

Modern(-ist) Man in Search of a Soul: Jung's Red Book as Modernist Visionary Literature

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Scholar Mathew Spano explores the tension between Jung's own desire that *The Red Book* not be viewed as art and the ways in which it reflects deep structural and stylistic similarities with such great modernist works as *Ulysses* and *Steppenwolf*.

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Without doubt, the publication of *The Red Book* has attracted scholars from various fields of psychology as well as those in the fields of history, philosophy, and religion among others. Curiously, the location and manner of its initial exhibition, with shows at the Rubin and Hammer Museums, raises the question of how it was intended to be received. For all intents and purposes, it has been treated as a work of fine art and has not, for example, made a tour of the special collections department at university libraries. And yet Jung himself famously and vehemently denied that what he was doing in this book was anything like art. In the midst of recording the visions that came to him, he paused: "I said to myself, 'What is this I am doing, it certainly is not science, what is it?'" Then a voice said to me, "That is art." "Well I said emphatically to this voice that what I was doing was not art, and I felt a great resistance rising up within me" (qtd. in Shamdasani, 2009, p.199). Interpreting the voice as that of his inner feminine side (anima) trying to mislead him, Jung traced the origin of the voice to a female Dutch patient he had known who had convinced a colleague of his to abandon his career in psychiatry to take up a career in painting (p. 199). Sonu Shamdasani has argued that this colleague was Jung's friend Franz Riklin, who at this time was also recording his fantasies and dreams in his paintings, as were others in Jung's circle. His friend's path troubled him: "For Jung, Franz Riklin appears to have been something like a doppelganger, whose fate he was keen to avoid" (p. 204). With Riklin in mind, determined not to be misguided about the true nature of his project, Jung insisted on designating his recording of these visions in the context of science (albeit of an unconventional kind) as a "book of my most difficult experiment" (p. 200).

Despite Jung's claims that what he was doing in *The Red Book* was not art, there is little doubt that a large part of the interest generated by the book seems to be coming from its artistic qualities—i.e., its impact on its audience as a work of art, which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, may be defined as

The expression or application of creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting, drawing, or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. Also: such works themselves considered collectively. (Art, 2011)

Thomas Kirsch, in his recent "interview" with Robert Henderson (2011), notes that Jung's illustrations (reproduced beautifully in the Norton publication) have shaped the book's reception as a work of fine art:

For me, besides the text, the drawings and paintings truly show Jung's artistic bent, which I mentioned Jung himself questioned, saying in MDR that they are psychological and not art. When I saw the 53 paintings in *The Red Book*, I had a much different impression. They are carefully and meticulously painted, and besides their psychological

meaning, they clearly have meaning as works of art; One community that has been fascinated by the book is the artistic community; it has been completely fascinated by the artwork and Jung's artistic abilities. The mandala images really do carry some numinous quality that obviously has captured the imagination of many; (pp. 19-20).

At the very least, it seems possible that many who have attended exhibitions of *The Red Book* have been moved by it as a work of fine art in addition to appreciating it in the sense that Jung interpreted it, as artistic means to a scientific end. The possibility of *The Red Book* as a work of fine art, then, may open a space for art historians, fine arts scholars and literary scholars at the archaeological dig that has surrounded this multi-faceted book.

The first to arrive at the site have been some very gifted Jungian scholars, who have been able to demonstrate the importance of *The Red Book* in the context of the *Collected Works*, tracing the evolutionary pathways from its weird and sometimes disturbing images to Jung's complex theories of personality types, synchronicity, active imagination, and individuation. Any scholar familiar with Jung's writings from the *Collected Works*, however, has to deal with the challenge of engaging a text that is unlike virtually all of Jung's other "professional" writings. Indeed, just as one cannot help but be struck by the vision and technical ability demonstrated in the paintings, so too is one struck by the literary qualities of *The Red Book*. Hence, acknowledging that *The Red Book* is of unquestionable value as a primary source, cause and progenitor of Jung's theories, I propose to examine an aspect of the book that hitherto has not received much attention—its literary value. More specifically, I want to consider the qualities of the book that qualify it as a work of visionary literature as defined by Jung's own study of literary texts. As a kind of visionary literary epic, like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Dante's *Commedia*, Goethe's *Faust*, or Joyce's *Ulysses*, it may well have served a compensatory function for the one-sidedness of the culture and times in which it was written (as well as for our own contemporary American culture and society). At the same time, it is also a product of the times in which it was written, and, taken as a Modernist literary work, it appears to synthesize various literary forms and genres and deals with Modernist themes of uncertainty, the search for meaning and soul, existentialist angst, and a certain fascination with, and particular use of, mythology. Perhaps just as Joyce turned to Homer for his own Modernist purposes (i.e., to use myth to impose meaning on the chaos of modern life and simultaneously to show the absence of meaning by such a juxtaposition) so it might be argued that Jung turns to Dante for his own purposes (i.e., both to resurrect the medieval psyche—in which reason did not dominate and was on equal footing with imagination, faith, and vision—and to show the dangers of the medieval doctrines of blind faith and the *imitatio Christi*). Hence, it may now be necessary to recover *The Red Book* as a once-lost Modernist visionary epic and install it in the cannon of world literature and world mythology, granting it a rightful place alongside other visionary literary works that have long been a staple in the esteemed literary anthologies.

