and symbolic thinking. According to Corbin, the individual can penetrate subtle degrees of mental energies, which, thanks to the imaginative faculty, can be used for healing or transformative purposes. Historically, Jung's appreciation of Corbin's principle of *mundus imaginalis* is impossible to establish. Corbin develops this notion a few years after Jung's death, and even during Jung's lifetime he feels their approaches are

not the same, separated at bottom by differing outlooks on metaphysics and psychology. However, fascinating hermeneutical analogies are also evident. Corbin recounts on more than one occasion how Jung's model of the mind is familiar to some trajectories of his research, as expressed for example in a *Post-scriptum biographique à un entretien philosophique*:

Throughout his research, Jung seized upon the idea of a 'world of subtle bodies'. The intuition was profoundly correct [...] A middle world where the spirit is corporalised and the bodies are spiritualised. This is precisely the '*mundus imaginalis*' (Corbin 1981:48-49).

However Jung may have reacted to this claim, Corbin's description of journeys into the *mundus imaginalis* such as Dante's *Commedia* or the Islamic visionary recitals and Jung's account of 'visionary works' share the same inspiration of dealing with visionary texts based upon the author's exceptional imaginative experience and accompanied by the author's own, implicitly prescriptive hermeneutic. This is the key of interpretation proposed by Dante in his letter to Cangrande and also the experience Jung comes to live in *Liber Novus* and transforms into the foundation of a new psychological model. Thus establishing an intertextual and symbolic relation, Jung approaches the *Commedia* as Dante's personal journey into the depths, and he takes the poet's adventure of the soul as illustrious guidance for his own self experiment in an analogous terrain.

As a rule, at the beginning of journeys of such nature, the protagonist finds himself in a state of utter psychic bewilderment. In the case of Dante's *Commedia*, the poet is forsaken in a barren desert and menaced by a triad of fearsome beasts. The obstacle pushes Dante back into the dreadful forest where he began his adventure. However, thanks to a precise optical turning— 'I looked up and saw' (Dante 2008:47, *Inferno*, I, 16) —, the poet can notice the appearance of a guide behind the triad. As much as Dante's 'looking up' at Virgil (sent on by the muse Beatrice), Jung's willing descent with open eyes contrasts with the exposure to a blind journey into Hell and allows the possibility of bringing the dark matter to light.

In *Liber Novus*, Jung's encounter with the prophet Elijah, and especially with Philemon, present very similar traits to the multifaceted role played by Virgil in Dante's *Commedia* (Shamdasani 2009:202). As Dante conceives Virgil as 'my master and my author' (Dante 2008:49, *Inferno*, I, 85), so Jung understands Philemon to be the 'higher author' of his visionary material. As a guide, magician and psychopomp, Virgil bears the primary function of initiating the apprentice Dante into the

mysteries. Firstly, he prevents Dante from the identification with Hell and the risk of being sucked down by the shadows of the dead. Furthermore, he mediates for Dante between the spiritual realm and sensory perceptions. Most importantly, he is the intermediary for Beatrice, the vessel of Dante's transformative epiphany. All in all, to put it in Osip Mandelstam's words—which can be valid as well for Jung's relationship with Philemon:

If Dante had been sent forth alone, without his *dolce padre*, without Virgil, scandal would have inevitably erupted at the very start, and we would have had the most grotesque buffoonery rather than a journey amongst the torments and sights of the underworld! (Mandelstam 2002 [1933]:50).

By showing Dante the way to the gates of the grave, the appearance of Virgil conveys the first changing attitude of the poet's mind: 'Then he moved forward, and I kept behind him' (Dante 2008:51, *Inferno*, I, 136). Under the guidance of Virgil, Dante moves on through his adventure, inspired on the one hand by the duty of 'dictation', or the masculine, static principle of notation, and on the other hand by the imaginative fire of Love, or the feminine, dynamic principle of progression. Where the superior sight that induces Dante to undertake his journey is carried out by Virgil (and by Philemon for Jung), the energy that makes possible for him the advancement throughout the journey is carried by the *anima*, the soul or the inner woman (Jung 1996 [1932]:22), thus gloriously speaking through the voice of Dante's beloved woman:

[...] I am Beatrice who send you on;  
I come from where I most long to return;  
Love prompted me, that Love which makes  
me speak (Dante 2008:53, *Inferno*, II, 70-72).

In 1921, in *Psychologische Typen*, Jung considers in the fifth chapter the relationship between the notion of soul in the Middle Ages and the subsequent evolution of religious experience in the Christian world. Jung refers there the birth of modern European individualism to Dante's worship of Beatrice in these terms,

It began, it seems to me, with the worship of the woman, which strengthened the man's soul very considerably as a psychological factor, since the worship of woman meant worship

of the soul. This is nowhere more beautifully and perfectly expressed than in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Dante is the spiritual knight of his lady; for her sake he embarks on the adventure of the lower and upper worlds (Jung, CW 6: §§376-377).

### The Unity Of Opposites

Jung's entries from Dante in the *Black Books* appear next to the dramatic sequence that stems from Jung's first encounter (December 21, 1913) with the 'figure-events' Elijah and Salome, the prophet of the Old Testament and the stepdaughter of King Herod.

In the 1925 Seminar, Jung recounts that the technique of inner exploration that he has developed takes him then to catch sight of a 'cosmic depth' (Jung, RB:246, n161). On the third night after the vision of Elijah and Salome, Jung experiences a deep conflict between an exceptional longing to continue his experimentation and a resistance about going down, resulting in the forceful release of new, cryptic imaginative material (December 25, 1913). In a first moment, Jung sees himself standing before walls enlarging into a huge mountain taking the form of the house of the prophet Elijah (Jung, RB:252). Then, Jung sees the image of the removal of Christ's cross mingled with symbols of the Mithraic mysteries—the 'I' then becomes the subject of a stunning moment of initiatory deification. Jung's 'I' stares at a serpent wounding itself around his body and feels his resistance to Salome's worshipping of him as Christ (Jung, RB:252). Eventually, the revelation of the sighted Salome and the falling of the serpent from the body of Jung's 'I' push Jung to an ecstatic resolution of the mystery play.

The sequence aptly condenses the motif of psychological regression and progression through the representation of a correspondence between the images of the crater and the mountain where Jung finds Elijah's house. In *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, Jung associates the crater with the spatial symbolism of caves, sanctuaries, cathedral, grave, catacombs, dark galleries, and vessels of inner transformation. To the European mind, the motif of the underworld journey is traditionally put in relation with the initiation of the hero at the entrance of a cavern, as transmitted by Plato in the image of Tartarus, by Homer in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, or by Virgil through the illustration of Aeneas' descent to the cavern of the Sybil. In Dante's *Commedia*, as portrayed in Botticelli's celebrated illustration of Dante's *Inferno*, the conical form of Hell is a crater caused by Lucifer's fall to the centre of the earth, filled with horror

of darkness and void, and the increasing spiritual torment of the poet.

The crater exemplifies the very first level of the journey of death and rebirth, where the individual experiences a descent to the recesses of the human soul and a chthonic reunification with matter. Jung's mystery play is also based upon this symbolism, as commented by Jung in both the first layer of *Liber Novus*, 'I am standing in the rocky depth that seems to me like a crater' (December 22, 1913) (Jung, RB:248), and the second, '[t]he scene of the mystery play is a deep place like the crater of a volcano. [...] He who enters the crater also becomes chaotic matter, he melts' (Jung, RB:247). In relation to the technique adopted in *Liber Novus* for letting the flux of imagination to grow within himself, Jung refers repeatedly to the image of a creative penetration of the stone-like walls of the depths. What in *Liber Novus* is indicated as the falling into the inner or hidden things, or as 'experiencing the mysteries' (Jung, RB:251), becomes in the 1925 Seminar the more technical description of the 'boring through' method:

I devised such a boring method by fantasising that I was digging a hole, and by accepting this fantasy as perfectly real. This is naturally somewhat difficult to do—[...]. But when I began on that hole I worked and worked so hard that I knew something had to come of it—that fantasy had to produce, and lure out, other fantasies (Jung 2012 [1925]:51).

The boring dynamism brings to light an enigmatic knot of symbolic representations from those layers of the mind where, according to Jung, the collective side of the psychic functioning abides. The approximation to the catacomb or grave is where either the individual is threatened at the risk of being shattered by the unification with the matter, or by 'digging a hole' he generates a reversed motion towards an expansion of the individual within the universal. In so doing, such as Dante's climbing over the legs of Lucifer at the very bottom of Dante's *Inferno*, Jung's journey can be energised towards an opposite direction, as established in the correspondence of the images of the cave and the mountain in the context of Jung's vision at the doors of the house of Elijah: 'The walls enlarge into a huge mountain and I see that I am below on the foundation of the crater in the underworld' (Jung, RB:252)

The symmetry of this construction resembles closely the Gnostic symbolism of the reversed cones,<sup>8</sup> which still in the 1925 Seminar Jung connects to the structure of Dante's *Inferno*, in a singular alignment with

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<sup>8</sup> As for the development of Jung's interest for Gnosticism and its reflection in *Liber Novus* see Jung 2012 (1925):69, n9.

the symbolist interpretation of Dante's sources,

Elijah said that it was just the same below and above. Compare Dante's *Inferno*. The Gnostics express this same idea in the symbol of the reversed cones. Thus the mountain and the crater are similar [...]. So I assume that Dante got his ideas from the same archetypes (Jung 2012 [1925]:104-105).

But not only does this have to do with the symmetrical pattern of Dante's Hell and Heaven, as pointed out by McGuire (McGuire, quoted in RB:252, n210). More precisely, the combination is visualised in the *Commedia* through the correspondence of Lucifer's fall to the bowels of the earth and the mountain of *Purgatorio*,<sup>9</sup> where Ulysses, Dante's *alter ego* in Hell and caretaker of the 'ancient flame' (reason or human science, see Dante 2008:157, *Inferno*, XXVI, 85), is sacrificed to the greater flame encompassed by the poet's worship for Beatrice (wisdom or divine science).<sup>10</sup> The closeness of Jung's passage (21-25 December, 1913) to this correspondence and the objective indication given in the *Black Books* by the entries from *Purgatorio* motivates a further remark. At the end of Jung's vision, Salome appears to him in 'wonderstruck devotion' (Jung, RB:252) and Jung, tears falling from his eyes, perceives that 'My feet do not touch the ground of this earth, and it is as if I were melting into air' (Jung, RB:252).

When Dante and Virgil reach the end of Hell in the *Commedia*, they have to climb Lucifer's legs 'into air' in order to begin to raise up to the opposite pole of the journey, chiselled in the 'sweet colour of oriental sapphire' (Dante 2008:199, *Purgatorio*, I,13) that fills the dawn rising up on the mountain of *Purgatorio*.

The whole passage furnishes a distinct symbolic illustration of an underpinning motif of *Liber Novus*, that is Jung's elaboration of the Heraclitean principle of *unio oppositorum*, or 'unity of opposites', according to which the existence of any situation in life depends on the constant change and compresent tension of two opposite conditions, co-

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<sup>9</sup> The mountain of *Purgatorio* is placed by Dante at the antipodes of Jerusalem as a result of the conical abyss formed by Lucifer's precipitation.

<sup>10</sup> Dante invents an original version of Ulysses' story (*Inferno*, XXVI, 49-142), in which the Greek hero takes a long journey beyond the Hercules' pillars and when he comes to sail by a giant mountain (the mountain of *Purgatorio*) a storm breaks and sinks the ship, provoking Ulysses' death.

substantiating each other, whether intended at empirical or symbolic levels.<sup>11</sup>

In this context, Jung's search for a way of renewal in *Liber Novus* appears triggered by the elevation of the erotic principle into a vessel of spiritual rebirth, as the transformation from the blind to the sighted Salome gives evidence to in the sequence described. In Dante's *Commedia*, this is in a similar vein indicated by the transposition of the beloved woman into an illuminated condition of the mind, to be conceived through the indications of the guide Virgil and worshipped through the extension of the loving capacities of the poet. In 1921, Jung comments on the transformation of the image of Beatrice in Dante's *Commedia* in this way: 'a figure that has detached itself from the object and become a purely psychological factor, or rather, of those unconscious contents whose personification I have termed the *anima* (Jung, CW6: §377).

Jung's standpoint appears here consistent with the phenomenology of Dante's love for Beatrice, from the juvenile promises following her departing and concluding the *Vita Nova* to the visions of the *Commedia*. In contrast with the prevalent intellectual motivation of Dante's philosophical writings, the *Commedia* presents an inversion of the relationship between the opposite tensions of logos and eros. The figure of Beatrice is now an elevated image of Dante's soul, or what Jung calls a 'purely psychological factor'. The domain of reason (Virgil) eventually becomes the servant of love (Beatrice).

Correspondingly, the couple Elijah and Salome represents in *Liber Novus* the earliest of Jung's representations of the syzygy of logos and eros. They are unified in the 'Mysterium Encounter' through the third principle of the serpent, which symbolises the 'introverting libido' (Jung 2012 [1925]:100) that is necessary to invigorate the visionary process. Jung points out in the 1925 seminar that Salome, as the *anima*, is the instinctive and erotic element that binds the mind of the individual to the force of the irrational. At the same time, Elijah, as the prophet, is the cognitional and foreseeing element that compensates this force, making out of the irrational the shape of a wisdom higher than reason. The polarity of the pairs of opposites thus represented echoes an abiding symbolic tradition, which bears the fundamental idea that every manifestation of life 'takes place through a twofold condition of principles, in the same way that animal procreation takes place through the union of male and female' (Evola 1991 [1969]:118). Plotinus ascribes the manifestation of this polarity to intellect and nature, to being as form and stability (*ous*) and life as the substance of becoming (*ousia*), or in other words, an everlasting male principle of unchangeable

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11 As for Jung's discussion of this topic, cf. lecture 10 and 11 from the 1925 Seminar (Jung 2012 [1925]:79-97).

presence and an everlasting female principle of undifferentiated matter.

Similarly, the conjunction of opposites through the figures of Elijah and Salome can be interpreted in Jung as the principle of *logos* that 'sees' (Elijah) and *eros* that 'sends on' (Salome): 'Forethinking is not powerful in itself and therefore does not move. But pleasure is power, and therefore it moves' (Jung, RB:247). Throughout Jung's self-exploration, the movement towards the unity of the opposites resounds as a persistent inspiration. But it is possibly in no place more sharply described than in a passage from Jung's encounter with Philemon and his wife Baucis, where the combined image of Elijah and Salome is taken to a higher level of representation: 'I must unite the two conflicting powers of my soul and keep them together in a true marriage until the end of my life, since the magician is called ΦΙΑΗΜΩΝ and his wife ΒΑΥΚΙΣ' (Jung, RB:314).

The masculine and feminine principles, Jung also argues, are 'one in the symbol of the flame' (Jung, RB:254), which the growing energy of the psychic journey carries out through the creative efficiency of imagination, as the unifying flame 'follows the fire whatever shape it takes'. The mental travellers who access the fire of imagination, gradually awaken the *scintilla* they stand in communion with, as echoed in a favourite passage quoted by Jung from the apocryphal apothegms of Thomas, 'Who is near unto me, is near unto fire' (Thomas 82, quoted in Jung, CW12§157). The flame is the trigger of visionary states of the mind, binding the two major properties of this element, purification and brightening elevation, by taking the individual into a hypnotising journey in a circle of fire considered by the Pythagoreans to be the agency of divinity and love.

Nevertheless, exploring *Liber Novus* reveals in the first place to the reader the restless, serpentine pathway of Jung's experimental hermeneutics. Jung describes repeatedly moments filled with illuminating intuitive perceptions, followed by new tormenting visions of Hell. Alongside the struggle to lead the visionary material to a new procedure of understanding, the 'new form follows the spirit' without the former ever being crystallised in a state of quiescence. In other words, the movement forward into the underworld journey compels the author to a creative relationship with the symbolic material, which cannot exhaust it anymore into the values and hopes of ordinary consciousness, but calls on the contrary for keeping the appearance of symbols alive as events and living correspondences. In order to intersect the visionary in Jung with the psychologist, therefore, the mentor Elijah speaks to Jung's 'I' with similar intents to those of Virgil to Dante in the adventure of the *Commedia*: 'Other things will come. Seek untiringly, and above all write exactly what you see' (Jung, RB:252).

As to the direction of this research, Jung provides at the end of *Liber Secundus* an information of remarkable historical precision: ‘I must catch up with a piece of the Middle Ages—within myself. We have only finished with the Middle Ages of—others’ (Jung, RB:330). If the European mind, half-way through her life, has lost a piece of her soul that the modern man needs to discover again, this must happen, Jung argues, through a new exploration of the medieval spirit. Thus carrying a special contact with this piece of the soul, Dante’s *Commedia* becomes inevitably a meaningful reference for Jung’s journey, which around the fortieth year of his life Jung called *Liber Novus*, echoing the inspiration (and the title, yet in a way that cannot be proven historically) of Dante’s *Vita Nova*: ‘Here begins a new life’ (Dante 1992 [ca. 1292-1294]:3).

## CONCLUSION

Similarly to what was pointed out in Bodkin’s foreword to her *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination* (Bodkin 1934:x), the inspiration of this paper is also underpinned broadly by searching for a common terrain of study between psychology and visionary literature.

From the material presented, I aimed to demonstrate the fresh contribution that stems from bringing these terrains into closer and permeable relation. This is possible, I argue, when a psychological reflection on a visionary text is not confined only to the purposes of psychological commentaries, and a critical reflection on the same material is not limited exclusively to the tools of literary methodologies or conventional aesthetic categories. The resulting attempt is to examine the imaginative production communicated by visionary experiences, on the one hand by analysing their underlying patterns of objectification, on the other hand by performing them again through expanding the basis of the analysis via the establishing of further symbolic correlations. Within the history of Jung’s thought, this hermeneutical approach results particularly flourishing when it is observed within the cultural moment of *Liber Novus*. Previous demarcations between scientific and aesthetic understanding ended up being challenged at bottom, conveying a fertilising experimental contamination. Historically, psychology itself was the ‘dream of a science’ (Shamdasani 2003). If from a reductive perspective, this could be considered the failure of psychology to become a science, from a constructive standpoint the psychologist as the abnormal scientist became the explorer par excellence of disciplinary cross-fertilisations.

Jung's place within this terrain appears far-reaching at both biographical and theoretical formulations. *Liber Novus* describes a unique experience of contact between an individual and a collective side of a cultural and spiritual quest. Jung's later account of 'visionary art' indicates the consistent attempt to recognise a tradition of visionary writing and practice, based upon an original psychic inspiration of a similar primordial nature. Having been Dante present for Jung at both of these levels—during the composition of *Liber Novus* and within Jung's subsequent references to the corpus of the 'visionary works'—I have utilised Dante as a bridge to understand the connection between different moments of Jung's thought.

To survey briefly the main course of this paper, I have argued in short that Jung's understanding of the model of Dante's *Commedia* is a relevant and dynamic key to access the content of Jung's *Liber Novus*. Throughout the inquiry, this approach entailed in the first place a literal level of discussion. I have addressed this aspect by establishing analogies between Dante's and Jung's repertoire of type-images, such as the descent to Hell, the sacrifice of the hero, and the function of the guide in relation to search for the soul. But the course of this paper also entailed a symbolic level of discussion. I have taken this aspect into account by considering the way in which Jung's development of a constructive or anagogic view finds in Dante a suitable hermeneutical model. In so doing, I aimed on the one hand to carry out a historiographical motivation of research, which can be evinced especially through the analysis of Jung's connection to the esoteric reading of the *Commedia*, and the attempt to focus on the language of *Liber Novus*. On the other hand, I have attempted to connect and expand this basis by locating further intersections of symbolic forms on the passages under consideration, and utilising them as a key to understanding the existential states experienced by Jung.

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#### ABBREVIATIONS

RB = *Liber Novus* = *The Red Book: Liber novus*. Edited and Introduced by Sonu Shamdasani, Translated by Mark Kyburz, John Peck, and Sonu Shamdasani. New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company.

WSL = *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido. Beiträge zur*

*Entwicklungsgeschichte des Denkens* (1911, 1912) = 1917. *Psychology of the Unconscious. A study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido*. New York: Moffat, Yard & Company.

Jung 2012 [1925] = 2012 [1925]. *Introduction to Jungian Psychology: Notes of the Seminar Given by Jung on Analytical Psychology in 1925*, original edition edited by W. McGuire, revised edition edited by Sonu Shamdasani. Princeton: Bollingen/Philemon Series, Princeton University Press.

CW = 1953-1983. *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. Ed. Sir H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, tr. R.F.C. Hull. Princeton: Bollingen Series, Princeton University Press, 21 vols.

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**JUNG AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
RELIGION: A PRELIMINARY SKETCH**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to position Jung's psychology of religion in the context of the development of the study of religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I argue that Jung's psychology of religion represents a synthesis between the 'science of religion' tradition, put forward by luminaries such as Max Müller and Cornelis Petrus Tiele, and the psychology of religion that Jung encountered in the works of his two intellectual masters, Théodore Flournoy and William James.

