

JUNG ON RELIGION, GNOSTICISM, HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE EAST, AND  
ALCHEMY

RUNNING HEAD: Jung, Religion, Gnosticism, the East, Alchemy

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I briefly survey the importance that Jung placed on the religious instinct, his life long engagement with Christianity, as well as his abiding interest in Gnosticism, his encounter with the East, and his discovery of the Grail tradition and alchemy. I also look at Jung's observations on Nazism, his realization of the living God and concept of the *unus mundus*. Jung sees Christianity as an ailing religion in need of healing. From his studies of the East, he gains much supportive knowledge that affirms his own empirical findings and personal experiences. While in India he realizes that his mission is to provide healing for the Western soul, which he understands requires compensatory truths for its Christian worldview that he particularly uncovers in Gnosticism, medieval alchemy, and the Grail tradition.

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## Introduction

In this paper I briefly survey the importance that Jung places on the religious instinct, his life long engagement with Christianity, as well as his interest in Gnosticism, his encounter with the East, and his discovery of the Grail tradition and alchemy. I also look at Jung's observations on Nazism, his realization of the living God and the concept of the *unus mundus*. Jung understands Christianity to be an ailing religion in need of healing. He regards Gnosticism as a speculative psychology of abiding interest that affirms his own empirical findings and personal experiences as did his studies of the East, where he also gains much supportive knowledge. While in India he realized that his mission is to provide healing for the Western soul, which he understands as requiring compensatory truths for its Christian worldview that he particularly discovers in Gnosticism, medieval alchemy and the Grail tradition.

Jung brings to the West a path that deals directly with its historical problems and biases, and that guides people towards an engagement with the living God. Although I don't discuss the subject in this paper, the nature of Jung's opus, meant mainly to address the healing requirements of the modern and post modern minds, especially in the West, his psychology aligns harmoniously with the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother from India. I write about this elsewhere, most fully in a book entitled *Jung's Global Vision Western Psyche Eastern Mind*.

### The Religious Function

Jung defines the archetype as the “self-portrait of the instinct,” the image-creating formative factor that shapes our instinctual expression, where instincts refer to “typical modes of action.<sup>1</sup>” An instinct of central importance, the religious instinct, he believes, impels individuals along the path of conscious self-reflection and careful consideration of synchronistic events for the integration of conscious and unconscious data via what he refers to as the transcendent function. In his understanding of the nature of the religious attitude, he prefers the ancient meaning of the word *religio*, from *religere*, meaning “to ponder, to take account of, to observe,” rather than the view of the Church Fathers, which bases it on *religare*, meaning “to bind, to reconnect.” The reason for Jung’s preference rests on the fact that he believes it is more in accord with empirical psychological evidence, although the Church Father’s view is close to the meaning of *yoga* and has its own validity in terms of binding to the Self or God as a transcendent numinous phenomenon, which is the goal of the religious function.<sup>2</sup>

.According to Jung, “religion is a revealed way of salvation,” that consists of symbolically expressed ideas and feelings that reflect “pre-conscious knowledge.<sup>3</sup>” The symbols behind religious ideas and numinous feelings, he suggests, function spontaneously whether individuals consciously understand their significance or not, for the very reason that the unconscious still relates to them as “universal psychic facts.<sup>4</sup>” In such circumstances, religious faith is adequate, but, over time, rational elaboration often has the effect of divorcing

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<sup>1</sup> 1975a, pp 135, 136

<sup>2</sup> As reported in Gerhard Adler, editor, 1975, p 482

<sup>3</sup> 1975e, p 199

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

people from the unconscious source of the symbols and understanding degenerates. "This," Jung observes, "is the situation today."<sup>5</sup> In fact, by and large, the West no longer lives in a moribund dogmatic Judeo-Christian world of convention, but a world of secular liberalism and reason. Generally speaking, that means, collectively, we live in a world alienated from a rich source of pure symbols and ideas, the result being that the narcissistic ego has such an inordinate influences on life that it has become a symbolic jungle.

Thus, Jung regards religious phenomena as a significant manifestation of the collective unconscious and, as such, an indisputable psychic fact. Yet, he makes an important differentiation between religion, and creed and belief. By "religion," he writes, "I mean a kind of attitude which takes careful and conscientious account of certain numinous feelings, ideas and events and reflects upon them; and by "belief" or "creed " he observes, "I mean an organized community which collectively professes a specific belief or a special ethos or mode of behavior."<sup>6</sup> According to Jung, the individuation process takes one beyond "belief" or "creed" to "the entirely individual exercise of the "religious function"" and the religious way of life, which involves "the allegiance, surrender, or submission to a transcendent factor or to a "con-vincing" [=overpowering!] principle."<sup>7</sup> He refers to the direct experience of the archetypal psyche as 'the numinosum' and regards it as an encounter with the divine. Beliefs and creeds, on the other hand, involve ritual practices, dogmas, doctrines, traditions and faith, and can actually serve to protect people from overwhelming experiences of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp 483, 484

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 484

numinosum and the pain of self-discovery, which involves not only experiences of illumination but the realization of potentially disturbing shadow factors.

#### Christianity

Jung engaged in a life-long dialogue with Christianity, which intensified during the last 20 years of his life, immensely concerned about the modern person's loss of emotional and intellectual containment in a religious tradition with its living symbols, ritual and practice. Murray Stein convincingly argues that Jung's position regarding Christianity is as a treating psychotherapist seeking transformation for his ailing 'patient'<sup>8</sup>. Basically he argues that Christianity needs to continue its evolutionary process that began with *The Old Testament* and continued through *The New Testament*.

Since we now live in the early stages of the Age of Aquarius, the Age of the Holy Ghost, there needs to be openness to individual experience of the divine along with a vision of extensive psychological integration of personality, wholeness and oneness. Jung is also adamant about the fact that Christianity's God-image needs to transform from a Trinity to a Quaternity that integrates feminine values and the Shadow or Devil, along with a metamorphosis from an all-good God-image to one that is a paradoxical union of opposites. He also regards the dogma of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary promulgated by the Papal Bull of Pius XII in 1950 and celebrated annually on August 15, as a significant move in that direction, representing the spiritualization of the body and the potential for the transformation of Christianity. The importance of coming to

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<sup>8</sup> 1986 passim

terms with Western cultural and religious tradition and its one-sidedness, for Jung, was based on his belief that a community's religious and cultural heritage imparts an informing collective experience that is peculiar to the society and individuals in question and that needs to be understood and assimilated to consciousness.

### Gnosticism

In *Psychological Types*, first published in 1921, Jung first clearly indicates his interest in Western Gnosticism, which he initially studied between 1910 and 1915<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup>. Gnosticism pre-dates Christianity and, in its essence, has Jewish roots.<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, orthodox Christian ideas developed in response to Gnostic *theoria*, and, arguably, Christian dogma finds its roots in the Gnostic world of ideas as Alfred Ribi argues.<sup>12</sup> Gnosticism, which relies on individual experiential knowledge, however, has never been a uniform movement and includes various spiritual perspectives. Some Gnostics, as reflected in the Gospels of Thomas, Phillip and of Mary Magdalene, understand divine reality to be firmly established on the earth and the spiritual opus takes life in the world seriously.<sup>13</sup> But, for the most part, the Gnostic position emphasizes that the pure divine is Transcendent, the material world is evil and the spiritual goal requires detaching from the world and its attachments and ascending to the non-dual *Pleroma*, the transcendent station beyond the opposites.

