C. G. Jung and the Evolution of God

Imagination, Revelation, and Jung's *Answer to Job*

Lance S. Owens

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The public release in 2009 of C.G. Jung's long sequestered Red Book, published as *The Red Book: Liber Novus*,[1] and followed eleven years later in 2020 by publication of his private journals, *The Black Books*: *1913–1932*,[2] opened new vistas into the foundation of Jung's life work. Taken together, these records affirm his late-life declaration to Aniela Jaffé:

> The years … when I pursued the inner images were the most important time of my life. … 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. …The numinous beginning, which contained everything, was then.[3]

The necessity of henceforth reading Jung's later writings in conjunction with *Liber Novus* was pronounced by Sonu Shamdasani in his 2009 introduction to that publication: "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*. … Each mutually explicates the other."[4]

One must now include Jung's Black Book journals in this obligatory program of study. The unvarnished immediacy of the journals affords a contemporaneous record of the enigmatic imaginal and visionary experiences that were foundational to all of C.G. Jung's subsequent works. The journals record imaginative events that progressed for over a decade after the final manuscript section of *Liber Novus* was compiled in 1917. They provide context to Jung's artwork after 1916, works contained both within *Liber Novus* and rendered apart from it. As such, the journals are essential to comprehending "the numinous beginning which contained everything."

Break a Leg: Jung's Last Quartet

Many years prior to the publication of Liber Novus it became evident to me that Jung's life labor was essentially a hermeneutic task driven by his enigmatic experiences during the years between 1913 and around 1925. The publication of *Liber Novus* and *The Black Books* journals confirmed that intuition.

In an essay published in 2010, "The Hermeneutics of Vision: C.G. Jung and Liber Novus," I gave summary to my reading of the evolving progression of Jung's visionary hermeneutics.[5] In that essay I argued that essentially everything Jung wrote after the 1920s, including his alchemical writings into the 1940s, was motivated by the need to develop a hermeneutic method, or interpretive approach and language, appropriate to his voyage with imagination and mythopoetic vision-the journey detailed in his journals and artfully exemplified in *Liber Novus*.

Of course, by the mid-1920s Jung concluded it was impossible to publish his *Liber Novus*, nor could he openly expose his own mythopoetic passage with the imagination. It would not be understood. Instead, he elected to exemplify his visionary hermeneutics by making commentary on historical accounts-and the proof texts upon which he drew in this period are voluminous. Whenever his own art or visions slipped into his later published work, the material was attributed to an anonymous patient.

But in 1944 Jung's attention was forced back to the source of his life work, the numinous beginning. In February 1944, Jung slipped in the snow and broke his ankle. This modest injury and associated immobilization led to development twelve days later of a venous thrombosis and life-threatening massive pulmonary embolism. For three weeks Jung hung between life and death. And in that twilight space, he was immersed in a prolonged series of visions. They seemed the end of his journey, the conclusion to the story he had lived.

> It is impossible to convey the beauty and intensity of emotion during those visions. They were the most tremendous things I have ever experienced. . . .

> I would never have imagined that any such experience was possible. It was not a product of imagination. The visions and experiences were utterly real; there was nothing subjective about them; they all had a quality of absolute objectivity.
>
> We shy away from the word "eternal," but I can describe the experience only as the ecstasy of a non-temporal state in which present, past, and future are one. Everything that happens in time had been brought together into a concrete whole. Nothing was distributed over time, nothing could be measured by temporal concepts.[6]

This illness, these visions, and a year of convalescence—followed by a second serious cardiac event in November of 1946—deeply affected Jung's perspective upon his life, his story and the task remaining to him. They marked the summation of an experience foreshadowed by *Liber Novus*, and gave immediate origin to his subsequent books, *Aion* and *Answer to Job*.

"At the beginning of the illness," Jung later noted, "I had the feeling that there was something wrong with my attitude."[7] Events reoriented it. Barbara Hannah, an astute observer close to Jung during this period, characterized his illness and visions as being something like a second "rite of initiation"—the first great initiation having been his visionary passage thirty years earlier, recorded in *Liber Novus*. She described his near-death visions as "the greatest milestone in Jung's attainment of wholeness."[8]

Readers of Jung have observed that Jung's last four major works, all published after his critical illness and visions in 1944, signal a changed tone and tack. But the sources and first conceptions underlying the multiplex masterwork that Jung initiated during the years following World War II, following his critical illness, have rarely been comprehended.

This was Jung's direct hermeneutic confrontation with *Liber Novus* and the venture chronicled in his journals. His changed attitude produced four interrelated works. Together, these four books constitute his opus magnum and the consummation of a vocation

received over thirty years earlier. These four works, which I have referred to as "Jung's last quartet," are: "Psychology of the Transference" (1946), *Aion* (1951), *Answer to Job* (1952), and *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (1955). Recorded in his mature years, and all published after a second extraordinary visionary experience, each provides a uniquely focused elaboration and final testament to the "numinous beginning."[9]

In 2011, I published the initial installment to a planned series of essays on Jung's last quartet. In that work, "Jung and Aion: Time, Vision, and a Wayfaring Man,"[10] I attempted to illustrate how Aion was a restatement and development of key themes in *Liber Novus*. In Aion, Jung speaks his "secret knowledge" and offers his declaration of a coming new age—a core revelation of *Liber Novus*. My intention in that prior publication was to offer a paradigm for placing Jung's last writings in conjunction with their first conception.