Seeing Red: It's Not Art! (Or Is It?)

More than most other schools of psychology, Jung's analytical psychology enjoys a close kinship to works of literature. Perhaps this is due in large part to Jung's own extensive reading and study in the humanities—literary myths from around the world were part of the cultural milieu in which Jung grew up, and he actively included classical and modern literature in the vast field of cultural data that informed the development of his mature thought. Indeed, reading one's own life as a work of literature, a myth, seems central to Jungian analysis. In the midst of the major mid-life crisis he experienced in 1913, Jung asked himself the crucial question, "What myth am I living?"—the question that inspired the composition of the black books (Jung's still-unpublished journals) and subsequently *The Red Book*. Just as Jung did, those undergoing Jungian analysis today discover an inner narrative of which they were previously unaware. The ego is the protagonist in this inner narrative, and the figures that manifest in dreams and visions are the cast with which the ego must interact and come to terms. Active imagination seems very much like a technique sometimes used by novelists who hold imaginary conversations with their characters and write out dialogs with them, the better to understand them and their relationships to other characters, especially the protagonist. The "plot" in Jungian analysis is driven by one's need to find one's own true path on the way to a wider, more comprehensive sense of self—i.e., to become a more mature individual and, in so doing, to find deeper meaning in one's life. Since a completely comprehensive and fully mature sense of self is a relative term, the plot can re-play at different levels throughout the course of a lifetime in a kind of upward spiral toward ever more advanced levels of maturity and integration. For Jung, each stage of life shapes this narrative with, for example, the stage of mid-life requiring a more patient, enduring hero like Odysseus as opposed to the more ambitious and impulsive hero of the stage of young adulthood. Working through the narrative at each life stage also prepares one to meet the challenges unique to that life stage—those of youth, adulthood, middle and old age.

Unlike a work of literature, however, individuation (the term Jung used for the aforementioned process) is not an artistic process but a psychological one—a work that one is living out and developing daily as opposed to an art product that one creates as separate and apart from one's daily life experience, and once one begins the Individuation process, one has an ethical obligation to take responsibility for it and see it through. For example, it wouldn't be

enough to become aware of one's own shadow or even to record dreams or dialogs with it—this is only part of the process. Having begun this, one must be responsible enough "to catch" one's shadow in everyday life (i.e., recognizing that one's ego is inflated with shadow when one goes into a fit of anger, or recognizing when one is projecting one's own shadow onto an innocent neighbor, maybe scapegoating him) (von Franz, 1976). One is now responsible for that shadow, as much as one would be responsible for a sibling who is always getting into trouble and needs to be cared for. This is the case for each of the figures that arise from the unconscious, for each is a part of the analysand. Hence, unlike the novelist who can put his/her book down for a while, maybe even scrap the whole idea and start anew, the individual undergoing Jungian analysis is stuck with his inner narrative and bears continual responsibility for it. Moreover, there are clearly formal differences between Individuation and literary narrative, the latter being a more or less conscious artistic construct with the artist making deliberate and skillful use of the literary elements of plot, character, theme, setting, language and the like.

Still, these differences are not great enough for Jungian analysts to avoid using literary myths to "amplify" patients' dreams and reveal broader cultural and collective meanings to dream images beyond those of the patient's biography. Some, like James Hillman (1992), even go so far as to emphasize a literary reading of the psyche, claiming that "Poetic, dramatic fictions are what actually people our psychic life" (p. 131) and that

[To] Know Thyself in Jung's manner means to become familiar with, to open oneself to and listen to, that is, to know and discern, daimons. Entering one's interior story takes a courage similar to starting a novel. We have to engage with persons whose autonomy may radically alter, even dominate, our thoughts and feelings, neither ordering these persons about nor yielding to them full sway. Fictional and factual, they and we are drawn together like threads into a mythos, a plot, until death do us part. It is a rare courage that submits to this middle region of psychic reality where the supposed surety of fact and illusion of fiction exchange their clothes. (p. 131)

Even Hillman, however, draws the line between a literary approach to psychology and the production of literary artworks, and one key difference, for him as well as for Jung, lies in the purpose and motivation of active imagination:

Active imagination is not a literary endeavor, not a creative production of paintings and poems. One may aesthetically give form to the images—indeed, one should try as best one can aesthetically—though this is for the sake of the figures, in dedication to them and to realize their beauty, and not for the sake of art. The aesthetic work of active imagination is therefore not to be confused with art for exhibition or publication (p.133).

Jungian scholars working on *The Red Book* have thus far operated upon the assumption that it is primarily a record of Jung's use of active imagination and, hence, upon this basic difference between active imagination and the production of a work of literature, as articulated by Hillman. Most have avoided calling *The Red Book* as a whole a work of art, literary or otherwise, and for good reason in view of Jung's own claims about the nature of his book as a recording of an experiment upon himself—a work of science and not of art.