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<sup>9</sup> As reported in Harold Coward, 1985

<sup>10</sup> Lance S. Owens 2013

<sup>11</sup> Elaine Pagels, 1981, p xxxvi

<sup>12</sup> 2013, pp 91, 98

<sup>13</sup> Alan Jacobs, 2006, pp 17-40 passim, 18-46 passim, 54-88 passim, passim

Jung found Gnostic parallels to his own experiences as documented in the *Liber Novus* (The *Red Book*) through various sources including Wolfgang Schulz's book, *Documents of Gnosis*, which includes material from the church Father, Hippolytus, who was sympathetic to the Gnostic tradition. Another important source for Schulz that Jung often refers to is G.R.S. Mead, and his book, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*. For one thing, his interest was drawn to the fact that the Gnostic's postulated the existence of three personality types, the *hylikoi*, *psychikoi* and *pneumatikoi*, which strongly supported his theory of personality types, in addition to the Gnostic understanding of "man's unconscious psychology" and "the problem of archetypes" by giving importance to individual spiritual experience, knowledge and the process of individual integration, although crudely, in comparison to contemporary depth-psychology.<sup>14</sup>

Gnostic typology, in fact, resembles the typology found in the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, with its tamasic, rajasic and sattwic personalities. In both the Gnostic system and the Gita, the goal is to become spiritualized, rather *pneumatikoi* amongst the Gnostics and *sattwic* in Hindu terms, meaning balanced, luminous, and harmonious, paragons of reason. The *hylikoi* or tamasic person is the material individual without ambition, considered by the Gnostics as not having any spiritual potential. The psychic individual or rajasic person is the average desire-ridden individual, which the Gnostics identified as Church-going Christians, who could potentially become Gnostics and *pneumatikoi*. This categorization of Christians and Gnostics reflected the Gnostic's tendency to

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<sup>14</sup> Harold Coward, 1985, pp. 11, 12



identify with the spiritual Self and suffer spiritual inflation, which is an obstacle for many spiritual seekers to this day.

Various creation myths are highly significant expressions of Gnosticism, including, in Jung's case, his Gnostic creation myth, *The Seven Sermons to the Dead*. For my purposes, most importantly, there are two Gnostic myths recounted by Hyppolytus that resonate with Jung's experiences and metaphysical position, as recounted in *Liber Novus*. . The first refers to the legend of Simon Magus, generally considered to be the Father of the Gnostics, and his consort, Helena. He is reported to have written that Helena is a manifestation of *Sophia* or Wisdom, the "primal first Thought" (*Epinoia*), which was in primordial relationship with the masculine Mind or Logos.<sup>15</sup> According to G.S.R. Mead, the legend of Helena and Simon refers to the human soul lost in the material world, and its redemption by Simon Magus and his masculine Logos.<sup>16</sup> Early on (1913) in Jung's imaginative adventure, he met Elijah and Salome as manifestations of Logos and Eros respectively, whom he later notes were, effectively, Simon Magus and Helena, relating his experiences directly to the Gnostic myth.

Hyppolytus reports that Simon Magus observed that a "Boundless power" resides in man and that that is the "Universal Root," which consists of a manifest portion and a concealed portion, the latter which Jung later refers to as the "collective unconscious."<sup>17</sup> In 1916, Jung's relationship to Simon Magus takes on greater definition in that, in his imaginative journey, he finds himself in a garden

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<sup>15</sup> Lance Owen, 2013, p, 21

<sup>16</sup> As recorded in Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p 32

with Christ and Philemon, and in response to Christ's recognition of the latter as Simon Magus, Philemon explains that he was Simon Magus but is now called Philemon. Later Philemon addresses the dead with *The Seven Sermons to the Dead*, and informs Jung that the Sermons are an expression of his *gnosis*. Jung holds Philemon/Simon Magus in the highest esteem, painting his image in the *Liber Novus* and on the wall of a second floor bedroom in the Tower at Bollingen, referring to him in the former case as "Father of the Prophets, Beloved Philemon" and, in the latter, as "Philemon, the Prophets' Primal Father."<sup>18</sup> To complete the picture of his adulation for Philemon, Jung consecrated the entire Bollingen Tower to him, with the following inscription above the door, "'*Philemonis sacrum*," (Shrine of Philemon).<sup>19</sup>"

The second Gnostic myth that resonates with Jung's experiences involves the relationship of Sophia to the Gnostic demiurge, the Creator God and ruler of this world, which Philemon refers to in *The Seven Sermons to the Dead* as Abraxas. Although in some accounts like in the legend of Simon Magus and Helena, she is lost in the shadows of the material creation and requires liberation, in classical Gnosticism, Sophia or Wisdom is the Divine feminine, interwoven into all the intricacies of the web of life, and the counterpart to the masculine Logos. According to the Gnostic myth, Sophia gave birth to a defective being, that detached himself from her, and, subsequently grew into a "fiery cosmic force" that claims to be the supreme deity holding the material world in

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p 24

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

his thrall.<sup>20</sup> With the detachment of the demiurge from Sophia, she found her deliverance and treated the latter as a cosmic adversary.

As divine power and wisdom, Sophia awakens humans to their divine origin and inner light, while alerting them to the seductive and illusory nature of the world play under direction of the demiurge. This is similar to an earlier formulation made by Jung in the *Liber Novus* when he made a distinction between the “spirit of the times’ ruled by a demanding demiurge, and the “spirit of the depths,” which later became known as the archetypal psyche.<sup>21</sup> The repercussion for Jung is that, in early 1916, in true Gnostic fashion, Jung was enjoined by the Sophia/soul to worship the “unmoving” star-like, “*one God*” within him.<sup>22</sup> As this one God was neither subservient to nor inclined toward the demiurge, Jung was instructed to turn away from the seductive power of the fiery Abraxas, which, he, nonetheless, was counseled to fear. .

It is clear from these considerations that Jung’s personal myth and the fundamental basis of his approach to psychology have an important Gnostic foundation with its significant teaching that the psyche is the source of psychological knowledge, as was the case with the medieval alchemists.<sup>23</sup> Jung, in fact, considers the Gnostics to be the first depth psychologists who had a significant perspective on the unconscious, including that God Himself is ignorant or unconscious. Jung took that insight to be highly important since it “identifies

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p 25

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 27

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p 26

<sup>23</sup> 1975c, p 174

the Deity with the numinosity of the unconscious.<sup>24</sup> This understanding means that symbols of the Self or the Deity can be realized by penetrating the unconscious, which agrees with Jung's empirical findings.