In 2015, I published a second installment to my developing commentary on the last quartet. This was a detailed examination of "The Psychology of the Transference" and its connection with *Liber Novus*. Therein, I discussed Jung's loving engagement with four women during the years he worked on *Liber Novus*—encounters that involved relationships with his wife Emma, Toni Wolff, Maria Moltzer and a paradoxical imaginary companion he addressed in his journals as his "Soul." My essay was titled "Jung in Love: The Mysterium in *Liber Novus*."[11]

Answer to Job was Jung's most personal statement about his encounter with God during the decade he worked on *Liber Novus*. It was a feverish continuation to *Aion*. But in this singular short essay he spoke in a very personal voice, uttering heretical avowals unexpressed in prior works. It is now apparent that *Answer to Job* originated from conversations with his Soul between 1916 and about 1919, all recorded in his private journals. In what follows, I will quote those journal entries. This present essay, the third in my series addressing Jung's last quartet, only became possible with publication of the journals in late 2020.

Insulting God

On 29 May 1951, Jung wrote a note to Aniela Jaffé from his tower at Bollingen: "I have landed the great whale; I mean 'Answer to Job.'"[12]

Answer to Job was Jung's great Leviathan, drawn from the bottomless sea. Near the end of his life, Jung stated it was the only one of his books that he would not want to rewrite, "he would leave that one just as it stands."[13] Job was the third book included in what I have dubbed Jung's "last quartet"-his four final works, the immensely important books he published after his visions in 1944.[14]

In these ultimate works, or "last quartet," Jung gave his mature commentary on "the numinous beginning that contained everything," the experience that had nearly overwhelmed him beginning in November 1913, and which he recorded in his big red folio volume, *Liber Novus*. But naturally, until *The Red Book: Liber Novus* was published in 2009, and now amplified by publication of his Black Books journals in 2020, no one fully understood the relationship of these works to *Liber Novus*.

In *Answer to Job*, Jung forcefully confronted the God-image of Christian theology, the canonical God of his ancestral tradition. He admitted to his friend and disciple Erich Neumann that in his nakedness he had to "insult even God." The Jehovah of Christian scripture was unconscious, incomplete and imbalanced.

Sonu Shamdasani noted, "it was in *Answer to Job* that the theology first articulated in *Liber Novus* … found its definitive expression and elaboration."[15] I would emend a word in that statement: theology. In my view, *Answer to Job* is not a theology, nor was there a theology lurking in *Liber Novus*. This was Jung's myth—one might call it (as has been done) his "Gnostic myth." Perhaps it should be termed a "Sophiology," rather than a theology. Jung moved Sophia toward center stage in the mythic drama at play in our age.

Jung penned *Answer to Job* as a continuation of *Aion*, the second book in this last quartet. *Aion* was composed between 1947 and 1949 and published in 1951. In *Aion*, Jung disclosed a revelation central to *Liber Novus*: the Christian age, the aeon of Pisces, which had dominated two millennia of Western culture, was drawing to a close.[16]

A new age and an epochal turning of human perspective approached. From the depths of the objective psyche, great archetypal powers were emerging anew. With them would come new symbols and a transformation of the God-image that would orient future humanity.

During the summer of 1951, Jung's personal secretary of twenty years, Marie-Jeanne Schmid, typed up his penned manuscript of Job. While reading and transcribing, she recounted how "the Protestant pastors in her ancestry rose in revolt, and she had a terrible time of it. … She was most upset."[17] Of course, Jung anticipated that his book would rouse revolt not only from Marie-Jeanne's Swiss pastoral ancestors. And upon publication in 1952, it did. Prior to publication, however, Jung tested the waters by sending his manuscript for comment to a few individuals he respected.

Jung is reported to have said that Fr. Victor White in Oxford and Erich Neumann in Tel Aviv were the only two friends with whom he could discuss his difficulties—the deep issues that lay at the center of his concerns.[18] If Jung did say or write that, he was surely speaking of the years between 1947 and 1952, the period when he engaged in conversation with White and reestablished personal contact with Neumann after a long hiatus forced by the war. These were crucial years during which Jung labored with his mature articulation of the central themes in *Liber Novus* and his journal record—difficulties he addressed in *Aion* and *Answer to Job*.

Publication of *Answer to Job* ruptured Jung's relationship with Fr. White. Despite Victor White's personal affection for Jung, this text was a heresy beyond the limits that Fr. White, an ordained Dominican priest and defender of Catholic theology, could publicly tolerate. Erich Neumann responded positively, but speaking as a Jew he protested that Jung described Yahweh as the demiurge.[19] And Jung had.

Jung and Job

I cannot here attempt a detailed commentary on the text of *Answer to Job*. I expect readers of this essay have read Jung's work. And I have not space here to offer a summary of Jung's 110-page treatise. That

task was met masterfully by Paul Bishop in his 2002 book, *Jung's Answer to Job: A Commentary*.[20] Therein Bishop reviews both the outrage evoked by Jung's little tome and Jung's response to his critics. Bishop then presents a scholarly overview of the book's text, amplified with quotations from Jung's letters and published writings and contributing insights about potential influences on Jung from preceding German literature.