**KEYWORDS**

C.G. Jung, psychology of religion, science of religion, Max Müller, William James

While James Heisig's *Imago Dei* (1979) still remains the standard critical account of Jung's psychology of religion, Shamdasani's 'Is analytical psychology a religion? *In statu nascendi*' (1999) is, so far, the only attempt to work out the making of Jung's psychology of religion in a more general fashion.<sup>1</sup> In what follows, I would like to expand on Shamdasani's remarks, and to offer a schematic account that will show how Jung's work fits into this wider intellectual tradition and into the tradition of the science of religion more broadly construed.<sup>2</sup>

The study of religion in the first decades of the twentieth century was in the process of being fundamentally reorganized by a group of psychologists calling themselves psychologists of religion. Devised mainly in the U.S., and championed by authors such as William James, Edwin Diller Starbuck, James Henry Leuba and G. Stanley Hall, the psychology of religion spread across the Atlantic, taking root in Germany, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Italy, and reached as far as Eastern Europe. In 1927, a young Mircea Eliade was writing confidently that 'everyone knows the names of Ribot, Leuba and Janet', before proceeding to take these authors to task for equating mysticism with psychopathology (Eliade 2003:344).

Pathologising religious experiences was, however, not the norm among religious psychologists, and neither was their discipline always seen as simply an extension of psychology to a new realm. Rather, a good deal of researchers in the field sought to completely overhaul the science of religion, by turning the focus onto experiences (i.e. the experiences of religious practitioners), usually understood to be primarily emotional ones, and by turning the scientific gaze onto their own contemporaries. To quote one of the early luminaries of the discipline, the task was 'to catch at first hand the feelings of spirituality' (Starbuck 1937:223). This attempt to capture the lived experience of the homo religiosus was contrasted with the methods that had been at the centre of earlier attempts to form a science of religion. As George Coe, another psychologist of religion, wrote in 1900:

the history and science of religions rummaged museums of anthropology and dug about the roots of language in order to discover the earliest forms of religion: but to none of these

<sup>1</sup> See also Ellenberger (1994), Wulff (1991), Lammers (1994), Shamdasani (1998; 2003; 2009), Liebscher (2018).

<sup>2</sup> This paper is an emended version of a talk given at UCL in November 2016, as part of the first European Jung History Conference.

was it revealed that the surest way to understand religion is to observe its present manifestations (Coe 1900:12).

In addition to its emphasis on the 'present manifestation' of religion, the psychology of religion sought to refashion the science of religion on the basis of an affective definition of religion and by reference to a host of new concepts, such as 'conversion', 'mysticism', or the 'unconscious'. This affective understanding of religion had its starting point in the work of German Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) (Mackintosh 1963:31-100; Jay 2005:88-102; Dole 2010; Gerrish 1984; Vial 2014).

In the early years of the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher set about trying to evade the strictures imposed by Kant (1724-1804) on the theoretical use of the faculty of reason. Kant presented a general account of the limits of knowledge in his classic *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and later took up the effects of that account on the knowledge of religion in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793) and in the posthumously published *Lectures on Philosophical Theology* (1830). As Kant made clear, for example in the latter text, one cannot really know anything about God, since God is not an object of experience. Strictly speaking, there can be no science of God, hence no theology, since 'I can have scientific knowledge only of what I myself experience' (Kant 1986:162). Therefore, belief is all that one can rely on in matters of religion, i.e. the postulate of God's existence, as a necessary adjunct for practical morality (Kant 1986:39). No science is required for this 'simple moral concept of God' (Kant 1986:167).

Schleiermacher's answer to this theoretical challenge was to claim that religion was not a thing of the mind, but of the heart. He first put forward this theory in a book addressed to his circle of Romantic friends in Berlin, and published anonymously in 1799 with the title *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*. The book was as much an exercise in rhetoric as it was a work of analysis. Its aim was to evoke a sense of the religious among its 'cultured despisers'. According to Schleiermacher, religion was neither metaphysics nor morality, even though one usually found it mixed together with these two fields. As he put it: 'Religion's essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling' (Schleiermacher 1996:22). Religion was 'the sensibility and taste for the infinite', and the 'intuition of the universe' (Schleiermacher 1996:23-24). As intuitions were always individual, so was religion. Religious intuitions were self-contained and could not be reduced to something else. The intuition and the feeling of the infinite were fused together in the original moment of consciousness and

Schleiermacher deplored the fact that the very act of analysis forced him to split them into rubrics. For him, it was impossible to fully translate the ineffability of religion into intellectual formulas without doing an injustice to its poetic originality. The dogmas and propositions of faith were only imperfect attempts to translate the richness of feeling and intuition into the alien language of reason (Schleiermacher 1996:48). As he put it: ‘Every holy writing is merely a mausoleum of religion, a monument that a great spirit was there that no longer exists; for if it still lived and were active, why would it attach such great importance to the dead letter that only be a weak reproduction of it?’ (Schleiermacher 1996:50).

Schleiermacher revisited these ideas in his work *The Christian Faith*, published in two parts in 1821 and 1822. *The Faith* was an innovative work that both developed Schleiermacher’s earlier, affective based theory of religion and also outlined a radical new method in dogmatic theology. As in *On Religion*, Schleiermacher began by distinguishing piety from metaphysics and morality. Piety, for him, was ‘*but a modification of Feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness*’ (Schleiermacher 1928:5). In a further statement, he qualified this feeling by claiming that its essence was ‘*the consciousness of being absolutely dependent, or, which is the same thing, of being in relation to God*’ (Schleiermacher 1928:12). Since the essence of religion was a feeling, dogmas were only secondary constructions—they were, as he put it, only ‘accounts of the religious affections set forth in speech’ (Schleiermacher 1928:76). The task of theology was to systematise the dogmas in a certain community at a certain time and to check them against the statements of Christ in the Scriptures. As Wayne Proudfoot has noted, this procedure effectively made theology a thoroughly empirical discipline, since it no longer maintained that it was making claims about God or transcendence, but only about religious affections, or about the reflection of God in human consciousness (Proudfoot 1985:16; Vial 2014:36).

In the later years of the nineteenth century, the psychologists of religion rediscovered Schleiermacher’s affective definition, in part, no doubt, because of a contextual similarity, one which E.D. Starbuck expressed as ‘the dramatic battle [...] between Adam and the monkey’ (Starbuck 1937:205). In less metaphorical terms, the ‘battle’ amounted to the strictures imposed on Christian belief not only by evolutionism, but also by higher criticism, materialistic reductionism, or by the famous ‘*ignoramus et ignorabimus*’ (we do not know and we will not know) put forward by German physiologist Emil du Bois-Reymond.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the Zofingia lectures, given while he was a student, Jung took a critical stance towards du Bois-Reymond as well as towards materialistically minded

For some, the fundamental affectivity of religion offered a way out of such quandaries. The theologian Otto Pfleiderer outlined this state of affairs in a series of lectures, published in English in 1907, describing the recent return to Schleiermacher as ‘the New-romanticism of to-day’. For his part, he found the position unsatisfying, despite its popularity: ‘Nowadays that seems a welcome way of escape for many, an easy peace-proposition in the bitter struggle between science and religion. Pity it is, that with this division of understanding and heart, the opposition is not reduced, but simply hidden and laid over’ (Pfleiderer 1907:58).

### THE CLOTHED INFINITE

Despite Pfleiderer’s misgivings, a number of psychologists used their affective understanding of religion as part of a wider strategy of bringing ‘science’ and ‘religion’ together, of using ‘science to buttress faith’ (White 2009:3). In this goal, they differed little from the nineteenth century proponents of the ‘science of religion’, whose enterprise they sought to reform and supersede. In addition to having similar aims, the nineteenth century scientists of religion also drew on the same Liberal Protestant tradition, and a majority of them built psychological theories of religion, or pointed to the overwhelming importance of psychology for the understanding of their subject. The ‘science of religion’ enterprise included authors like Max Müller (1823-1900), the man who coined the expression ‘science of religion,’ Cornelis Petrus Tiele (1830-1902), his Dutch counterpart, the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), Albert Réville (1826-1906) in France and a host of other lesser or greater theorists. In what follows I will outline two examples of the psychology of nineteenth century theorists of religion, namely those of Max Müller and C.P. Tiele. I shall highlight the psychological nature of the conceptions of these theorists, firstly, because the point has often been missed or glossed over in the history of the study of religion (Molendijk and Pels 1998; Sharpe 1986; Wheeler-Barclay 2010; Kippenberg 2002; Waardenburg 2017; Capps 1995).<sup>4</sup>

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physiologists like Ludwig Büchner (Jung 1983:8).

<sup>4</sup> The only notable exception is Evans-Pritchard (1965). Molendijk (2005) also contains references to the psychological discourse of some of the founders of the science of religion in the Netherlands, and especially Tiele. Concerning the latter he writes that ‘it cannot be overlooked that within the emerging “science of religion”, the psychology of religion came to the fore earlier than that [1905]. The work of C.P. Tiele illustrates this development very aptly’ (Molendijk 2005: 218).

Secondly, I will do so because it is unlikely that the psychology of religion would have spread so rapidly and gained so many enthusiastic adherents, had the public not already been primed by the psychological speculations of authors like Pfeleiderer, E.B. Tylor, Müller, Tiele, Andrew Lang, or Ernest Renan. At the same time, in the case of Jung, the older psychology of these thinkers was married in creative ways with the new psychology. It is thus useful to outline two examples of this older psychology, particularly since one of these models is close to the one that Jung himself espoused in his work.

Like the psychologists of religion, Müller and Tiele were also interested in ‘religious experience’, though they sought to get to it via a detour through ancient texts and philological excavation. For Müller, such an approach made good Protestant sense: the more ancient the text, the more likely it was to contain the original experience, unsullied by the inexorable process of decay that attended any religious revelation (Müller 1868:24). Seen from this angle, Müller’s edition of the *Sacred Books of the East*, which he began in 1876, can be seen as nothing short of a world scale reprisal of the role of Luther and other translators of the Bible. For Müller, psychology went straight to the heart of his account of religion. Starting with his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (1873), Müller began defining religion as a mental faculty ‘which, independent of, nay in spite of sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the Infinite under different names, and under varying disguises’ (Müller 1882:13). By the late 1870s, Müller gave up the notion of the faculty of faith in public. But he was only half-heartedly apologetic about his advocacy of such a faculty: in an 1882 reprint of the Introduction he kept the same language, and only inserted a footnote that explained that his use of the word ‘faculty’ merely meant that the mind had a possibility of doing something. He did not, however, feel that such terminology committed him to any specific view as to the ultimate nature of the mind (Müller 1882:16).

His colleague Tiele was critical of Müller’s perceptual definition of religion, but agreed that the science of religion was tasked with uncovering the essential experience underscoring the variety of religious phenomena (Tiele 1899:228-231). As Tiele wrote in 1896, ‘we study these phenomena—the conceptions and the observances of religion—in order to penetrate to what is concealed behind them’ (Tiele 1897:37). Tiele intimated that ‘the question as to the origin of religion is not of a historical or archaeological nature, but is purely psychological’ (Tiele 1897:71). The science of religion, for him, had two components: a morphological one, which studied the forms (the *morphai*) of religion

throughout history, and an ontological side which looked at what remained unchanged—in other words the essence, the psychological experience that created these various forms. He, thus, reckoned psychology to be a part of ontology. Religious experience, as he saw it (reformulating Müller and Schleiermacher), was ultimately a kind of incarnation of the Infinite: the Infinite, which he regarded as an innate form of thought, became actualised through the agencies of the imagination and of feeling and transformed spontaneously into a religious conception (Tiele 1899:121; 228-231).

Jung picked up part of his method from these nineteenth century comparativists like Müller and Tiele. While Jung's knowledge of Müller is easy to infer, because Jung referred to him in his published work, and also possessed some of his books in his personal library, as well as an almost complete set of the *Sacred Books of the East*, it is not clear whether Jung was in fact familiar with Tiele's theories. At most, I can infer that that he would have encountered passing references to him in a work which he possessed in his library, the 1905 *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, edited by Chantepie de la Saussaye. Nevertheless, Jung's conception in *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (*WSL*) (1911-1912) bears a striking resemblance to Tiele's theory.

In the 1925 seminar, Jung recounted the famous dream that he had on his way back from America in 1909. In the dream, he found himself in a medieval house from which he descended first into a Gothic cellar, then into a Roman one beneath it. Finally, from a hole in the second cellar's floor he looked down into a dusty tomb, filled with fragments of pottery and ancient bones (Jung 2012:23). Jung said that this dream was the first intimation of the collective unconscious as well as the origin of *WSL*, which he began publishing in 1911 in the *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, and then as a book in 1912. After his return from America, Jung began reading extensively on mythology, with the aim of finding a 'phylogenetic basis for the theory of neurosis' (Shamdasani 2003:214). That same year (1909), he quit his job at the Burghölzli, and moved into a new house that he had built for his family in Küsnacht.

The pretext for *WSL* was an article by a woman named Frank Miller, which appeared in the *Archives de Psychologie* in 1905 together with a short introduction by Flournoy (Miller 1906:36-51). Miss Miller was an American born in Alabama in 1878. She had travelled widely in Europe, and studied at several universities (including in Geneva), and had success as a popular lecturer in the U.S., where she spoke about and presented the garbs of countries like Russia, Greece, and Scandinavia (Shamdasani 1990; Serina 2016). Flournoy presented her as possessed of a hypersensitive, almost

mediumistic temperament, coupled, however, with a critical acumen and a lively intelligence. He did not doubt that, had she lacked in introspection and self-criticism, she would have become a successful purveyor of subliminal romances, much like H el ene Smith, the subject of Flournoy’s book *From India to the Planet Mars* (Flournoy 1906:36-38). Miss Miller was, as she herself noted, completely opposed to spiritualist interpretations. The point of her article was precisely to offer a naturalistic explanation of some personal episodes of unconscious or semi-conscious reverie and lyrical genesis, with the aim of ‘dispersing the superstition of so-called “spirits”’ (Miller 1906:48).<sup>5</sup> She used the explanatory paradigm of cryptomnesia, set out by Flournoy in *From India to the planet Mars*, and traced back her ‘fantasies’ to forgotten or half-remembered incidents in her life.

Jung did not take Miller’s explanations at face value, quite likely because he thought them to be insufficient, and instead proceeded to treat them somewhat like free associations. His argument in *WSL* started with a distinction between fantasy and directed thinking. He claimed that directed thinking was adapted to reality and objective, whereas fantasy thinking was subjective, nebulous, and dreamy. Fantasy thinking was a survival from ages past, when mythology held humans in its sway (Jung 1916:24). In what was a common anthropological move, he regarded fantasy thinking as the primary mode of thinking for children and primitive peoples, and also equated it with the kind of thinking that was common in dreams. In children’s fantasies, one had the proof that, psychologically, ontogeny repeated phylogeny. Such fantasy thinking was, furthermore, the basis for all mythology and religion:

One can say, that should it happen that all traditions in the world were cut off with a single blow, then with the succeeding generation, the whole mythology and history of religion would start over again. Only a few individuals succeed in throwing off mythology in a time of a certain intellectual supremacy—the mass never frees itself. (Jung 1916:30).

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<sup>5</sup> In his review of Jung’s *WSL*, Flournoy referred to her procedure as being a “‘psychoanalysis’ avant la lettre”. See Th odore Flournoy, review of C.G. Jung, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido: Beitr age f ur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Denkens*, *Archives de psychologie* 50, 13 (1913):195.

As this quote suggests, religion and mythology were genetically related (if not identical), they were psychically ingrained, and they were to be overcome (at least by those who were gifted enough to rise above the mass). This negative evaluation of religion was implicit in the conception that religion was the result of a lower form of thinking. One became religious (or mythological) as a result of fatigue, of an *abaissement du niveau mental*, whose correlative was a loss of what Janet called 'the function of the real' (Jung 1916:142-153). It was the extent of this loss of the function of reality in schizophrenia that convinced Jung that the libido was not purely sexual, but more like a vital energy or Schopenhauerian Will. As he put it, with regard to dementia praecox:

The function of reality is lacking to such a degree that even the motive power must be encroached upon in the loss. The sexual character of this must be disputed absolutely, for reality is not understood to be a sexual function (Jung 1916:143).

The self-deepening of psychotics into a world of fantasy led to a 'loosening up of the historical layers of the unconscious.' (Jung to Freud, 12 June 1911, in McGuire 1994:427). As such:

it may be concluded that the soul possesses in some degree historical strata, the oldest stratum of which would correspond to the unconscious. The result of that must be that an introversion occurring later in life, according to the Freudian teaching, seizes upon regressive infantile reminiscences taken from the individual past. That first points out the way; then, with stronger introversion and regression (strong repression, introversion psychoses), there come to light pronounced traits of an archaic mental kind, which, under certain circumstances, might go as far as the re-echo of a once manifest, archaic mental product (Jung 1916:37).

Thus, the fantasies that were triggered by such introversions revealed not only personal or infantile memories, but memories of the race. A case in point was the Solar Phallus Man, who hallucinated the ancient myth of a sun-phallus that could also be found almost identically in the Mithraic liturgy (Jung 1916: 108-109). Jung expanded Flournoy's cryptomnesia paradigm so as to include such ancient memories. As Shamdasani has argued, one could call this method a 'phylo-cryptomnesia' (Shamdasani 2003:218). In later editions of *Wandlungen and Symbole der Libido*, Jung would

retrospectively supply a diagnosis for Miss Miller that would more closely fit this model, turning her into a nascent schizophrenic (Shamdasani 1990:27).

Jung's project in *WSL* seems to have been, in part at least, a synthesis between the comparative religion project of people like Müller and Tiele and the religious psychology of James, Flournoy and Janet. There is in fact a striking similarity between Jung's conception in *WSL* and that of Tiele. To recapitulate, Tiele claimed that the study of myths and symbols provided a window into the embryology of religion: a way of seeing how early man had used the faculty of the imagination to give concrete form to a diffuse Infinite, lurking in one's unconscious depths. *Mutatis mutandis*, Jung argued the exact same thing: one only has to replace 'imagination' with 'fantasy thinking' and 'the Infinite' with the equally protean libido. Contrary to Tiele, however, Jung claimed that this imaginative process also took place among his contemporaries—indeed that every person carried within them both the libido and its typical forms. A loss of psychological tension (as in a psychosis, an introversion, or a dream) could show that this mythologizing capability had not been lost. This argument served as the justification for why Jung studied Ms. Miller's religious fantasies side by side with the ancient myths and symbols of Greece, India, or Egypt.

Jung carried the model that he outlined in *WSL* into his later comparative work, which took off in the 1920s, after he finished with *The Red Book* and after he outlined the process of individuation. In this later comparative project, Jung attempted to find parallels to individuation in the world's religious traditions: yoga, Buddhism, alchemy, *The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* (Jung 1952, 1960). One can consider this project as an update on the Müller-Tiele model: having established what the psychological experience was (i.e. individuation), he began searching for iterations of it in *The Sacred Books of the East* and in European alchemical texts.

### EFFECTING 'CONVERSIONS'

As mentioned above, the psychology of religion constituted itself in opposition to the earlier science of religion. In other words, much like the aforementioned quote from Coe stipulated, the task was no longer to look at anthropological accounts or at ancient texts, but rather at contemporary experiences—and then to try to tease psychological meaning out of them. However, at least in the U.S., the question that the religious psychologists asked was in a sense the same question that the comparative religionists and anthropologists had asked before: what is

the origin of religion? (Masuzawa 1994). The question was, however, no longer asked in the historical sense (how did the primitives get religion?), but rather in the sense of: how does contemporary man get religion? The psychologists of religion called this topic 'conversion'.

The psychology of conversion was outlined in a number of foundational texts, such as James Henry Leuba's 'A Study in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena' (1896), E.D. Starbuck's *The Psychology of Religion* (1899), William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), and G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence* (1904). Though there was some European contribution to the discussion (Allier: 1925), conversion was without a doubt the preserve of the Americans. Jung was familiar with at least some of the debates around conversion from William James' *Varieties*.

Conversion for the American psychologists was not so much about adopting a different 'religion' as it was about the psychological development of a new centre of personality. The process was usually described as comprising going through an inner struggle with one's own sinfulness and potential damnation, which was often (sooner or later as the case may be) resolved into a state wherein earlier contradictions seemed resolved, such that joy and well-being replaced despair and doubt (Starbuck 1911; James 2002; Coe 1900; Leuba 1896). The whole discussion was embedded in a Protestant practice and used the vocabulary of Protestantism. The scientific presumption of the psychology of religion came from its use of questionnaires, which aimed to record the experience raw, before it was used for drawing conclusions. But then again, the majority of respondents were also Protestants, though the whole process was assumed to be universal—at least until 1920, when James Bissett Pratt exposed the whole enterprise as little more than a translation of theological terms into the language of psychology (Pratt 1920:154). As there were seemingly infinite variations to the conversion process, discussion among the psychologists of religion raged on about how to describe the process, what factors had the upper hand, and whether, ultimately, the whole process was so individual that it remained mysterious and defied all rational description—as both James and Starbuck suggested (James 2002:162; Starbuck [undated manuscript]:1). Be that as it may, there was a significant degree of consensus that the process of conversion corresponded in general to the normal process of adolescent growth.