But is it possible that Jung was operating on a false either/or assumption without considering the possibility that his book could be both science and art? The fact that such a dialogue took place at all indicates that there was at the very least a serious question in his mind about the artistic value of his work. It should also be noted that this question arose when Jung was recording the visions in his "Black Books," the material of which he would later transfer to a single, red, large bound folio that he had specially made by a bookbinder. He would spend years adding commentary and paintings, revising and editing so that the result is much more than a "dream journal," something that noted Jungian historian and scholar Sonu Shamdasani (2009) has called "a work of psychology in literary form" (p. 194). Thomas Kirsch (2011) references Shamdasani's insights on the transformation that took place between *The Black Books* and *The Red Book*:

There are significant differences between what Jung writes down in his *Black Books* and what ends up being in *The Red Book*. Sonu Shamdasani as editor of *The Red Book* notes all the differences between the two books. *The Red Book* contains very little direct unconscious material, for Jung had thoroughly assimilated the material from *The Black Books* before transcribing it into *The Red Book* ("An Interview" with Thomas Kirsch, M.D., p. 13).

Curiously, however, Kirsch concludes that "The Red Book is a personal diary; the diary of a man who is undergoing profound changes in his inner life as well as his outer life" (pp. 13-14), and both he and Robert Henderson seem to accept this conclusion without further explanation or analysis, referring to The Red Book as "Jung's private diary" (p. 17) and "Jung's journal" (p. 19) throughout their "interview" entitled "Jung's Personal Diary: The Red Book." If The Red Book is a diary, this designation is in need of further qualification, for it is a highly stylized and literary diary—something more than what the Oxford English Dictionary describes as "the daily record of events or transactions, a journal; specifically, a daily record of matters affecting the writer personally, or which come under his personal observation" (Diary, 2011) which perhaps pertains more to what Jung recorded in The Black Books. Kirsch also observes similarities between The Red Book and Nietzsche's Zarathustra, noting that "the difference between the two is that there is no 'I' speaking to Zarathustra, whereas for Jung there is always an 'I'" (An "interview," p. 12). Still, one does not have to look very far to find literary texts that would qualify as something more than a personal diary or journal: Odysseus narrates his adventures to strange and mysterious lands in his first-person account to the Phaeacians, Dante relates his fantastic descent and subsequent ascent to the reader in the first person, Dostoyevsky's Underground Man recounts his own sort of descent in the first person, and so on. In The Red Book, we are dealing with a complex and stylized literary work that goes far beyond what we might generally associate with a private diary or journal.

As Kirsch rightly points out, Jung made important choices and changes in transferring his visions from The Black Books to The Red Book, and many of these were conscious, literary choices: "I, along with many others reading The Red Book, find it difficult and something we cannot stay with for a long time. For me part of this is the language of The Red Book. The language has a mannerism, which is perhaps purposeful" (An "interview," pp. 14-15). Shamdasani also notes that one of the major revisions that Jung made in transferring material from the black books to The Red Book was to conceive of an audience, which he addresses as "my friends" throughout The Red Book. No such address is present in the black books, which, Shamdasani adds, were really more collections of active imaginations. The point is that Jung did not consider what he was doing to be art at the time he was initially writing down the visions in the black books. But would he have considered the finished Red Book to be art? The question takes on gravity when one considers the assertions of Shamdasani and John Beebe (2010) that The Red Book is for Jung "an experiment with language" that charts Jung's "individuation as a writer" (p. 422). Moreover, we know that Jung did indeed intend for The Red Book to be published to a wide audience, that he had shared a limited number of copies with close friends and colleagues, and that he had taken seriously the advice of trusted friend Cary Banes, whose opinion he had asked regarding possible publication. She responded emphatically that he certainly should publish it as a work of "Dichtung and Wahrheit [Poetry and Truth]" in the same vein as Goethe's Faust, Part II (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 212). No doubt, Jung took her seriously enough to ask her to transcribe and type the entire contents of The Red Book (p. 212).

That The Red Book is a record of Jung's experiments with the technique called "active imagination" is uncontested. Indeed, the visions Jung illuminated in The Red Book were the origin points of active imagination, in which one lets oneself "drop" into a twilight consciousness. One allows elements of the unconscious to form into images, with which one then interacts in imaginal dialogue. The goal of the process is to reach a better understanding of the core elements of the unconscious and to form a better relationship with these figures, making it possible to integrate their contents into waking consciousness. Jung actually preferred this method to dream analysis because he felt that the ego and the unconscious were on more even terms as opposed to dreaming where the ego and consciousness are greatly diminished (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 210). There is no doubt that Jung employed artistic means as techniques to interact with the images that arose from the unconscious as is born out by the paintings, poetry, fairy tales, and dramatic dialogues present throughout The Red Book. Whether or not the products of these artistic means constitute works of art, however, is another question. Jung was clear, at least, that the INTENTION of active imagination should not and could not be to produce a work of art, a motive that is clearly conscious and that subjects the images of the unconscious to the control and even tyranny of the ego. But this still leaves open the question of whether or not the products of active imagination undertaken for psychological purposes could still be considered works of art outside of their therapeutic function. To my knowledge, Jung never addressed this question. Yet his writings on the relationship between psychology and art offer some intriguing possibilities.