To counterpoint Bishop's commentary, one must conjoin the exposition offered by Edward Edinger. In 1989, Edinger gave a passionate and prescient commentary on the text of *Answer to Job* in lectures delivered at the C.G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles, material that was subsequently published in 1992 as *Transformation of the God-Image: An Elucidation of Jung's Answer to Job*.[21] Edinger revered Jung as a harbinger of the coming age of consciousness—what he dared to call the new Jungian Aion. His expansive vision of Jung was, of course, scorned by many scholars. Nonetheless, Edinger had profound insights into the focus of Jung's work, discernments now supported in part by Jung's private annals.

However, the essential source Bishop and Edinger both lacked for their commentaries—the primary source unavailable to any writer who has heretofore addressed *Answer to Job*—was Jung's private journal record. That source only became available in 2020. And in the journals, one meets the primary source of *Answer to Job*: an intense rebuke of Yahweh as a demiurge, a god devoid of self-consciousness-a figure in need of relationship with his Sophia, the feminine companion whom ancient scriptures declare present from the beginning.[22]

Jung's attack on the almighty Jehovah deeply offended his theologically and dogmatically inclined critics in the early 1950s, and in tone and text it has perplexed readers over subsequent generations. Nonetheless, his declarations were rooted in Jung's own personal experiences. As early as 1914, Jung had witnessed a coming transformation of the divinity. In the opening words of *Liber Novus*, he declared "the way of what is to come": the coming of a new Aion and the evolution of a new God image. His journals demonstrate the development of that revelation. In *Answer to Job*, the old man personally and passionately spoke his secret knowledge.

Finding God

I will here focus on one recurrent theme in Jung's visionary venture: his search to apprehend the ultimate mystery of God, as he met it in evolving visionary and imaginative forms over the course of the experiential journey recorded in his journals.

"And if you look into yourselves, you will see … the nearby as far-off and infinite, since the world of the inner is as infinite as the world of the outer."[23] This affirmation was the keystone arching over Jung's thoughts, writings and reflections throughout the rest of his life.

In later life, Jung frequently used the word psyche to speak of this inner infinity. Of this inner infinity he observed: "Psyche can function as though space did not exist. The psyche can thus be independent of space, of time, and of causality. This explains the possibility of magic."[24]

For Jung, the psyche was both the boundless underpinning of consciousness and, imaginably, its infinite, timeless, primal source. In his commentary on The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation composed in 1939, Jung asserted:

> The psyche is therefore all-important; it is the all-pervading Breath, the Buddha-essence; it is the Buddha-Mind, the One, the Dharmakāya. All existence emanates from it, and all separate forms dissolve back into it.[25]

One must, however, step back to the beginning, and comprehend that when Jung started his venture in 1913—what he termed in a December 1913 journal entry to be "my most difficult experiment"[26]—he had no idea where he was going, or what would follow. It was an expedition into the unknown.

In the comments that follow, I will mostly be referencing Jung's writings in his Black Books journals. The journals are handwritten text records, unedited. They offer raw evidence of the evolution of Jung's journey with his fantasies and visions, and—particularly after 1916—they offer detail about his quest to understand the nature of

God, a journey that extended for years beyond the last entries contained in *Liber Novus*.

Are you God?

Let us start at the beginning. On the night of 14 November 1913, two nights after Jung's first journal entry as his quest began, he called out to his Soul:

> Who are you, child? You know that you have used this image in my dreams, the image of a little girl. (And I found you again only through the Soul of the woman.)… How dare I guess about this? What do I know of your mystery? … Forgive me if I speak as in a dream, like a drunkard—are you—God? Is God a child, a female child?[27]

Was God a female child dwelling in man? In his intrepid expedition into the interior infinite, Jung was pondering what God was in relationship to humankind.

The mystery unfolded slowly over coming months and years, layer by layer. On 12 December 1913 he descended into the fantasy image of the cave.[28] Ten days later, on 22 December 1913, the doors of perception swung wide open. In his journal, on the threshold that night, he started his account, asking:

> What am I going to write? Everything is dark in front of me. …it is the gate to darkness….
> Who enters here, enters as a poor or stupid one, because what we call knowledge here is ignorance, seeing blindness, hearing deafness, feeling dullness….[29]

The event following those introductory words—visions that continued over three nights—Jung called his Mysterium. On the last night of these visions, Jung finds himself stretched out as if on a cross,

enwrapped by a serpent, blood streaming from his body. Salome proclaims to him, "You are Christ."[30]

In the 1920s, Jung described his experience in the Mysterium as a vision.[31] He had entered a visionary world. And from the end of 1913 going forward over the next months, many more imaginative or visionary or fantastic encounters followed. Vision, fantasy, imagination: Find your own words to describe what he recorded in his journals.

The words God, Christ and Christianity appear over a thousand times in *Liber Novus*. They are present in the first journals of 1913–14, and are even more numerous amidst the commentary Jung composed in his draft manuscript of *Liber Novus* during late 1914 and early 1915. In *Liber Novus* he spoke about no longer being a Christian, but a Christ. He envisioned the end of the Christian aeon and the coming of a new age, the fourth month of history: "Mankind has grown older and a new month has begun."[32] This is the way of what is to come.