For some of the psychologists of religion, conversion served as a way of 'naturalizing' religion, of making it an indelible part of the psychology and even physiology of the individual. As stated above, such a procedure took religion out of the ambit of critique and into the realm of the inevitable,

offering a solution to the perceived science vs. religion debate. For some psychologists, such as William James, religion served a special function. In the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James argued that this function was to heal the ‘divided self’, James’ preferred phrase for a constitutional imbalance or existential rift, whose healing sometimes came only through a conversion. As James put it, this existential rift ‘reduced to its simplest terms, is a sense that there is *something wrong about us* as we naturally stand’. The value of religion came from that fact that, through it, one received ‘sthenic affection’ which provided an exit from the drama of existence through the instrument of a connection with ‘the higher powers’ (James 2002: 390-92).

Both James’ ‘special function’, as well as the more usual ‘naturalisation’ of religion that was attempted by others, created a problem for the psychology of religion, which found itself trapped in an insoluble paradox. The paradox is that the very attempt to naturalise religion—to make it an inextricable part of the psychology or even physiology of the individual—ends up dooming both ‘religion’ and the psychology of religion with it. The problem is this: if one argues that conversion is a normal process of adolescent growth, which happens with or without religion, religion becomes superfluous. The object of the psychology of religion has been dissolved in the very process of analysing it. And, in fact, the psychology of religion is dissolved as well, because it no longer deals with anything specifically ‘religious’, but simply with psychological processes as such. The corollary is that one also now has a psychological and hence ‘scientific’ description of what before was described imperfectly, or at least unscientifically, by religion. Therefore, this is a further reason to scrap religion and to proclaim psychology as the new theology, the new religion—or as the only legitimate form of speculation on these states of transformation labelled conversion. As James Leuba wrote in his conversion study, ‘when the division between metaphysics and science has been fully recognized in Religion, the church will take cognizance of facts only, and leave to independent specialists the post-experiential speculations’ (Leuba 1896:320). Exactly the same problem appears with James: if religion is that which heals the divided self, what is it about religion that has this healing function? Would it not be possible to achieve the same results, through some other means, such as psychotherapy?

Jung answered this question in the positive, and he also borrowed James’ terms to describe the goal of psychotherapy as a healing of the divided self (Jung 1932, CW11: §488-538). Furthermore, at least two of the essential elements of his psychology of religion can be considered as reformulations of methodological procedures borrowed from previous

psychologists of religion—most notably William James and Théodore Flournoy, the two psychologists of religion whose work he highly prized. A third methodological procedure, namely the separation between ‘religious experience’ and its intellectual or dogmatic formulation was probably reinforced by Jung’s reading of James and Flournoy, though its deeper source was Friedrich Schleiermacher. Jung belatedly acknowledged his indebtedness to Schleiermacher in a late letter written to Henry Corbin in 1953:

Your intuition is astounding: Schleiermacher really is one of my spiritual ancestors. He even baptized my grandfather—born a Catholic—who by then was a doctor. This grandfather became a great friend of the theologian de Wette, who had connections of his own with Schleiermacher. The vast, esoteric, and individual spirit of Schleiermacher was a part of the intellectual atmosphere of my father’s family. I never studied him, but unconsciously he was for me a *spiritus rector* (Jung to Corbin, 4 May 1953, in Adler and Jaffé 1991: 115).<sup>6</sup>

Jung acknowledged the role played by Flournoy and James in his intellectual formation in the unpublished protocols of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Together with his friend James, Flournoy was one of the founding fathers of the psychology of religion (Iagher 2014). Even before meeting him, Jung had offered to translate his *From India to the Planet Mars* into German. He also visited him in Geneva during his time at the Bürgholzli. Jung also later perused Flournoy’s account of a case of a contemporary Protestant mystic (*Une mystique moderne*), of which he possessed two copies in his personal library. In the protocols, Jung claimed that Flournoy was an intellectual mentor for him, at a time when he felt that he was too young to strike out on his own. He also thought that Flournoy shared his interests (e.g. in psychical research and religion) and general way of looking at things, at a time when no one else did. He stated that he had borrowed from Flournoy the notion of creative imagination, that Flournoy had taught him how to immerse himself in a case, and that

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<sup>6</sup> It is quite likely that Jung also had a second hand knowledge of Schleiermacher, which he could have derived, for example, from Otto Pfeleiderer’s *Die Religion, ihr Wesen und ihre Geschichte, auf Grund des gegenwärtigen Standes der philosophischen und der historischen Wissenschaft*, 2. vols. (Leipzig: Fues Verlag, 1869), which he possessed in his personal library. As Ellenberger points out, Schleiermacher had his own notion of individuation, though it’s unclear whether Jung was aware of this (Ellenberger 1994: 729).

his Genevan mentor had a wider, more objective outlook that helped him overcome the one-sidedness of Freud. Jung also had a good rapport with James, whom he remembered to have met twice (at Clark in 1909 and also in 1910). Jung claimed that James and him understood each other excellently on the role that religious factors had in the psyche. At the same time, Jung also stated that he found James to be a bit dry, a bit too much of a philosopher and that it was Flournoy that was emotionally closer to him.

Regardless of the depth of his personal feelings towards the two men, Jung borrowed both concepts as well as some of his methodology from them. Firstly, in his psychology of religion Jung reformulated the question about the origin of religion into a question about the religion-making process. Between 1913 and 1928, Jung was engaged in an experiment that resulted in the production of *Liber Novus* and in the articulation of a cosmology and a soteriology. According to his own account in *Liber Novus*, the experience also comprised a divine revelation. In a cryptic letter that he wrote to Adolf Keller in 1915, Jung hinted that the process he was going through would lead to a state of ‘mystical development and unification’:

1st Stage: introversion: separation of the individual from society. This happens not without misunderstanding, because of a too strong sticking together. Hostility and hatred = war.  
 2nd Stage: libido in the mother: resurrection of the archaic = psychosis. Unleashing of the highest and the deepest. An almost anarchic condition, at any rate dissolution of society in the highest degree (dismemberment motif).  
 3rd Stage: hatching out. A mystical development and unification, of which I can say myself only too little, for I can only intuit it rather than think it. For we have barely experienced it so far. The dismemberment of the old is not yet accomplished. The isolation will become terrible. The beginning is given in the national isolation. (Jehle-Wildberger 2014:45).

In 1916, he gave a talk to the Association for Analytical Psychology, in which he further translated this process into the language of psychology, outlining what he called the process of individuation (Jung 1920: 444-474). Starting in the 1920s, Jung began looking for parallels to the individuation process in the world’s religions. The psychology of the religion-making process that Jung articulated in the aftermath of *Liber Novus* can be seen as a synthesis between the two questions of origins

from the comparative religionists and the religious psychologists: like the psychologists, he started from an experience—only in this case, it was his own—and like Müller and Tiele, he tried to compare this experience with what he could glean from the world's traditions.

Secondly, much like some of the religious psychologists before him, Jung attempted to 'naturalise' religion—to make it an indelible part of human nature. This is evident from statements to the effect that the psyche has a religious function. Jung described this function (that of symbol formation), in *Psychological Types* (1921): 'wherever we can observe a religion at its birth, we see how even the figures of his doctrine flow into the founder as revelations, i.e. as concretisations of his unconscious phantasy' (Jung 1946:70). If such concretisations were generally accepted (as was the case with Christ and other religious founders), they turned into 'stereotyped symbolical ideas'—which was Jung's way of referring to dogmas. In his view, religions offered such 'stereotyped symbolical ideas' that expressed 'the stages of unconscious processes in a typical and universally binding form' (Jung 1946:70). The question here is whether Jung's psychological description was in fact any different from such 'stereotyped symbolical ideas' that expressed 'the stages of unconscious processes in a typical and universally binding form'. The problem once again is that once you make religion an integral part of the psyche, and you have a scientific psychology that is supposed to describe that psyche in its totality, at that point psychology becomes a direct competitor to any traditional, or, so to speak, 'religious' description—because it is scientific, and hence more precise. Now Jung says as much in *Psychological Types*, when he writes that:

Our science is also a language of metaphor, but from the practical standpoint it succeeds better than the old mythological hypothesis, which expresses itself by concrete presentations, instead of, as we do, by conceptions. (Jung 1946:314).

This solution may not have been sufficient, as a year later Jung recorded a conversation between the 'I' and his 'soul,' in which the latter pressed him to make the revelation public:

[I]: But what is my calling?

[Soul]: The new religion and its proclamation.

[I]: Oh God, how should I do this?

[Soul]: Do not be of such little faith. No one knows it as you do. There is no one who could say it as well as you could.

[I]: But who knows, if you are not lying?  
 [Soul]: Ask yourself if I am lying. I speak the truth  
 (Jung, RB:211).

As Shamdasani has noted, Jung recoiled from this proposal and sought instead to understand the religion-making process (Shamdasani 2009:62). In an after dinner speech given in New York in 1936, Jung stated: ‘This sounds like a religion, but it is not so. I am speaking just as a philosopher. People sometimes call me a religious leader. I am not that. I have no message, no mission; I attempt only to understand.’ (Jung 1993:98). Jung’s statement was predicated on the notion that he could separate the experience from its dogmatic elaboration. In the Terry lectures which Jung had just finished giving at Yale in 1937, the distinction Jung used was between the ‘*numinosum*’, a term he had borrowed from Rudolf Otto, and the ‘creed.’ (Jung 1937, CW 11: §§6-11). The numinosum represented the defining aspect of religious experience, and creeds were ‘codified and dogmatised forms of original religious experience.’ (Jung 1937, CW 11: §10). This distinction was a recasting of an earlier one he had made in 1923, between the the ‘fire’ and the ‘form’.

In 1923, Jung held a seminar in Polzeath, on the Cornish coast. The seminar was Jung’s first major statement in public about the historical significance of Christianity. In Polzeath, he defined religion as ‘the formulation of a universal attitude’ (Jung 1923:71). The universal attitude was conditioned by certain dogmas, and in order to be universal it had to be assumed unconditionally as well. Christianity, Jung claimed, was no longer a valid formulation of this universal or impersonal attitude. Christianity had only truly been the universal attitude during the Middle Ages. As he put it in a striking sentence: ‘The real Christianity was Medieval’ (Jung 1923:74). The Christian impersonal attitude had gone to pieces because of the Renaissance and the Reformation. As opposed to the Middle Ages, when there was a general sense of connectedness amongst the people of the known world (the same religion, the same science, the same language), contemporary people lived in utter separation from each other. They lacked ‘collective representations’, and had only tribal or at best national representations, as had been shown by the recent war (Jung 1923:68).

People had become unconscious of a general symbol. This lack had resulted in a constellation of the collective unconscious. A new symbol could, nevertheless, be created: ‘creative fantasy could produce a religion in ourselves, because it can produce the symbol by which we live’ (Jung 1923:89). As he put it, ‘the thing that still works in us may

be a religious attitude, but it is not nowadays naturally Christian and need not be Christian everywhere' (Jung 1923:74). In one passage, Jung compared analytical psychology and Christianity. Both of these had a spiritual fire in them, and both sought a form (Jung 1923:79). He said: 'I myself am always seeking form. Well, if we find a form that satisfies our expectations, we are done for.' (Jung 1923:82). According to him, the form, or the church, had taken the life out of Christianity, and Jung wondered if the same fate awaited his movement. He implied that the loss of the fire by Christianity happened because the Church had produced four psychological exclusions (or repressions): 1) of nature; 2) of the animal; 3) of the inferior man; 4) of creative fantasy and freedom (Jung 1923:75-77). By contrast, analytical psychology could rekindle the fire by taking these psychological issues into account (Jung 1923:89).

According to these statements, analytical psychology did come close to a religion, but Jung wanted to keep it from turning into a church. As Shamdasani has argued, it was in the form of psychotherapy that Jung's psychology came closest to a religion, because the role of psychotherapy was to facilitate religious experiences. As Jung wrote in 1943, psychotherapy was a religion *in statu nascendi*—a religion in the process of being born—the idea being not that it should be born, but that it should remain in a nascent state (Jung 1943, CW 16: §181).

As already hinted at above, Jung understood the healing that came out of the psychotherapeutic encounter as similar to the way in which conversion functioned in William James' account in the *Varieties of Religious Experience*. For James, the value of conversion came from its ability to heal the 'divided self'. In 1932, Jung gave a paper at a pastors' conference in Strasbourg on the relationship between psychotherapy and the cure of souls. In it, Jung put forward an argument for why the Protestant *Seelsorger* needed to take up the study of analytical psychology (Jung 1932, CW 11: §§488-538). He argued that neuroses were at bottom problems of a loss of meaning. They were problems that required a philosophical, spiritual or religious solution, not a medical and certainly not a reductionist one. Ultimately, they required an experiential solution, which Jung compared with Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. In a Jamesian manner, Jung described neurosis as 'an inner cleavage, a division (*Entzweiung*) within oneself' which could only be healed by religion or in a religious fashion (Jung 1932, CW 11: §§522-531).<sup>7</sup> As opposed to

<sup>7</sup> Jung probably did not read James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* until after 1919. He had two copies of the book in his library: an English edition from 1919 and a French translation from 1931.

James, however, he did not simply record this, but claimed that he could bring it about. Psychotherapy was thus the answer to the ‘divided self.’

## CONCLUSION

The argument presented here has sought to highlight several elements that Jung borrowed from the psychology of religion that came before him, and from the science of religion articulated by scholars like Max Müller and C.P. Tiele. Firstly, Jung’s central conceptual framework in his psychology of religion was that of the Liberal Protestant theological tradition, whose founding father was Friedrich Schleiermacher. The defining feature of this framework was the sharp separation between ‘religious experience’ and its intellectual translation into dogmas, or between the ‘fire’ and the ‘form’, to use Jung’s language in the Polzeath seminars. Furthermore, Jung did not seem to be bothered by the fact that this model was ultimately Christian, for, despite his forays into other traditions, he never considered himself to be out of the fold. As he told the pastors in Strasbourg, he was ‘on the extreme left wing in the parliament of Protestant opinion’ (Jung 1932, CW 11:§537). Secondly, I have argued that Jung’s comparative study of the individuation process was a synthesis between psychology of religion and the science of religion outlined by theorists such as Müller and Tiele. These latter theorists speculatively tried to understand the origin of religion in a psychological fashion. Having arrived at what they thought was the fundamental experience of religion, they sought out the ways in which this experience was embodied in the world’s traditions. The psychologists of religion brought the question concerning the origin of religion into the present, searching out the ways in which the contemporary individual ‘got religion’ through conversion. Jung combined these into a practice whereby, starting from his own experience, as recorded in *Liber Novus*, he outlined a universal process of individuation, for which he sought parallels in the world’s traditions.

Thirdly, I have tried to show how Jung’s wrestling with the notion of whether his psychology was a religion or not was rooted in the central paradox of the psychology of religion. The idea that religion was an experience that could be separated from its dogmatic or traditional formulation resulted in a situation where either religion was dissolved into psychology, or in one in which, regardless of the intrinsic value of that experience, theological formulations were deemed insufficient and non-scientific, particularly when compared to psychological ones. For Jung, this problem was compounded by the expectation that the analytical encounter would

itself be able to foster such religious experiences. As Jung furthermore stipulated, such experiences bore the hallmarks of the conversion narrative outlined by William James: they were experiences which healed the divided self. For all intents and purposes, Jung's psychology performed the same function as religion. What Jung did not want was for his own psychology to be turned into a creed. In part at least, this came from an understanding that his own categories were makeshift (Hillman and Shamdasani 2013:73). The experience of the numinous overrode any interpretation.

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**THE RECEPTION OF C.G. JUNG IN US  
DEATH AND DYING STUDIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

C.G. Jung's work has had a noticeable impact on conceptions about death and the dying experience, as well as on the therapeutic work methods that deal with anxiety, depression or terminal illnesses. This article analyses the reception of C.G. Jung's work in the United States during the time period 1960-80. It examines ways in which Jung's concepts were discussed and applied by psy practitioners who worked in fields related to death and dying studies (thanatology, palliative care, suicide and near-death studies). Following an examination of Jung's 'Americanisation' in the 1950s and the reception of his commentaries on death, discussed in relation to the reception of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, I will analyse four examples: 1) a psychiatric interpretation of Jung's account of a near-death experience and its comparison with William James' mystical states of consciousness; 2) psychedelic therapies conducted with LSD, in which 'symbolic dying processes' are provoked; 3) suicide studies done on suicide survivors; 4) parapsychological investigation of near-death experience. The examples show that Jung's work was pivotal, allowing psychologists to link it to concepts and approaches to terminal illness and positive or transpersonal psychology. Within the period under consideration, Jung's reception has to be read and understood in relation to the more general reception of James' work, in particular his psychology of religion.

**KEYWORDS**

William James, near-death experience, thanatology, palliative care, *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, LSD therapy, suicide studies, humanistic psychology

It has been widely acknowledged that Carl Gustav Jung made an important contribution to the psychological study of death. Jung's commentary on the *Bardo Tödöl* and his questioning of immortality tend to be highlighted in this regard. Historians have also emphasized the central role that Jung played in the development of the psychology of religion in the West (Wulff 1991). Less has been written about Jung's influence on the development of death and dying studies in North America subsequent to his own death in 1961.

The mid-twentieth century was a decisive moment for both the reception of Jung and the history of psychological sciences. As Jung scholars have shown, the 'Americanisation of Jungian ideas' is crucial for the understanding of the intellectual history and legacy of Jung.<sup>1</sup> Since the turn of the century, American scholars and practitioners played a major role in promoting and remodeling Jungian ideas. Pioneering psychotherapists, especially in New England, applied Jung's ideas in psychotherapy to value the 'actualization of personal potential' (Taylor 1998, 100). Here, I will focus on the reception of Jungian ideas in humanistic and transpersonal psychologies. These emerging fields of research and therapy linked Jung's ideas to the study of cultural, existential or spiritual attitudes towards death. Hence, in what follows, I examine a specific episode of Jung's legacy in the United States, in the context of 'death and dying studies'. For the purpose of this article, I use 'death and dying studies' to designate a series of intellectual and clinical practices developed in the 1950-70s, which addressed death in mental health prevention and treatment, within the context of the creation of palliative care and thanatology.<sup>2</sup>

It is no coincidence that Jung's popular success in the United States developed at the same time as the death and dying studies. The latter evolved out of an intellectual debate in which psychodynamic interpretations were predominant. For instance, concepts such as the 'taboo' or 'denial of death' were promoted (Feifel 1959) to criticise the advances of biomedical sciences and emergency care technologies, which were considered responsible for pushing the experience of dying to the background. In this period, designated retrospectively as the 'rediscovery of death' (Vovelle 1980), psychologists and psychiatrists strongly shaped a psychological definition of death (Martinovic 2017). Drawing on humanist teachings on the art of dying, theories of grief and trauma, but

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<sup>1</sup> See Eugene Taylor's foreword in *Psychology of the Unconscious* (Jung 1991).

<sup>2</sup> I use the term 'death and dying' also specifically in reference to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' influential book, published with this same title in 1969 (Kübler-Ross 1969). See also (Martinovic 2017).

also mysticism and the work of Jung, these psy practitioners promoted the meaningfulness of dying in clinical research, palliative care and the medical humanities.<sup>3</sup> The rise of death and dying studies in the late 1950s subsequently led to the emergence of scholarly work on near-death experiences and psychotherapeutic methods ‘mimicking’ death-like encounters. The examination of these developments, which began in the late 1960s, enables us to reflect on Jung’s influence beyond his immediate circle of followers and in the era generally characterised as Post-Jungian. It furthermore enables us to detect how, and to what extent, Jung’s commentaries on death—in particular his foreword to the *Bardo Tödöl* and his own account about a near-death experience—offered key elements for practitioners to rethink and redesign existing models in psychotherapy, such as the treatment of patients suffering from depression and incurable illnesses.

### THE ‘AMERICANISATION’ OF JUNG

Jung’s reception in the United States has been growing since his first visit to Northern America in 1909 (Taylor 1986; Taylor 1998). In fact, Jung’s affinities with Anglo-American physicians and patients developed already in 1900, at the Burghölzli Clinic (McGuire 1995), which successively led to editorial collaborations, financial support and the establishment of Analytic Clubs. The translation of *Wandlungen und Symbole* in 1916 by Beatrice M. Hinkle (Jung 1991) marked an important moment in the distribution of Jung’s work. If the first decades of the twentieth century can be characterised by personal relationships that Jung maintained with Northern American analytic therapists and Analytic Club founders, the 1950s introduced a shift of attention in the reception of Jung’s ideas, especially in humanistic psychology. There, Jung’s ideas were considerably reshuffled. Abraham Maslow, for example, puts forward the importance of Jung’s contribution for liberating the notion of unconscious from Freud’s theoretical framework, and allowing its comparison with other fields of study, such as Zen Buddhism (Maslow 1976:490-491). Most importantly, Jung’s conception of personality was regarded as paramount in these circles. It presented a historical precursor to the humanist ideals spreading in the US from the

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<sup>3</sup> The *Medical humanities* was officially promoted from 1969 on by the Society for Health and Human Values to commit clinicians to scholarship and teaching in the humanities (Charon and Williams 1995).

