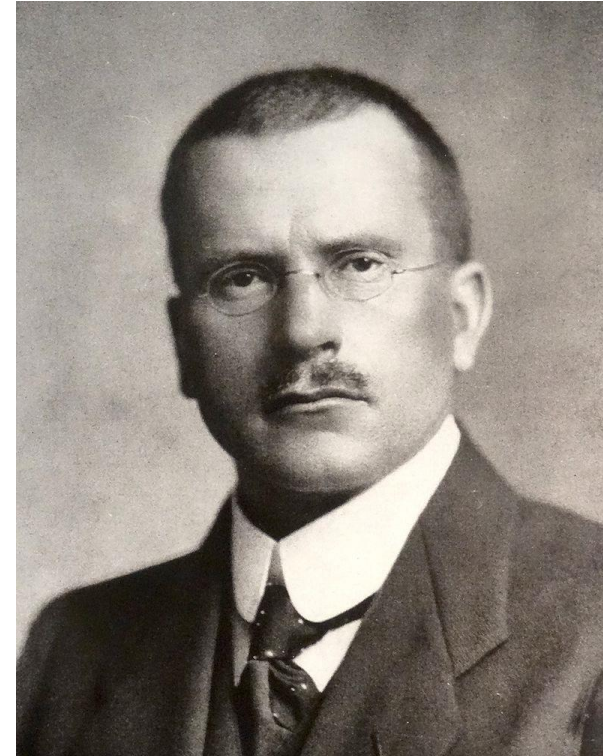
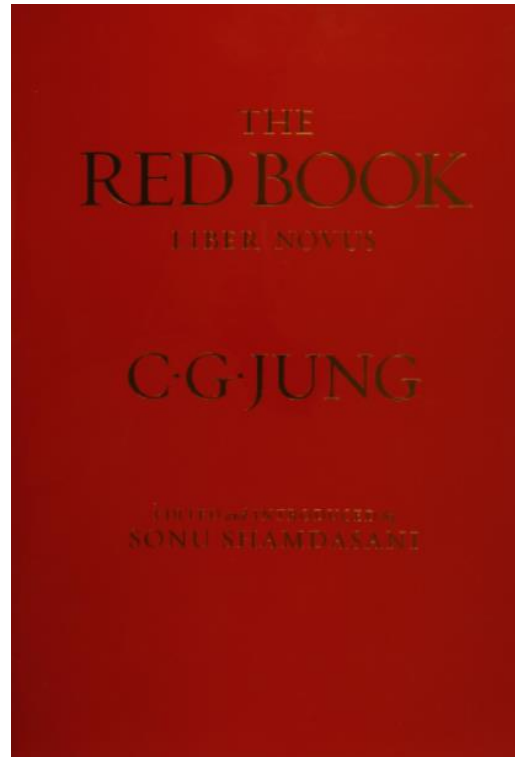




The Liber Novus

DR. FRANCES CLYNES

The Importance of the *Liber Novus*



‘THE YEARS, OF WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU, when I pursued the inner images, were the most important time of my life. Everything else is to be derived from this. It began at that time, and the later details hardly matter anymore. My entire life consisted in elaborating what had burst forth from the unconscious and flooded me like an enigmatic stream and threatened to break me. That was the stuff and material for more than only one life. Everything later was merely the outer classification, the scientific elaboration, and the integration into life. But the numinous beginning, which contained everything, was then.’

C. G. Jung, ‘Authors’ Note’, *The Red Book: The Liber Novus*



‘In the end the only events in my life worth telling are those when the imperishable world erupted into this transitory one. That is why I speak chiefly of inner experiences, amongst which I include my dreams and visions. These form the *prima materia* of my scientific work. They were the fiery magma out of which the stone that had to be worked was crystallised.’

C. G. Jung, ‘Prologue’, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections: An Autobiography*, p. 14.



Jung's work after 1930

- An extended amplification of the contents of *Liber Novus*
- An attempt to translate its contents into a form acceptable to the contemporary outlook
- Some of the statements made in *Liber Novus* closely correspond to positions that Jung would later articulate in his published works and, represent their first formulations
 - 'One is simply not in a position to comprehend the genesis of Jung's late work, nor to fully understand what he was attempting to achieve, without studying *Liber Novus*. At the same time, the *Collected Works* can in part be considered an indirect commentary on *Liber Novus*.'
 - Sonu Shamdasani, 'Liber Novus: The Red Book of C. G. Jung' in C.G Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, p. 87



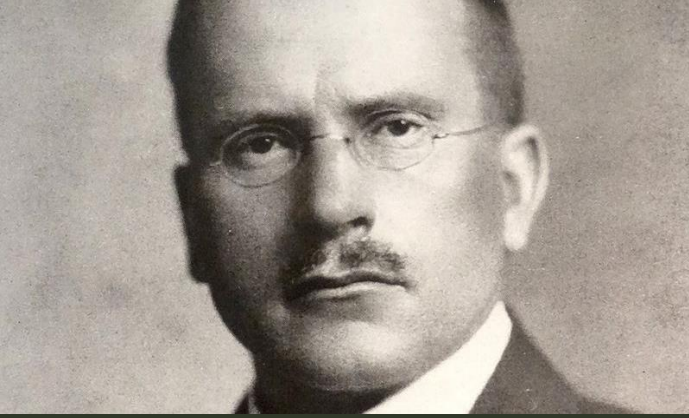
Before Confrontation with the Unconscious