Finding Ancient Friends

By 1915, as Jung began creating the calligraphic Red Book folio, he was seriously searching for evidences in history that his visionary, revelatory, imaginal experience—use whatever words fit—was not unprecedented. Of course, what he had experienced was beyond the ken of most people of his time.

The place he clearly first found historical record of similar mythopoetic imagination was in the suppressed Gnostic writings of the early Christian era-writings that were later labeled as heresy.

Jung was investigating and reading all available remnants of Gnostic material from January 1915 onward. He was struck by how much this ancient material resembled his own experiences. What he apparently perceived in these writings was an imaginative entry into the mythopoetic terrain he too was traversing. Yes, those old heretical writings were couched in another age, at the beginning of the Christian age. Yes, they were ultimately suppressed and renounced

as heresy. But in them Jung discerned reverberations of his experiences.

In 2013, I wrote a foreword to Alfred Ribi's book, *The Search for Roots: C.G. Jung and the Tradition of Gnosis*, detailing Jung's study of all available Gnostic materials during this period; I refer the reader to that foreword.[33]

The Return of Philemon and Gnostic Myth

By mid-1915, Jung perhaps supposed his visionary venture was concluded. What remained for him was to offer exegesis, understanding and psychological explications of the record he had at hand, both for himself and others.

Then, in late summer 1915, it started again. Philemon returned. The imaginal world reopened, but now it took a deeper turn.

Some of his journal writings from this period were included in Jung's final manuscript section composed for *Liber Novus* in 1917 titled "Scrutinies." However, much more detail appears in his journals from the fall of 1915 and onward through the 1920s. During this timeframe, Jung's conception of what he was doing became more complex. Gnostic mythic motifs had begun to enter into his own mythopoetic world.

In January 1916, as recounted in his journal, an intense vision of the complexity of divinity was spoken to Jung by his Soul. It is an extraordinary transcript of a visionary conversation with his Soul. Sonu Shamdasani added this key section of Jung's journals to the published edition of *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, where it appears as Appendix C.[34]

In this revelation, Jung's Soul speaks in the voice of Sophia as she appears in early Gnostic mythology. She warns him of the demiurge, a signal motif of Gnostic mythology. Here, the name of the demiurge that is spoken by his Soul is Abraxas, a name later revised in the text of *Liber Novus* to "ruler of this world"—an apt description of this immensely powerful but lesser deity.

Consider Jung's text from his journal, 16 January 1916:

> You should worship only one God. The other Gods are unimportant. Abraxas is to be feared. Therefore it was a deliverance when he separated himself from me. You do not need to seek him. He will find you, just like Eros. He is the God of the cosmos, extremely powerful and fearful. He is the creative drive, he is form and formation, just as much as matter and force, therefore he is above all the light and dark Gods. He tears away Souls and casts them into procreation. He is the creative and created. He is the God who always renews himself, in days, in months, in years, in human life, in ages, in peoples, in the living, in heavenly bodies. He compels, he is unsparing. If you worship him, you increase his power over you.…
>
> You must be in the middle of life, surrounded by death on all sides. Stretched out, like one crucified, you hang in him, the fearful, the overpowering.
>
> But you have in you the one God, the wonderfully beautiful and kind, the solitary, starlike, unmoving, he who is older and wiser than the father, he who has a safe hand, who leads you among all the darknesses and death scares of dreadful Abraxas. He gives joy and peace, since he is beyond death and beyond what is subject to change. He is no servant and no friend of Abraxas.[35]

One cannot encounter that text and fail to grasp the intensity of Jung's evolving vision of deity. Echoed there one finds motifs and images from his sympathetic reading of ancient Gnostic mythopoetic vision. But these were not solely myths from the past. He had met something in his present, in the timelessness of psyche. At this time, Jung sketched in his journal his first "mandala," a complex psycho-cosmology of the inner worlds he was traversing.[36] This subsequently evolved into his exquisite painting of the *Systema Munditotius*, completed in 1916.[37]

This period in January 1916 was an indefinably difficult passage for Jung. As he wrote in his journal two days later on 18 January 1916: "Men flee in horror from me since I bear the marks of the fire. ….

My God, why have you forsaken me? Oh, horrendous silence!" His Soul responds, "You have waited long enough. The holy fire is blazing, step into the flames." Jung asks, "What should I proclaim, the fire? Which fire?" His Soul responds, "The flame that blazes over your head, look up, the skies redden."[38]

On 30 January 1916 Jung petitions his Soul: "You need to bring some relief. Speak a redeeming word. What's up with spirits. They're tearing at me and I have difficulties standing." His Soul speaks to him one word: "Surrender."[39]

On the next line of his journal, Jung began addressing the dead. This was the beginning of the *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* – "The Seven Sermons to the Dead." Over eight subsequent nights he continued his sermons to the dead. (How this transpired is a more complex story than Aniela Jaffé relates in her memoir of Jung, or as Jung related the event later.) All of this is documented in his now published journal.