1950s onward. Alongside Carl Rogers, Karl Abraham, Gordon Allport, Kurt Goldstein and Jean-Paul Sartre, Jung was included, with his text 'The Development of Personality', in the seminal book *Self: Exploration in Personal Growth* published in 1956. The editor, Clark E. Moustakas, introduced Jung as someone who 'continues to present his unique ideas in personality and their relevance to a world-view' (Moustakas 1956).

What kind of world-view was Moustakas referring to? In other words, what was the 1950s perspective on psychology in the United States, and its contribution to the world?

Post-World War II social sciences have been qualified by historians as a period in which theories on the 'democratic', 'non-authoritarian' or 'open mind' proliferated with regards to personality and its place in culture (Cohen-Cole 2014). Émigré German-speaking analysts, psychologists and sociologists played a considerable role in this development, as they re-examined the relationship between the individual and the collective with regard to political and economic dynamics. The works of Erich Fromm and Theodor Adorno are standard in this regard. At a time when psychology was considered an all-encompassing science that penetrated into the many aspects of daily life, social scientists, including psychologists, explained emotional distress increasingly with the industrial and societal developments of the Western industrial world (Burston 1991). Promoting a collective *Sane Society* (Fromm 1955), psychologists—who were often thinking more in terms of anthropologists and sociologists than clinicians—were part of a broader turn, initiated after World-War II, that brought the prevention of mental health into the centre of attention.

Jung's oeuvre was received within this context that favoured mental health rather than mental illness. For instance, his conception of the psyche as a 'historical structure' that changes over the course of a life-time (Jung in Perry, 1953:vi) strongly connected to humanist psychology and its conception of personality. In his influential book *Becoming*, Gordon Allport referred to Jung to make the argument that 'personality is not what one has, but rather the projected outcome of his [the individual's] growth' (Allport 1955:90). Jung's work also influenced those who were engaged in a non-pathological approach for the treatment of mental illness. John Perry (1914-1998), who would become the creator of Diabasis (a residential facility for adults suffering from psychosis and who were treated without medication) was granted a preface by Jung in his book *The Self in the Psychotic Process* published in 1953. There, Jung establishes his legacy as a forerunner of non-pathological conceptions of mental illness. For instance, Jung claims in this preface that very early on

in his career he had a strong reaction when he heard the medical ‘axiom,’ ‘mental diseases are diseases of the brain’ (Jung 1953, in Perry: v).<sup>4</sup>

Jung cannot be equated with humanistic psychologists or psychologists who were inclined towards critical cultural analysis. Rather, the Swiss analyst was emphasising the value of symbols, the archetype or collective unconscious more so than societal, economic or political structures as the driving forces in personal growth. But, more broadly, his reception in Post-World War II America opened up questions on some urgent matters, such as the relationship between insanity and sanity; medicine and spirituality; living and dying. With regards to Jung’s ‘Americanisation’ in the context of death and dying studies, it is interesting to highlight that Jung’s paper on ‘Seele und Tod’ (1934) has first been published (and translated by R.F. C. Hull) in *The Meaning of Death* (Feifel 1959) before it was integrated in the volume 8 of 1960 Jung’s *Collected Works*. Herman Feifel’s 1959 book was seminal: it popularised the study of attitudes towards dying both among psychologists and the general public. Jung’s ‘The Soul and Death’ was thus chosen as the opening article of the book, introducing the first chapter, ‘Theoretical Outlooks on Death’. The editor of the book presents Jung as the one who stresses ‘the point that the rationalistic view of death tends to isolate man further from his psychological self and underlines the need for psychology to digest certain parapsychological findings’ (Feifel 1959: xii). Gardner Murphy, a psychologist and parapsychologist, who contributes with a paper to *The Meaning of Death*, highlights also Jung’s importance for the discussion of parapsychology, while also criticising Jung’s generalisation about ‘the first and last halves of life’ (Gardner 1959:319).

From the mid-twentieth century on, and especially in the context of increasing interest in the meaningfulness of dying, Jung offered psy practitioners a way to address key issues, when medical science was short of evidence. But, his work also allowed some practitioners to connect experimental psychology to a philosophy of mysticism, as we will see in the following section. To discuss this, let me first start with Jung’s commentary on death, paying particular attention to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

### RE-SITUATING *THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD*

Jung wrote extensively on death-related issues: ‘Seven Sermons to the Dead’ (1916); ‘Commentary on the Secret Golden Flower: A Chinese Book

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<sup>4</sup> This was first quoted in *The Content of the Psychoses (Schriften zur angewandten Seelenkunde, 1907)*.

of Life' (1925); 'Marriage as a Psychological Relationship' (1925); 'The soul and death' (1934); 'Concerning Rebirth' (1939); 'The Psychology of Transference' (1946) (Yates 1999; Shamdasani 2008). Jung also developed his own makings of a theology of the dead in the *Red Book*, which included as well the privately published 'Seven Sermons' (Shamdasani 2009). Yet, two publications stand out with regard to Jung's legacy in death and dying studies in the United States. First, his commentary on *Das Tibetanische Totenbuch*, initially published by Rascher Verlag in 1935, which was translated by R.F.C. Hull with the help of James Kirsch and included in the third edition of W. Y. Evans-Wentz influential *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* in 1957; second, his description of his near-death experience, which was included in *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, published the following year after its German release in 1962. Jung's commentary on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* was an important moment. It resituated Jung's contribution to psychology at the intersection of 'ars moriendi' and Oriental philosophies. Both came to shape psychotherapy in the 1960-70s.

To illustrate this, let me comment on the English-language editing history of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. First published in English in 1927 by Oxford University Press, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, a manual for the intermediate state between life and death (Bardo), was subsequently re-edited by Evans-Wentz in 1949 and 1957. A comparison of the three editions gives significant insight into how death and dying was brought to the attention of English-speaking readers. In 1927, the editor claimed that he was acting 'simply as the mouthpiece of a Tibetan sage,'<sup>5</sup> while also pursuing the aim to 'reproduce Oriental ideas in a form which would be intelligible for the European mind' (Evans-Wentz 1949:xvi). The second edition more directly links the importance of the *Bardo Tödöl* to different traditions of the 'art of dying'. Most importantly, Evans-Wentz establishes a comparison with the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. The latter was an English reformulation of its original meaning, *The Coming Forth from Day*. Equally, *Bardo Tödöl* initially means, in transliterated Tibetan, 'Liberation in the Intermediate State through Hearing' (Lopez 2011:2). Evans-Wentz deliberately chose *Book of the Dead* to cross-reference the meaning of Tibetan Buddhism teachings on death with the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. This was a way for the author to establish the two manuals as the main

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<sup>5</sup> Evans-Wentz, who never visited Tibet, relied on the translation by several Tibetan Buddhist, most importantly Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub, to transpose and articulate the content of the *Bardo Thödol*. For an extensive commentary on the different editions of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, see Lopez (2011), who argued that the latter was a product of American Spiritualism rather than Tibetan Buddhism.

pillars and contrasting forces to the European tradition of *ars moriendi*. The latter goes back to Ancient Greek and Roman traditions of ‘good death’, which were eventually translated into medieval and Christian notions of a pious death and were also taken up by modern medicine (Vovelle 1980; Carol 2004). In the second edition of 1949, Evans-Wentz highlights the main outcome of the *Tibetan Book to the Dead*: to teach the art of dying as an art of living. Interestingly, the editor contextualises the importance in relation to Western developments in medicine in the following way: ‘here in America, every effort is apt to be made by a materialistically inclined medical science to postpone, and thereby to interfere with, the death-process’ (Evans-Wentz 1949:xii). Evans-Wentz puts forward an argument that is then taken up by many anthropologists, sociologists, historians and psychologists, who, in the late 1950s, addressed strong criticism towards biomedical dealings with death (Feifel 1959; Kübler-Ross 1969; Noyes 1970). In the editor’s view, the manual therefore affords an opportunity to the Western reader, who would be willing to follow the prayers of the Lamas, to dissipate ‘that Darkness of ignorance’ (Evans-Wentz 1949:xi). The latter (darkness of ignorance) was also attributed to medicine by Evans-Wentz. In the third version (1957), the inclusion of Jung’s commentary (and a second foreword written by the Lama Anagarika Govinda), exemplifies that the previously emphasised taboo of death in medicine is replaced with a highlighting of the benefits of psychological insights. More particularly, the argument is that *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* helps to introduce Oriental philosophies into Western medicine and science. In this process, Jung plays a predominant role: ‘no greater honor could be shown by the Western World to this Tibetan treatise on the Science of Death and Rebirth than that shown by the most illustrious of the West’s psychologists, Dr. Carl G. Jung’ (Evans-Wentz 1957:vii). Here, Jung plays a significant role because he attests, with his credibility as a Western scientist and practitioner, the understanding and value of Oriental wisdom. Moreover, Evans-Wentz considers Jung as essential, because he offers a contrasting view to Freud. The editor considers the latter as omnipresent in American society and criticises him for his fear of metaphysics, which represents, in his view, the ‘self-imposed limitations of Western science’ (Evans-Wentz 1957:viii). Jung put forward in his commentary of the *Bardo Tödöl* that his approach was a contrasting view to Freud.

The introductory comments by Evans-Wentz make clear that a teaching about death, in 1957, is conceived not in terms of ‘denial’ or ‘taboo’ as most American writers would increasingly emphasise, and who rather referred to Freud (Feifel 1959; Farberow 1963), but in terms of a

‘journey’ to be understood as an initiation into a spiritual realm unknown to the average Western reader. It is therefore no surprise that *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* version from 1957, comprehensive in terms of commentaries, would be read and re-edited at the height of the death and dying studies, in 1964. Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner and Richard Alpert, at the height of the popular experimentation and consumption of psychotropic substances (most importantly LSD)—prominent protagonists in the counterculture—turned the *Bardo Tödöl* into a psychedelic manual. In this book, they compare the first stage of the *Bardo* (*Chikhai*) to a ‘period of ego-loss’, the second to a ‘period of hallucinations’ (*Chönyid*), and finally the third to a ‘period of re-entry’ (*Sidpa*) (Leary & al 1969). In the preface of this book, entitled *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of Dead* (1969), the authors pay tribute to C. G. Jung. They highlight that ‘he [Jung] recognized the rich meaning of the Eastern message’ and knew how to react to ‘that great Rorschach inkblot, the Tao Te Ching’ (Leary & al 1969:20). Similarly, they pay tribute to Evans-Wentz for his ‘role of bridge and shuttle between Tibet and the West’. In addition, and interestingly, they highlight the important contribution of Evans-Wentz to the ‘art of dying’ (Leary & al 1969:17). As I have shown, this aspect has been rather dismissed in the third edition (in contrast to the second edition). In 1957, only Sir John Woodruffe explicitly refers to this dimension in his preface entitled ‘Science of Death’. Jung remains to a large extent rather focused on problems of consciousness than dying. In fact, Leary, Metzner and Alpert lamented that Jung was missing the meaning of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, since he wrote about the travels of the soul rather than the dying process. This aspect is not entirely accurate, as Jung followed the three stages in detail to make his psychological commentary explicit. But it is correct to say that Jung did not link the teachings of the Lama to a possible application in palliative care or the studies on death and dying. Jung’s main purpose was, beyond connecting Eastern to Western philosophies, to find a therapeutic rationale and applicability for the initiation process described by the *Bardo Tödöl*. According to Jung’s view, it is only with the workings of the unconscious that the third phase (*Sidpa Bardo*) (Jung 1957) can be opened. For instance, according to Jung, with the help of the therapist, birth instincts and prenatal elements can be addressed in this stage.

What is interesting about the commentaries made by Leary, Alpert and Metzner is that they do want to consider the manual for its applicability in the process of dying. The latter has to be understood in its psychological and consciousness-expanding dimension. In other words, they make it out to be an experiential and learning process, which can be mimicked and

applied also in other forms that are not life-threatening for an organism, such as meditation, altered states of consciousness, and psychedelic experience. In the following, I will show how the consciousness-expanding studies also concerned academic psychiatry. There, Jung became an important source to build a theoretical model for the experience of nearly dying.

### DYING AND MYSTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In 1944, Jung suffered a heart attack and experienced what he then claimed to be an experience ‘after death’: ‘what happens after death is so unspeakably glorious that our imagination and our feelings do not suffice to form even an approximate conception of it’ (*Letters*, Vol. 1, 343, cited by Yates 1999:6). In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections (MDR)*, Jung recounts this experience. He describes how he traveled outside of the body, from Ceylon to the ‘reddish-yellow desert of Arabia’ and the Mediterranean, encountering on his way, a ‘black block of stone’—like a meteorite—, where he visited a temple and saw a ‘Hindu’ seated in ‘lotus posture’ who was expecting him (Jung 1963:289-293). Along this journey, Jung encounters his treating physician, Dr. H., who appears in his ‘primal form,’ Basileus Kos. This encounter led Jung to believe that he was appearing himself in his ‘primal form’ (Jung:289-293). Subsequently, Jung’s encounter with death was to have an important impact on his life. He addressed this issue on different occasions, notably in a letter addressed to Kristine Mann in 1945, in which he argued that this experience gave him a ‘glimpse behind the veil’ (*Letters* Vol. 1, 358-359, cited by Yates 1999:7).

Read by many psychologists, *MDR* also attracted the attention of those who identified with neither Freud nor Jung in their practice. Russell Noyes Jr is one such example. The Midwestern psychiatrist, who practiced at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, initially trained in psychoanalysis—as almost all psychiatry residents did in the 1950s. He later turned towards descriptive psychiatry, in the lineage of Karl Jaspers and the British School of Psychiatry. But, at the beginning of the 1970s, in order to address the meaningfulness of dying experience and its potential impact for a psychiatric support to patients suffering from incurable illnesses, he turned to Jung. At the time, Noyes also wrote on subjects such as ‘Grief’, ‘The Taboo of Suicide’, ‘Care and Management of the Dying’ seeking to apply his psychiatric expertise to the increasingly growing field of palliative care.

In one of his articles, ‘Dying and Mystical Consciousness’, published in 1971, Noyes cites Jung’s account of his near-death experience at length. Published in the first issue of the *Journal of Thanatology*, Noyes

utilises Jung's personal account to explain the experience of nearly dying in terms of what he calls 'mystical consciousness'. Even though he draws mostly on examples from literature—from Poe's *Descent into Maëlstrom* to De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* and Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*—Noyes gives pride of place to Jung's account. He does so because of the 'real' nature of Jung's death-encounter and his scientific credibility. Noyes, for instance, considered Jung (together with Freud) as 'keen observers' of the 'subjective life' (Noyes 1971:26).

For Noyes, the important part about Jung's narrative was not so much the symbolic content or the archetypal images that the Swiss analyst revealed during his time-space travel. In contrast, he was rather interested in the 'noetic' and emotional qualities of the experience. The psychiatrist gives credit to this idea by citing the following extracts from Jung's account: 'it is impossible to convey the beauty and intensity of emotion during these visions ... I can describe the experience only as the ecstasy of a non-temporal state, in which present, past and future are one' (Noyes 1971:27). Elsewhere, Noyes adds another aspect to credit the 'noetic quality' of Jung's experience: 'I [Jung] had a feeling that everything was being sloughed away: everything I aimed at or wished for or thought, the whole phantasmagoria of earthy existence, fell away or was stripped from me—an extremely painful process' (Noyes 1971:26-27).

Noyes assembles Jung's citations to qualify 5 key aspects of a 'nearly dying' experience: 1) 'ineffability' (the difficulty for the person to talk about the experience), 2) 'transcendence of time' (as perceived by the person who was reportedly in a life-threatening danger situation), 3) 'a sense of truth' (revealed to the subject during the experience), 4) 'loss of control' (the person losing control over the events happening at the time), 5) 'emotional extremes' ('sensations of ecstasy, fear, depression') (Noyes 1971:27-28). In fact, with this qualification Noyes refers to William James' definition of a mystical state of consciousness that he initially defined in four elements. Noyes added to James' definition the fifth element, 'emotional extremes.'<sup>6</sup>

Noyes, who was more a reader of James than of Jung (and who is here interpreting Jung through the lenses of James),<sup>7</sup> highlights the historical connection between the two psychologists, because of their mutual interest in religion. It has been acknowledged by historians that Jung credited the impact that James's work had on his own practice. The

<sup>6</sup> James developed his definition of a 'mystical state of consciousness' in his lectures on mysticism (XVI, XVII), published in *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* (1902).

<sup>7</sup> Interview with the author, May 2010, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City.

Swiss analyst for instance highlighted in the *Protocols of Memories, Dreams, Reflections* that he ‘esteemed James’ openness and vision, which was particularly marked in his psychical research’ and that he was ‘very influenced by James’ work on the psychology of religion’ (Shamdasani 2003:58). For Noyes, Jung’s compatibility with James was due to their mutual emphasis on the meaningfulness of a mystical experience for psychological investigation. This, in turn, allowed him to think further through the psychological mechanisms at stake in the dying experience (if happening suddenly, and in an unexpected way). In addition, their work allowed him to link the spiritual nature of the experience to a broader experimental practice, for instance self-experiments. James was a known self-experimenter and he attested to this in numerous ways, particularly in his comments on the experience with nitrous oxide (James 1882).

It is important to highlight here that James had an important revival in experimental psychology in the 1960s, when a renewed interest in mysticism was also proliferating. Practitioners, who experimented with psychotropic agents, Zen meditation, sleep, and more generally ‘altered states of consciousness’, regularly quoted James and discussed his contribution to recent discussions in philosophy, such as W. T. Stace’s *Mysticism and Philosophy*, published in 1961 (Stace 1961; Deikman 1963; Fischer 1970; Kasamatsu and Hirai 1969). Some examined his definition of mystical consciousness in the form of a scale (questionnaire) to measure ‘experimental mysticism’, for instance Walter Pahnke and William Richards in their study on the effects of psilocybin on priests and laics (Pahnke and Richards 1966). During the 1960s, there was a broader interest in connecting clinical data to ‘altered states of consciousness.’ This expression was meant to convey a non-pathological perspective on experiences that traditionally would have been described in psychiatry in terms of disorders, and even mental illnesses (Ludwig 1966; Bowers and Freedman 1966). Charles Tart’s edited book *Altered States of Consciousness*, first published in 1969, is a particularly good example. It shows how psychiatry, experimental psychology, dream studies, hypnosis, Zen Buddhism (in the laboratory) and psychedelic therapy could be used in a joint effort to promote non-pathological interpretations of mental life, as well as the valorisation of ‘non-rational’ states.

The omnipresence of James’ work in experimental psychology, in particular the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, is indeed striking. James is also frequently cited, because he delivered in this book two pictorially remarkable examples of contrasting forms of mysticism: on the one hand Theresa of Avila (a person), on the other hand Samadhi (a state) (James

1982:400-401, 408-413). In fact, this comparison (and illustration) of two mystical states was discussed by numerous practitioners at the time, and in particular those interested in establishing a theory of consciousness that builds phenomenological bridges between states of insanity, creativity and 'daily rational consciousness' (Fischer 1970). Interestingly, the remarkable representation of two emblematic or idealised forms of mysticism (West and East) was also present in Jung's effort to highlight the importance of Eastern philosophies for Western psychology. In his foreword to Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki's *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (1934), first published in German in 1939 and then translated into English in 1949, Jung refers to 'consciousness' and 'mysticism' to define the nature of Zen. There, he also uses two illustrations of Eastern and Western mysticism: Meister Eckhart and Satori. For Jung, a Zen-like consciousness can be linked to the idea of losing 'ego-boundaries': 'satori is interpreted and formulated as a break-through of a consciousness limited to the ego-form in the form of the non-ego-like self' (Jung, in Suzuki 1964:14).

By the end of the 1960s, the inherent association was made between a Jamesian mysticism, Oriental philosophy and a psychology of transformation. The broad range of psy practitioners took, somewhat uncritically, James' understanding of mysticism and applied it to their own concern, which consisted either in understanding dying or altered states of consciousness. As I have shown, Jung's own account was used to formulate a psychiatric framework that allowed researchers to consider ineffable experience as clinically relevant. Furthermore, the experience of anticipating death was turned into a psychotherapeutic paradigm, as we will see in the following example of psychedelic therapy.