- Establishing a structural account of general human functioning and of psychopathology
- Theory of complexes
- An inherited universal unconscious peopled by mythic images
- A non-sexual psychic energy
- Introversion and extraversion types
- Functions of dreams
- Approach to fantasies

Liber Novus

- The individuation process
- Would come to occupy him for the rest of his life

Confrontation with the Unconscious



Jung's Two Personalities

Personality No. 1

A scientific, rational
personality who conformed
to the society he lived in

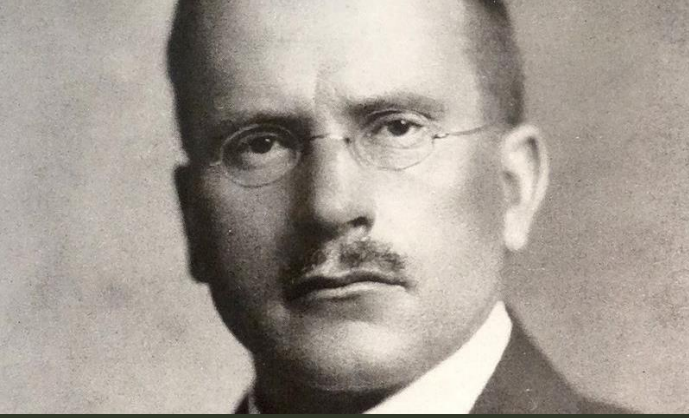
‘Empirical science
constitutes the only
authoritative world-view’

*Greene, Jung's Studies in
Astrology, p. 181*

Represses his spiritual,
philosophical side

Lacked confidence





Jung's Two Personalities

Personality No. 2

'An old man who lived in the 18th century and wore buckled shoes and a white wig'

A numinous quality that was in sympathy with the uncanny side of his mother

This personality felt the 'most real'

Had the potential to overwhelm No. 1



The Two Spirits

The Spirit of This Time

The Spirit of the Depths

‘In terms of Jung’s later biographical memoir, the spirit of this time corresponds to personality NO. 1, and the spirit of the depths corresponds to personality NO. 2.’

Shamdasani, p. 48

THE
RED BOOK

LIBER NOVUS

C·G·JUNG

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SHAMDASANI

Split with Freud

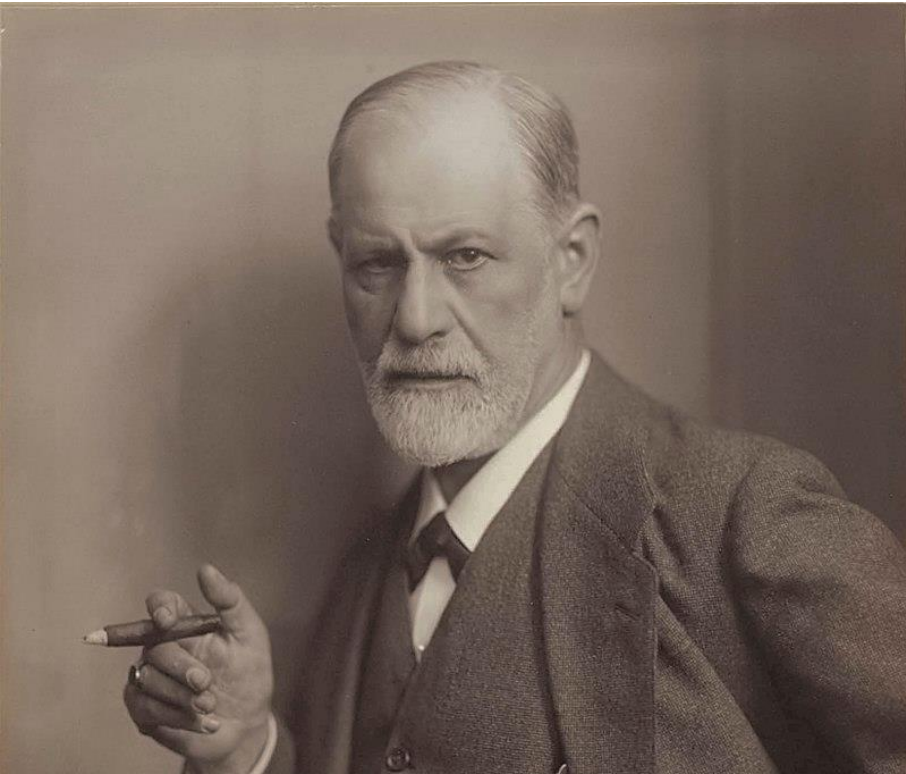
Studied mythology, folklore and religion

Psychology of the Unconscious: a study of the transformations and symbolisms of the libido, a contribution to the history of the evolution of thought