Art and Images

Jung is a puzzle that demands careful attention if one will assemble the whole. It was during a period of early 1916, at the time he recorded the above words from his Soul and began transcribing his sermons to the dead, that he was also painting some of the most beautiful pages of *Liber Novus*, recounting the story of Izdubar, the god whom Jung poisoned with his toxic modernity and then struggled to resuscitate. That story had condensed in visions that were recorded in his journal in January 1914. Around Christmas 1915, Jung began work on these folio pages of *Liber Novus*, illustrating the story of Izdubar and the imaginative tale recorded in his journals two years earlier. While illustrating those stunning leaves, folio pages 36 to 64 of his calligraphic volume, and while transcribing his incantations inscribed therein unto the renewal of the god he had poisoned, Jung was also confronting the task demanded by his Soul to surrender and speak his Seven Sermons to the Dead. Piece this together. Meet the man in this moment. [See figures 1-3]

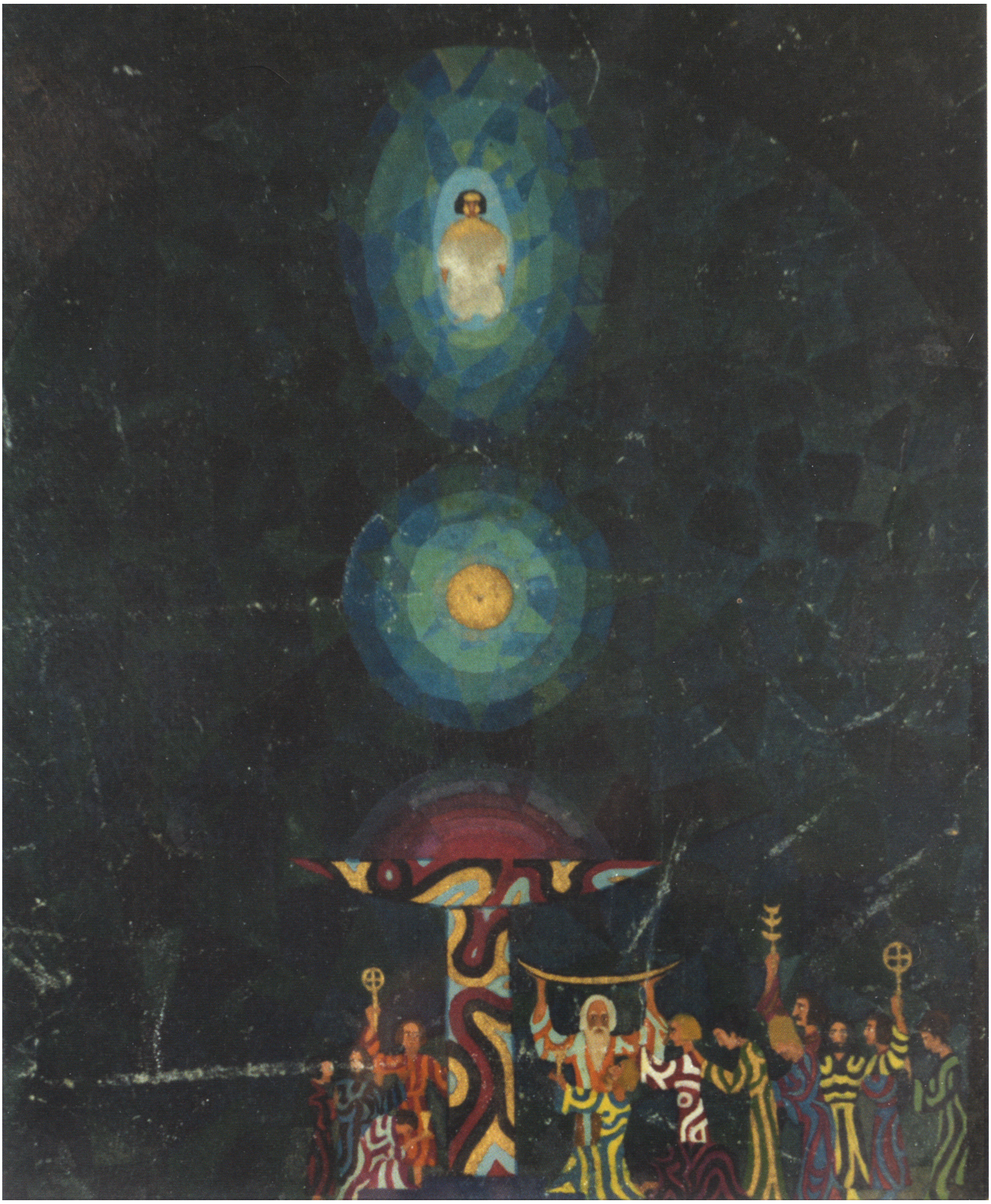

Figure 1. A cultic scene, painted by Jung around 1916-17. Phanes appears above, a glowing orb is at center, and an assembly of ritual celebrants are below. The central figure below at center, holding the vessel of offering, is probably indicates Philemon.

(*The Art of C.G. Jung*, Cat. 52, p 124)

Figure 2. Painted by Jung around 1917-19. Note similarity to figure 3, the image titled *Septem Sermones ad Mortuous.* The celebrant holds a serpent in one hand, and a dove in the other, both apparently emitting fire. Above is the equal armed cross, encircled in serpent forms. To the right Philemon is represented holding the *Septem Sermones*, and to the left is Ka.