Reading Red: A Jungian Literary Analysis of The Red Book

A close reading of Jung's commentary and analysis of literary texts suggests that The Red Book indeed contains several elements of a visionary literary text by Jung's own definition and standards. In both "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry" (1966) and "Psychology and Literature" (1966), Jung examined the role of the writer in the production of a work of literature and defined two kinds of literary art: personalistic and visionary. Of the former, Jung writes, "There are literary works, prose as well as poetry, that spring wholly

from the author's intention to produce a particular result...He submits his material to a definite treatment with a definite aim in view...His material is entirely subordinated to his artistic purpose; he wants to express this and nothing else" ("On the Relation," para. 109, p. 72). Hence, the writer is motivated by a clear and conscious intention and purpose. In this case, Jung explains, the author is especially receptive to the experiences, people, events, passions of everyday life; he gathers these together and, in the crucible of his workshop, synthesizes them and sublimates them into a work that brings readers' attention to all that they have not noticed in the everyday world around them—in essence, to "glorify the commonplace" in the words of Wordsworth. Jung cites Goethe's *Faust I* as an example of such a literary work, noting that the tragic love affair of Faust and Gretchen seems to have been consciously conceived by Goethe, who used the elements of literature to evoke pathos and perhaps catharsis from the reader ("Psychology," para. 138, p. 88). We might add Dante's *La Vita Nuova* to this category—the sonnets and poems all consciously motivated by the poet's intention to praise his beloved Beatrice, express the anguish and pain of this unrequited love, mourn her untimely death, and attempt to immortalize her in his verse. Indeed, Dante even provides his own commentary and analysis following each of the poems, explaining what he was consciously trying to achieve in each verse of each poem. Some of Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* might also serve as examples of personalistic literary works. The *Chimney Sweep* poems, for example, appear to be Blake's conscious and deliberate outcry in response to the blind eye society turned toward the exploitation of children and the horrors of child labor in the birth of the Industrial Revolution.

Jung differentiates the personalistic literary work from what he calls the visionary literary work by stressing the strange, almost dream-like qualities of the latter. In this case, the author often appears to be more a vehicle for some impersonal motivation that overwhelms him, often against his will and despite his conscious intent:

These works positively force themselves upon the author; his hand is seized, his pen writes things that his mind contemplates with amazement. The work brings with it its own form; anything he wants to add is rejected, and what he himself would like to reject is thrust back at him. While his conscious mind stands amazed and empty before this phenomenon, he is overwhelmed by a flood of thoughts and images which he never intended to create and which his own will could never have brought into being. ("On the Relation," para. 110, p. 73)

As examples of such visionary works, Jung cites Goethe's *Faust II*, Dante's *Commedia*, Blake's paintings and presumably his visionary poems ("Psychology," para. 142, p. 91), as well as Joyce's *Ulysses* (p. 91, n.7). The material that motivates this type of work comes not from the outer world of everyday experience but from a deep inner source that seems to have nothing to do with the author's conscious experiences. Of such works, Jung writes

In dealing with the psychological [personalistic] mode of creation, we need never ask ourselves what the material consists of or what it means. But this question forces itself upon us when we turn to the visionary mode. We are astonished, confused, bewildered, put on our guard or even repelled; we demand commentaries and explanations. We are reminded of nothing in everyday life, but rather of dreams, night-time fears, and the dark, uncanny recesses of the human mind. ("Psychology," para. 143, p. 91)

The material from which the author draws in personalistic works, Jung notes, is fairly easy to identify, coming as it does from the author's conscious experiences and concerns. The material from which the author draws in visionary works, however, is much more difficult to track, as it seems to come from a source outside of the author's waking life and intention. Jung here asserts that the sources of such material are the archetypes of the collective unconscious. He held that groups of people, even whole cultures, have distinct personalities much like individuals do and that the psyche of a society operates in some ways similarly to the psyche of an individual. For Jung, the psyche operates on the law of homeostasis—a self-regulating principle that will internally compensate for a condition that has become too extreme, analogous to the process of respiration and body temperature in mammals (Stevens, 1994, p. 72). Hence, in the case of the artist, the archetypes of the collective unconscious become activated in the artist when his/her culture has become too one-sided or rigid. The artist becomes a release point or passage for the archetypal energy to find its way into the consciousness of the culture, compensating for the imbalance and encouraging the development of greater maturity. Jung's theory might well account for the invocation of the muse or the gods that authors have used for centuries to open an epic work of literature. Beyond elevating and justifying his poem, such an invocation might also be an honest confession of the motivation behind the work—the poet confessing that he has no choice but to be the vehicle for archetypal forces seeking to rise to consciousness.

In the conception of a visionary work of literature, the archetype, activated in the artist's unconscious, forms

...an autonomous complex. By this we mean a psychic formation that remains subliminal until its energy charge is sufficient to carry it over the threshold of consciousness. Its association with consciousness does not mean that it is assimilated, only that it is perceived; but it is not subject to conscious control, and can be neither inhibited nor voluntarily reproduced. Therein lies the autonomy of the complex: it appears and disappears in accordance with its own inherent tendencies, independently of conscious will...In this respect it offers an analogy with pathological processes, since these too are characterized by the presence of autonomous complexes, particularly in the case of mental disturbances. The divine frenzy of the artist comes perilously close to a pathological state, though the two things are not identical. (“On the Relation,” para. 122, p. 78).