### PSYCHEDELIC ENCOUNTERS WITH DEATH

In the mid-1960s, within the context of the development of psychedelic research and therapy with LSD, practitioners started to use the powerful psychotropic agent for the treatment of patients suffering from incurable or terminal illnesses.<sup>8</sup> At that time, different approaches were practiced within psychedelic therapy, from behaviourist conceptions

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<sup>8</sup> Since the late 1940s, LSD has been administered to patients suffering from mental illnesses (as well as to animals and 'healthy' subjects), initially to elucidate origins and semiology of mental illnesses, most importantly schizophrenia. A shift happened in the mid-1950s, when LSD most specifically was administrated for therapeutic purposes. For a history on the clinical and therapeutic use of psychotropic substances, see Dyck 2008; Tornay 2016.

that aim to reach 'insightful responses' in patients suffering from problems of addiction (Shagass & al 1967) to psychodynamic therapies aiming for lower and repeated doses of psychotropic substances to treat a broad range of 'mental disorders'. Within the latter circles, the reception of Jung's work became a widely established practice. In Los Angeles, for example, Betty Eisner argued for a strong influence of LSD on the 'unconscious activity' (Eisner 1963). She developed her work in dialogue with Ronald Sandison, a Jungian UK therapist who installed an LSD-clinic at Powick Hospital and coined the term 'psycholytic therapy'. The latter refers to a specific agency (of the substance) on the unconscious and explores in the psychotherapeutic treatment creative processes. In Germany, Hans Leuner was equally influential in disseminating psycholytic therapy. He used materials depicted by his patients to whom he administered LSD to provoke a 'symbolic death and rebirth' (Leuner 1963:68). Leuner furthermore considered the 'constituent part of hallucinatory archetypal symbols', as by psychotropic drugs, in line with C. G. Jung's conception of the collective unconscious (Leuner 1963:68).

In the history of psychedelic therapy's application in clinical palliation, Jung's legacy served practitioners to lay out a theory for chemically-induced 'human encounters with death' (Grof/Halifax 1977). The most striking example of this procedure is Stanislav Grof. An emigrated Czechoslovakian psychiatrist, Grof became part of the *Spring Grove Experiment* in Maryland (1965-69), a seminal clinical project that involved numerous LSD sessions. Later, in the beginning of the 1970s, he worked at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Centre, where he built together with his collaborators sessions specifically dedicated to the treatment of patients suffering from incurable or terminal illnesses. Dealing with patients who were suffering from 'aging, disease, physical pain and agony', Grof's goal was to apply psychedelic therapy (using LSD) to address the 'critical aspects of human existence' that often accompany the 'deep realization of the frailty and impermanence' of one's 'biological existence' (Grof 1973:25). He summarised these findings in several books, among them *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research* (1975); *The Human Encounter with Death*, co-written with Joan Halifax (1977); and *LSD Psychotherapy* (1980).

Applying a procedure that is based both on Jung (the idea of ancestral memories and the collective unconscious) and Rankian theory of birth (the idea that pre-birth experiences influence the mental state of an individual), Grof and his co-workers set up a therapeutic procedure that aimed to explore mental material through visualisation processes. His goal was to

work through what he characterised as ‘systems of condensed experience’ (COEX) (Grof 1975:101; 1973). In other words, LSD helped the client or patient to reach different stages of the experience and layers of the unconscious. Although Grof argued that the results of psychedelic therapy depend on set and setting, the therapist’s approach and the individual’s constitution, in principle, the following stages are reached: 1) ‘abstract and aesthetic experience’, 2), ‘psychodynamic experience’, 3) ‘perinatal experience’, 4) ‘transpersonal experience’ (Grof and Halifax 1977:40). The four different categorisations of an experience reached with the assistance of LSD reflect other writings at the time. For example, in *Varieties of Psychedelic Experience: The Classic Guide to the Effects of LSD on the Human Psyche*, a book written in 1966 by R.E.L. Masters and Jean Houston, the authors distinguish between four different layers, or levels, to be reached within a LSD session; ‘the sensory’, the ‘recollective-analytic’, the ‘symbolic’ and the ‘integral or mystical’ (Kripal 2007:256). Masters and Houston’s reference to James’ work on the psychology of religion, here in terms of experimental psychedelic varieties of experience, shows again to what extent James was relevant to the consciousness-expanding and experimental psychology practitioners at the time. James’ work allowed practitioners, for instance, to talk about ‘non-rational experiences’ and to highlight their benefit for mental health or personal growth.

Grof utilised LSD to trigger, most importantly, what he called a ‘perinatal experience.’ This literally means to provoke a state of near-death (a sensation of extreme fear), followed by a symbolic re-birth. In an LSD-assisted therapy imagined and realised by Grof and his co-workers, the therapist guides the patient through different stages of visualisation, of often threatening and traumatic experiences that lead back to childhood. For Grof, the ‘shocking emotional and physical encounter with the phenomenon of death’ is the ‘opening up of spiritual and religious dimensions that appear to be an intrinsic part of the human personality’ (Grof 1973:25). He adds, furthermore, that these dimensions are independent of the ‘individual’s cultural and religious background and programming’ (Grof 1973:25). With the latter, Grof brings into play Jung, arguing that archetypal images of the ‘Great Mother’ and ‘Terrible Mother’ characterise some of the perinatal matrices (Kripal 2007:256).<sup>9</sup> Grof, in line with Rank, considers death and birth on a continuum: ‘the similarity

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to highlight here that Grof was not only inspired by Jung’s work, but also drew on Rank and Freud. His work also has to be contextualised with regards to Grofs’ reinterpretation of tantrism, and psychological theories of sexuality/eroticism and death. See Kripal 2007.

between birth and death—the starting realisation that the beginning of life is the same as its end—is the major philosophical issue that accompanies the perinatal experiences’ (Grof 1973:25). To facilitate a guidance through this intermediate state, which Grof and Halifax call the ‘psychedelic metamorphosis of dying’, four different ‘basic perinatal matrices’ (BPM I-IV) are ideally reached. These can be explained as stages through which the individual evolves, following a symbolic logic that mimics the life of a fetus in the womb until its delivery through the birth canal (Kripal 2007). The four different matrices are: ‘primal union with mother’; ‘antagonism with mother’; ‘synergism with mother’; ‘separation from mother’. During the therapy, the matrices are reached with the guidance of the therapist. Patients produce visual materials after the therapy, mostly drawings. Grof summarises and explains their meaning, as following a death-rebirth experience. For instance, in two illustrations made by the same patient, Grof transcribes the patient’s experience and interprets the drawings as: a ‘suffocation and dyspnea’ (the patient was reliving a rebirth experience), or the representation of the ‘horrors of birth trauma’ (Grof 1975:98).

Grof’s LSD-assisted therapy demonstrates an important aspect of death and dying studies, relevant for the intellectual history of psychological disciplines, in the period under investigation: it laid the foundations for a theoretical framework for transpersonal psychology (Grof 1973). Grof argues in his work that traditional psychotherapies generally tended to exclude the birth trauma. In his view, to conduct a ‘reliving’ of this trauma would allow to liberate some of the generally avoided materials in therapy (spiritual, religious, mythological). With this, he aims to link ‘individual psychology with transpersonal psychology’, and ‘psychology with religion’ (Grof 1975:99). Grof, a therapist, transposes thus a Jungian definition of what exceeds the personal (*überpersönlich*, the equivalent of collective unconscious) into a new paradigm: the transpersonal. He utilises chemically-induced altered experiences and their ability to trigger sensations of *Urangst* in order to establish a new paradigm, along with other practitioners equally interested in spiritual aspects. Together with Abraham Maslow and James Fadiman, Grof was one of the key players in establishing the *Association of Transpersonal Psychology*. To come back to the initial comments made on humanistic psychology, it is important to highlight that when transpersonal psychology first started to be promoted in the early 1970s as a professional organisation, it still largely passed through a validation by humanistic psychology. In fact, several psychedelic studies that were conducted within a transpersonal paradigm, or referring to the ideas promoted by transpersonal psychology, included references to

humanistic psychology, and notions such as ‘peak experience’ and ‘positive psychedelic contents’ (Pahnke and al 1970). When Grof first presented the empirical data of his LSD therapy in accordance with a transpersonal paradigm, he was doing it at the *Annual Conference of the Association for Humanistic Psychology* (in 1972, in Squaw Valley). On the other hand, and to come back to the previous section of the text, ‘consciousness’ at the time was debated (in psychology) at the intersection of humanistic psychology, theory of creativity and psychedelic exploration. A major conference, *The Council Grove Conference on Altered States of Consciousness*, organised in 1969 by the Research Department of the *Menninger Foundation* and the *American Association of Humanistic Psychology*, illustrates this best. It brought together some of the key protagonists to discuss chemically-altered consciousness within the context of human growth and Jamesian psychology of religion: Jean Houston, Stanley Krippner, Robert Masters, Charles Tart, Walter Pahnke, James Fadiman, Carlos Castaneda, Abraham Maslow, Sanford Unger, Joe Kamiya, Alexander Shulgin, and of course, Stanislav Grof.

Grof’s psychedelic encounters with death valued a syncretic approach towards the understanding of dying. The use of LSD for the ‘human encounter with death’, furthermore, allowed the psyche to be resituated outside of the medical realm. This highlights a shift towards transpersonal psychology, where the collective unconscious and archetypal images are valued. The important aspect of Grof’s work and the psychedelic sessions of death-mimicking, was that the experience of dying was associated with a separation from one’s idea of selfhood. The latter would eventually lead, in this perspective, to profound psychic transformation. The symbolic value of this process was furthermore accentuated in the context of suicidology, research on suicidal behaviors in the early 1970s. There, a Jungian approach served not only to qualify the ‘dying process’ but also to structure ways in which the latter could contribute to the clinical practice of treating depression.

### **SUICIDE SURVIVORS AND TRANSFORMED ILLNESSES**

The *American Association of Suicidology*, an association created by psychiatrists and suicide prevention specialists in 1967 in Los Angeles, introduced a major shift in the study of suicide. Rather than preventing suicide (with physical barriers and other measures), the idea behind it was to study behaviors related to suicide, such as the motivations underlying an individual’s attempt to commit suicide, and how they relate to cultural

beliefs, and personality. The works of Edwin S. Shneidman and Norman Farberow are referential in this regard. One example that implemented suicide research more specifically was a study conducted on the survivors who attempted suicide in the Bay area in the early 1970s. Two researchers, Richard Seiden and David Rosen, were involved in the study, which consisted of interviewing 6 of the 8 survivors who attempted and survived a suicide at the Golden Gate Bridge or San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. Rosen, a Jungian analyst, was appointed chief resident in 1974 at the Langley-Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute, University of California Medical Center in San Francisco.<sup>10</sup> In a study published in 1975 (Rosen 1975), Rosen describes the sudden encounter with death during experiences of a fall or jump as ‘mystical states of consciousness characterized by loss of the conventional senses of time, space and self’ (Rosen 1975:293). Referring to Noyes, and hence the refashioning of Jamesian mysticism, Rosen also argued that most of the survivors, ‘during or after their jumps’, ‘experienced a sense of oneness or unity with other human beings and the entire universe’ (Rosen 1975:293). Here, he more specifically refers to Grof to qualify the survivors’ experiences as ‘death-rebirth experiences’, because they represent ‘both an ego-death (a feeling of total annihilation) and a rebirth (with feelings of love and salvation)’ (Rosen 1975:293).

This study shows that there is an evolution (or shift) from a concern for thanatology (or, to say the least, suicide prevention) to a clinical and therapeutic application of the interpreted empirical data. For instance, Rosen applied his empirical research, widely disseminated at the time in the popular press, as was the study of near-death experiences, into his analytic work: the treatment of patients who suffer from depression. In a book first published in 1993, *Transforming Depression: Healing the Soul Through Creativity* (reedited in 2002 by the publisher Jung on the Hudson Book Series), Rosen implements the concept of *egocide* as a tool to generate the creative potential of his patients. This process was thought to lead to substantial transformation in the perception of the self, characterised by Rosen as ‘the archetype of wholeness and eternity’ (Rosen 2002:97). Using techniques from within a Jungian tradition, such as ‘active imagination’, the therapist guides his patients through a visualizing process, in which they imagine their own annihilation (of self). This process is characterized as cathartic and impactful for the healing of a person’s suffering. Drawings and paintings produced by the patients play a major part in this symbolic journey. Rosen calls them ‘healing images’, and qualifies their meaning

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<sup>10</sup> Created in 1941, the Langley-Porter was an important institution for the academic implementation of analytic psychology in the United States (Kirsch 2000).

in terms of archetypes, because they tend to evoke (and therefore represent, in a clinician's view) both positive and negative possibilities. Rosen gives the example of the 'mother', the 'shadow' and frequently refers to the uroboros (the image of the snake eating its own tail) to characterise the experience of no beginning and no end (Rosen 2002: 87).

In addition to promoting Jung's oeuvre in California, Rosen was later also involved in invigorating the relationship with Chinese Jung scholars and analysts.<sup>11</sup> This example illustrates how, within a context of suicide prevention, a study on the psychological impact of the experience (of jumping off the bridge and having a potential near-death experience) on the person became important. This, in turn, allowed the creative potential to be introduced as an essential element in the psychotherapeutic treatment of depression. The strong emphasis on Jung (personal-collective shadow, archetypal mother, the reunion with anima) and Eastern philosophies, shows a different type and itinerary of the Jungian legacy. The latter was not directly articulated (in the 1970s) through *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* or Jung's *MDR* (although Rosen claimed later that Jung's *MDR* had a tremendous impact on his practice), but rather through a reading of Noyes and Grof. For instance, Rosen read the writings by Russell Noyes on the 'experience of dying' (Noyes 1972:174), a study on the accounts of people who have nearly died from sudden accidental causes, and in which Noyes postulated a three-stage scheme of dying: 1) 'resistance' 2) 'life review', 3) 'transcendence' (Noyes 1972). Rosen completed Noyes' interpretation, arguing that those who attempted to commit suicide prepared for the idea of death and therefore did not experience all phenomena that Noyes described ('life or panoramic memory,' for example, was missing in Rosen's view). Rosen further argued that, because of the preparative aspect, suicide survivors would generally tend to have an even stronger personal transformation after a failed attempt. Some of the survivors, for instance, claimed that they found renewed strength in religious beliefs (Rosen 1975).

In this trajectory from suicide studies to a therapy for patients suffering from depression we can also discover the value of symbolic interpretations of a suicide attempt and the subsequent introduction of these insights into therapy. The visual illustrations (drawings from patients) that Rosen reproduces in his book (Rosen 2002) evoke this specific encounter between

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<sup>11</sup> Along with other analysts, John Beebe, Stan Marlan and Ruth Ledergerber, Rosen travelled to Professor Heyong Shen's first *International Conference of Jungian Psychology and Chinese Culture* at Guangzhou University in December 1998 (Kirsch 2000: 221). Rosen wrote also a book, re-interpreting Jung's life in terms of Taoist principles (*The Tao of Jung: The Way of Integrity*, 1996).

Jungian archetypes and the uncovering of unconscious material in terms of death-and-rebirth experiences, as they were emphasised in the ‘psychedelic metamorphosis of dying’ by Grof and Halifax (Grof 1975). The broader context out of which the archetype-personality affiliation evolved is the development of studies that approach suicide in a de-pathologising perspective. James Hillman, for instance, highlighted the individual ‘death experience’ as transformative in his book *Suicide and the Soul*, which laid the groundwork for the establishment of his archetypal psychotherapy (Hillman 1976:56).<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the image-centered therapy and the emphasis on symbolic journey refers also to, yet not in a direct way, Gestalt therapy. There, the ‘hot chair sessions’, as practiced at Esalen, were conceived as a place where ‘old’ and ‘new’ versions of self were debated, ‘killed’, ‘eaten’ or replaced (Perls 1992). In Rosen’s image-based practice (‘healing images’) it is possible to find similar evocations, such as: ‘giving birth to death shit’; ‘giving birth to myself’, and, more colorful, ‘a Symbol of the self-soul emerged out of the Gestapo energy of the destructive shadow and was a hopeful image for [the patient]’ (Rosen 2002:188).

## LEGACIES

What is the legacy of Grof, Rosen’s suicide work, Noyes’ mystical consciousness and the countercultural re-reading of *The Tibetan Book of Dead*? What are the ways in which Jung’s work is still manifested in studies concerned with death and dying?

Scholarly studies on near-death experiences (NDE) are one way to answer this question. Studies on NDE flourished since the early 1970s, although the popular success of this concept is generally attributed to Raymond Moody’s *Life after Life* (1975). The latter set the framework for the general perception and discussion of this subject: it was about ‘survivors’ of ‘death’ and not about testimonies on an experience of ‘nearly dying’. In other words, it was about the spiritual underpinnings delivered mostly by patients to the medical practitioner (cardiologists who reported either patients’ experiences related to cardio-vascular diseases or emergency care treatments). This shift of perception, away from a descriptive approach inspired by the humanities towards questions of after-life (survival of the soul after bodily death), included

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<sup>12</sup> Suicide was also among the key topics to be addressed by thanatologists to discuss the ‘taboo of death’ in medicine and psychiatry, or more generally, ‘taboo topics’ in society (Farberow 1963).

more overtly questions of paranormal phenomena (Martinovic 2017). In these discussions, starting predominantly in the late 1970s (and that reactivate the long-standing tradition of psychical research), the reported narratives of survivors frequently cite the ‘tunnel experience’, travelling through an otherworldly light, or encounters with deceased persons. In this emerging tradition of NDE studies conducted by parapsychologists, Jung’s legacy again came into play. Jung’s ideas about synchronicity, his interest in paranormal phenomena and immortality were emphasised. For example, in an effort to produce a scholarly work on NDE studies, Jenny Yates authored *The Near-Death Experience: A Reader* (1996). This was followed by an edited book on *Jung and Immortality* (Yates 1998).

Another example is Bruce Greyson and his research team in Charlottesville, Virginia. A distinguished professor of psychiatry, Greyson is also the director of the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia, a place with a long-standing tradition in parapsychology.<sup>13</sup> There, researchers connected a whole range of research subjects to NDE studies—telepathy, precognition and other psi phenomena<sup>14</sup>. One of his co-workers, Michael Grosso, a philosopher, wrote an article entitled ‘Jung, Parapsychology, and the Near-Death Experience. Toward a Transpersonal Paradigm’ (Grosso 1982). The article was published in *Anabiosis* (created in 1982 by the *International Association for Near-Death Studies*, later renamed *Journal of NDE Studies*). In this lengthy text, Grosso considers NDE as evidence for the activation of a unique archetype that the author calls *Archetype of death and enlightenment* (ADE). The function of this archetype is the ‘process of enlightenment, a passage toward greater consciousness of the Self’ (Grosso 1982:15). Moreover, Grosso presents ADE as a contributing force in the individuation process. He then goes on to discuss the variety of near-death imageries and their meanings, drawing on symbols from creation myths (Rig Veda, Old Testament) to allegories (Plato’s Cave) and modern philosophy. Ultimately, Grosso’s goal is to establish, with the help of ADE (and via Jung), a transpersonal paradigm. To read Grosso allows us therefore to reach a form of Jung’s reception that

<sup>13</sup> The Institute (DOPS) was founded in 1967 by Ian Stevenson, psychiatrist who brought into academia the empirical study of phenomena of reincarnation. Thanks to an important financial contribution that Chester Carlson, inventor of xerography, left after his death in 1968, the Institute was able to develop its activities and studies into parapsychology.

<sup>14</sup> This effort goes back to the early days (1980s), when NDE research was mostly conducted by transpersonal psychologists, and parapsychologists. In the publications edited by *The Journal of Near-Death Studies*, mentions of ‘soul’ or ‘after-life’ are frequently discussed. But the ‘archetype’ also re-emerged in this literature.

goes all the way back to *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which the author also discusses. Moreover, it enables us to discover how Jung's relevance with regards to death and dying shifted from a previously focused interest in psychedelic science to questions rather focusing on immortality and psi phenomena. Almost two decades later, Grosso would co-edit with his colleagues from Charlottesville the book *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2009). The book aimed to articulate NDEs in a non-pathological perspective. The authors also attempted to answer the neuroscientific investigations into the phenomenon of NDEs, which described these in terms of a brain dysfunction. In the book, the authors attribute an important role to the writings of F. W. H. Myers and William James.

## CONCLUSION

This article took the dissemination of Jung's work in the 1960-80s as a main impetus to examine ways in which death and dying studies were shaped by the reception of Jung's work. If Jung has generally been credited for his impact on a renewed interest in spirituality in psychotherapy, the article has located the debate in a broader discussion on Jung's equally influential role in defining a psychological approach to death, and using near-death as a psychotherapeutic model. The four examples discussed have shown that Jung's reception was shaped around different key aspects: ineffability of the experience (difficulty to talk about it), which allowed Jung's experiences to be compared to James' notion of mysticism; furthermore, collective unconscious and archetypal images as determinant factors of self-transformation to make the process of anticipating death clinically relevant; the preparation for death conceived as a process of loosening ego-boundaries, comparable to Oriental spiritual traditions (egocide).

Psychologists brought into play concepts elaborated by James and Jung, sometimes without going into depth into their works. Rather, the psy practitioners were interested in the application of a psychology of religion to death and dying studies, thanatology (what does death mean in a society marked by enormous biomedical progress?), and more generally altered states of consciousness (valuing non-rational states). As I have shown, the James-Jung association was particularly important in experimental psychology, where studies on ASC, meditation, sleep and psychoactive drugs were conducted to gain insights into mental processes and to articulate a theory of consciousness. The renewed interest in Tibetan Buddhism furthered this association.

That these emergent practices in the field of death and dying studies consistently altered the meaning of both Jung and Oriental philosophies does not question the relevance the latter had and continue to have within a particular field, especially in therapy. A historical investigation into an intellectual history of Jung's reception or legacy, as I have shown it here, therefore cannot separate psychology from cultures: scholarly, clinical, therapeutic, experimental, and linguistic.