Jung's favorable view and kinship with the Gnostics was not only there at the beginning of his encounter with the unconscious as documented here, but the Gnostic flavor in his work persisted until the end of his life. Gnostic references, for instance, can be found in his magnum opus, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, published in 1955, and even more amply, in his historical study, *Aion*, published in 1951 on the nature of the Self. Here Jung elaborates a remarkable extension on the nature of the Self as a static fourfold quaternity that unfolds dynamically in a circular process, where the spiritual Anthropos and the primary base substance, the *rotundum*, the pneumatic stone, meet like the serpent biting its tail. Inclusion of the *rotundum* as the foundation of the Self creates tension with the spiritual dimension such that the image of the static Self is set in circular motion. Visualizing the dynamic, rotating Self is possible today thanks to scientific materialism and knowledge of the space-time quality of the physical world which, notes Jung, reflects "the deification of matter."<sup>25</sup>

Jung is a contemporary, highly educated man trained in science, Christian theology and philosophy, all of which inform his thinking. It stands to reason, therefore, that his contemporary Gnosticism needs to be differentiated from the classical variety, where, for the most part, the material world was considered to be an evil creation. Jung appreciates the fact that evil was acknowledged by the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p 194

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p 257

Gnostics as a potent force in a dualistic universe, and not reduced to *privatio boni*, (privation of the good) as in mainline Christianity.<sup>26</sup> Still, regarding creation and the material world as evil, means that it was not adequately integrated into Gnostic symbolism, spiritual mythology or psychology. As a case in point, the second century Church father, Irenaeus, reports that Valentinus, often considered the most important early (Christian) Gnostic, Christ came with “a kind of shadow” that he “cast off from himself and returned to the Pleroma.”<sup>27</sup> Jung conjectures that the shadow cast off was the “Yahwistic law” from which practicing Gnostics sought liberation. If nothing else, from a psychological perspective, this metaphysical speculation can have the practical effect of encouraging repression of the shadow and moral inhibitions. In sharp contrast, not repression, but accepting the shadow and transforming conscience to reflect the Self and the transcendent function when facing a conflict of duties, is central to Jung’s Gnostic psychology.<sup>28</sup>

For the ancient Gnostics, there was alienation from the immaterial essence that the aspiring Gnostic sought to redress. For the most part, this means that the general goal of ancient Gnosticism was to flee the world and its attachments, and to attain identity with the *Pleroma* or unconscious Father, who is described as being without quality of being and without opposites, like the non-dual Transcendent in most post Upanishad Hindu spiritual traditions, for instance, contemporary *Advaita* and *Tantra*, despite their wealth of symbolism. In contrast to the ancient Gnostics and post-Upanishad Hindu traditions, in Jung’s Gnostic

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<sup>26</sup> 1975e, pp 41n, 169

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, pp 41n, 41, 110

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p 110

psychology, the contemporary person is alienated as were the ancient Gnostics, not from the immaterial essence, however, but from the unconscious, which, the individual can rectify by pursuing the individuation process and coming to terms with the unconscious. With Jung, unlike the ancient Gnostics, the material world is fully integrated, as reflected in his turn towards alchemy, a pre-cursor to modern science, and “the concreteness of modern scientific thinking<sup>29</sup>.” Alchemy fully embraces the chthonic psyche, and psychological/spiritual transformation that includes the material world, and potentially goes so far as realization of the *mysterium coniunctionis* and *unus mundus*, the differentiated non-dual one-world. The distant goal for Jung is transformation and individuation to the point of wholeness and oneness, and not aspiring for transcendent identity with non-dual Reality per se, although that realization is not necessarily precluded.

Despite the otherworldly spiritual orientation of Gnosticism, Jung found several symbols of wholeness there that are still relevant, although requiring contemporary perspective.<sup>30</sup> Examples are the point, the reconciling locus for the microcosm and macrocosm, male/female syzygies, the ordering principals of circle, square and quaternity, living water, well, river (of paradise), stream and ocean, sparks ensnared in matter, akin to the alchemical scintilla, stars, sun, Christ as phallus (“that has an urge from below upwards”), stone, fish, and serpent, and, according to Hyppolytus, the Gnostic Naassenes identified the serpent, Naas, as “their central deity.<sup>31</sup>” Otherwise the serpent was a symbol of the Self and of Christ that acted like a magnet to attract and liberate disparate

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p 172

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp 194-269, passim

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, pp 199, 202

parts like the entrapped sparks and to ascend with them to the Transcendent Pleroma. The Gnostic Christ is, typically, an androgynous spiritual figure that had cast off his shadow, and who, as the *Arcanthropos*, the Original man, symbolizes the Self. For the ancient Gnostics, he was naturally inclined to rise from below in vertical ascension to the Transcendent, away from the worldly life and material reality, which was viewed as intrinsically evil.

### Sources of Defense against Gnosticism and Jung

Before bringing this section on Gnosticism to a close I feel a need to briefly examine reactions against Jung and Gnosticism from what I loosely refer to as resistant quarters of provincialism that existed when Jung was alive and still exist. As suggested above, Jung was a contemporary Gnostic although, his full embrace of the world and the physical body, gives him a radically different understanding than the ancient Gnostics. Early Church Fathers regarded Gnostics as heretics, mainly because of their pejorative view on the material world and the human body, as well as the solely spiritual nature of Christ. This unsympathetic view on Gnosticism eventually led to their oppression by the established Church beginning in the fourth and fifth Centuries C.E. Although it astonishes me, students of history may not be surprised that this perspective on Gnosticism continues to affect the contemporary world, specifically regarding the Church's acceptance of Jung's psychology.

On February 21, 2003, the Vatican through its council for culture and council for interreligious dialogue published a document where Jung is identified

as a founding member of the New Age movement with foundational elements that are “incompatible” with Christianity.<sup>32</sup> Specifically the document attacks pantheism and panentheism, all forms of Gnosticism and neo-Gnosticism, contemporary and ancient, which it accuses of representing the psyche as sacred. Jung is also condemned for championing the divinity of the individual Self and, along with the New Age Movement in general, for rejecting the transcendent personal divine.

During Jung’s lifetime, the philosopher, Martin Buber,<sup>33</sup> who authored a popular book entitled *Eclipse of God*, attacked both Gnosticism and Gnostics, the latter for hubris in their declared personal relationship and identity with God, the indwelling Deity, and pretension to be able to describe different upper spheres of divine being.<sup>34</sup> Jung, in fact, makes a clear differentiation between the ego and the Self, avoiding this particular problem of the early Gnostics.<sup>35</sup> But Buber also attacked Jung as a contemporary Gnostic, claiming he psychologizes God, by which he means Jung objectifies God and treats him as “it” by locating him in the human psyche. But, in response to Buber, according to Jung, “Reality is simply what works in a human soul and not what is assumed by certain people to work there...”<sup>36</sup>

In fact, his locating God or reality in the psyche follows his formula for reality as *esse in anima*, a “reality in ourselves,” reconciling the mind-body dichotomy, and avoiding the dissociation that results from a one-sided mental

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<sup>32</sup> John P. Dourely, 2010, pp 6, 7

<sup>33</sup> 1999

<sup>34</sup> As reported in Alfred Riibi, 2013, pp. 65. 66

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, pp 74, 75

<sup>36</sup> 1974a, p 41



conceptualization of God beyond the psyche, as in the case of Buber.<sup>37</sup> The latter's lack of ability to appreciate psychic reality prompts him to accuse Jung of transgressing the boundaries of psychology "with sovereign license" in his discussions on the psyche as "creator of all that is knowable."<sup>38</sup> What is knowable for Jung, in fact, includes the perception of different God-Images, some of which are shocking to the contemporary religious believer, as experienced within the human psyche.<sup>39</sup> As riposte to Buber's challenge of Jung regarding his locating God in the psyche and his asserting an "I-Thou" relationship, one could point out that Jung, in fact, has an intimate psychic "I-Thou" relationship through the archetypes of the collective unconscious, to which Buber is not privy in his inability to appreciate psychic reality and his not locating God in the soul. In fact, Buber rather endorses the fact that souls have "all God outside."<sup>40</sup>