Jung implies that the literary artist plays an important role in molding and shaping the archetypes, which erupt into consciousness through dreams and visions, into an artistic form that is more or less accessible to the general readership. Still, such works are often challenging and often misunderstood and rejected (initially at least) by the public as well as the critics (“Psychology,” para. 143, p. 91). In some instances, however, an artist may make the archetypal content more palatable with an overlay of historical or contemporary events and images (para. 143, p. 91). Nevertheless, on close inspection we catch a glimpse of the activated archetype moving beneath the surface:

In each of these images there is a little piece of human psychology and human fate, a remnant of the joys and sorrows that have been repeated countless times in our ancestral history, and on the average follow ever the same course. It is like a deeply graven river-bed in the psyche, in which the waters of life, instead of flowing along as before in a broad but shallow stream, suddenly swell into a mighty river. This happens whenever that particular set of circumstances is encountered which over long periods of time has helped to lay down the primordial image. (“On the Relation,” para. 127, p. 81).

How to give expression to the mighty river of primordial images surging into consciousness is the task of one practicing active imagination as well as the visionary literary artist. Early on in *The Red Book*, Jung (2009) admits “My speech is imperfect. Not because I want to shine with words, but out of the impossibility of finding those words. I speak in images. With nothing else can I express the words from the depths” (p. 230). This is the very issue with which the visionary artist wrestles, seeking verbal and literary forms of expression for the flood of images emerging from the unconscious. In the case of *The Red Book*, however, since many of the episodes were actually sessions of active imagination, it is likely that Jung's stylistic and imagistic choices were not all preconceived, planned or even fully conscious. While some choices were probably conscious ones, it is likely that others were the result of the unconscious seizing upon whatever was available from Jung's conscious experience of literature --from the Bible, Augustine, Dante, Goethe, etc. When speaking of the visionary experience that takes possession of the artist, Jung explains, “In itself it is wordless and imageless, for it is a vision seen “as in a glass, darkly.” It is nothing but a tremendous intuition striving for expression. It is like the whirlwind that seizes everything within reach and assumes visible form as it swirls upward” (“Psychology,” para. 151, p. 97). Hence, Jungian theory suggests that the stunning array of literary styles, devices, tones, images, etc. displayed throughout *The Red Book* is, at least in part, the product of Jung's unconscious seeking material to make itself known. Similar experiences occur in dreams, in which the unconscious often uses material from waking consciousness, often from the previous day or week, to give expression to deeper archetypal forces, as though it were using scraps of paper, string, paper clips, etc. to form a collage that can then be understood by the conscious mind. Since Jung was so widely read in world mythology and literature, it makes sense that his unconscious would draw upon this storehouse of material, but shaping and altering it for its own purposes as a twister picks up cars, houses, cattle, making itself visible as it forges ahead on its own path.

A Modernist Shade of Red

In his analysis of the dreams and visions of the death of the hero, which appear early in *The Red Book*, Jung reflects on his life and career to this point. His success came at a price. In becoming Freud's heir apparent, he had allowed himself to be devoured by the father. He had sacrificed his own convictions and ideas and had become overly ambitious, arrogant and unfeeling in the process. The visions were telling him that his ego had been inflated with the archetype of the young hero and that this had to stop--i.e., that he must kill the young hero in himself and that this would give rise to a new myth to live by. The tragic consequence of such hero inflation, Jung realized, was a loss of soul. Hero

myths in ancient cultures evoke the tragic consequences of the young hero's over-development of his abilities at the expense of his humanity and relationships—after they begin to accumulate heroic deeds and reputation, Jason abandons Medea, Theseus abandons Ariadne, Aeneas abandons Dido. For Jung, the word "soul" has many meanings, but in the context of *The Red Book*, it seems to refer specifically to the archetype of the anima. Hence, a central theme of *The Red Book* is "the Re-Finding of the Soul" or, as the title of another work by Jung, "Modern Man in Search of a Soul" (1955). Jung's own anima appears in *The Red Book* in the form of the figure named Salome as well as that named simply "my soul" (the two figures appear to be interchangeable and Jung says directly of Salome, "…she is my own soul" (p. 248). Soon after Jung had his visions of the death of the hero, Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, igniting WWI. The parallel between his personal crisis and the collective crisis overtaking Europe was not lost on Jung. The meaningful coincidence (synchronicity) suggested to him that Europe, as a personality writ large, was also inflated with the archetype of the young hero and had similarly lost its humanity and soul, its anima, in the process. Unable to understand this inflation, it acted it out on a mass scale with the murder of the Archduke as well as millions of young men sent off to battle filled with the heroic ideals of nationalism.

