JUNG`S RED BOOK FOR OUR TIME

Searching for Soul under Postmodern Conditions

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EDITORS

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C. G. Jung and the Prophet Puzzle
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C.G. Jung and the Prophet Puzzle

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The Red Book: Liber Novus is a volume that defies categorization or comparison; it resounds with voices beyond our common ken.[1] Though a singularly modern document, it is nevertheless transcribed and presented in the form of a medieval manuscript. And since its belated publication in 2009, it has proved to be a work that perplexes most people who venture into its visionary domain. Whether one approaches *Liber Novus* as a historian, a psychologist, a literary critic, or simply as an interested reader, the puzzle is the same: What was Carl Gustav Jung doing, what was happening to him? Is this record to be interpreted as an imaginative literary creation, the product of an incipient psychosis, or a psychological work veiled in prophetic language?

Of course, *Liber Novus* is none of those latter things. To meet this book, one must apprehend that C.G. Jung elaborated *Liber Novus* in the form of a revelation; it is a message to mankind at a critical juncture in human history. This is a visionary work in the most fundamental sense of those words: Jung fashioned the book from his journal accounts of visionary and imaginative experiences, events he originally chronicled between 1913 and 1916. Though he labored at calligraphically transcribing the text into his illuminated red leather-bound folio volume for over 16 years, and though he asserted the book was the foundation of all his later work, it is a manuscript he chose never to publicly disclose. He knew it would not be understood by men of his time. Now, nearly a hundred years later, it has finally been revealed. Will people of this time understand it? Can this age comprehend a man who experienced and carefully recorded visions, ultimately regarded them as a revelation, and recognized in them the prophecy of a vast new coming age?

Vision, revelation, prophecy: How will the "spirit of this time" decipher such archaic words? And how will coming generations meet this strange tome, elaborated as a revelation and implicitly addressed

as a message to them? I cannot prophesy how the future will view this book, but I do now know that *Liber Novus* and the lifework of C.G. Jung are inextricably intertwined. Any understanding of *Liber Novus* inevitably demands an engagement with Jung and his tireless efforts toward awakening modern consciousness to the ancient and mysterious fact of the soul.

The Hermeneutics of Vision

Dr. C.G. Jung certainly struggled with his own understanding of the visionary and imaginative experience that erupted in the fall of 1913 and continued nearly nightly into the spring of 1914.[2] Early on, he accepted the possibility that it might be a path into insanity. It began in October 1913 with two separate spontaneous visions of a wave of blood consuming Europe. Confronted with prolonged visual hallucinations, Jung conceded that interior powers he could neither resist nor ignore were demanding his attention. He interpreted his predicament firstly in personal terms, as a summons to engage lost, rejected, or hidden aspects of himself. In the opening words of his journal on 12 November 1913, he petitioned reunion with his "almost forgotten soul." Throughout four subsequent weeks of rigorous nightly introspection, a voice from the depths began to answer him. He listened.

As a physician with extensive clinical training, he committed himself to keeping a contemporaneous and carefully documented record of his nightly endeavors. In December 1913, two months after beginning his exploration, Jung described the journal in clinical terms, calling it "the book of my most difficult experiment."[3] In this and the five journal volumes that followed, he meticulously narrated what he saw and heard, and what he said in response. It was an experiment, a perilous journey of discovery into unknown psychic terrain.

Ten years later, Cary Baynes recorded Jung's description of his approach to the imaginative encounters, recounted to her privately in 1924:

> You said some of it hurt your sense of the fitness of things terribly, and that you had shrunk from putting it down as it came to you, but that you had started on the principle of 'voluntariness' that is of making no corrections and so you had stuck to that.[4]

Jung's initial interpretive challenge was "putting it down as it came," recording in his journal the voice of the depths in dialogue, in visionary scene, and in image. This was an extraordinary initial hermeneutic task.[5] He described his effort at the outset of *Liber Novus*: "I speak in images. With nothing else can I express the words from the depths."[6]

"In the beginning, when I wrote these things," Jung told Aniela Jaffé in 1957, "there was this voice whispering to me, 'this is art.'" But he would not accept it. He forcefully countered "that it was not art, that it was nature."[7] This is an enigmatic distinction, and it needs further explanation. Jung perceived that through a concentrated engagement with imagination, fantasy and vision, he had gained entry into an autonomous realm of nature. It was real, it was independent of his will, and it had a tale to tell. What he recorded was not *his artistic creation*. Though his illuminated folio volume can certainly be viewed as a work of art, whatever artfulness materialized within *Liber Novus* was—in Jung's understanding—a voice of *nature*.

During the early months of 1914, the events he recorded often presented with a portentous prophetic tone. But by spring the visions slowly abated and then ceased entirely with the coming of summer. Jung recognized he had been gifted with something extraordinary; however, what he should do with it, or how to further interpret it, remained obscure. When the First World War erupted in August 1914, his interpretation of the experience and his journal record took a radical turn. Jung immediately recognized that what he had seen, heard, and recorded over the preceding months did indeed contain a prophecy: By willful engagement with the autonomous natural functions of vision and imagination, he had been shown the way of what is to come. Jung now confronted strong evidence that his visionary venture had not been of solely personal or subjective

import. It was epochal; the account he had recorded was a revelation. It was the core of a new book, to be addressed to a new age.