Buber also reproaches Jung for psychologism in his emphasize on introversion and self-development, where, in fact, the individual involved in conscious individuation risks subordinating "everything and everyone else to the goal of integration or individuation" turning them into "functions of the process."<sup>41</sup> Seriously reflecting on messages from the unconscious and taking back projections, where one's own problems are perceived in others, can alleviate this psychological danger. Buber further criticizes Jung for his claim that, through human interiority, one is privy to spiritual experiences and knowledge, meaning gnosis, which is not intellectual knowledge, but instinctually related life

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p 52

<sup>38</sup> As reported in Ribí, 2013, p 75

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p 75

<sup>40</sup> Jung, 1977, p 11

<sup>41</sup> Alfred Ribí, 2013, p 73

processes, revelation and “knowledge of the ultimate things.”<sup>42</sup> Buber also accuses Jung of moral lassitude and of encouraging “acting out” the shadow and doing evil, given his intense interest in the opposites, including the opposites of good and evil. Jung’s belief is, rather, that it is psychologically healthy to reconcile and integrate the shadow into the Self, as a higher truth comprised of the opposites of good and evil. Dourley takes on Buber by observing that Jung explicitly states that “this embracing wisdom does not endorse licentiousness but rather a fuller knowledge of what is authentically human.”<sup>43</sup> Along similar lines to his understanding of Jung’s promoting evil, and in keeping with his encouragement of faith and belief, Buber condemns Jung for mystically deifying the instincts instead of hallowing them in faith<sup>44</sup>. Jung’s answer to Buber is that supreme value resides in the soul and “not I but God himself has deified ... (the soul (psyche)),” which includes the instincts<sup>45</sup>.

In contrast to Jung’s interest in the unknown God and Gnosis, and the resulting extension of consciousness which comes with it, along with the effect of rejecting the existing God-image, Buber conceptualizes God as Transcendent and Wholly Other along traditional lines. The latter champions faith and belief in the Transcendent Thou, and encourages the “I-Thou” relationship between humans and God. It is not, however, apparent how this relationship is established without the agency of the human psyche. As Dourely reasons regarding Buber’s declarations, this relationship turns out to be superficial as

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<sup>42</sup> C G Jung 1975e, p 192

<sup>43</sup> 2010, p 81

<sup>44</sup> As reported in Ribic, p 65

<sup>45</sup> 1977, p 13

there is no significant in-depth human subjectivity in the relationship between the human I and this extra-psychic and distant God, which Buber refers to as Thou.<sup>46</sup>

Jung emphasizes that he is not a metaphysician, but an empirical scientist, who is open to human experiences without ideological distortion. It is noteworthy, however, that his empiricism includes experiences of the archetypes of the collective unconscious including the archetype of the Self, as well as individual life experiences. Jung's empiricism, in other words, can lead him to metaphysical truths inasmuch as they are based on experiential evidence of a typically ego transcendent nature. As discussed above, Jung, in fact, has Gnosis inasmuch as he has immediate experience of God in the soul, As I indicate above, In contrast to the Gnostics and Jung, Buber holds to faith and belief in the "I-Thou" relationship between humans and a distant God beyond the human psyche. In fact, Buber's convictions are typical of institutions and people who hold to dogmatic belief in the Transcendent God without connection with immanence, in contrast to Jung's immanent God that resides in the human soul.

The polemic against the Gnostics and Jung continues to this day, notably by a diplomate of the Jung Institute in Zurich and past president of the C. G. Jung Foundation in New York., Jeffrey Satinover.<sup>47</sup> He feels the need and responsibility to warn Christians of Jung's pagan and Gnostic leanings, which, like Buber, he believes opens up evil tendencies. He contrasts this apparent inevitability, as he sees it, to the ethical monotheism of Judaism and Christianity which, he believes, are capable of morally containing the instincts of the pagan

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<sup>46</sup> 2010, p 91

<sup>47</sup> 1994 passim

psyche. Needless to say, dogmatic application of codes of conduct, including Christian and Jewish, can be of value in supporting the ethical requirements of the spirit of the times, but they are resistant to the exploration of Gnostic or alchemical depth of being through knowledge of the heart.

This resistance from the established Church, Martin Buber and Jeffrey Satinover point to the Herculean task that Jung and Jungian therapists face in order to endorse the nature of the creative psyche. All forms of resistance discussed above, however, can be reduced to a defense against the Self as *spiritus rector* and the soul and archetypal unconscious that serve to repress the unconscious psyche. The soul and the Self need to speak and function on their own terms without restraint, while wisely relating consciousness to the spirit of the depths. This transparency to the depths effectively means that the immanent God is heard and brought into material realization. Needless to say, opposition to Jung's depth psychology today also comes from so-called "scientific" evidence-based psychology, which has developed apace since Jung's time and reflects the contemporary spirit of the times. This type of psychology can help adapt to the spirit of the times and resolve superficial psychological adaptive difficulties but it has nothing to do with the spirit of the depths and Gnosis, and the advent of a new world

Having noted the above, there is legitimate concern about a culture where the moral virtues of Judaism and Christianity have been discarded for the sake of a morality of individualism and individual freedom (license). Individualism, where the individual ego is magnified, must not be confused with individuation, which

demands a continual sacrifice of the ego. Furthermore, the Judaic and Christian moral codes are of value to both individual and society and need to be upheld for the sake of cultural and individual harmony and well-being. There comes a time for some individuals, however, when inner pressure originating from the Self puts one on a path of wholeness and individuation.

In that case, an ethic that is one-sidedly focused on the good alone needs to give way to one where the goal is conscious wholeness, which requires a superior morality, where the shadow and the instincts need to be integrated along with the good. Jung asserts that unconsciousness is at the knotted root of much evil. He cites a saying of Jesus from the *Apocryphal New Testament* that asserts "Man, if thou knowest what you doest, thou art blessed, but if thou knowest not, thou art accursed and, and a transgressor of the law."<sup>48</sup> This saying recommends self-knowledge; indeed, it requires a path of righteousness for the sake of self-knowledge. Not unconsciousness but knowledge of the Self and wholeness is the Jung's Gnostic goal.

In fact, Jung sought a bridge between Gnosticism and the contemporary world and found it eventually in alchemy, as I indicate below in a section on the subject, which began in 1921 and continued until the end, but first by way of a dialogue with the East,. He did not encounter the East naively but with growing empirical psychological evidence, self-knowledge and astute understanding of the psychological shortcomings and needs of the one-sided scientifically and technologically oriented rational and individualistic Western mind, with its peculiar religious history. He found both confirmation and refinement of his

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<sup>48</sup> As recorded in Jung, 1975e, p 197

understanding of the psyche as well as reason to be cautious about mechanically adopting eastern paths to enlightenment.

#### Encounter with the East

According to Jung's notation beside a painting of Philemon in his *The Red Book* and illustrated in *Word and Image*, Jung was evidently struck by the *Bhagavad Gita's* account of the descent of divine consciousness for purposes of uplifting humankind whenever the times become disordered and people no longer live according to truth.<sup>49</sup> Philemon is an angelic being that Jung encountered in his dreams and active imaginations; he represents "superior insight" and was, for him, a guru.<sup>50</sup> He, and other fantasy figures, taught Jung about the autonomy of psychic factors and the objective nature of the psyche. One could say that Philemon initiated Jung into in-depth psychological understanding and provided him with important keys for the development of his mature approach to psychology, with its immense contribution to the development of consciousness today.