Jung was not alone in struggling with the experience of a loss of soul in his work; in addition to dealing with the issue on an individual, personal level, he was also engaging in the collective loss of soul experienced throughout the Western world at the opening of the twentieth century. Again, this loss of soul was in part a consequence of the collective inflation with the archetype of the youthful hero that resulted in a naïve faith in industrialization, nationalism, science and technology—a faith that was suddenly thrown into doubt following the horrors of WWI. Artists in several fields recognized this one-sidedness of Western culture and sought to express it and the resulting search for the soul that characterizes much Modernist art, and literature in particular. Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, for example, captures the new mistrust of naive bourgeois views on nationalism, education, and art. In one episode, Harry Haller (the protagonist) quarrels with a former professor friend. Angry and depressed at the one-sided state of his culture, Haller stumbles into a dance hall where he meets a pretty young anima figure named Hermine, who will cure him of his depression and help him mature emotionally, developing his feeling and sensation functions by teaching him to dance to jazz and finding him a lover, and ultimately guiding him into unexplored realms of the individual and collective unconscious in the climactic "Magic Theater" episode. It was indeed characteristic of literary Modernists to focus on moments of crisis that threw into question established truths and "objective" realities, forcing one to reflect on the subjective creation of meaning, so that Modernist works could be called, to use Paul Valéry's term, "dramas of mental images" (Ellmann and O'Sullivan, 1988, p. 1). Certainly Jung's *Red Book*, opening as it does at a profound moment of crisis and descending into a gallery or labyrinth of archetypal images, could be said to fit such a description. As Thomas Kirsch (2011) points out "When Jung was writing down his fantasies, it was the end of the Age of Reason with its emphasis upon rationality. Jung's finding a sense of individual spiritual meaning inclusive of his experience of the shadow speaks to the modern individual. Today, we are much more aware of the dark side of human nature. ("An Interview"; p. 18).

The theme of moderns seeking the lost soul of their age is prominent in many central texts of Modernist literature, such as Eliot's "The Wasteland," Hesse's *Steppenwolf* and Joyce's *Ulysses*. In his commentary on *Ulysses*, Jung was struck by the absence of feeling in the work—i.e., the absence of relationship and soul characteristic of the modern Dublin portrayed by Joyce:

Atrophy of feeling is a characteristic of modern man and always shows itself as a reaction when there is too much feeling around, and in particular too much false feeling. From the lack of feeling in *Ulysses* we may infer a hideous sentimentality in the age that produced it—Think of the lamentable role of popular sentiment in wartime! Think of our so-called humanitarianism! …I am deeply convinced that we are not only stuck in the Middle Ages but also are caught in our own sentimentality. It is therefore quite comprehensible that a prophet should arise to teach our culture a compensatory lack of feeling. ("Ulysses," para. 184, p. 122)

Joyce, like Jung and Hesse, appears to have been responding to the same crisis—a culture inflated with the archetype of the naïve and youthful hero, one who has sacrificed soul (genuine feeling and relationship) in his quest to conquer his environment. Such a hero, as recounted in classical myth, is often incapable of mature feeling, expressing himself in sentimentalism and naïve idealism. To compensate for a culture inflated by such a hero archetype, Joyce offered a work devoid of all sentimentalism, devoid of feeling itself, with Leopold Bloom, a middle-aged hero who seems to be struggling with his own loss of soul, the search for which seems to go unfulfilled as his reunion with Molly at the novel's end underscores the striking differences in their characters and the fractured nature of their relationship. Contrast this with the ironic counterpoint of Homer's Odysseus who, through numerous encounters with the anima, seems to have reached a mature relationship to the feminine, as Homer makes clear in *Odysseus's* reunion with his beloved Penelope, a mature and wise counterpart for the hero in every way. Steven Walker notes that in the

Nausicae chapter of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom seeks his lost soul in the image of Gerty MacDowell as he “…projects his anima onto Gerty, who becomes, at least for a while, a fascinating seaside girl, who gives him “relief” and a sense of feeling young again” (“Art Thou My Real Ideal?” (2009)). Jung, for his part, responded to the soullessness of his age by abandoning the hero model that had been the focus of his *Symbols of Transformation*, in effect slaying the hero and overcoming his own inflation with this archetype to create a “post-heroic” work in *The Red Book* (Shamdasani and Beebe, 2010, p. 417). Now, his focus shifts to the struggle to regain genuine feeling in his encounters with the anima figure throughout *The Red Book*.

Other Modernist authors also produced works that addressed, and compensated for, the loss of soul in and around the period of the first world war, as Steven Walker makes clear in his striking analysis of Proust’s *Time Regained* and Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. Against the backdrop of a crumbling wartime Paris, Proust’s middle-aged hero, Marcel, struggles with his mid-life crisis—a crisis that is inextricably intertwined with the wartime crisis, for, as Walker suggests, Marcel struggles with the symbolic and psychological death of the young hero he used to be: “He himself is no longer the young hero of the world of literature—his ambitions and talents have disappeared, and his middle age begins to emerge as the disappointing sequel to a youth full of promise” (*Midlife*, 2011, p. 306). Amid the ruins of his former self-image as youthful hero, Marcel attends a reception where “one particular figure suddenly stands out in the largely aging and decrepit crowd at the reception. It is Mlle. De Saint-Loup, the daughter of his late friend Robert, and she seems to embody in this crowd of increasingly decrepit seniors the magical beauty of the ever youthful anima” (p. 321). Women writers too responded to the loss of soul at this time, as Walker makes asserts in his analysis of Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*. Here, the character of Peter Walsh has devoted his youth to the heroic ideal of service to the British colonial government, having spent many years in India, “…years that have gone largely unrewarded” (p. 331). With the passing away of his youthful idealism, Peter struggles to deal with his loss of soul, starting an affair with a the young wife of a Major. He falls asleep in the park and dreams “of trees turned into female figures, and then into one figure who offers him “comprehension” and “absolution,”…an ecstatic moment for him—a glimpse through dream into the archetypal world of the feminine, where “compassion, comprehension, absolution” are offered to him freely” (p. 333). Here again, we note the compensatory Modernist artist valuing the qualities of the anima that seemed to be so absent and so undeveloped in the period surrounding WWI.