(*The Art of C. G. Jung*, Cat. 54, p 126)

Figure 3: Image titled *Septem Sermones ad Mortuous,* painted by Jung around 1917. Phanes, the new-born god, appears at top, with ritual celebrants under the glowing cross.

(*The Art of C. G. Jung, Cat. 53, p 125*)

From 1917 onward, Jung executed several additional paintings apart from his illustrations in *Liber Novus*, pictures few people had beheld until publication of *The Art of C.G. Jung* in 2019.[40] These images in sum suggest the power of Jung's visions as recorded in the journals. (Jung later encouraged his patients to do likewise: to paint as a method of amplifying images emerging from the unconscious.)

Among the most striking of these paintings is an image created in 1917, titled Septem Sermones ad Mortuos. It appears as the frontispiece of The Art of C.G. Jung.[41] In this painting, a celebrant in ancient clothing ritually elevates a golden paten filled with a sacred offering (perhaps blood); he is flanked by two kneeling assistants. Above floats a glowing circled cross, and then at the top is Phanes—an emerging new image of God. Off to the sides, vaguely outlined, one spies Philemon and Ka.[42]

Jung painted this theme in similar style at least two other times during this period, each painting suggesting an ancient cultic ritual. All three paintings are reproduced in *The Art of C.G. Jung*.[43] The power of these repeated images, and their recurrent stylistic execution, bear witness to the visionary world Jung was traversing between 1916 and 1917.

The Coming of Phanes

Phanes appears in Jung's journal accounts and in several paintings after 1916.[44] On 11 September 1917, Philemon speaks in the journal record, describing Phanes:

> Phanes is the God who rises agleam from the waters. Phanes is the smile of dawn. Phanes is the resplendent day. He is the immortal present….
> He is promise and fulfillment. He is the light that illuminates every darkness…. He is the benevolent and the gentle. He is salvation. He is the friend of man, the light emanating from man, the bright glow that man beholds on his path.
> He is the greatness of man, his worth, and his force.[45]

Ten months later, on 31 July 1918, Phanes describes himself as:

> The mystery of the summer morning, the happy day, the completion of the moment, the fullness of the possible, born from suffering and joy, the treasure of eternal beauty, the goal of the 4 paths, the spring and the ocean of the 4 streams, the fulfillment of the 4 sufferings and of the 4 joys, father and mother of the Gods of the 4 winds, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and man's divine enhancement, highest effect and nonbeing… death and the rebirth of God, borne by eternally creative power, resplendent in eternal effect.[46]

At this juncture in Jung's visionary venture, the youthful Phanes is emerging as image of the reborn God. [See Figure 4.]

The Unconscious God

The crucial journal text during this progressive revelation from his Soul about the nature of God was recorded on 1 March 1918. This extraordinary entry is echoed throughout the next three decades of Jung's writings on religion. It is foundation for the proclamation that erupted in *Answer to Job* thirty-three years later, and is the background to his final statements about God written late in life. Many volumes would be required to unpack the declarations found in these nine handwritten pages of his journal, or to track the ways they wove into Jung's thoughts. In his own occult way, Jung attempted an elucidation in his abundant comments on the experiential grounds of religion.

One of the disquieting accusations Jung made against God in *Answer to Job* is that Yahweh was incomplete and apparently unconscious of his omnipotence. To become self-aware, God must, through an eventual incarnation, enter into creaturely man. Such a declaration was heresy—perhaps even a Gnostic heresy—in the view of theologians. Nonetheless, the words recorded and later articulated in *Answer to Job* had been revealed to Jung by his Soul in March 1918.

Figure 4. Painted by C. G. Jung in 1917, and presented to his wife. This is one of his several recurring paintings of Phanes, the new born god.

(*The Art of C. G. Jung*, Cat. 50, p 122.)

Here I will extract only brief selections from this animated 1918 journal record. In that record, his Soul declared of God:

> …he is unconscious of his power. Since he is every single being, he is not conscious of his being. Since man is conscious of his self by virtue of his limitedness and separateness, God can also reveal the fullness of his being only if he is drawn by individual men….[47]
> …God is unchangeably the same, and he doesn't understand himself as a seed, since above all he is incapable of understanding himself as a singularity, since his essence is totality, and generality, he does not know from omniscience, just as he also does not know himself as existing from universal essence.[48]

In his journal account, Jung then asks, "But if the seed is God, and the whole world is God, where and what is man?" The Soul answers: "I tell you, man is completely in God. He is the mediator between God as world and God as seed." In response to his Soul, Jung remarks, "Therefore man would be the mediator in the transformation process of God."[49] These words encapsulate Jung's assessment of humankind's duty to God. It was a duty he embraced. It was a key theme in *Answer to Job*.

A Hermeneutics of Vision

The publication of *Liber Novus* in 2009, followed in 2020 by the release of *The Black Books*, opened new perspectives onto the life and work of C.G. Jung. One of the most important historical perspectives these works reveal is C.G. Jung's multifaceted vocation as hermeneut. Jung had received a revelation. How did he interpret this fact in the context of Western tradition, and what was his reading of himself, the one who had received a revelation?

Herein is a critical issue in understanding Jung and his hermeneutics. Over decades, Jung reflected deeply upon these questions. In

the last two decades of his life, he directly confronted the soteriological implications of his experience within the contexts of Christian history. Following his near-death visions in 1944, he accepted his obligation to finally speak, and thereafter he wrote both *Aion* and *Answer to Job*, works that in concert exposed his long-veiled revelation.