From his study of the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and Pantanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, Jung gained insight on the problem of the pairs of opposites and the solution as was interpreted in the translations he read.<sup>51</sup> He understood the Hindu path involved seeking freedom from entanglement in all the opposites in order to experience *moksha* or liberation, and oneness with *Brahman*. He could not accept this goal because he reasoned that, as the Transcendent, *Brahman* also

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<sup>49</sup> As reported in Jaffé, editor, 1979, p. 67

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 79

<sup>51</sup> As reported in Harold Coward, 1985

stands outside of the opposites and their dissolution and that, in life, there is always need for more entanglement in the opposites, which need assimilation into consciousness. He also argued that transcending the opposites leads to abdication of the ego [*purusha*] and therefore unconsciousness. From the Hindu concepts of *dharma*, meaning the law of being, and *rta*, truth or right way, however, Jung found uniting symbols for the opposites as he did in the Chinese concept of *Tao*. From the *I Ching* he also learned of the danger of too wide a separation between the opposites, which results in imbalance and a compulsion for change into the opposite (*enantiodromia*), as well as the natural flow of life and the principle of synchronicity. He applied this thinking to the Western condition, where he believed one-sided intellectual development has led to instinctual atrophy and mental breakdown, since the individual has lost touch with the archetypal images and natural instinctual patterns of behavior.

Jung found some parallel to his belief in the objective reality of the psyche in the *Yoga Sutra's* concept of *citta*, which refers to formative consciousness that uses the mental, vital and the physical as its instruments. He also found confirmation for his concept of a neutral libido from Pantañjali's understanding of the *rajas guna* [desire nature], which in its own right refers to action, but also dynamizes the other two *gunas*, *sattwa*, meaning poise and light, and *tamas*, meaning inertia and darkness, without which they remain static. From the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* Jung also recognized an immanent "dynamic or creative principle" in the concept of Brahman that is equivalent to his understanding of the

nature of libido or psychic energy.<sup>52</sup> Although the *Yoga Sutra's* define the *kleśas* negatively as being related to the afflictions of ignorance, egoism, attachment to sensuous pleasure, aversion, and attachment to life, for Jung, they are conceived more neutrally as “urges, the natural instinctive forms in which libido first appears out of the unconscious.<sup>53</sup>” He also found in *Tantra* “the desire for intellectual discrimination” as a *kleśas*, which Jung interprets in his characteristic way to mean as “an urge to produce personality, something that is centered and divided from other things....an urge or instinct toward individuation” away from what Jung refers to as “participation mystique,” unconscious identification with the collective psyche.<sup>54</sup>”

Jung was also impressed with *Tantra's* identification of the *chakras* as centers of universal energy, although his interest at the time he gave his seminars in 1932 on *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga* included centers of consciousness up to the heart centre, and not beyond.<sup>55</sup> He was concerned about the Western tendency to live mentally, too high up and away from full-bodied engagement in life, while emphasizing the higher centers of being at the expense of the lower. The immanent *Atman-Brahman* concept of the *Upanishad's*, which united inner and outer realities, also perfectly fit Jung's model of the Self. Jung was particularly enchanted with the Hindu conception of *Atman* because of what he perceived to be “the uninterrupted connection with [the primitive that] keeps man in touch with Mother Earth, the prime source of all

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>55</sup> 1996, passim



power,” from which the West has become divorced.<sup>56</sup> He goes onto say, “Seen from the heights of a differentiated point of view, whether rational or ethical, these instinctual forces are impure. But life flows from springs both clear and muddy, Hence all excessive “purity lacks vitality”.... (and) “Every renewal of life,” he insists, “needs the muddy as well as the clear.”<sup>57</sup>

Jung was leery of any system of yoga that was too structured like Pantañjali’s Yoga Sutras, for the specific reason that he believed the Westerner already lived in a way that was too controlled, leading to a one-sided cramped conscious mind. He, nonetheless, found sustenance from Pantañjali’s Yoga Sutras and gleaned support from it according to need. Another concept he found of interest there was the notion of *tapas*, which he interpreted as “self-brooding” as a means to creatively individuate, an understanding he took from Paul Deussen’s interpretation of Rig Veda X, 121.<sup>58</sup> One can find support here for Jung’s dynamic approach to meditation, which he calls “active imagination,” involving a dialogue between the conscious ego and the unconscious by concentration on images naturally produced by the psyche. In keeping with Jung’s respect for the individual and individual differences, and concern for the cramped nature of the Western mind, the approach one takes is not prescribed but fits individual needs.

From “*The Secret of the Golden Flower*,” sent to Jung by Richard Wilhelm, the individual who popularized the I Ching in the West, Jung was impressed with the idea of *wu-wei* or action through inaction, something he believed was

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 55

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 55

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 35

essential for Westerners to learn, given their predominantly action-based extraverted orientation to life.<sup>59</sup> He also found support for the idea that the process of self-discovery is not linear but circular or spiral-like, and a circumambulation around the center, the Self. He found further support of this process in his studies of Eastern and then alchemical *mandalas*. He himself had spontaneously produced several *mandalas* during a turbulent period in his own life that was transcribed into *The Red Book*, without knowing what he was doing until he eventually realized that he was always being drawn back to the Self, the center of personality.

Jung found confirmation for his idea of the collective unconscious in eastern thinking in various places. Not only did he find it in the *chakras* of *Tantra*, but also in the *Upanishads* and in Buddhist texts such as the *Amitayurdhyana Sutra* as well as in the *buddhitattva* idea of Tibetan Buddhism. In the *Brhadāranyaka Upanishad* the gods and goddesses are individualized subdivisions of the One, while, in the above mentioned Sutra, in one's search for self-knowledge, one traverses different realms of being until one attains ever greater intensity of experience of the universal *Amitabha* land. The *buddhitattva* is conceived as a universal mind without form, yet the creative source of all form. Jung was also encouraged with the notion that deeply rooted psychological processes involved in the *buddhitattva*, the *samskāras*, were similar to the archetypes in seed-form. Rather than treat them as evidence of reincarnation, however, as does the Eastern mind, he saw them as the outcome of a long human history in general.

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<sup>59</sup> 1970d

Finally, Jung found support for his conception of the anima and animus, ideally integrated as psychic functions that mediate between the conscious and unconscious to the point of realizing the anima-animus *syzygy* and wholeness in the Hindu conception of *Shiva-Shakti* as well as in the Chinese conception of *yang-yin*. He found the latter formulation more relevant to his psychology of individuation because of its more pragmatic application in daily life. In fact, according to Jung's findings, in the place of following a strict discipline as dictated by a guru, once the personal shadow has been reasonably assimilated to consciousness, the path of individuation requires following the unique lead of the anima or animus within, as indicated by dreams and authentic fantasy.

Although Jung was concerned about the inner softness of Westerners and their constitutional inability to make the kind of sacrifice demanded by a guru, he was impressed with the guru-student master-disciple relationship. He, in fact, saw some parallel to the relationship between the therapist and the analysand and gurus to their students in India in terms of the personal instruction imparted. He, at the same, recognized the need for continual self-discovery on the part of therapists, as well as the need for on-going scrutiny of transference/counter-transference phenomena, failing which they can be of no help to their patients or worse. Moreover, in recognition of the individualism of the Western psyche, the relationship between the therapist and patient is essentially one of equals, one of brother/sister to brother/sister rather than of father/mother to child.