Modernist artists like Joyce, Hesse, Eliot, et al. also drew upon classical mythology as a way of diagnosing, and compensating for, the inflation of their age. In some cases, myth was used as a means to impose some kind of order onto an otherwise chaotic existence and thereby find meaning. But the technique could also be used ironically, to illustrate the absence of a shared mythology, the absence of structure and meaning in modern life as contrasted with the lives of the ancients who lived within the worldview and framework of their mythology. Joyce seems to use myth in both senses in *Ulysses*, as the disparity and comic irony ring in the episodes in Homer’s epic and the sometimes trivial and absurd events in Bloom’s life. At other times, the myth seems to amplify and deepen the potentially meaningful events in Bloom’s life, such as his meeting and friendship with Stephen, which echoes the reunion of Odysseus and his son Telemachus (a rare example of genuine feeling in *Ulysses* that Jung perhaps missed in his commentary!). In *The Red Book*, it seems that Jung too uses mythical figures and allusions in both senses. The episode with Izdubar (Gilgamesh) seems to illustrate a diagnostic use of myth, emphasizing the disparity between a time when humans operated within a more or less consistent imaginative framework of a shared mythology as opposed to a modern age of reason that has all but destroyed the kind of imaginative and fantastic thinking that could create such a shared mythology. The episode with the Red Knight (Satan) illustrates a compensatory myth. Jung echoes Goethe’s *Faust I*, as Jung/*Faust*, at least temporarily, learns the value of dancing and of joy. And, of course, the myth of the nekya and descent to the realm of the dead, an archetype at the heart of so many epic myths, seems to provide the overarching (or underpinning) structure of the entire *Red Book*, providing meaning and historical, cultural and psychological context for his individuation.

Still, it should be noted that Jung’s use of myth was not primarily conscious and artistic in the conventional sense; rather, the mythic figures and structures with which he was familiar were likely swept up into the whirlwind of the activated archetype—the situation that Jung noted confronts the visionary artist as opposed to the personalistic one. For Jung, as for the visionary artist, the experience of the archetype is primary and mythic figures and images provide a language to articulate that experience. As Shonu Samdasani (2009) suggests, Jung used mythology in this sense as part of his daily practice with patients, discovering a practical application for his interest in mythology, and seeing myths as cultural expressions of some of the same archetypes activated in his patients’ psyches (p. 197). In other words, mythic parallels might be used to help patients caught up in the whirlwind of an activated archetype to identify the shape, features and even course of that whirlwind as well as how to relate to it and perhaps compensate for it. Moreover, in contemplating his own crisis at this time and his break from Freud, Jung wondered if one lived, perhaps unconsciously, according to an underlying myth that gave shape and meaning to one’s life. He wondered further how one could live without such a myth and felt compelled to discover and analyze his own myth—crucial, he believed, if he was to help others and get to know the underlying myths that governed their lives. This realization provided the motivation and inspiration for his composition of *The Red Book*. Hence, for Jung, as for many other Modernist artists

of his time, the world was fractured and chaotic; truth was no longer clearly defined or easy to find in the institutions that had hitherto claimed to possess it. Myth provided a means to diagnose the current fractured state of the world as well as a possible means to compensate for its ills and even find meaning in it. To this end, Jung radically reinterprets the Judeo-Christian myth to serve his own ends. For Jung, one should pursue the *Imitatio Christi*, not in the traditional Christian sense, but rather in terms of his own definition of individuation. In *Psychotherapists or the Clergy* (1955), he asserts

It is no easy matter to live a life that is modeled on Christ's, but it is unspeakably harder to live one's own life as truly as Christ lived his. Anyone who did this would run counter to the conditions of his own history, and though he might thus be fulfilling them, he would none the less be misjudged, derided, tortured, and crucified. (p. 340)

Hence, *The Red Book* illustrates Jung's Modernist radical revision of biblical and classical myth toward subjective ends.

In addition to its central theme and use of mythological imagery, Jung's *Red Book* also shares stylistic similarities with works of Modernist literature. One hallmark of Modernist literature is the incorporation of multiple literary genres to give expression to the artist's subjective experience of inner and outer realities. In Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, readers encounter a mix of straight narrative, visionary or surreal narrative, and critical analysis in *The Treatise on the Steppenwolf*. Eliot's *The Waste Land* incorporates biblical, lyrical, epic and folk poetic forms, among others. In Joyce's *Ulysses*, readers encounter this practice in the extreme with the forms and genres ranging beyond the literary into the musical and mathematical. In *The Red Book*, Jung draws on epic and wisdom literature in the opening of *Liber Primus*, folk and fairy tale as well as lyrical incantations in *Liber Secundus*, critical analysis and confession in *Scrutinies*, and dramatic dialogues and analytical commentary throughout. The tone and style shift as well throughout *The Red Book*, with a prophetic, biblical tone at times reminiscent of the Old Testament and at others of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, to a light and fanciful tone in the *Castle in the Forest* episodes of *Liber Secundus*, to the esoteric and bombastic style of *Scrutinies*. What links Jung to the Modernist here is the disregard for consistency and continuity of form and an insistence on the primacy of the subjective experience with the writer drawing upon form, genre, imagery and language as needed in an effort to give expression to visionary experiences for which there are no established vehicles of expression.