To investigate Jung's reception in death and dying studies gives us not only an insight into the 'extreme plasticity' of Jung's concepts (Shamdasani 1999:54), as they were adopted and reformulated in the decades that followed his death. It also allows us to rethink the wider cultural range of psychotherapy. Psychology has shaped notions of death, not only since Jung, but also before (think of Freud's influential considerations on death published after World War I), establishing a link between individual psychology and collective psychology. Dying in the 1910s or 1930s did not mean the same thing as in the 1960s or nowadays (Bromberg & Schilder 1933; Bromberg 1982:89). Neither did the discussion about death, incurable illnesses and individual suffering matter the same way in the past as in the present. Yet, the specifically 1960s-definition of death as being both a psychological and potentially spiritual experience, reactivated via Jung (and James!), continues to shape today's conceptions of dying. The latter is seen as a potentially transformative experience, as well as a meaningful (imaginative) process. This has for example been recently reactivated by studies using psilocybin to treat depression, which shows once again how art of dying and psychotherapy continue to shape the present with the past. These studies frequently cite mystical states of consciousness (often via Pahnke and Richards) and use the category to evaluate the meaningfulness of the psychopharmacological experience of cancer patients (Ross & al 2016). Thus, in these recent clinical trials, one can find a continuous articulation which states that 'mystical psychedelia' would somehow allow the individual not only to cope with death, but ultimately also with life.

With this in mind, the history of Jung's reception in the United States has to be highlighted once again as a consequence of the powerful mid-twentieth century connection between (a Western interpretation of) Tibetan Buddhism and humanistic psychology: the idea that death is a transformative element in one's life, but also an event that extends the imagination of what a self can do. To reach one's full potential (of the self), psy practitioners promote, now and then, therapy, creative activities, or chemical substances to expand the possibilities of the mind. One can therefore question whether these recent suggestions do not ultimately

express 'coping strategies' (in clinical practice) to deal with the more general decline of spirituality, which medicine and psychology have sought to compensate progressively since the mid-twentieth century in different ways: clinical pastoral care, grief counselling, palliative care.

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**C. G. JUNG'S ENCOUNTER WITH HIS  
FRENCH READERS.  
THE PARIS LECTURE (MAY 1934)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article recounts a little-known episode in C. G. Jung's life and in the history of analytical psychology: Jung's visit to Paris in the spring of 1934 at the invitation of the Paris Analytical Psychology Club (named 'Le Gros Caillou'), a stay marked by a lecture on the 'hypothesis of the collective unconscious' held in a private setting and preceded by an evening spent in Daniel Halévy's literary salon with some readers and critics.

**KEYWORDS**

collective unconscious; France; Julien Green; Daniel Halévy; Lucien Lévy-Bruhl; Ernest Seillière.

**B**ased on published evidence, the question of whether or not Carl Gustav Jung gave a lecture in Paris remains rather confused. The editors of the *Collected Works* do not mention such an event, while Jung's recollections as recorded in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* state that he presented 'The Structure of the unconscious' as a lecture in Paris in the course of 1916 (Jung/Jaffé [1962]: 297). In fact, contrary to words that were attributed to him, Jung never presented this work as a lecture in the French capital. The assertion that he did is not supported by the *Protocols of Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, in which Jung makes no mention of it. In addition, France was at war with Germany at that time, and therefore scientific activities and exchanges were relatively limited. 'The structure of the unconscious' was the subject of a lecture at the Zurich Club, prior to being published in a French translation in the journal of Théodore Flournoy and Édouard Claparède, the *Archives de psychologie*, edited in Geneva. Since Jung regularly visited Théodore Flournoy's home in Florissant during the years following his break with Vienna—a gathering place where members of the Geneva school and of the Zurich school met—it is possible that he presented all or a part of this work there, in a private setting.

On consulting the parts of his correspondence selected by Aniela Jaffé and Gerhard Adler, one can see that Jung was invited in 1933 to give a lecture at the Sorbonne but refused. Indeed, he wrote to his Basel student Elisabeth von Sury (1878-1956), who had obviously forwarded him the invitation:

It would look too much like making propaganda for my own cause. I would regard such a procedure as not only unintelligent but misleading as well. I have always acted on the principle that if people have the need to hear me they could also invite me to speak. I would therefore prefer to wait and see whether something will stir spontaneously in Paris or not. I have found over and over again that it is not worthwhile speaking to an unprepared public. My whole psychology is such that it can be accepted only by someone who is ready for it. It is too little in accord with the conscious expectations of the time to be grafted on to something known. So let us wait and leave it to the intellectual development of France whether or not to adopt a positive attitude to this kind of psychology (Jung to Elisabeth von Sury, 14 November 1933, in Adler, Jaffé 1973: 130-131).

As a matter of fact, the invitation did not come directly from the

Sorbonne, but was most certainly issued by the *Groupe d'études philosophiques et scientifiques pour l'examen des idées nouvelles* (Philosophical and Scientific Studies Group for the examination of new ideas). This group was founded in 1922 and led thereafter by René Allendy (1889-1942), physician and psychoanalyst, and his wife, the art critic Yvonne Allendy-Nel-Dumouchel (1890-1935), known by her pen name Jacques Poisson. This group, interested in avant-garde currents, used to welcome artists and intellectuals as speakers. In psychology, for example, Otto Rank, Alphonse Maeder and Alfred Adler each gave a lecture there in the mid-1920s. Jung probably did not know exactly who had issued the invitation, since René Allendy was one of those French psychoanalysts most receptive to his theories, having contributed by his essays to their popularisation<sup>1</sup>. Jung was probably more willing to consolidate the base of his disciples already won over to his cause, rather than fight with academics, fearing that they would judge his assumptions too risky.

Elisabeth von Sury's response was not kept in his archives. However, it appears that she managed to convince him to come to Paris to give a private lecture on 30 May 1934, especially for the members of the psychological club she had founded a few years prior to that date. Before recounting the history of this little-known episode in Jung's life and in the history of analytical psychology, I would like to focus on the events that preceded it the day before, more specifically the evening, that Jung spent in another socially convivial place, the salon of the historian and essayist Daniel Halévy.

### IN DANIEL HALÉVY'S SALON

Daniel Halévy (1872-1962) was the son of Ludovic Halévy, of Jewish origin, and Louise Breguet, who was descended from a long line of

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<sup>1</sup> C. G. Jung and René Allendy met several times the following years. Their first meeting took place in October 1937 during the 9<sup>th</sup> International Medical Congress for Psychotherapy in Copenhagen, where the French psychoanalyst was invited to lecture (Frémont 1994: 116-117). They also met at the annual meeting of the Society for Nature Research, Basel, 7 September 1941, organised by the Swiss Society for the History of Medicine and the Natural Sciences to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Paracelsus' death. In 1945, receiving a book written in tribute to Allendy, who had died prematurely three years earlier, Jung thanked his publisher, saying he was delighted to have 'this memory of a remarkable man' (Jung to Jean Desplanque, 18 June 1945, ETH Zurich). As for whether he was inspired by his work in alchemy, there is no reason to think so. Just as he described in *Psychologie and Alchemy*, his study on *La symbolique des nombres* (*The Symbolism of Numbers*) as a 'very valuable account' (1944-1952, CW 12: §313).

Protestant watchmakers. He made a name for himself by publishing the first French translations of Friedrich Nietzsche's work. He became a passionate follower of Nietzsche at an early age, and subsequently authored a biography that became a standard work. He was close to Marcel Proust, with whom he became friends while he was a high school student, and aligned himself with Alfred Dreyfus, but then made a left turn, approaching Georges Sorel, Charles Péguy, and Paul Desjardins. Director of the 'Cahiers verts' at Grasset (editor of the famous 'four Ms', François Mauriac, André Maurois, Henri de Montherlant and Paul Morand), host of a very popular salon, critic and essayist, Halévy had real 'literary power' in the Paris of the twenties (Laurent 2001).

The historian's relationship with psychoanalysis and theories of the unconscious cannot easily be described. Halévy said he was an admirer of Paul Bourget, one of the very first French writers to pay public tribute to Sigmund Freud—his *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (*Essays of contemporary psychology*) having been 'one of the solid readings of [his] youth' (Halévy 1920, 175). But unlike many men of letters of his generation, Halévy had no particular interest in Freud. Being a regular contributor to the *Revue de Genève*, he had undoubtedly discovered Freud as early as 1920, as well as the published translation of his Worcester lectures<sup>2</sup>. However, he devoted only these few lines to him in 1932:

Freud, Einstein, these are the new masters, the craftsmen today of the abandonment [of nature]. Freud steals our souls from us: what we knew, what we thought we knew about them, was, it seems, only the quick and carefully simplified sight of a distant swell of elementary instincts which is the substance, which is all we are, and which in no way resembles the human idol that we had set up (Halévy 1932a: 53).

As for Jung, Daniel Halévy seems to have discovered the man as well as his works during a gathering on the perimeter of the meeting of the *Europäische Kulturbund* (*European Cultural League*) in Zurich on 1 June 1932. He praised him in an article in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*:

At the forefront of these hosts who welcomed us, I will name the eminent philosopher and psychiatrist C. G. Jung, whom we know so little about in France. He is a prince in his city,

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<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937), Friedrich Nietzsche's muse, and Freud's friend and disciple, visited his salon in the 1920's.

the affable and friendly prince of an entirely republican city. Let us admit that we are often slow in our readings. Belatedly, we read Freud, and today we barely know (or we do not know) that Jung, his continuator and in no way his disciple, breaking up the narrow formulas in which the master imprisons himself, has succeeded in making psychoanalysis an admirable instrument for the knowledge of man and his history, from the most distant to the closest (Halévy 1932a: 2) .

The following year, Daniel Halévy sketched his portrait in slightly different terms in a chapter of his new essay, *Courrier d'Europe*:

The chairman of this evening is Jung, the eminent Swiss psychiatrist and philosopher, whom we do not know well enough in France. Belatedly, we read Freud, we keep to the penetrating but narrow formulas of the Viennese fanatic, and we do not know Jung, this master connoisseur of man, of his history, this great explorer of his ordeals, of his aspirations. Here he is, a perennial and cheerful sexagenarian, and who has this delicious, good-old-boy affability of the bourgeois of Basel, prince in his city, sweet natured prince of a completely republican city (Halévy 1932b: 237).

Daniel Halévy seems to have emerged as an admirer of the man, regretting that he did not have the time and freedom to translate his work. His article ends with these lines: 'I would like to have six or eight months entirely free, to devote them to the study of this great spirit, to translate his work, to make it accessible to our public. This is the task of a younger person, I trust that he will be found' (Halévy 1934: 2). If this had been the case, Nietzsche and Jung would have had the same French translator.

A few days before his departure for Paris, Jung received an invitation from Halévy, who was personally informed of his arrival, inviting him to join him and his guests:

A card tells me that on the 30th, you are giving a lecture in Paris. I found out that your editors did not know it, that my fellows who read and learn from your books also did not know it. I warned them, they can hear you. But I would really regret, I would find it unfortunate that, passing through Paris, the opportunity is not seized to establish a contact between you and your best readers, between you and a few good minds from here.

Would you like to come to my place, Place Dauphine 26, on May 31, June 1 or any other day? I wouldn't burden you with futile assistance, but I would certainly bring together about ten attentive people (Halévy to Jung, 23 May 1934, ETH Zurich).

Jung wrote to him to thank him for his message, saying that he did not intend to stay long, but that he agreed to join his salon the day before the lecture, and said that he would be '*enchanté* to meet his Parisian readers' (Jung to Halévy, 24 May 1934, ETH Zurich).

In addition to journals, literary salons have long counted as high places of sociability and cultural exchange in France. Although the phenomenon was probably not as important as in the previous century, there were still a few in Paris in the *Années folles*, including that of Halévy, which was still very influential at the time (Laurent 2001: 315-320). Halévy's Second Empire salon was located in his vast apartment, decorated by Degas' paintings, on the Ile de la Cité, just a few steps from the Pont Neuf. It was known for bringing together men of letters from different generations and sensibilities. A journalist described the place at the beginning of the decade:

We find representatives of all literary horizons united in good intelligence, under the liberal and penetrating eye of the master of the house. In front of the beautiful waters of the Seine that can be seen from the windows of the living room, Mr Guéhenno and Mr Gabriel Marcel meet each other without acrimony and the most violent polemicists approach each other with a smile (Sygne, 1932).

According to one of his regular guests, 'a fine light, filtered by the foliage of the large trees of the quay, gave rise to a soft and scarcely audible ambiance, favourable to attentiveness and polite discussion' (Mazauric 1972). However, some of his friends like Julien Benda, Romain Rolland, Albert Thibaudier, Jean Guéhenno, or André Chamson were beginning to keep their distance. Formerly known as a left winger, Halévy was ostentatiously drifting towards Maurrassism. His public support for the violent demonstration of 6 February 1934 organised by extreme right-wing leagues soon earned him, in the eyes of some, the reputation of an untrustworthy reactionary (Pellissier 2000; Jenkin & Millington 2015). This was confirmed by the publication in the spring of the anti-parliamentary lampoon, *La République des comités* (*The Republic of Committees*).

It is unfortunately impossible to identify all the guests of this

reception. But the presence of a few personalities on the evening of Jung's arrival is nonetheless perfectly proven. Among them was the philosopher and sociologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939). While this was probably their first meeting, his work was well known to Jung. He had even borrowed several notions from the author of *La Mentalité primitive*, including that of 'participation mystique'. Also present was the writer and poet Pierre-Jean Jouve (1887-1976) who was a regular at the salon.<sup>3</sup> He was probably accompanied by his wife, the Genevan psychiatrist Blanche Reverchon (1879-1974), member of the *Société Psychanalytique de Paris*, and translator of Freud's *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*. (Although the salon was almost exclusively male, it is said that while wives might be invited, they were nonetheless expected to remain silent). One of Jung's most virulent critics of the inter-war period, the philosopher and essayist baron Ernest Seillière (1866-1955), was also present.

For the rest, one is reduced to speculation. One could imagine a few personalities close to the *salonnier* whose present or future interest in Jung's work is acknowledged: Pierre Drieu La Rochelle,<sup>4</sup> Edmond Jaloux, who wrote a foreword to Jung's anthology *Essais de psychologie analytique* (1931), or the philosopher Gabriel Marcel.<sup>5</sup> One might also presume the presence of Jean Giraudoux, Louis Guilloux, André Suarès, André Siegfried, Fernand Gregh, Jacques-Émile Blanche, Marcel Guérin, André Spire, Robert de Traz, François Mauriac, or Henry de Montherlant, if one were to mention the most regular visitors at that time.

Jung himself offered a lively glimpse into this 'nice evening in Paris' during his lectures in London at the Tavistock Clinic in the autumn of 1935, an account which was to his advantage. The Zurich psychologist told his audience that 'very cultivated men had invited' him, and that they had had 'a pleasant conversation'. Asked about national differences, he said he had not hesitated to 'put [his] foot in it', explaining what he thought was psychologically the most clear-cut distinction between the French and the Germans:

What you value is *la clarté latine, la clarté de l'esprit latin*.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre-Jean Jouve reminds Jung of his presence that evening in a letter sent in 1945 (Jouve to Jung, 8 June 1945, ETH Zurich).

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Drieu la Rochelle (1893-1945) had read Jung through the Argentine publisher Victoria Ocampo with whom he had a love affair (Ocampo 2007: 131).

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) said in an interview with Maurice de Gandillac: 'Jung interests me much more than Freud, and I think he goes much further' (Centre culturel international de Cerisy-la-Salle 1976: 225).

That is because your thinking is inferior. The Latin thinker is inferior in comparison to the German thinker.” They cocked their ears, and I said: “But your feeling is unsurpassable, it is absolutely differentiated.” They said: “How is that?” I replied: “Go to a café or a vaudeville [...] and you will notice a very peculiar phenomenon. There are any number of very grotesque and cynical things and then suddenly something sentimental happens. [...] For you, the salt and the sugar have to go together. But a German can stand a whole evening of sugar only. The Frenchman must have some salt in it. You meet a man and say: *Enchanté de faire votre connaissance*. You are not *enchanté de faire sa connaissance* at all; you are really feeling: “Oh go to the devil.” But you are not disturbed, nor is he. But do not say to a German: *Enchanté de faire votre connaissance*, because he will believe it (Jung 1935, CW 18: §95).

The statement that the French mind and the French language are characterised by their clarity is far from original (Swiggers 1987). In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Antoine de Rivarol wrote in his *Discours sur l’universalité de la langue française* (1784): ‘what is not clear, is not French’ (*ce qui n’est pas clair n’est pas français*). Great Germanic writers such as Goethe, Nietzsche and many others also convey admiration for this supposed clarity. In 1928, the Baltic German philosopher Hermann von Keyserling (1880-1946) described the French mind in *Das Spektrum Europas* (*The Spectrum of Europe*) as follows:

while the rest of the world increasingly stresses the irrational powers of the unconscious, France lays the stress, more than ever before, on intelligibility. From this point of view we are at last able to offer a final evaluation of the significance of the French limitation of mind. [...] France can play the leader only in a time of fulfilment, when it is a question of imparting final perfection to an accepted world. The blazing of new paths is not for this race (Keyserling 1928: 61-62).

Jung never gave a complete picture of the psychology of the French people, nor did he for that of other nations. Nevertheless he appears to be in agreement with Keyserling’s reflections. In a review of his essay, he asserts:

Whatever may be perceived on the broad surface, Keyserling

sees brilliantly [...]. With regard to France, he has hit the nail on its head (which is Paris), but the Frenchman buried in the countryside remains invisible, essential though he is to the picture (Jung 1928, CW 10: §908).

Nevertheless Jung goes beyond this *topos*, or rather myth, in linking the supposed French clarity to his theory of psychological types. Thus, after having classified different psychological types and functions on an individual scale in *Psychologischen Typen* (1921), Jung tried to apply this methodology to the area of nationalities and peoples, or, in other words, to collective psychology (Pietikäinen 1998). And in this manner, France and Germany would oppose each other by their 'rational function', thus giving a psychological explanation for the two wars that had opposed the Western Europe's 'hereditary enemies'.

Probably expecting Daniel Halévy to invite only an audience of admirers or benevolent readers, Jung may have been surprised to have to face a small group of detractors, determined to cross swords with him. Indeed, it is also known that Jung confided to an American friend, who was also undergoing analysis with him, that his conception of a collective unconscious was fiercely debated by a small group of guests. Some of them expressed their opposition, with the notable exception of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Daniel Halévy, both of whom, as Jung pointed out in Cabot's account, were Jews. However, it was said that Halévy was habitually self-effacing, ensuring that everyone had a chance to speak, turning the discussion to other topics from time to time, and most often trying to show his guests off to their advantage. But the others would have protested, with Baron Ernest Seillière first and foremost: '*Mais cher Monsieur, c'est de la religion*' ('But dear Sir, this is religion') (Cabot 2001: 345).<sup>6</sup>

Actually Ernest Seillière did not wait to meet him personally in

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<sup>6</sup> Catharine Rush Cabot writes: 'He then told me how once he was invited to a meeting of famous French scientists. At the meeting there was Halévy (a famous biographer of Nietzsche) and Lévy-Bruhl. He said that they inquired about "my concept of the Collective Unconscious. Another man present, the Baron de Ségur, said that my concept of the Collective Unconscious was a mystical conception. I explained to the scientists that it produces the myths of the world, a part of the human mind which functions everywhere. No one understood except Halévy and Lévy-Bruhl, who were Jews. The others said, '*Mais cher Monsieur, c'est de la religion*'. I replied, 'Do you call that "religion" when I tell you that I am a professor of the research of myths?' But they couldn't understand, and then I saw that the corresponding thing to the concept of the Collective Unconscious was for a Frenchman the Church". Cabot obviously confuses the so-called 'Baron de Ségur' with Baron Ernest Seillière. Jung may also remember his book *Nietzsches Waffenbruder, Erwin Rohde* (1911), of which he had a copy.

Halévy's salon to debate, or rather, discredit his theory of the collective unconscious. If he considered this theory 'infinitely more acceptable... than Freud's uniformly sexual psychology', his essay on *Le Néoromantisme en Allemagne (Neo-Romanticism in Germany)* (1931), denounced the supposed dangers of a 'mystical and imperialistic pangermanism'. It sought to unmask what he considered to be Jung's disguised metaphysics as leading to the deification of the Hartmanian and Freudian concept of the unconscious (Seillière 1931:60). The Parisian aristocrat seems to have taken advantage of the opportunity to offer the guest a copy—unsigned—that Jung kept intact and unread in his library. Seillière would take advantage of the publication of the first French translation of *Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Ich und dem Unbewussten* to tell his readers that:

Mr Jung does not readily accept being called a mystic because he bases his theoretical views on his vast experience as an empirical psychologist. It seems to me, however, that when he synthesizes them, he nevertheless moves toward the deification of the Collective Unconscious in order to form an alliance with it. In my view, this is the very definition of mysticism and the most fruitful of all in drawing enlightening conclusions (Seillière 1938: 3).