### Alchemy and the Grail Tradition

As is clear from the above discussion, Jung did not engage in his studies of Eastern thought naively or uncritically, allowing him to develop his own psychological synthesis. In fact he visited India in 1938 on invitation by the British Government of India to participate in celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the University of Calcutta. While there he was honored with three doctorates, one from Allahabad, representing Islam, one from Benares, representing Hinduism and one from Calcutta, representing Indian-Western medicine and science.<sup>60</sup> The three doctorates were very fitting in that his psychology grew out of Western medicine and science, it has considerable affinity with Hinduism as indicated above and there is also, through Arabic alchemy, affinity with Islam. Thus, in his alchemical work, Jung often referred to the Arabic alchemist known in the West as Senior, whose real name was Muhmmad Ibn Umail, while acknowledging his influence on Western alchemy.

Marie Louise von Franz picked up this thread and wrote a psychological commentary on his alchemical work entitled *Muhmmad Ibn Umail Hall Ar-Rumuz ('Clearing of Enigmas')*, based on photocopies she was able to attain through the challenging efforts of her student, Theodore Abt, from the Hyderabad Library in India.<sup>61</sup> Abt himself later wrote a more extensive psychological commentary on Ibn Umail's work in a book titled, *Corpus Alchemicum Arabicum* where he emphasizes his historical importance as an interpreter of symbolic alchemy.<sup>62</sup> Von Franz notes that, while Islamic alchemy influenced Western alchemy,

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<sup>60</sup> Jung, 1965

<sup>61</sup> 1999

<sup>62</sup> 2009

Islamic alchemy was in turn influenced by *Tantra*, particularly evident in the *coniunctio* symbolism of the masculine and feminine principles. According to Jung, the *coniunctio* refers to both the coming to terms of the conscious and unconscious, on the one hand, and reconciliation between the sexes, on the other.

Despite the affinity of Jung's work with Hindu thought and Islamic alchemy, during his visit to India, Jung had a significant dream, where he alone, amongst his colleagues, could swim across the water and obtain the Grail. Jung interprets the dream to relate to his obligation to seek the healing vessel for the West. He had, in fact, already begun his alchemical studies, which he realized, along with the Grail tradition, formed the necessary bridge from Gnosticism to the contemporary Western mind.

#### Nazism: The Perverted Grail

Between the years 1928 and 1944 Jung passed through the third phase of his life's work, where he refined and published his fundamental insights on the psyche's purposive nature and its natural inborn healing tendencies.<sup>63</sup> He spent his time authenticating his findings, examining dreams and finding amplificatory material in the study of mythology, including Gnostic mythology and alchemy. During this period, Jung also warned against the dangers of mass movements as was evident in Nazism and elsewhere.

In 1936, he published "*Wotan*," describing what he believed to have been the archetypal source of Germany's restlessness and militancy, namely the constellation of the pagan god referred to in the title. After centuries of

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<sup>63</sup> J. Gary Sparks, 2007

repression much of his darker qualities as a cunning and fierce god of war emerged, while Wotan's healing values remained submerged and unconscious. Jung observes that the Christian God was no longer a living phenomenon and regulating factor, but that the militant Wotan had become their god.<sup>64</sup> Significantly, unlike his cousin, the Greek god, Dionysus, who is subordinate to Zeus, Wotan has no god above him. Moreover, in ancient Greece, the excesses of Dionysus were balanced or subdued by one of the most important of their deities, the sun-god Apollo, a far-seeing god of prophecy, music of the lyre and healing.

Germany's pagan roots, therefore, opened up the possibility of a people being one-sidedly driven by the archetype of Wotan without the moderating influence of reason and a superior spiritual principle. As a matter of fact, pre-world war II Germany was heavily influenced by the spirit of Romanticism and the Age of Reason had not taken hold there as it did in other Western European countries. In light of Jung's dream and interest in the Grail tradition, it is also noteworthy that there was a perverted Grail movement amongst many of the Nazis, notably Himmler and his followers in the SS, which included a "Grail castle."

In 1945, Jung published another essay, this time on the fate of Germany and the Nazi rule, entitled "*After the Catastrophe*." In it he wrote about the need for all Germans to acknowledge Germany's collective guilt and moral inferiority in the face of their European neighbors and the rest of the world. Even if individual German's weren't Nazis *per se*, they were either consciously or half-consciously

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<sup>64</sup> 1970a

Nazi and in denial, or unconsciously carried along with the devastating events. The question is not only why the catastrophe happened, but why it was allowed to happen.

Jung argues that Germany suffered the madness of dissociation and mass hysteria and needed to confess being overwhelmed by Wotan, the storm god, and to acknowledge their ego's shadow counterpart. Psychologically, the individual's shadow, with all its inferiority, power drive and personal ambition, aligned itself with the collective shadow of the Nazi regime. By way of example, feeling types with the capacity for discriminating feeling evaluation, who by definition, have inferior thinking functions, were swayed by illogical arguments about the natural superiority of the Aryan race and the inferiority of the "soulless" Jew. This would not have happened during normal times, as then, individuals with a differentiated feeling function have the natural capacity to relate personally to individuals regardless of their racial, religious or ethnic origin as long as inferior thinking does not interfere and contaminate their beliefs.

Intellectuals and thinking types in general, with inferior feeling functions, were drawn in by Nazi values that supported their irrational prejudices, stereotypes, and sentimentalized version of life. They include the unwarranted belief that Jews, who were illogically associated with reason, capitalism, socialism and communism and antagonistic to a sentimental German "volkish" Romanticism, had seized economic and political power, and the propagation of a superior Aryan race was in danger of contamination by Jews who lusted after Aryan women. Sensation types, with inferior intuition, were enthused by Hitler's

shadow vision of a Third Reich consisting of a superior race of Aryans, unable to distinguish between that and the spiritual evolution of the human race, and the realization of the “Kingdom of God” on earth. Finally, people with superior intuition and an inferior sensation function and not adapted to practical realities, were caught in Hitler’s convoluted state machinery and dependent on its benefits, feeling that there was no way out. They had no capacity to identify, let alone encourage, more realistic and down to earth bureaucratic and administrative practices, foreign affairs, political agendas, and economic objectives uncontaminated by Nazi ideology and ambition.

Although focusing on what had happened to Germany, Jung warns that “this is not the fate of Germany alone, but of all Europe,” observing that “We must all open our eyes to the shadow [which] looms behind contemporary man.<sup>65</sup>” Indeed, it is becoming increasingly evident that we all need to become more conscious of the functioning of the collective shadow, and how we individually support it through our personal shadow and inferior aspects of the psyche. Realization of a transformed world and new order of life requires nothing less.

Marie-Louise von Franz reports a dream of Jung’s, where “Wotan, Tiw and Thor (a triad of the same god) had entered the country demanding that a house should be built for them.<sup>66</sup> Jung notes, “They are among other things the dark, murderous side of God.<sup>67</sup> Here we have three aspects of the same god, Wotan, who can be said to embody “the spirit of the unconscious psyche, the spirit of

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<sup>65</sup> 1970b, p. 215

<sup>66</sup> As reported in Wertenschlagg-Birkhauser, 2009, p. 68

<sup>67</sup> Ibid



nature.<sup>68</sup> When there is no conscious dialogue with this archetypal personality, it acts autonomously and can carry people away in a destructive frenzy as happened with Nazi Germany or occurs with possessed individuals. When related to consciously, the same god brings understanding of how to deal with the perils of the unconscious on both a collective and an individual basis. As a *mercurius-duplex* figure, Wotan is also a *psychopompos* that potentially weaves a full life of conscious individuation and the embodiment of wisdom.