The Modernist manipulation of narrator and character to re-imagine the notion of the self as an amalgamation of multiple forces, many of whom exert an influence from *behind the scenes*, as it were, reflects similar aspects of *The Red Book*. As Sonu Shamdasani points out in the translator's note, the narrative voice in *The Red Book* is by no means a single, consistent entity and voice. Instead, Jung writes in 3 registers: descriptive (reporter); conceptual (analytical); and mantic (prophetic, romantic) (p.222), and the three registers often rub up against each other and shift one to the other without any apparent plan, with Jung using them intuitively as he needed, a quality distinctive of a Modernist literary work. Hesse had used narration in a similar way in *Steppenwolf* with the inclusion of *The Treatise on the Steppenwolf*, a booklet written by Haller commenting on and analyzing his own character and experiences. Moreover, the characters and narrative voices of Haller and the other characters, especially Hermine, often merge, as do their identities, similar to Jung's experiences with his soul, Salome, Philemon and others throughout *The Red Book*.

While *The Red Book* appears to be in large part a collection of active imaginations, the seemingly random presentation of episodes, at times linked by association or image, is similar to that in the *Magic Theater* section of Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, or episodes in Joyce's *Ulysses*. The Modernist insistence on subjective experience over objective *reality* and the rational, causal progression of plot seems to be present in Jung's *Red Book*, corroborated by his insistence on a valuation of imaginal, fantastic thinking over reason and logic. Similarly, compressions and expansions of time, fragmentary episodes, unresolved subplots, as befits the subjective experience of events and of dreams, are the norm rather than the exception in *The Red Book*. Again, we need look no further than Proust, Joyce, Hesse et al. to see this approach. As Bradbury and McFarlane (1991) point out in their landmark work on literary Modernism, Modernists by definition were fascinated with the process of evolving consciousness, and Modernist literary works were often not organized according to linear time, but according to layers of consciousness (p. 50). Certainly, the same could be said for Jung's *Red Book*, as each episode seems to involve a deeper level of the unconscious, culminating in a core or nucleus in the image of Philemon's garden at the end of the work. The process of evolving consciousness, for Modernists, also involved holding in suspension the forces that persist from the past and those that grow from the novel present (p. 49) leading to an *explosive fusion* of the old categories of thought which would give rise to *new wholes* (p. 49). Such a process may be seen, for example, in Strindberg's attention to alchemy and his fusion of reason and unreason, science and magic (p. 49). In *The Red Book*, Jung's encounters with several of the figures from the unconscious often result in debate and even hostility as Jung's

rational ego clings to its established rational, scientific values and often feels threatened by what it cannot fathom or value. Yet in many of these encounters, a new attitude emerges out of the "explosive fusion" of the opposing attitudes. The encounter with The Red One leads to a new appreciation for, and valuing of, the feeling of joy on the part of Jung's overly rational ego, a synthesis that results in Jung's experience of sprouting new leaves all over his body. Jung's encounter with Izdubar also seems to illustrate this process, with scientific rationalism nearly killing imaginal, mythical thinking, but then producing a new birth of the god and a new attitude toward the divine. Indeed, throughout The Red Book, one can see Jung's "melting together of sense and nonsense, which produces supreme meaning," a phenomenon for which Jung coined a new German term: *der Übersinn* (Odajnyk, 2010, p. 447).

Of course, one may argue that the literary Modernists were simply incorporating the discoveries of the psychologists from Freud onward into their art, but this may be an oversimplification of the process. Many mythological and visionary texts, recorded long before the clinical observations of the psychoanalysts, employed similar techniques, and Jung was intimately familiar with these texts. Hence, the psychologists' "discoveries" of associative and imagistic thinking, compressions and expansions of time, etc. may be re-discoveries of psychic dream experiences originally recorded in works of literature. Even in Jung's day, the question of who influenced whom among artists and psychologists was a murky one, with cross-fertilization and influence the likely reality. As Shamdasani points out, the early twentieth century was indeed a time before clear boundaries between disciplines of literature, art, & psychology were established (p. 194). Many psychologists wrote works of fiction; many writers incorporated the latest psychological theories, and individuals searched for any means possible to express their inner experiences. It comes as no surprise, then, to discover works that do not fall neatly into conventional categories of literary text or psychological study. Hence, to underscore Shamdasani's assertion, The Red Book is a "work of psychology in literary form" and it could only have been written at this time (p. 194). And while psychologists have begun to trace the book's influences on Jungian analytical psychology and on modern psychology in general, literary critics must now begin to trace The Red Book's qualities as a work of Modernist visionary literature.

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