In a journal entry dated 5 January 1922, Jung engaged in a conversation with his Soul about his situation. The dialogue he recorded that night sheds light upon the burden Jung carried at that moment. Jung has been unable to sleep, and addresses his Soul, asking why. She says there is no time to sleep; he has great work to begin; he must go to "a higher level of consciousness." Jung says, "I'm ready. What is it? Tell me!"

> Soul: Now listen closely: to no longer be a Christian is easy. But then what? For more is yet to come. Everything is waiting for you. And you? You remain silent and have nothing to say. But you ought to speak up. Why have you received the revelation? You mustn't hide it. You busy yourself with the form? Has the form ever been important, when it is a matter of revelation?
> Jung: But you are not thinking that I should publish what I have written? [*Liber Novus*]? That would be a disaster. And who would understand it?
> Soul: No, listen! … above all your calling comes first.
> Jung: But what is my calling?
> Soul: The new religion and its proclamation.
> Jung: Oh God, how should I do this?
> Soul: Do not be of such little faith. No one knows it as you do. There is no one who could say it as well as you could.[50]

Three days later, on 8 January 1922, his Soul explains further: "You know everything that is to be known about the manifested revelation, but you do not yet live everything that is to be lived at this time…. The way is symbolic."[51] Jung was confronting not just the "revelation," but also the fact of himself, a modern man. How could he live that

peculiar fact, find that symbolic way, at this time? He faced not only the emerging and developing hermeneutics of his vision, but of himself as the hermeneut.

Behind the word hermeneut resides a mythic and symbolic history of meaning. Jung knew this. Old theological discussions of the hermeneutical art worked within a horizontal axis: the method of interpreting meanings from a text (classically, a sacred text, the "word of God") in historical, ethical, allegorical and metaphorical modes. However, another mysterious mode of interpretation was mentioned in medieval commentaries. It was called anagoge. Its methods remained perpetually vague across centuries of commentary. The Greek word ἀναγωγή implies "a climb" or "ascent upwards." Hermeneutics in the anagogical mode cleaves customary horizontal approaches with a vertical axis: it reads veiled meanings. In this mode, the hermeneut bridges above and below, constellating by vision deeper mysteries.

Jung traveled that occult path—the vertical axis, the hermetic road. In the image of the hermeneut, he stood as nexus between inner and outer, hidden and seen, above and below. His exegesis in *Answer to Job* evidences his attitude.

Jung accepted he had duties to his time. Late in life, he explained his situation apropos his visionary venture, details of which are now laid bare by the publication of his journals and *Liber Novus*:

> There were things in the images which concerned not only myself but many others also. It was then that I ceased to belong to myself alone, ceased to have the right to do so. From then on, my life belonged to the generality.[52]

Late Thoughts

As he began his journey on 14 November 1913, Jung asked his Soul: "Who are you, child? ...Forgive me if I speak as in a dream, like a drunkard—are you—God? Is God a child, a female child?" It was a sincere inquiry. At that moment he had no idea what God was. In a

complex evolution of revelations over the next five years, his Soul informed him. By 1918 he had heard and had come to conclusions that oriented his life task thereafter. These revelations accompanied him through his journey over the next decades.

At the end of life, he wrote what he knew. He spoke his vision in *Aion* and in *Answer to Job*. But he most powerfully stated his knowledge of God in the essay he scribed for his memoir, the section titled "Late Thoughts." I end here with those last words:

> The unavoidable internal contradictions in the image of a Creator-god can be reconciled in the unity and wholeness of the self as the coniunctio oppositorum of the alchemists or as a unio mystica. In the experience of the self it is no longer the opposites "God" and "man" that are reconciled, as it was before, but rather the opposites within the God-image itself. That is the meaning of divine service, of the service which man can render to God, that light may emerge from the darkness, that the Creator may become conscious of His creation, and man conscious of himself.
> That is the goal, or one goal, which fits man meaningfully into the scheme of creation, and at the same time confers meaning upon it. It is an explanatory myth which has slowly taken shape within me in the course of the decades.[53]

This is the summary of Carl Gustav Jung's vison of the evolution of God, "an explanatory myth which has slowly taken shape within me in the course of the decades."

Endnotes

[1] C.G. Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novu*s, ed. Sonu Shamdasani, trans. John Peck, Mark Kyburz, and Sonu Shamdasani (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2009)). Hereafter, LN.

[2] C.G. Jung*: The Black Books: Notebooks of Transformation,* ed. Sonu Shamdasani, trans. Martin Liebscher, John Peck, and Sonu Shamdasani (Stiftung der Werke von C. G. Jung & W. W. Norton, 2020). Hereafter, BBJ. All subsequent references will be given to journal dates, not volume or page numbers.

[3] C.G. Jung, *The Red Book*, vii.

[4] Sonu Shamdasani, "Liber Novus: The 'Red Book' of C.G. Jung," in C.G. Jung, The Red Book: Liber Novus, ed. Sonu Shamdasani, trans. John Peck, Mark Kyburz, and Sonu Shamdasani (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2009), 219.