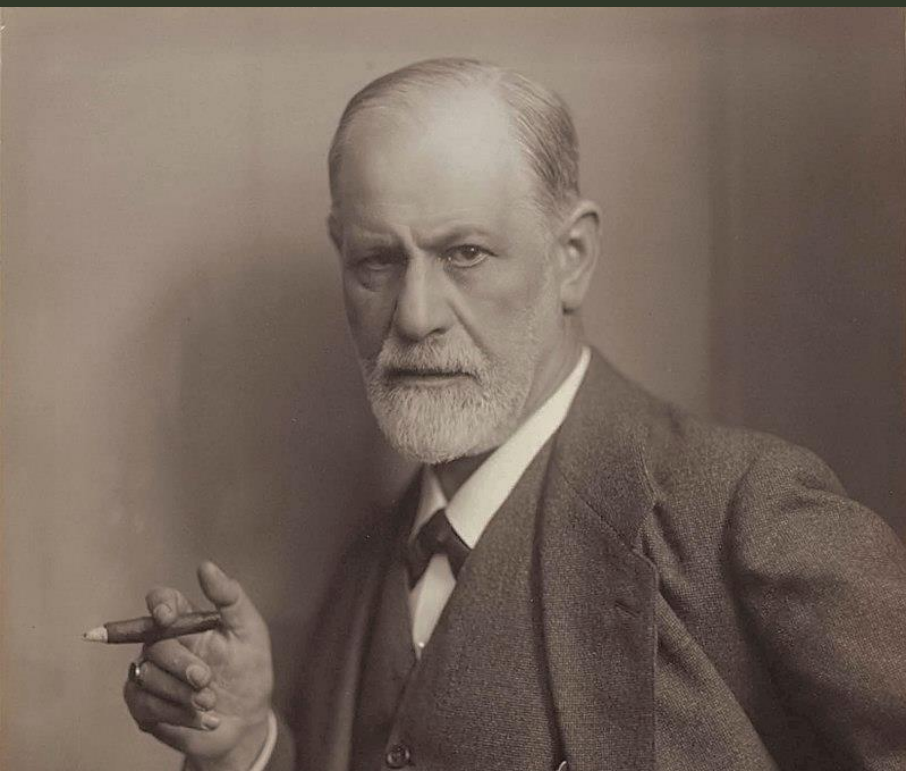
Published in 1912 as *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* and translated into English in 1917

Jung wrote to Freud, 'The publication of the book marks the end of our friendship'