Considering that an in-depth discussion with Halévy's guests would be futile, Jung came to the conclusion that what would best correspond to the collective unconscious for a Frenchman could only be the Church, and that their Catholicism was an obstacle to the discussion. He asserts during his seminar on Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* a couple of weeks later:

I had an opportunity lately to talk to some French people who are Catholic to the marrow of their bones, and for them that whole sphere of psychological or religious experience, which is so conspicuous in primitives for instance, simply does not exist. It does not exist, because it is in the church. But then you would assume that they believed in their Catholicism. Not at all! They are Catholic with an a, a-Catholics, but they are in the church. [...] They organise themselves most probably in a free-thinking society or a society for atheist propaganda. But their whole psychology is still in the Catholic Church in its positive or negative form (Jung 1989:96).

Irritated by their attitude, he ends up with an unflattering

comparison of his interlocutors with the penguins of the Anatole France's novel, *L'Île des pingouins* (*Penguins Island*):<sup>7</sup>

To say anything about Nietzsche, or to mention analytical psychology to such people, is perfectly preposterous—you could talk to the penguins just as well. I felt like St. Malo, only I was not blind and deaf: I saw that they were penguins. They were only the conscious half of man—the unconscious didn't exist—and the conscious half was the walls of the church (Jung 1989: 96).

Obviously, this evening at Halévy's parlour did little to change his opinion of the French about whom he had said almost ten years earlier during another seminar:

Their rationalism is blocking them at every point. They have an exact view about everything and know what it is to the last dot. They exhaust themselves in that fight. Because of this knowing how everything works, they are inclined to depreciate the immediate facts of the soul, and to assume that everything is the result of an old civilisation (Jung 2011: 167).

One is also reminded of these remarks reported by Jung's French translator and disciple, Roland Cahen, in his preface to *L'Homme à la découverte de son âme* (1944) (*Man in Search of his Soul*), which seem to directly echo what transpired during this Parisian evening:

In his opinion, the French, as far as concerns the mind, are little open to empirical viewpoints and the demands of phenomenology. They are either under the influence of the Church, which gives an answer to questions that seem lawful to them and hinders others, or they leave the Church and try to attack her from the outside. But, in either case, the Church occupies a place of honour for the French spirit, which tires and exhausts itself by wondering whether the Church's truth is valid or not. This central concern

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<sup>7</sup> James L. Jarrett notes that Jung confuses St. Malo with another figure of the novel, St. Muel (Jung 1989:96 n. 8). Besides a copy of *L'Île des pingouins* (1908), Jung had other books by Anatole France (1844-1924) that he appreciated a lot (as did Freud and Ferenczi), frequently quoting regularly his saying: 'Les savants ne sont pas curieux.' Jung possessed indeed *Le jardin d'Épicure* (1895, 1908 edition), *L'Orme du mail* (1897, 1919 edition), *La pâtisserie de la reine Pédauque* (1893, 1909 edition) and *Sur la pierre blanche* (1905, 1906 edition), all in French.

leaves little room, little fresh receptivity to new concepts that might upset the traditional debate (Cahen 1944: VI-VII).

A few weeks after this evening, Daniel Halévy published a portrait of ‘the illustrious master of Zurich’, whom he says he was ‘happy’ to receive and hear, considering that he deserved ‘our attention much more than we have so far given it to him’. Halévy presents Jung as a ‘lively, talkative, inexhaustible storyteller’, with the look of an ‘athletic fifty-year old’, and most importantly as the one who knew how to ‘unblock the impasse’ in which Sigmund Freud had taken psychoanalysis:

Freud discerns only the repressed elements of individual life, Jung sees life as immense. Imagine a night landscape through which passes a beam of light, stopping here and there; this is our soul, the part that we know is contained in the thin, moving, luminous space. Dark or bright, it lives completely like the landscape with its flora, fauna, and a past from which nothing dies: it contains energies, richness that we can barely see. This is Jung’s main idea, and the origin of his research (Halévy 1934: 3).

Receiving a copy of the journal, Jung wrote to Halévy in August thanking him for his ‘kind letter’—which has not been preserved—and for his article, which had ‘greatly interested him’. And in return, he sent him a collection of his articles, probably *Wirklichkeit der Seele*, which had just come off the press (Jung to Halévy, 17 August 1934, ETH Zurich). Their exchanges were probably not continued.

As for Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Jung had the opportunity to speak with him again when he was invited by the Psychological Club to give a lecture in Zurich on 9 February 1935 on ‘L’expérience mystique des primitifs’ (‘The mystical experience of the primitives’) (Lévy-Bruhl 1936-1937; 1938).<sup>8</sup> Shortly after his return to Paris, the sociologist sent him a copy of his essay on *La Mythologie primitive* (where he uses

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<sup>8</sup> Lucien Lévy-Bruhl’s diary gives some details about his stay in Zurich. On 8 February 1935, the day of his arrival, he had lunch with Toni Wolff, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Markus Fierz and Linda Fierz-David, followed by a lecture at the *Naturforschende Gesellschaft* in the evening. The next day, he had lunch in Küsnacht with the Jung, Marie-Jeanne Schmid, the Fierz and Toni Wolff, and then gave a lecture at the Club. On the 10th, he met Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn again (who invited him to Ascona), and had lunch at the Zurich main station with Toni Wolff (who obviously asked him to contribute to Jung’s *Festschrift*), before taking a train back to Paris (Lévy-Bruhl 1935b). On their meeting in Küsnacht, see also de Angulo 1977: 170-171.

the term of 'archetype' once, but in a rather vague sense), 'in memory of his very kind welcome'.<sup>9</sup> Jung only merely confirmed receipt (Jung to Lévy-Bruhl, 21 February 1935, IMEC), but obviously read this book carefully; his copy of that volume containing many pencil marks. A few weeks later, in a letter to Jolande Jacobi, he described his guest as a 'delightful relic', praising the material of his books for their 'priceless value', saying also he regretted that he failed to bring anything new to the occasion of his visit to Zurich. (Jung to Jacobi, 12 March 1935, ETH Zurich). Jung finally expressed his 'very sincere gratitude' after receiving the *Festschrift* that the Zurich Club offered him for his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday (Jung to Lévy-Bruhl, 31 July 1935, ETH Zurich) for which Lévy-Bruhl wrote a special article on the initiation of medicine men (Lévy-Bruhl 1935a).

We also know that Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, the founder of Eranos, offered Lévy-Bruhl to come to Ascona in August 1935, but he told her that his chances of being unoccupied at that time 'were very small'. He confirmed his refusal a few weeks later in a letter, probably addressed to Baron Eduard von der Heydt, saying also that he read the first two volumes of the *Eranos-Jahrbücher*, stating: 'The 1934 one, which I recently received and which I have just read, interested me even more than the first one; it throws a lot of light on questions of capital importance' (Lévy-Bruhl to Eduard von der Heydt, 26 April 1935, Fondazione Eranos). Fröbe invited him a second time the following year, and obtained a personal interview at his Parisian home (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn to Lévy-Bruhl, 28 October 1935, IMEC). Although he still refused to come, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl seems to have accepted to play an intermediary role between Eranos and the French academic world to make the work of the circle known (Fröbe-Kapteyn 1942: 3). The 1936 *Tagung* was indeed marked for the first time by the presence of French scholars (Paul Masson-Oursel, Henri-Charles Puech and Boris Vysheslawzeff), thus compensating for the enforced absence of several German speakers, prevented from attending by the Nazi government<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Before going to Zurich, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl had passed through Vienna where he conversed with Sigmund Freud. The latter will say about the French scholar: 'He's a real savant, especially by comparison with me.' Lévy-Bruhl also sent him a copy of his *Mythologie primitive* for which Freud sent him a thank-you note (Freud to Lévy-Bruhl, 20 February 1935, IMEC).

<sup>10</sup> Upon hearing the news, Jung expressed his disappointment to his German friend Gustav Richard Heyer (1890-1967), complaining that they shall have to speak French or English during the *Tagung*. He then concluded with this Latin formula: 'O quam mirabilis sunt viae vestrae!' (Oh, how strange are your ways) (Jung to Gustav Richard Heyer, 1 August 1936, ETH Zurich).

### ‘THE HYPOTHESIS OF COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS’

Since the founding of the Zurich Club, Jung had given private lectures or seminars to his followers in various groups or associations on a regular basis, bringing together some of his collaborators and patients. Wishing to test his latest theories and studies with an audience familiar with his thoughts, he often rehearsed his ideas in front of members of the Zurich Club, who were privileged to preview his upcoming lectures and his work in progress. Jung also accepted to speak more sporadically at the invitation of different groups of admirers living abroad, a sure way of building a lasting relationship with his disciples. Thus, after England, where he held several seminars in the 1920s, and Berlin, where he gave a seminar two years after the foundation of the *C. G. Jung-Gesellschaft*, he went to Paris, not to give a seminar but a single lecture. The reason for this is that the French Club remained very discreet and secret in comparison with the others, and none of its members were doctors or psychiatrists but only amateurs, with the exception of Elisabeth von Sury, who was a lay-analyst.

The initiative of this Parisian association came from Elisabeth von Sury, a founding member of the Zurich Club. Unfortunately, not much is known about her. The Club published in its yearbook an obituary, paying tribute to her ‘benevolent, noble and gracious nature’, her ‘warmth’, her sense of compassion, her sense of humour and her ‘exemplary commitment’ (*Psychologische Club Zürich 1956-57*: 12). Nurse by training, analysed by C. G. Jung, Elisabeth von Sury first practised analysis in Riehen, in the canton of Basel. She was the aunt of Jung’s personal secretary Marie-Jeanne Schmid, herself the daughter of Marthe Guisan and Hans Schmid, of whom she was also the former pupil and close friend. For unknown reasons, Elisabeth von Sury moved to Paris at the beginning of the twenties, becoming the very first Jungian analyst in France. She was perhaps even the very first psychoanalyst to be installed in the country.<sup>11</sup> Over the years, a patient base was formed, probably by word of mouth, and essentially from the Protestant bourgeoisie living nearby. In the autumn of 1926, she encouraged her analysands to meet at her home so that they could jointly study Jungian theories on the model of the Zurich Psychological Club. Hence they formed one of the first French associations grouping analysts or patients in psychotherapy in order to collectively deepen the study of a psychological doctrine. The French Club, named ‘Le Gros Caillou’ in

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<sup>11</sup> Perhaps Elisabeth von Sury, like Eugenie Sokolnicka (1884-1934) with Freud, received in 1921 a kind of mandate from C. G. Jung to thwart the development of the Viennese school in Paris.

reference to the neighbourhood in Paris where most of its members lived, thus appears as the first Jungian association in France, and, after Zurich and London, as the third psychological club in Europe and in the world.

A few weeks after the premature death of Hans Schmid-Guisan, who had sponsored the Paris Club in its early years, Jung and his wife went to the French capital for their first visit in July 1932—a little over a month after going to the Alsatian Pastoral Conference in Strasbourg (Jung 1932, CW 11: §§ 488-538). However, only his wife Emma Jung gave a lecture—presumably in a strictly private setting—on the theme of the animus, which was later followed by several working sessions in the Club.<sup>12</sup> On his return home, C. G. Jung wrote to their president, Jean Bruneton, that he had ‘an excellent memory of the evening at the Gros Caillou and especially of the dinner with [his] family’, whom he said he had ‘been very happy to meet’ (Jung to Bruneton, 18 July 1932, ETH Zurich). A good part of this Protestant religious family probably attended the dinner. In addition to Jean Bruneton (1872-1952), an engineer with a passion for analytical psychology, and his wife Cécile (1879-1940), Jung shared dinner with Jean’s brother, Gaston Bruneton (1882-1961)—known by historians for his role in the Vichy regime and his personal relationship with *maréchal* Philippe Pétain in the forties (Arnaud 2000)—, his wife, Jeanne (1888-1973), and their sister Marie Bruneton (1877-1962), a social worker actively involved in the *Union Chrétienne de Jeunes Filles*, the French branch of the Young Women Christian Association. Most of them had been patients of Hans Schmid-Guisan, and following his death, Jung had given a few sessions of analysis to Jeanne and Marie Bruneton.<sup>13</sup>

His lecture, which took place in a private setting, was held on 30 May 1934. That evening, the audience was made up of at least forty people, according to Jean Bruneton’s estimate (Bruneton to Jung, 25 December 1933, ETH Zurich). There were perhaps even more, since some guests may have arrived at the last minute thanks to Daniel Halévy. In addition to the members of the Gros Caillou, one can suppose that Jung’s daughter, Gret Jung-Baumann and her husband Fritz Baumann might have

<sup>12</sup> ‘On the Nature of the Animus’ was read at the Psychological Club of Zurich 21 November 1931 and was first published, in a slightly expanded form, in *Wirklichkeit der Seele* (1934). See E. Jung 2004.

<sup>13</sup> See their correspondence kept at the ETH Zurich.

been there. They lived near Paris at that time, and contributed from time to time to the life of the Club.<sup>14</sup> It is known that Jung's disciple Jolande Jacobi was present; Jung asked Jean Bruneton to send her an invitation. His translator Yves Le Lay may have made a special trip, as well as his friend and former patient Emil Medtner, who supervised the edition of his French translations. There were undoubtedly several personalities whom he had met the day before: Daniel Halévy, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Ernest Seillière, and the couple Jouve-Reverchon. One also knows of the presence of Édouard Pichon, another member of the *Société Psychanalytique de Paris* and Pierre Janet's son-in-law, who was then trying to work out of a synthesis between Janet's theories and psychoanalysis (Pichon 1934: 63).<sup>15</sup> And it is quite probable that his young friend and follower, the future leader of the French psychoanalytic movement, Jacques-Marie Lacan, was also there.<sup>16</sup> One can equally assume the presence of Fernand Aubier, who

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<sup>14</sup> In 1926, Fritz Baumann obtained a job in France to represent the interests of Georg Fischer, a Swiss industrial company, selling tube components (or similar) and settled in the Paris region, in Bellevue en Seine-et-Oise (now Meudon in the Hauts-de-Seine). With their two children Dieter, and René (who later translated several books under the direction of Roland Cahen *Présent et avenir*, and *Un mythe moderne*). A third one, Wolfgang, will be born on French soil. The family lived in France for twelve years until World War II broke out.

<sup>15</sup> Édouard Pichon (1890-1940) wrote: 'In a very interesting private lecture given by Mr. Jung, which I had the honour of attending, this author, after quite rightly protesting that sexuality did not represent the entire content of the unconscious, came to bring out the role of the "male principle" and the "female principle" in the psychic productions (mandalas) that he presented to his listeners.' It is quite possible that Pichon's stepfather, Pierre Janet, was also invited. However, it is known that Janet was in Switzerland at that time, since the University of Geneva awarded him an honorary doctorate *ès-sciences psychologiques* on the occasion of his 75th birthday, which he celebrated that day. This award was presented to him at the solemn commemorative session of the 375th anniversary of the University of Geneva on 4 June 1934.

<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) acknowledges, during his first seminar, that the interest of the Jungian investigation de par 'the parallels it establishes between what some mental or religious askesis produces and what a schizophrenic produces' (Lacan 1991: 116), which is precisely what the lecturer did indeed attempt to show that evening of June 1934, stating in particular the 'psychic orientation that the images of yoga seek to obtain is in perfect analogy with the goal to which his patients tend by performing drawings of the same kind' (Jung 1934). On the other hand, the analogy that the Parisian psychoanalyst would later draw up between Jung and Jakob Boehme can be interpreted as a reminiscence, or at least an allusion to the part of his presentation devoted to the so-called mandala named the 'philosophical eye' or the 'inverted eye' of the German theosophist (Lacan 1991: 496). Jacques Lacan's presence at the meeting of the Swiss Association of Psychiatry, in Prangins, October 7-8, 1933 at which Jung gave a short lecture 'On Hallucination' (1933, CW 18: §1113-1114) is proven, as evidenced by the review he devoted to that event (Lacan, 1933). But the

would have come to meet the author with whom his publishing house, the *Éditions Montaigne*, had just concluded an agreement, as well as a person in charge of the *Librairie Stock*, in particular Maurice Delamain. Other well-known or emerging writers were also present: Edmond Jaloux; Jean Cassou who wished to publish a French translation of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*; and the young Franco-American writer Julien Green, who wrote a relatively brief but lively account of the evening in his *Diary*.

It is not possible to determine the venue of the lecture. However, Julien Green (1900-1998) spoke about the Boulevard Malesherbes in the 17<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* of Paris, not far from the Parc Monceau and the Cernuschi Museum of Asian Arts (Green 1990: 1526).<sup>17</sup> He describes the place as 'a long room of the period of Henri II', decorated with a 'lofty fireplace of the baronial type'. Green adds, 'a hideous pane of stained glass concealed an electric light bulb which cast a sinister light' on the audience, according to the young writing, essentially composed of Germans. No doubt Green did not distinguish the Germans from the Swiss-Germans, nor the French-speaking Germans. The lecturer is 'a tall old man, with sanguine complexion and a white moustache. He was in evening dress, and with a calm, quiet delivery he told us the most astonishing things' (Green 1939: 172). Jung is in his 59th year. From October, he delivers a series of courses on 'Modern psychology' at the *Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule* in Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute for Technology), which attracts a large audience. Rumours also began to spread, accusing him of anti-Semitism and sympathy for the National Socialist ideology because of his involvement in the International General Medical Society of Psychotherapy, and following a polemical article published in the *Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie*. However, it seems that at this time only a small number of French people have begun to hear about it.

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supposed meeting in 1954 between C. G. Jung and Jacques Lacan, organised by Jung's disciple Roland Cahen, seems more than doubtful. Other than Lacan's assertion that he would take from 'Jung's mouth' the word that Freud before their arrival in New York would have told him that he would bring them the 'plague', nothing confirms it. Roland Cahen's account, collected by Elisabeth Roudinesco for his biography of Jacques Lacan, and presented as the only proof of this meeting, seems to us to be subject to caution (Roudinesco 1993: 348). Roland Cahen, who admits that he did not attend the meeting, seems above all to have wanted to play a beautiful role by appearing alongside his two major figures in 20th century psychiatry.

<sup>17</sup> Green says during this interview: 'I remember attending a lecture of Jung with Edmond Jaloux and Jean Cassou in June 1934. It was a beautiful evening, boulevard Malesherbes, a deserted and silent boulevard Malesherbes. The lecture was very interesting. Pr. Jung had shown that there was a connection between magic drawings of India and Tibet, known as "mandalas", and drawings of children or mentally ill'.

This talk was the resumption of a lecture given on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1932 at a meeting of the *Naturforschende Gesellschaft* (Society of Natural Sciences) at the Swiss Federal Institute for Technology, and at the Zurich Club on 5<sup>th</sup> March of the same year, of which only a summary was published (Jung, 1932a).<sup>18</sup> It was translated into French by Marthe Schmid-Guisan, and corrected by Jung as shown in the original typescript (1934). No doubt he had thought of adapting it to his audience, as he explained previously in an interview to Jean Bruneton:

In Germany, the audience is always attentive; they understand me no matter how I speak. In the United States, I always have to be active; there, they want a live speaker! But in French-speaking countries, if the beginning is not perfect, if the form is deficient – nobody listens to me! (Bruneton 1933: 687-688).

In this lecture, Jung retraces the genesis of the notion of the unconscious in psychology. He then goes on to elaborate his concept of an unconscious whose contents are characterised by a strong autonomy, and which would come from a layer of the unconscious psyche ‘existing in all men and being everywhere identical in itself’, called the collective unconscious. Explaining that he encourages his analysands to sketch their inner experiences, he presents a series of drawings to his audience that were done during his patients’ treatment. He compares them to certain elements in mandalas from oriental art of the medieval and Renaissance periods, notably through an evocation of the German mystic and theologian Jakob Böhme. Julien Green summed it up fairly faithfully:

According to him, in the depths of our unconscious selves we all carry certain ideas which are a heritage from a distant past common to every race of humanity. Some patients of his whom he asked to make drawings have unconsciously reproduced symbolic signs of extreme antiquity, known only to Orientalists; for example, the mandalas, or magic circles adorned with cross and serpents. His meaning was made clear

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<sup>18</sup> In a letter to Wolfgang Kranefeldt, Emma Jung wrote: ‘C. G. gave a very interesting lecture on ‘The Hypothesis of the Collective Unconscious’ at the Naturforschenden Gesellschaft on Saturday and also in the Club, with a lot of comparative pictorial material, which was certainly very puzzling for many of these “naturalists”, but was welcomed by some with great interest and enthusiasm.’ (Emma Jung to Wolfgang Kranefeldt, 3 March 1932, Zentralbibliothek Zurich).

by the use of lantern-slides. Certain Tibetan or Hindu drawings have their counterpart in drawings of children of seven to twelve years of age. (The two serpents with one gigantic eye, rising from the surface of the water. The cross enclosed within a circle — I thought of *Atlantis*) (Green 1939: 172-173).