[5] Lance S. Owens, "The Hermeneutics of Vision: C.G. Jung and Liber Novus," in *The Gnostic: A Journal of Gnosticism, Western Esotericism and Spirituality*, Issue 3, 2010, 23–46. (Available online)

[6] C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé (New York, NY: Vintage, 1963), 295-96.

[7] Ibid., 297.

[8] Barbara Hannah, *Jung: His Life and Work*, (New York, NY: G. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 276.

[9] The published journals, *The Black Books 1913–1932,* exclude the last approximately 70 pages Jung entered into his journal during the 1940s. These last pages almost certainly contain Jung's private account of his near-death visions in 1944. It is unclear why this concluding portion of his last journal was not disclosed or published.

[10] Lance S. Owens, "Jung and *Aion*: Time, Vision and a Wayfaring Man," in *Psychological Perspectives* 34 (2011), 253–89. (Available online)

[11] Lance S. Owens, *Jung in Love: The Mysterium in Liber Novus* (Gnosis Archive Books, 2015). Originally published in *Das Rote Buch—C.G. Jungs Reise zum anderen Pol der Welt,* ed. Thomas Arzt, (Verlag Königshausen & Neumann, 2015). (Available online)

[12] Gerhard Adler (ed), *C.G. Jung Letters, Volume 2:* 1951–1961, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 17–18.

[13] Marie-Louise von Franz, *C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time*, trans. William Kennedy (New York, NY: C. G. Putnam, 1975), 161.
[14] For a detailed discussion of the "Last Quartet" see *Jung in Love,* 7–9.
[15] Sonu Shamdasani, "Foreword to the 2010 Edition," *Answer to Job* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Reprint edition, 2010), ix.
[16] Lance S. Owens, "Jung and *Aion*," 286, n.33.
[17] Ximena Roelli to Cary Baynes, August 8, 1951 (Baynes papers, Contemporary Medical Archives, Wellcome Library). Marie-Jeanne Schmid was Jung's secretary. Cited in Shamdasani, "Foreword to the 2010 Edition."
[18] "Elkisch wrote that somewhere he had read words which he never forgets in which Jung said: 'I have a huge correspondence, see innumerable people but have only two real friends with whom I can speak about my own difficulties; the one is Erich Neumann and he lives in Israel and the other is Father Victor White in England.'" Ann Conrad Lammers & Adrian Cunningham, eds., *The Jung–White Letters* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 334. Where Elkisch read this remains unknown.
[19] C.G. Jung & Erich Neumann, *Analytical Psychology in Exile: The Correspondence of C.G. Jung and Erich Neumann,* ed. Martin Liebscher, trans. Heather McCartney (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 5 December 1951, 271.
[20] Paul Bishop, *Jung's Answer to Job: A Commentary* (Brunner-Routledge, 2002).
[21] Edward F. Edinger, *Transformation of the God-Image: An Elucidation of Jung's Answer to Job* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1992).
[22] Jung's summary of this textual tradition about Sophia is found in *Answer to Job*, *CW* 11, par. 609ff.
[23] C.G. Jung, *The Red Book*, 264.
[24] Journal of Suzanne Percheron in *C.G. Jung, Emma Jung and Toni Wolff - A Collection of Remembrances* (The Analytical Psychology Club of San Francisco, 1982), 62.
[25] C.G. Jung, "Psychological Commentary on 'The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation,'" in *CW*, vol. 11 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), par. 771.
[26] C.G. Jung, *The Black Books of C.G. Jung*, vol. 2, 58.
[27] C.G. Jung, *The Black Books*, vol. 2, 151.
[28] C.G. Jung, *The Red Book*, 237.

[29] C.G. Jung, *The Black Books*, vol. 2, 184-85.
[30] C.G. Jung, *The Red Book*, 251.
[31] Ibid., Appendix A.
[32] Ibid., 356.
[33] Lance S. Owens, "Foreword," in Alfred Ribi, *The Search for Roots: C.G. Jung and the Tradition of Gnosis* (Los Angeles and Salt Lake City: Gnosis Archive Books, 2013), 13ff. (Available online)
[34] C.G. Jung, *The Red Book*, 370–1; BBJ vol 5, 163–78.
[35] C.G. Jung, *The Black Books*, vol. 5, 274-75.
[36] Ibid., 273.
[37]C.G. Jung, *The Red Book*, Appendix A, 365.
[38] C.G. Jung, *The Black Books*, vo. 5, 279-80.
[39] Ibid., 283.
[40] Hoerni, Ulrich, Thomas Fischer, and Bettina Kaufmann (eds), *The Art of C.G. Jung*, The Foundation of the Works of C.G. Jung, trans. Paul Young and Christopher Murray (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 2019).
[41] Ibid., Jung later gave this painting to H. G. Baynes, who translated the *Septem Sermones* into English for private publication in 1925.
[42] Ka was one of the imaginal figures with whom Jung was conversing in this period.
[43] *The Art of C.G. Jung*, 124–6.
[44] Ibid.,122–3.
[45] C. G. Jung, *The Black Books*, vol. 7, 158.
[46] Ibid., 192.
[47] Ibid., 177.
[48] Ibid., 178-79.
[49] Ibid., 180.
[50] Ibid., 210-11.
[51] Ibid., 216.
[52] C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 192.
[53] Ibid., 338.