CG Jung, *Introduction to Jungian Psychology*



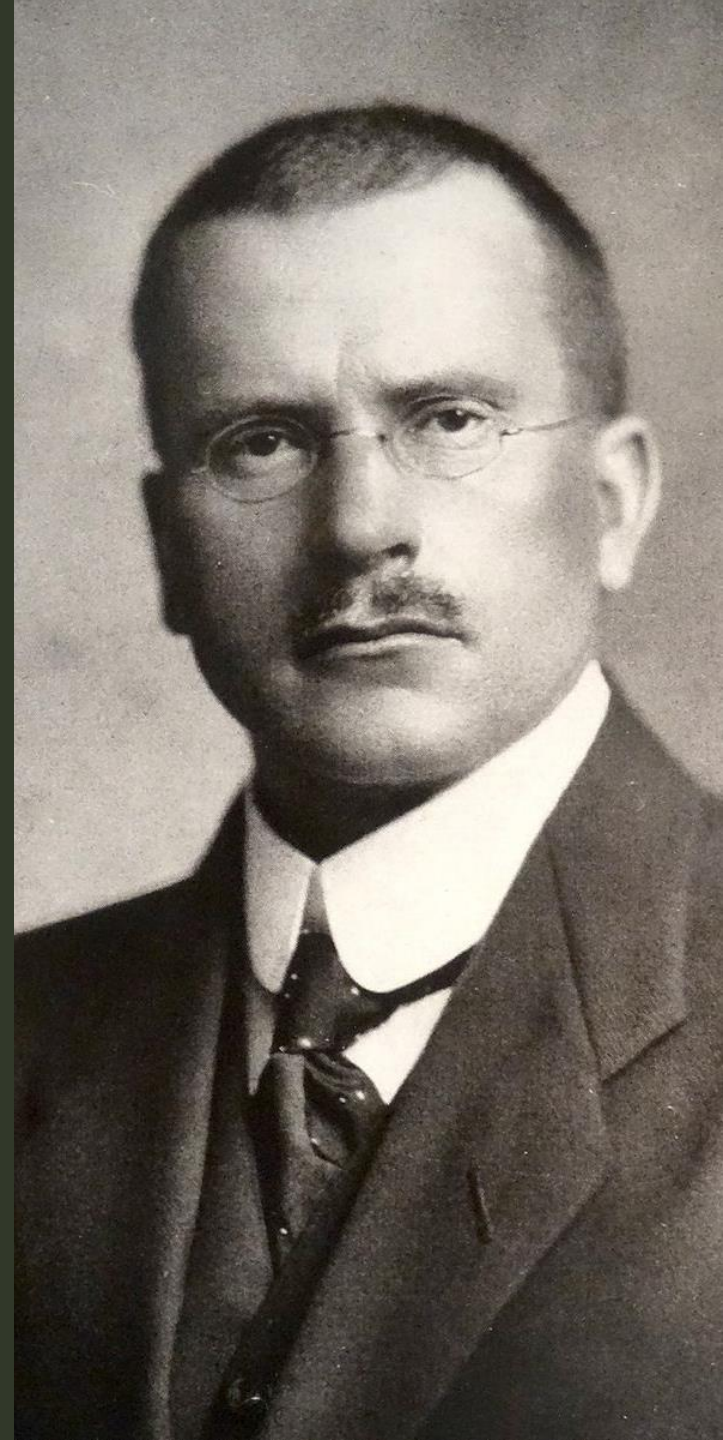
Split with Freud



6th January 1913 –
Jung splits with Freud

‘After the parting of the ways with Freud, a period of inner uncertainty began for me. It would be no exaggeration to call it a state of disorientation. I felt totally suspended in mid-air, for I had not yet found my own footing.’

- *MDR*, p. 205



1913 – The Darkness

‘Towards the autumn of 1913, the pressure which I had felt was in me seemed to be moving outwards, as though there were something in the air. The atmosphere actually seemed to me darker than it had been. It was as though the sense of oppression no longer sprang exclusively from a psychic situation, but from concrete reality. This feeling grew more and more intense.’

MDR, p. 205



October 1913

‘I saw a monstrous flood covering all the northern and low-lying lands between the North Sea and the Alps. When it came up to Switzerland I saw that the mountains grew higher and higher to protect our country. I realised that a frightful catastrophe was in progress. I saw the mighty yellow waves, the floating rubble of civilisation, and the drowned bodies of uncounted thousands. Then the whole sea turned to blood. This vision lasted about one hour.’

MDR, p. 210



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1913 – The Dreams

- 2013-2014 – A series of dreams and visions of death and disaster
- 31st July 2014 – WWI
- Identified twelve precognitive fantasies Oct 2013-July 2014
 - ‘I understood that my dreams and my visions came to me from the subsoil of the collective unconscious’
- Commenced writing the *Draft* of the *Liber Novus*
 - C. G. Jung *Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*, pp. 233– 34.

Confrontation with the Unconscious

‘In order to grasp the fantasies which were stirring in me “underground,” I knew that I had to let myself plummet down into them, as it were. I felt not only violent resistance to this, but a distinct fear. For I was afraid of losing command of myself and becoming a prey to the fantasies — and as a psychiatrist I realised only too well what that meant. After prolonged hesitation, however, I saw that there was no other way out. I had to take the chance, had to try to gain power over them; for I realised that if I did not do so, I ran the risk of their gaining power over me.’

MDR, pp. 213-214



Confrontation with the Unconscious

‘Not knowing what would come next, I thought perhaps more introspection was needed . . . I devised such a boring method by fantasizing that I was digging a hole, and by accepting this fantasy as perfectly real.’

The Red Book, p. 22.



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Beginning the Process

12th December 1913 – ‘The Decisive Step’

‘Because I was caught up in the spirit of this time, precisely what happened to me on this night had to happen to me, namely that the spirit of the depths erupted with force, and swept away the spirit of this time with a powerful wave.’

The Red Book, p. 150



Beginning the Process

‘First I formulated the things as I had observed them, usually in “high-flown language,” for that corresponds to the style of the archetypes ... But since I did not know what was going on, I had no choice but to write everything down in the style selected by the unconscious itself. Sometimes it was as if I were hearing it with my ears, sometimes feeling it with my mouth, as if my tongue were formulating words; now and then I heard myself whispering aloud. Below the threshold of consciousness everything was seething with life.’

MDR, p. 213



Active Imagination

- Confrontation with the unconscious lasted until 1930
- Developed a technique to
 - ‘Get to the bottom of [his] inner processes’
 - ‘Translate the emotions into images’
 - ‘Grasp the fantasies which were stirring . . . “underground.”’
- Later called this ‘Active Imagination’
 - *The Red Book*



Active Imagination

- Aim was to allow psychic contents to appear spontaneously
- He deliberately evoked visions
- Recorded his fantasies in the *Black Books*
 - 1913-1916
- Transcribed into *Liber Novus* with commentaries
- 1930 – Put it aside unfinished
- 1959 – Tried to complete it
- *Black Books* – For personal use
- *Liber Novus* – For public consumption
 - Begins with an address to ‘My Friends’



Active Imagination

- Initially he referred to it as active fantasy, trancing, visioning or technique of the descent
- A gateway or bridge between the invisible world and the world of consciousness
- It is in charge of its own expression
- ‘The imagination process runs its own show’
 - Greene, 2017

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Spirit of This Time

‘The spirit of this time would like to hear of use and value. I also thought this way, and my humanity still thinks this way. But that other spirit forces me nevertheless to speak, beyond justification, use, and meaning.’