One of the drawings particularly struck his imagination, as he alluded to it several times in his diary. In the days that followed, Green wrote that he recalled a Tibetan image 'of an infinite complexity, the contemplation of which brings on death'. He recalled this evening again in January 1948, remembering the lecture 'on the drawings of madmen, many of which bore traces of thousands of years of memory: an illiterate person reproduced, for example, a picture of an extreme complexity which had no equivalent except in Tibetan art' (Green 1975: 321). He acknowledged that he was inspired by 'this theory of the memory of humanity, a great common source from which we draw constantly' when he wrote *Varouna* (1940) (translated under the title *Then Shall the Dust Return*), a novel whose action extends over a thousand years, in which he assumes that 'two beings, spiritually united by an unconquerable attraction, meet from century to century, recognise and love one another' (Green 1941: IX).<sup>19</sup>

It is not known whether this lecture was followed by a debate with the audience. However, Julien Green reports on a rather unpleasant episode at the end of the talk: 'The lecturer, on being asked whether he would be returning to Paris, shook his head with a fierce smile. No!' (Green 1939: 173, translation modified). No doubt Jung was sincere when he told Jean Bruneton that he maintained 'a very good memory' of his Parisian stay (Jung to Jean Bruneton, 5 June 1934). But this lecture, which was never published, was indeed his last public talk in René Descartes's country.

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<sup>19</sup> Julien Green notes in his diary that he discussed the idea of the collective unconscious after the conference with Jean Cassou and Edmond Jaloux after Jung's lecture: 'All three of us left together to gossip until 1 p.m. in a cafe on the place Pereire. They believe that constants exist in the human brain that would partly explain these strange drawings. Certain ideas, certain emotions are always expressed in the same way. They made no attempt, however, to explain by any reasoned arguments certain coincidences which are almost incomprehensible. So far as I myself am concerned, I wonder whether those mysterious signs may not be an unconscious memory of some antediluvian writing. There are so many things we inherit from our parents and from our great-grand-parents. Why should not this inheritance come down to us from a very remote period, going back to the first beginnings of humanity? We are crammed full of memories'.

## EPILOGUE

C. G. Jung must have concluded that France, with its powerful reservations about psychoanalysis in the pre-war period, was one of the most reluctant countries in Western Europe to accept his psychology. His main priorities being, on the one hand, the conquest of Germany, then largely in support of Freud's and Adler's theories (which remained his main ambition in Europe, even to the point of compromising himself with personalities close to the Nazi power), and on the other hand, the Anglo-American world, where he was delighted to find his largest audience, even receiving honours from the prestigious Harvard University, which awarded him (and Pierre Janet) an honorary doctorate in September 1936 (McGuire, 1995).

Although he was invited to join the XIIth International Congress of Psychology of 1938 in Paris—under Janet's presidency—Jung refused, on the pretext of having other commitments, intimating that such a perspective in no way tempted him (Jung to Jean Bruneton, 7 May 1937, ETH Zurich). Without making any formal commitment, he also seems to have accepted in principle to give a new lecture for the benefit of the Gros Caillou in 1939. But he asked the Parisians to remain patient, since his schedule did not allow him to prepare an 'appropriate' lecture (Marie-Jeanne Schmid to Jean Bruneton, 6 March 1939, ETH Zurich). World War II and his health problems finally made it impossible.

In the late 1940s, Jung believed for a moment that he could make a breakthrough on the French book-market—one of the most important in Europe—following the success of *L'Homme à la découverte de son âme*. At least that is what a part of his correspondence with his publisher Rascher shows (Bishop 1998). And this thanks to his follower Roland Cahen, more concerned to adapt his work to the so-called 'clarity' of the French mind than to translate it rigorously. However Jung lost his 'illusions' in the fifties, as he confided in a letter to Károly Kerényi (Jung to Kerényi, 12 July 1954, ETH Zurich), probably noting the commercial failure of the subsequent translations, including *La guérison psychologique* (1953), an anthology of his texts with a more specific psychotherapeutic scope.

Jung was to wait until the late 1950s for a professor from the Sorbonne, the early modernist historian Alphonse Dupront (1905-1990), to suggest that Jung be invited to Paris to organise a colloquium in his honour (Dupront to Jung, 29 November 1957, ETH Zurich). More than twenty years after he had refused to speak in the 'temple' of the 'goddess Reason', a Sorbonne professor had come to respect him. Jung

preferred to give it up because of his advanced age (Jung to Dupront, 7 December 1957, ETH Zurich). A restricted symposium in Switzerland with the orientalist Henry Corbin and the support of the French Embassy in Bern was considered, but the project never came into being. Two years before, he made the observation during an interview, not without a touch of bitterness: 'The Anglo-Saxons understand me better than the French. The French are either Cartesians, or Catholics' (Schabad 1955: 271). Finally, shortly before he passed away, Jung regretted in a letter to one of his pupils that he remained 'almost totally unknown to the French readership' (Jung to Suzanne Percheron, 21 March 1961, SFPA).

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**Review of Paul Bishop. *On The Blissful Islands with Nietzsche and Jung. In the Shadow of the Superman.*  
London and New York: Routledge, 2017.  
ISBN: 978-1-138-79161-6 (pbk). 237 pp.**

**I**n the second section of the second part of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* [*Also sprach Zarathustra*] (1883-1885), Zarathustra is on a piece of land called the 'Blissful Islands', delivering a speech to his 'friends'. The subject of the speech concerns the liberating power of 'willing' to create the 'superman' [Übermensch], as opposed to the heaviness of Christian values and God. Zarathustra concludes: 'Now my hammer rages fiercely against its prison. Fragments fly from the stone: what is that to me? I will complete it: for a shadow came to me — the most silent, the lightest of all things once came to me! The beauty of the Superman came to me as a shadow. Ah, my brothers! What are the gods to me now!' (Nietzsche 1978: 109-112 ). Paul Bishop's book *On the Blissful Islands* is an attempt to interpret these final lines in the light of an aesthetics of the shadow and notions of self-sculpting. The book traces these two ideas (and practices) to the Platonic and Neo-Platonic traditions, and follows their development in the Italian Renaissance, in German Idealism (where he claims they culminate), and all the way to C. G. Jung, who is reckoned to have embraced them. This book displays an impressive array of sources, which it weaves into a densely patterned story of an inherently fascinating topic. Readers of this review should bear in mind, however, that this is not a historical study in the true sense of the word, but rather a meditation on the symbolical constellation 'blissful islands-shadow-self-sculpting', developed upon an interdisciplinary kind of hermeneutics. Such hermeneutics handles literary, psychological and philosophical topics, trying to merge them together in a wider understanding, thus recalling Jung's very own interpretative method.

Bishop's investigation is developed on three different levels that correspond to elements from Jung's analytical psychology: the shadow; the need for sculpting—in the sense of both the actual art form and the symbolical meaning of self-sculpting—; the idea of self-transformation. Seemingly based upon Jung's understanding of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*

as the self, this latter topic is in reality at the basis of ‘an important *aurea catena* in the central tradition that links Goethe, Nietzsche and Jung’ (xxi).

The first chapter, ‘On the Blissful Islands. In the Shadow of the Superman’ is dedicated to contextualising the image of Nietzsche’s ‘blissful islands’ in a wider tradition, commencing with the Greeks. Dwelling upon the image of the shadow, as interpreted by Jung in his seminar on *Zarathustra*, Bishop argues that Jung has missed the main question: ‘why is it that what comes to Zarathustra as a shadow is not simply the superman, but *the beauty of the superman?*’ (10). To answer his own question, Bishop develops the rest of the chapter, grounding it on both Nietzsche’s aestheticising ethics and Jung’s idea of the shadow—developed throughout an entire tradition: from the Hermetic, Kabbalistic and Neoplatonic schools, through alchemy and Gnosticism, to European mysticism. Finally, Bishop highlights the centrality of the pregnancy theme in Nietzsche’s idea of the *Übermensch*, whose announcement is ‘analogous to that of the Old Testament God’, but aims at replacing ‘the divine’. Bishop concludes: ‘Because he represents a totality, the superman is beautiful, hence it is *the beauty of the superman that came to Zarathustra as a shadow*. Beauty is totality; it is both light and dark, both illumination and shadow, both good and evil’ (62-63).

“‘Never Cease Chiselling’. Statues and Self-Sculpting’ is the title of the second chapter, which dwells on the idea of self-sculpting. In ‘On the Blissful Islands’, Nietzsche wrote that Zarathustra saw ‘an image sleeping in the stone, the image of [his] visions’ (Nietzsche 1978: 111). The ‘sequence VISION TO ACTION via QUESTIONING and RESOLUTION’ constitutes the core of Bishop’s investigation (79). Such an investigation explores the meaning of sculpture and statues in Platonism, Neoplatonism, Christian Mysticism, Italian Renaissance, Enlightenment, German Idealism—wherein Bishop, loyal to his own idea, places Nietzsche as well—, Klages, Cassirer, Manly P. Hall, Heidegger and finally Jung. Again, the author sees continuity between ‘the path of ascent (Plato)’, the alchemical transformation of ‘the *materia prima* into the Philosopher’s Stone’ and Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*: ‘[t]aken together, these ideas constitute a persistent appeal to their reader to embark on the path of self-transformation as well’ (129).

In chapter 3, ‘Shadows or Forms. Life and the Ideal’, this very idea of self-transformation is taken up through a comparison between ‘On the Blissful Islands’ and Schiller’s poem ‘The Ideal and Life’ [Das Ideal und das Leben] (1795). Here, Bishop notes how Schiller shifted from the first working title ‘The Kingdom of the Shadows’ [Das Reich des Schattens], to ‘The Kingdom of the Forms’ [Das Reich der Formen], to the final one, in order to point out the closeness between shadows, forms, ideal

life and beauty—not only in Schiller’s thought, but in the whole tradition he is examining. Again, what is common to Schiller and Nietzsche is the necessity of sculpting to bring the image to reality, while rising up ‘into the aesthetic realm’ (154). So, Bishop concludes, ‘[r]ead in the light of Schiller’s poem[...] Zarathustra’s reference to “the beauty of the superman” coming to him “as a shadow” can be seen as an example of rhetorical repetition, for the *shadow* (in the Schillerian sense) *is beauty*’ (165).

The last chapter of *On the Blissful Island with Nietzsche and Jung, ‘Journey’s End. Platonic, Nietzschean, and Jungian Attitudes to the Body’*, focuses on the role of the body in Plato, Nietzsche and Jung. As opposed to many scholars, Bishop sees not only continuity in Nietzsche’s understanding of the body and Plato’s, but also ‘*affinities*’ between the two, founded in the notion of ‘hierarchy’ (204). Bishop concludes his argument by unveiling a lexicological connection in German between ‘power’ [Macht] and ‘to do’ [machen], which he extends to ‘love’ and ‘beauty’: ‘ultimately the will to power is the will to love; and its highest expression is—beauty’ (208). In this sense Jung comes back in the discourse with the inscription ‘love never ends’ on the crown brought by the ‘white bird’ at the end of *Liber Novus* (Jung 2009: 326). According to Bishop, *Liber Novus* and analytical psychology must be understood as ‘a new kind of *vitalist aesthetics*’—re-articulating the old ‘relation between life and love’ (209).

With these three big claims Bishop makes his point very clearly: ‘Beauty is totality’ (63); ‘the *shadow* [...] *is beauty*’ (165); love is beauty and, by extension, life (209). Such claims are held together by the idea of ‘self-transformation’, which undoubtedly plays a major role in both Nietzsche’s and Jung’s thoughts. Exploring how that very idea originates in such a wide philosophical and literary tradition is helpful as well as fascinating. Bishop’s writing style, which courses freely along a wide swath of the history of Western thought, requires an in-depth familiarity with continental philosophy, German literature and classical studies. This is not a book for first-time readers of Nietzsche or Jung—nor for someone not fully steeped in German and classical literature and philosophy.

Moreover, despite Bishop’s extensive knowledge of both Nietzsche and the German language, to endorse his hypotheses, he sometimes draws on *The Will To Power*. This is a book that Nietzsche decided not to publish—despite the many plans he had drawn up—and which was released after his death, compiled by his sister and Peter Gast (Heinrich Köselitz), with omissions and substitutions, based on their own ethical principles. Since all of Nietzsche’s *Nachlaß* is

freely accessible online and easy to consult, the question needs to be posed as to why Bishop would prefer to cite this questionable source.

Lastly, despite the plausibility of Bishop's argument, Jung's interest in creating 'a new kind of *vitalistic aesthetics*' is implied throughout but never explicitly proven. Such a reading, however, can open up new perspectives in the exegesis of Jung and of his literal and philosophical sources, which can really enrich the history of analytical psychology.

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**Review of Romano Mådera, *Carl Gustav Jung. L'opera al Rosso*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 2016. ISBN 978-88-07-22705-9. 160 pp.**

**E**ighteen years after *Jung. Biografia e teoria* (Mådera 1998), Romano Mådera, Professor Emeritus of philosophy at the University of Milan-Bicocca and Jungian analyst (member of the AIPA<sup>1</sup> and of the IAAP<sup>2</sup>), dedicates a new monograph to C.G. Jung. During the intervening period, Mådera has laid out the theoretical and practical roots of the '*Analisi biografica a orientamento filosofico*' (ABOF–Philosophically-oriented biographical analysis), based upon the encounter between the most important approaches in the history of depth psychology, somewhat ecumenically brought together, and the renewal of practices of the ancient philosophical schools (taking inspiration from the works of Pierre Hadot) (Mådera 2012; Mådera 2013a; Mådera 2013b; De Fiori 2016).

Furthermore, this period saw a momentous event in the publication of Jung's *Red Book. Liber Novus*, which opened up new perspectives in the understanding of Jung's work. Whereas in *Jung. Biografia e teoria* Mådera dwelled on fundamental concepts deriving from the connections between biography and theory (Mådera and Tarca 2003), in *Carl Gustav Jung. L'opera al rosso*, Jung's work is instead examined using *Liber Novus* as a starting point, as the title suggests: 'The work in red'. *Liber Novus* becomes the trigger for a reconsideration of Jung's work, the key to elucidating its meaning. In this book, Mådera appears to succeed in reconciling the analyst's view, confronted in his daily life with psychic material, with the wider perspective of the philosopher who is able to tease out connections between life, culture and history. Throughout his inquiry, Mådera touches upon philosophical, historical and cultural questions whilst rethinking the intersection of psychotherapy and philosophy.

Published in the series '*Eredi*' (Inheritors), whose purpose is to edit monographs on the symbolic legacy of distinguished authors, *Carl Gustav Jung. L'opera al rosso* is not merely a simple historical and conceptual introduction to the work of the Swiss psychologist, but a journey to the heart of Jung's thought, presented through a kaleidoscope of images, visions and

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<sup>1</sup> AIPA - *Associazione Italiana di Psicologia Analitica* (Italian Association of Analytical Psychology).

<sup>2</sup> IAAP - International Association of Analytical Psychology

concepts drawn from *Liber Novus*.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, important parts of the text are dedicated to carefully evaluating the links between the questions that lie at the core of *Liber Novus* and the historical and cultural events of the 20th century, and also to outlining what part of Jung's legacy still speaks to us today.

*Liber Novus* is presented as not only Jung's answer to his personal trials, but also as the reflection of historical and cultural upheavals. Mådera reminds us of the way in which the themes presented in *Liber Novus* bear witness to a time of change, a crucial paradigm shift in European culture. The Great War, for him, appears symptomatic of the crisis of the old traditionalist Europe and of the downfall of patriarchy, or what Mådera understands as the end of fathers as embodiments of the law. In a biographical sense, Mådera argues that, after the break with Freud, Jung was 'disappointed for the second time' by fathers (Mådera 2016:18).

In the first two chapters of the book, 'Imitation is Prohibited' (*Vietato imitare*) and 'Critique of the Fathers and the Crisis of Patriarchy' (*Critica dei padre e crisi del patriarcato*), Mådera analyses the relationship between the historical crises of the time and the notion that 'imitation', meaning the structuration of personality by models, became out of date. This is expressed clearly in a passage from *Liber Primus*: 'Woe betide those who live by way of examples! Life is not with them. If you live according to an example, you thus live the life of that example, but who should live your own life if not yourself? So live yourselves.' (Jung, RB:231). Consequently, Mådera sees the individuation process as it begins to emerge in *Liber Novus* as the imperative for everyone to find their own way, instead of following pre-mapped paths. As Jung wrote in the same chapter of *Liber Primus*: 'My path is not your path therefore I / cannot teach you. The way is within us, but not in Gods, nor in teachings, nor in laws. Within us is the way, the truth, and the life' (Jung, RB: 231).

In this sense, Mådera argues that the 'Murder of the Hero', a pivotal section in the structure of Jung's *Liber Novus*, is a metaphor for the crisis of patriarchy at the end of the 19th century, for which the Nietzschean 'Death of God' also stands as an image of a whole age on the wane.

In the chapter 'The end of the hero and the sacrifice of the I' (*La fine dell'eroe e il sacrificio dell'io*), the author underlines the analogy between historical events (the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand) and biographical events (the dream of the murder of Siegfried). According to Mådera, in *Liber Novus*, the murder of the hero reveals a psychic dynamic that takes place at the same time in the individual and in the collective,

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<sup>3</sup> A legacy that is not limited to Jung's work but takes into account the views of some of Jung's most eminent pupils such as Ernst Bernhard and Erich Neumann.

where killing the hero becomes necessary to avoid the search for an exterior scapegoat. So, accepting the end of the hero involves realising the sacrifice in oneself. As Jung wrote in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, in reference to the dream of the murder of Siegfried reported in *Liber Novus*:

Siegfried, I thought, represents what the Germans want to achieve, heroically to impose their will, have their own way. 'Where there is a will there is a way!' I had wanted to do the same. But now that was no longer possible. The dream showed that the attitude embodied by Siegfried, the hero, no longer suited me. Therefore it had to be killed. [...] This identity and my heroic idealism had to be abandoned, for there are higher things than the ego's will, and to these one must bow. (Jung/Jaffé [1962]:180-181)

This theme is explored in the chapter 'The shadow, the war and the scapegoat' (*L'ombra, la Guerra e il capro espiatorio*). The murder of Siegfried is read as the symbol of the end of an epoch and the sacrifice of the 'I'. This last point Màdera interprets as basically the springboard for Jung's later theorisation of the disidentification with the persona. Furthermore, Màdera examines the danger of the projection of the Shadow that is behind the dynamic of the scapegoat by drawing on Erich Neumann's *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic* (1949).

In the following chapter, 'God is dead? An answer to Nietzsche' (*Dio è morto? Risposta a Nietzsche*), Màdera goes from the dynamic of the scapegoat to self-sacrifice, which he explains with these words:

In the catastrophe of the Great War that threw everyone against each other and stacked in the modern pyramids of sacrifice thousand of deaths, Jung sees the end of the hero, and believes to grasp the way of the overcoming of the demented mechanism of the scapegoat [...]. When the way of the sacrifice of the other is understood as export and projection of the internal conflict, necessity appears to turn on himself what we charge to the other: a new way is opened, the one of the self-sacrifice (Màdera, 2016: 79).

This chapter is also the place in the book where Màdera explains why *Liber Novus* can be read in close relation to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and in which sense, as he writes, 'Nietzsche is the double and the opponent that Jung will always meet again' (Màdera 2016:55). In particular, Màdera sees in the 'Supreme meaning' (*Übersinn*) Jung's answer to the

Nietzschean ‘Superman’ (Màdera 2016:89). In the same chapter, Màdera relates the ‘divine child’ (*göttliches Kind*) at the end of *Liber Primus*, the new God which ‘reunifies what is divided’ and ‘joins the opposites’, to the notion of *coniunctio* that, he argues, is ‘the myth that defines Jung’s biography and constitutes the core of his thought’ (Màdera 2016:89).

Whereas, during the crisis of what Overbeck called ‘*mythenbildende Kraft*’ (mythbuilding force), and the crisis of ‘imitation’, it is no longer possible to follow well-worn paths, Màdera stresses the important vista this opens up for Jung, enabling him to identify the regulatory function of the search for meaning as the fundamental therapeutic factor. This last theme is at the core of the last two chapters of the book, where the author outlines what, according to his view, are the new territories opened up by Jung for posterity.

As he identifies in the chapter ‘Clinic of the Individuation’ (*Clinica dell’individuazione*), these new territories are characterised by four fundamental factors: ‘the cognitive and therapeutical function of the image’, ‘the expressive value of the gesture and of the game’, ‘the irreproducible specificity of the biographical singularity’ and the ‘individual re-elaboration of the outcome collectively inherited from the sense’ (Màdera 2016:103). Finally, the legacy of Jung’s work is related by Màdera with the possibility offered by Jung’s thought for the renewal of philosophy as a way of life and for opening up forms of lay spirituality. These themes are explored in the seventh and final chapter, ‘Historical-biographical Psychology, Philosophy as Way of Life and Lay Spirituality’ (*Psicologia storico-biografica, filosofia come stile di vita e spiritualità laica*).

According to Màdera, Jung’s legacy consists primarily in having laid the basis for others to go beyond his thought. Since the time of models and prophets is over, Màdera writes: ‘the opening of the way from imitation to individuation is the clever paradox that allows us to abandon Jung—or any other master—to renew his teaching for the future’ (Màdera 2016:121).

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