### Alchemy

Of central importance to Jung was medieval alchemy, with its plethora of mythological images and descriptions, which provided him with rich insights on the nature of the psychological healing process and transformation, and the symbols involved.<sup>69</sup> Jung's focused interest in alchemy began in 1928 when he received, from Richard Wilhelm, a Chinese alchemical-Taoist text, "*The Secret of the Golden Flower*," for which he wrote a commentary.<sup>70</sup> Although Jung had personally experienced the fires of the alchemical furnace between 1913 and 1916 and transcribed his encounter with the unconscious into his *Liber Novus* (*The Red Book*), this marked the beginning of Jung's long-term interest in the study of alchemy itself. He gathered together a collection of rare books, which contained alchemical symbols and language, which he meticulously deciphered in terms of the psyche's natural healing process. He regarded alchemy to be compensatory for the spiritually one-sided Christianity that stressed too much

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p 69

<sup>69</sup> J. Gary Sparks, 2007

<sup>70</sup> 1970d

light and good while repressing the chthonic feminine and the shadow, where alchemy relates the Self to Mother earth, as was the case with the immanent *Atman* of the *Upanishads*.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung is reported to have said:

When I began to understand alchemy, I realized that it represented the historical link back to Gnosticism, and that a continuity therefore existed between past and present...Alchemy formed the bridge on the one hand into the past, to Gnosticism, and on the other into the future, to the modern psychology of the unconscious, and the uninterrupted intellectual chain back to Gnosticism, gave substance to my psychology.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, in alchemy and related traditions, Jung discovered the missing bridge between the mythological images of the Western pre-Christian psyche and Gnosticism, and those permeating the dreams and true fantasies of himself and his analysands. What he discovered were not only imagistic contents, but also living processes, therefore an important key to understanding dreams and concealed motifs of neurotic and mental disorders as well as the nature of the individuation process itself. It is worthwhile noting that, an important tradition related to alchemy and Gnosticism was the legend of the Grail, about which Jung's wife, Emma, initiated a psychological treatise that, on her death, Marie Louise von Franz, completed in a book entitled *The Grail Legend*.<sup>72</sup> The main message of the Grail tradition, where the Grail represents the principle of individuation, is the need to compensate one-sided medieval Christianity with pagan, Gnostic and Islamic values, and treading the path between the opposites.

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<sup>71</sup> 1963, p. 201

<sup>72</sup> 1972 passim

In 1944, Jung suffered a near fatal heart attack, convalescing from which he had a series of remarkable *coniunctio* visions, including the “sacred wedding” of the gods which, “At bottom was I myself.<sup>73</sup>” Marie Louise von Franz interprets these experiences as a feeling experience of the *unus mundus*, “in which everything happening in time is experienced as if gathered up into a timeless objective oneness.<sup>74</sup>” During the vision, an image floated up from the direction of Europe in the form of his Doctor in his primal form as a *basileus* of *Kos*, and after a mute dialogue, he understood that he was called back to earth to complete his work.<sup>75</sup> This was the beginning of the fourth and final stage of Jung’s opus that lasted until 1961, the end of his life. From then on he surrendered directly to the unconscious and wrote as dictated by the emerging material, no longer trying to appeal to the needs of the reader.

Some of the major works published during this period include *Psychology and Alchemy*, 1944, followed by “*The Philosophical Tree*,” 1945, “*The Psychology of the Transference*,” 1945, and “*The Transcendent Function*,” 1946. In *Psychology and Alchemy* Jung demonstrates the relevance of alchemical symbolism for the process of individuation and the psychology of the unconscious by illustrating how alchemical symbolism appears in contemporary dreams, while describing the *coniunctio*, goal of alchemy as compensation for Christianity. He also solved the problem posed by the axiom of Maria, often quoted by Jung, which states: “Out of the One, comes the Two, Two gives birth

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<sup>73</sup> 1965, p. 294

<sup>74</sup> 1975, p. 252

<sup>75</sup> Jung 1965, p. 292

to the Three and the Three gives birth to the One that is the Four.<sup>76</sup> This formula points to the problem of the 3 and the 4, where 3 refers to conceptual insight and process and 4 is the symbol of wholeness that, at one level, requires integrating the inferior function to consciousness. By and large, the alchemists tended to waver between the 3 and the 4, and it remains a challenging problem in Jungian psychology to this day as well. Jung himself demonstrates how the formula is solved, as indicated in recorded experiences of him having attained wholeness and oneness near the end of his life, briefly described below.<sup>77</sup>

In "*The Philosophical Tree*," Jung writes about the symbolic tree rooted in the earth and ascending vertically as representing the developmental process of human life.<sup>78</sup> Given its identity with *Mercurius* as vegetative spirit, Jung also regards it as also representing a transformative process that involves death, rebirth and resurrection, the growth of consciousness and attainment of wisdom and knowledge of God. In *The Psychology of the Transference*, Jung appeals to a series of alchemical images and descriptions from the alchemical text, "*Rosarium Philosophorum*," in order to elucidate the transference phenomenon, especially as it transpires in an in-depth therapeutic container.<sup>79</sup>

Jung argues that inasmuch as the patient comes with an activated unconscious, the corresponding material is potentially activated in the therapist. As he envisions it, the therapeutic task for therapists, therefore, is to accept the human bond of the therapeutic relationship and to work on their own soul.

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<sup>76</sup> 1977

<sup>77</sup> As recorded by von Franz, 1975, p. 287

<sup>78</sup> Jung, 1970e

<sup>79</sup> Jung, 1970c

Moreover, the process depicted in the pictures, which terminate in the union of King and Queen, corresponds to the developmental process in the patient's unconscious that aims at the anima-animus *syzygy*. In "*The Transcendent Function*" Jung discusses the way to come to terms with new adaptive requirements, and the need to bring the conscious and disturbed unconscious into harmony.<sup>80</sup> According to Jung, this requires first becoming aware of the unconscious compensatory reaction and then, holding two emotionally charged positions, the original conscious and formerly unconscious positions, in consciousness. The resulting energy-laden tension, he argues, creates a living third thing as the conflict resolves itself in a new level of being.

#### The Living God and *Unus Mundus*

In 1959, Jung was asked during a BBC interview with John Freeman on the radio series "Face to Face," if he believed in God's existence, and, after some pause, he replied, "I don't need to believe – I know," by which he felt the need to later insist, that what he meant is that he experiences the God-image as a greater Will that crosses his path and maneuvers his fate favorably or otherwise.<sup>81</sup> To put his notion of the Western God-image in perspective, Jung writes that "the real history of the world seems to be the progressive incarnation of the deity," which suggests that not only conscious individuals are subject to a greater will of the emerging God-image crossing their path, but so are civilizations and cultures, especially evident in times of major cultural transition like today.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> 1975b

<sup>81</sup> Gerhard Adler, editor, 1973, p. 521

<sup>82</sup> As reported in Edward F. Edinger, 1996, p. 119

Given his intense involvement in the life of his times and his engagement at the level of Western and world culture, Jung's work and personal submission to the God-image is relevant to everybody. The last dream he was able to report, which took place a few days before his death, is indicative of the full extent of his individuation and spiritualization. "He saw a great round stone in a high place, a barren square, and on it were engraved the words: "And this shall be a sign unto you of Wholeness and oneness." Then he saw many vessels to the right in an open square and a quadrangle of trees whose roots reached around the earth and enveloped him and among the roots golden threads were glittering.<sup>83</sup>" The only comment on the dream that Marie Louise von Franz felt the need of making was that "When the *Tao*, the meaning of the world and eternal life are attained, the Chinese say: "Long life flowers with the essence of the stone and the brightness of gold."<sup>84</sup>" According to the dream, Jung had attained Wholeness and Oneness and individual differentiation at the level of the rhizome below the roots of the trees.