• *The Red Book, p. 119*

- Before his confrontation with the unconscious, he had served the Spirit of This Time
- Personality No. 1 served the Spirit of This Time

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Spirit of The Depths

‘I have learned that in addition to the spirit of this time there is still another spirit at work, namely that which rules the depths of everything contemporary.’

‘Filled with human pride and blinded by the presumptuous spirit of the times, I long sought to hold that other spirit away from me. But I did not consider that the spirit of the depths from time immemorial and for all the future possesses a greater power than the spirit of this time, who changes with the generations.’

The Red Book, p. 119

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Spirit of the Depths

- Personality No. 2 served the Spirit of the Depths
- Concerned with the soul
- Confrontation with the unconscious served the Spirit of the Depths
 - ‘Integrating [the fantasy figures] into consciousness, hence recovering the value of the mythopoeic imagination which had been lost to the modern age, and thereby reconciling the spirit of the time with the spirit of the depth.’

Reconciling the Spirit of This Time with the Spirit of the Depths

‘But know that there is a
divine madness which is
nothing other than the
overpowering of the spirit of
this time through the spirit
of the depths.

The Red Book, p. 150

THE
RED BOOK

LIBER NOVUS

C·G·JUNG

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S. H. AMUNDSON

THE RED BOOK

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Spirit of the Depths

‘The spirit of the depths took my understanding and all my knowledge and placed them at the service of the inexplicable and the paradoxical. He robbed me of speech and writing for everything that was not in his service, namely the melting together of sense and nonsense, which produces the supreme meaning.’

The Red Book, p. 120

The Acceptance of the Irrational

‘Jung argued that the era of reason and skepticism inaugurated by the French Revolution had repressed religion and irrationalism. This in turn had serious consequences, leading to the outbreak of irrationalism represented by the world war. It was thus a historical necessity to acknowledge the irrational as a psychological factor. The acceptance of the irrational forms one of the central themes of *Liber Novus*.’

Shamdasani, p. 56

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Active Imagination

‘The Red Book told of the battle between the world of reality and the world of the spirit. You said in that battle you had been very nearly torn asunder but that you had managed to keep your feet on the earth & make an effect on reality.’

Letter from Cary Baynes to Jung on 30th January 1924, cited in Jung, C. G.. The Red Book: A Reader's Edition, pp. 68-69.

The Liber Novus



Active Imagination

November 1916

Paper – ‘The transcendent function’

Published only in 1957

Outlines the method of eliciting and developing fantasies that he later termed active imagination

Explains its therapeutic rationale

‘An interim progress report on Jung’s self-experimentation, and may profitably be considered as a preface to *Liber Novus*’

- Shamdasani, pp. 52-53.



‘The Way of What is to Come’

- *Draft* typed up
- First section of it – *Liber Primus* entered into a specially commissioned red leather volume
- Continues with *Liber Secundus*
- Titled first book ‘*The Way of What is to Come*’
- Citations from the *Book of Isaiah* and the *Gospel of John*
- Presented as a prophetic work



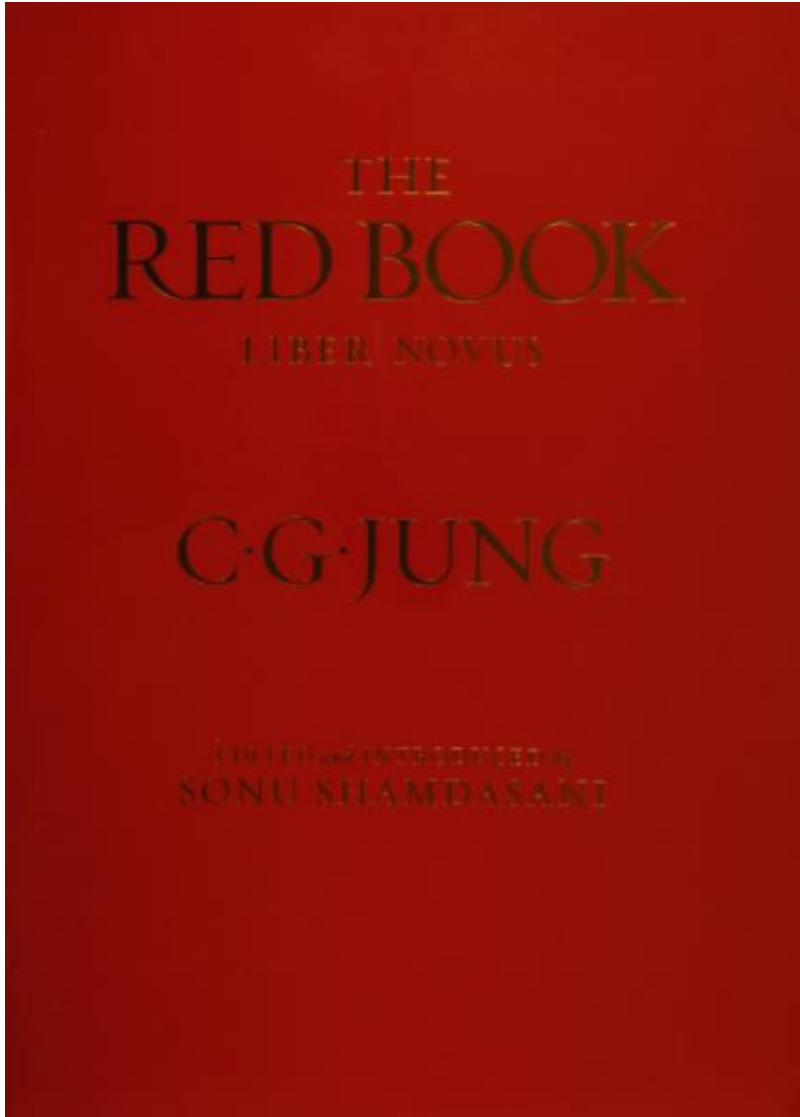
Format of Chapters

- Description of the fantasies where Jung encounters a series of figures and enters conversation with them
- Confronted with unexpected happenings and shocking statements
- Figures part of the collective unconscious
 - Elijah and Salome
 - 'I am shocked, I am incapable of grasping it.'
 - pp. 174-175



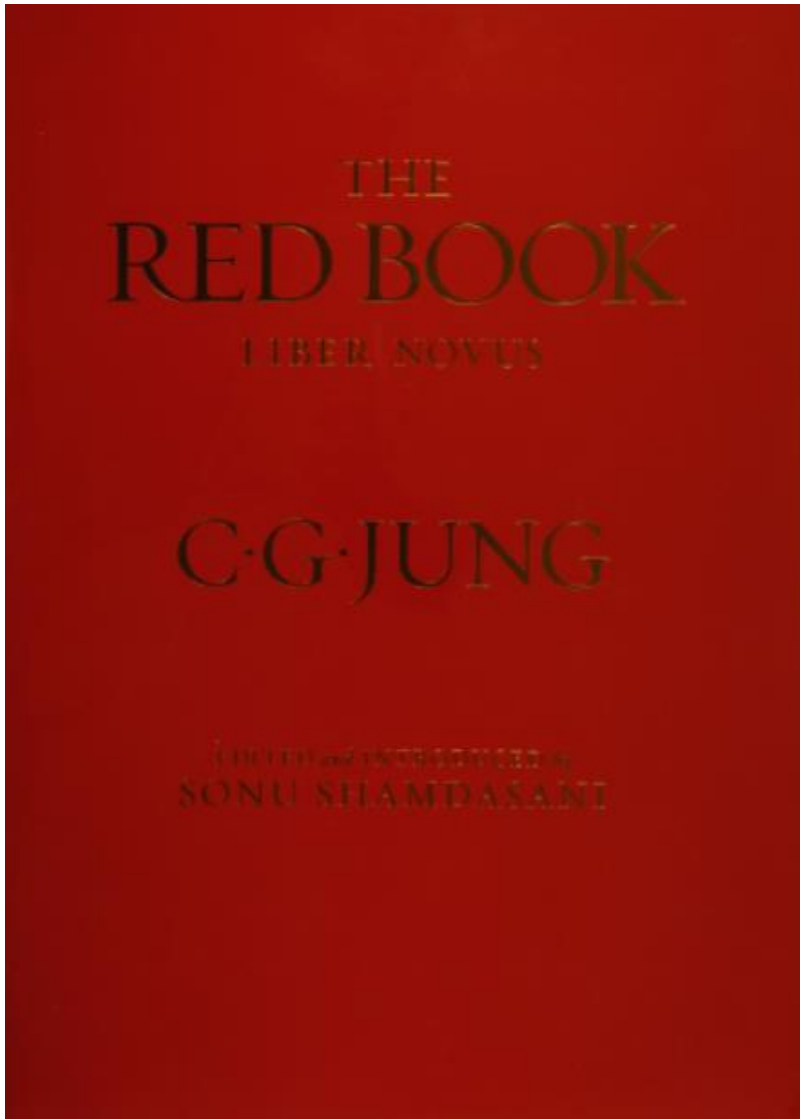
Format of Chapters

- Attempts to understand what has transpired and formulate the significance of the events and statements into general psychological conceptions and maxims
- The task of individuation lay in establishing a dialogue with the fantasy figures or contents of the collective unconscious, and integrating them into consciousness
- Reconciling the spirit of this time with the spirit of the depths



Philemon

- First appears in a dream
- Jan 27 1914 – Writes of Philemon in the *Black Books*
- After that Jung invokes him using ritual
- Superior insight
- Evolved out of the figure of Elijah who had previously appeared to him in dreams
 - ‘Philemon was a pagan and brought with him an Egypto-Hellenic atmosphere with a Gnostic coloration . . . It was he who taught me psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche. Through the conversations with Philemon, the distinction was clarified between myself and the object of my thought . . . Psychologically, Philemon represented superior insight.’



Symbols

- “I am of the opinion that the union of rational and irrational truth is to be found not so much in art as in the symbol per se; for it is the essence of the symbol to contain both the rational and irrational.”
 - CW 10, 24
- Symbols stem from the unconscious
- The creation of symbols is the most important function of the unconscious
- Only present when we are willing to recognise it
 - Shamdasani, *p. 57*



1918 – Emerging From the Darkness

‘It was only towards the end of the First World War that I gradually began to emerge from the darkness.’