The extent of Jung's knowledge of a living God is also, to some degree, expressed in his all his writings, but especially in his last three works. His three most important publications include *Aion*, 1951, published when he was 76, *Answer to Job*, published in 1952, at 77, and his *magnum opus*, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, his last book, published in 1955, when he was 80. In *Aion*, Jung describes the progressive unfolding of the archetype of the God-image or the

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<sup>83</sup> 1975, p. 287

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

Self during the Christian aeon, the Age of Pisces.<sup>85</sup> His discussion includes his observation that the image of Christ is all good and all light and that the shadow element remains with Satan as the Adversary and Antichrist who, according to early tradition would return after 1000 years. Astrology symbolically depicts the Age of Pisces as the Two Fishes, one, representing Christ, swimming vertically, the other, representing the Antichrist, swimming horizontally. This, notes Jung, accords with the psychological law of *enantiodromia*, change into the opposites and, since the Renaissance, the seed was planted for the materialistic world of today that is anything but Christian.

But wholeness requires integration of both sides of the Self, the light and the dark, and spirituality needs to include the horizontal and earthly dimension of life as well as the spiritual dimension per se. Jung believes that in Christianity the “archetype of the Self is hopelessly split into two irreconcilable halves, leading ultimately to a metaphysical dualism” the separation of those who belong to the City of God and the damned.<sup>86</sup> Not only does the new God-image, which is a paradoxical God, embrace all dimensions of being, but individuals, according to Jung, are now required to consciously individuate to the point of assuming the role and responsibility of a Christ in terms of being a mediator between God and the world.<sup>87</sup> Not only does Jung clarify his concepts of the anima, the animus and the shadow, but he brings unprecedented differentiation to his understanding of the archetype of the Self, which he sees as both static and a dynamic circular process. He also defines the Self structurally as a fourfold quaternity, which, for

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<sup>85</sup> 1975c

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*, p. 255

humans, has a spiritual, animal, vegetative and inorganic [material] dimensions, thus involving all aspects of life.

Jung continues this dialogue on the Christian epoch in his most passionate and controversial and, some say, most important book, *Answer to Job*,<sup>88</sup> He addresses the problem of good and evil, noting that Job was more moral than the amoral God of the Hebrew Testament that confronted and tested him. Jung deliberately takes an anthropomorphic view arguing that God's answer to Job was to incarnate as the all-good Christ, suggesting that, initiated by Christ, God now wants continuing incarnation as man, beginning with Christ.

Continuing a theme he discusses early on at the beginning of *The Red Book*, in a section entitled "The Way of what is to Come," he prophesizes the emerging aeon with a new god-image based on openness to the down flow of the Holy Spirit, the union of opposites and the *coniunctio*.

Lance Owens (2010, p. 31) makes the astute observation that *Answer to Job is*, in fact, a contemporary Gnostic Myth, referring to Shamdasani's observation that it relates to the theology of *The Red Book*. He points out that it is Jung's articulation of the Gnostic myth of Sophia and the demiurge and that humankind stands at a turning point where it needs Sophia, whom Jung sees as having returned in the dogmatic pronouncement by Pope Pius XII in 1950, of the assumption of the Virgin Mary. As Jung writes in *Answer to Job*: (1975 d, p 457), "we also need the Wisdom (Sophia) that Job was seeking," for birth of "the higher and complete man." Indeed, some forty years earlier, in *The Red Book*, Jung

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<sup>88</sup> 1975d



writes about his God-given vocation and challenging task along these very lines that fulfilling redeems him.

To give birth to the ancient in a new time is creation. This is the creation of the new, and that redeems me. Salvation is the resolution of the task. The task is to give birth to the old in a new time.<sup>89</sup>

Jung ends his book, *Answer to Job*, with the observation that we now live in the age of the Holy Spirit and that “the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the third Divine Person, in man, brings about a Christification of many, and the question then arises whether these many are all complete God-men.” Considering the problem of inflation that this state of affairs inevitably invokes, he refers to Paul’s “thorn in the flesh,” and surrenders to these inspiring words: “even the enlightened person remains what he is, and is never more than his own limited ego [*purusha*] before the One who dwells within him, whose form has no knowable boundaries, who encompasses him on all sides, fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky.<sup>90</sup>”

All the themes examined in Jung’s alchemical studies, as well as his later works, are evident in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, where he continues his interpretation of alchemical classics for purposes of elucidating the nature of the symbolism, goal and later stages of the individuation process.<sup>91</sup> The book’s subtitle, “An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy,” is indicative of the subject matter and alludes to its importance to the student of personality integration. The alchemical opus first involves the need for

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<sup>89</sup> 2009, p. 311

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*, p. 470

<sup>91</sup> Jung, 1974

discernment through separation, in an alchemical operation known as *separatio*, and subsequently a conscious synthesis, symbolized by the major *coniunctio* of the King and the Queen, the masculine and feminine principles.

Jung begins by taking the reader through the preceding stages of dissociation involving the alchemical chaos or *prima materia*, through intermediate stages to the reconciliation of opposites in the *lapis philosophorum*, the philosopher's stone, a symbol of the Self and psychic totality. Throughout his study, he makes important allusions to the *filius philosophorum*, the son the philosopher, child of the alchemical opus and the chthonic mother, who is "the secret hidden in matter and "the light above all lights,"" a being who "ascends and descends and unites Below with Above," thus "gaining a new power that carries its effects over into everyday life.<sup>92</sup>" Indeed, for Jung, psychological transformation is "a notable advance...only if the centre experienced is a *spiritus rector* of everyday life.<sup>93</sup>" Conscious relationship to the *filius philosophorum* and the chthonic mother, take the process of transformation to greater heights and depths of being than otherwise is the case, while insisting on its concrete reality.

Following the alchemist, Gerhard Dorn, Jung describes three stages of conjunction: the first being the *unio mentalis*, meaning conceptual and aesthetic understanding, the second, which includes the body, being the realization of one's understanding in life and, the third stage, the *unus mundus*, which Jung writes "is universal: it is the relation or identity of the personal with the

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, pp. 41, 228

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 544

suprapersonal *atman*, and of the individual *tao* with the universal *tao*.<sup>94</sup> As the cosmic Self and center of the manifest world, the *unus mundus* assumes unity in multiplicity or multiplicity in a unified field, and it is, accordingly, the living source of synchronistic experiences. In Jung's words "if *mandala* symbolism is the psychological equivalent of the *unus mundus*, then synchronicity is the para-psychological equivalent."<sup>95</sup>

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It should be evident from this survey that in the deeper realm of Jung's work the religious function and spiritual values are front and centre, most importantly studied within the context of the Western psyche and its peculiar biases and needs. He has the particular merit of bringing to consciousness for the contemporary Western mind compensatory values to Christianity that he found in Gnosticism, alchemy and the East. As such he shows the way for in-depth healing of the ailing Western soul and the spiritual transformation of being required in the new aeon. Jung's approach to depth psychology is a genuine synthesis that first required the maturation of the subjective self-reflecting mind and the advancement of scientific materialism in order to be possible.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 535

<sup>95</sup> 1974, p. 464

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