MDR, P. 231

‘During those years, between 1918 and 1920, I began to understand that the goal of psychic development is the self.’

MDR, p. 233



Psychological Types (CW 6)

1925 - Jung presented his seminars on analytical psychology to the Psychological Club

Discussed some of the important fantasies in *Liber Novus*

Described how they formed the basis of the ideas in *Psychological Types*

Impact on Jung's Model

'*Liber Novus* is of critical significance for grasping the emergence of Jung's new model of psychotherapy. In 1912, in *Transformation and Symbols of the Libido*, he considered the presence of mythological fantasies—such as are present in *Liber Novus*—to be the signs of a loosening of the phylogenetic layers of the unconscious, and indicative of schizophrenia. Through his self-experimentation, he radically revised this position: what he now considered critical was not the presence of any particular content, but the attitude of the individual toward it and, in particular, whether an individual could accommodate such material in their worldview. This explains why he commented in his afterword to *Liber Novus* that to the superficial observer, the work would seem like madness, and could have become so, if he had failed to contain and comprehend the experiences.'

Shamdasani, p. 74

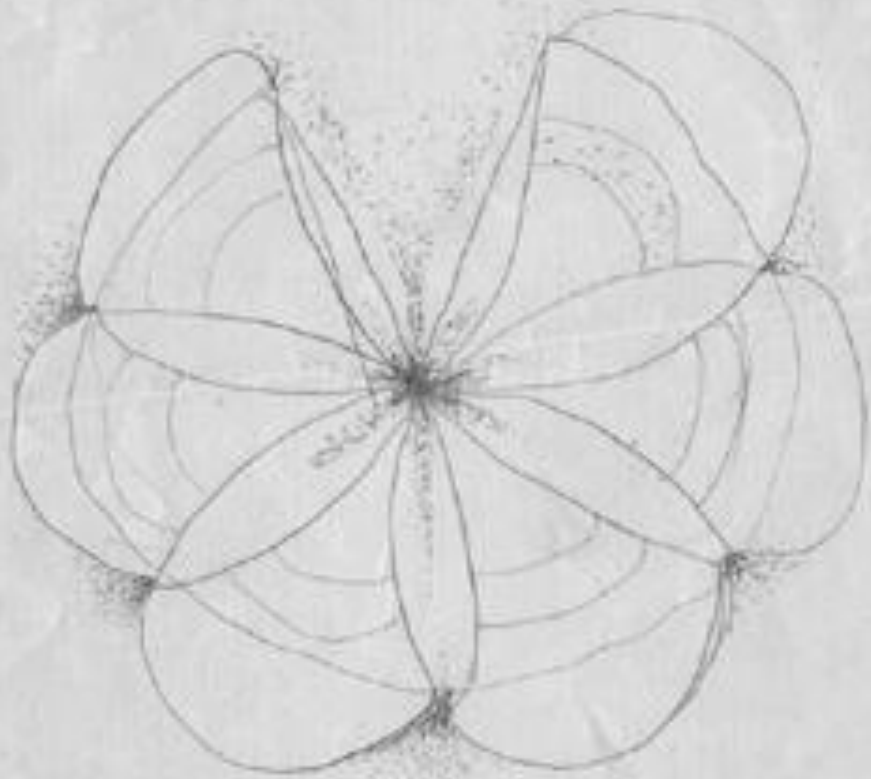




Mandala of Aug 2 1917, *Liber Novus*

The Self

- August-September 1917 – 27 Mandalas
- In 1918 during a period when he was working on a series of mandalas, the idea of the Self came to him
 - 'The self, I thought, was like the monad which I am, and which is my world. The mandala represents this monad, and corresponds to the microcosmic nature of the soul.'
 - 'Only when I began to paint the mandalas did I see that all the paths I took, all the steps I made, all led back to the one point, that is, to the center. The mandala became the expression of all paths.'
- *The Red Book*, p. 45



Mandala of Aug 6 1917, *Liber Novus*

The Self

‘Only now did I gradually come to what the mandala really is: “Formation, transformation, the eternal mind’s eternal recreation.” And that is the self, the wholeness of the personality, which, when everything is well, is harmonious, but which can bear no self deception. My mandala images were cryptograms on the state of my self, which were delivered to me each day.’

- *The Red Book*, pp. 43-44



Jung and Soul

‘I thought and spoke much of the soul. I knew many learned words for her, I had judged her and turned her into a scientific object. I did not consider that my soul cannot be the object of my judgment and knowledge; much more are my judgment and knowledge the objects of my soul. Therefore the spirit of the depths forced me to speak to my soul, to call upon her as a living and self-existing being. I had to become aware that I had lost my soul.’

The Red Book, pp. 128-129



Jung and Soul

- In the *Black Books* most of the dialogues are with his soul
- In some sections of *Liber Novus* he converses with the serpent and the bird
- January 1916
 - Conversation with his soul
 - When the Above and Below are not united, she falls into three parts – a serpent, the human soul and the bird or heavenly soul, which visits the Gods
 - Plato's tripartite soul
 - *The Red Book*, p. 46



Jung and Soul

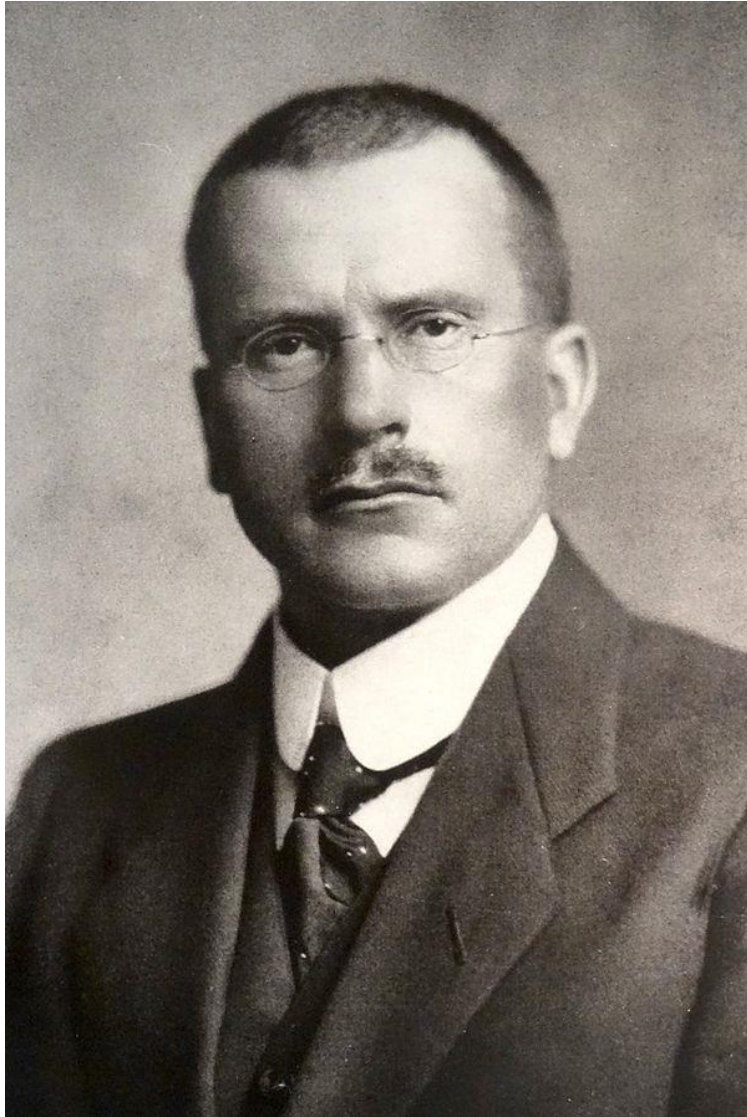
- Theme of the book is how Jung regains his soul
- Overcomes the spiritual alienation typical of all Spirits of This Time
- A new image of God born in his soul
- Develops a new psychological cosmology



1928 - Alchemy

‘My acquaintance with alchemy in 1930 took me away from it. The beginning of the end came in 1928, when [Richard] Wilhelm sent me the text of the “Golden flower,” an alchemical treatise. There the contents of this book found their way into actuality and I could no longer continue working on it.’

The Red Book, p. 84.



Individuation

- '*Liber Novus* presents the prototype of Jung's conception of the individuation process, which he held to be the universal form of individual psychological development.'
- 'A new project emerges here: the attempt to provide a temporal account of higher development, which he termed the individuation process.'

Shamdasani, pp. 49-59

Individuation

‘The dominant narrative of the *Liber Novus* is Jung’s journey from an inner state of alienation and depression to the restoration of his soul, through the long and painful process of integrating a seemingly irreconcilable conflict within his own nature: the dichotomy between reason and revelation, outer and inner worlds, facts and prophecies, and between the scientist and the visionary, both of whom he experienced as authentic, demanding, and mutually exclusive dimensions of his own being.’

Greene, p. 2.



Individuation

The individuation process was now conceived as the general pattern of human development. He argued that there was a lack of guidance for this transition in contemporary society, and he saw his psychology as filling this lacuna. Outside of analytical psychology, Jung's formulations have had an impact on the field of adult developmental psychology. Clearly, his crisis experience formed the template for this conception of the requirements of the two halves of life. *Liber Novus* depicts Jung's reappraisal of his previous values, and his attempt to develop the neglected aspects of his personality. Thus it formed the basis of his understanding of how the midlife transition could be successfully navigated.

Jung, C. G.. *The Red Book: A Reader's Edition* (Philemon) (pp. 80-81). W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition.





Jung's Tower at Bollingen

‘Words and paper, however, did not seem real enough to me; something more was needed.’

A ‘representation of individuation’

MDR, p. 50

Photo: By cgjung.net - site cgjung.net (avec accord), CC BY-SA 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5316365>

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