Over the ensuing months Jung composed a thousand-page handwritten draft of this new book. Into it he transcribed the visionary events recorded in his journals, adding to them an additional layer of reflection and commentary. This was the culmination of Jung's initial hermeneutics of the visions—the essential condensation of his visionary experience into sensuous form. His interpretative journey with this primary record would, however, move through several further phases—indeed, this hermeneutic enterprise became his life's hidden work.

The revelation was not, however, finished in 1914—as Jung may have then supposed. After concluding the initial drafts and beginning the formal calligraphic transcription of his record, in late summer 1915 a second wave of visionary and imaginative experiences commenced. During this latter period, which extended in his manuscript record through 1916, the revelatory and prophetic tenor of the account was further augmented. This latter part of the revelation is recorded in the final section of *Liber Novus*, titled "Scrutinies," which Jung drafted in 1917. During this period, Philemon became a central figure in his imaginative encounters. The nature of Jung's relationship with Philemon was hinted at in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Jung stated in that memoir, "At times he [Philemon] seemed to me quite real, as if he were a living personality. I went walking up and down the garden with him, and to me he was what the Indians call a guru."[8]

However, in private comments to Cary Baynes in 1923, Jung described Philemon as something ineffably greater. He was, in multiform manifestations, an avatar of "the Master … the same who inspired Buddha, Mani, Christ, Mahomet—all those who may be said to have communed with God."[9] Above Philemon's image on folio 154 of *The Red Book*, a page completed around 1924, Jung penned an appellation in Greek: "Father of the Prophets, Beloved Philemon."[10] A few years later, on the enormous mural painting of Philemon at his Bollingen Tower, Jung added a similar tribute: "Philemon, the Prophets' Primal Father."[11]

A Book of Revelation

Is *Liber Novus* a revelation? During several decades lecturing and teaching about C.G. Jung's life and work, I have found that the words *vision*, *revelation,* and *prophecy* are noxious reactants when cast into any alembic of academic discourse, even when added in homeopathic dilution. These words reek of rancid superstition. They have long since passed, it seems, their scholastic "sell by" date. Nonetheless, in the *Black Book* journals, and in comments transcribed by Aniela Jaffé in 1957, Jung did speak of *Liber Novus* as having been elaborated in the form of a revelation. He did avow that he had seen visions, and later in life he did expound at length on the prophetic message of his New Book.[12]

To say Jung rejected the archaic role of prophet is, of course, both accurate and completely insufficient. This is a crucial issue in understanding Jung, his *Liber Novus*, and his hermeneutics of vision. Simply proclaiming, "No, he didn't do *that*" is no solution at all.

Among the previously unseen source materials Dr. Sonu Shamdasani provided in the editorial apparatus of *Liber Novus* is a section from Jung's journal dated 5 January 1922, in which Jung entered a conversation with his soul about his vocation.[13] At the time of this journal entry, Jung had worked for seven years on the transcription and illumination of his *Liber Novus* manuscripts into the big, red leather-covered folio volume. He would continue the effort for at least seven more years. This journal entry illustrates how he perceived his book in the midst of that labor.

Jung had been unable to sleep and addressed his Soul, asking why. She said there was no time to sleep; he had great work to begin; he must go to "a higher level of consciousness." Jung asked, "What is it? Speak!"

> *Soul:* You should listen: to no longer be a Christian is easy. But what next? For more is yet to come. Everything is waiting for you. And you? You remain silent and have nothing to say. But you should speak. Why have you received the revelation? You should not hide it. You

> concern yourself with the form? Is the form 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 misfortune. And who would understand it?[14]

Three days later, his Soul explained 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."[15]

He had received the manifest revelation, but still he struggled with the proper form for its expression. Thirty-five years after that journal entry, Jung affirmed to Aniela Jaffé, "The Red Book is an attempt at an elaboration [of the imaginal events] in the sense of Revelation."[16]

An Ethical Obligation

In his introduction to *Liber Novus*, Sonu Shamdasani documented that during the early 1920s Jung continued correcting and emending the typescript drafts of *Liber Novus*, and publication of the book was then still under consideration.[17] But there was an insurmountable impediment to publication: "Who would understand it?"

Around 1928, Jung began to realize that another course was both possible and necessary. Before his book could be exposed, he needed to establish a hermeneutics—a new interpretive approach—to visionary works such as his own. Sonu Shamdasani has described the following years of labor as Jung's effort to elucidate a "psychology of the religion-making process,"[18] and to produce a "comparative study of the individuation process."[19]

This period of work, extending until about 1944—the fateful year of Jung's grave illness and near-death visions—may constructively be understood as the essential next phase in Jung's hermeneutic enterprise.[20] The foundational task was the crystallization of his visionary experience into word and image. But in order for coming generations to comprehend *Liber Novus*—the molten magma of vision he worked to form and from which he extracted

his science—an entirely new interpretive approach to imaginative experience was required.

Essentially everything Jung wrote from 1916 onward was oriented to creating an interpretive modus that could meet the seeming madness of his *Liber Novus*. What emerged in this next phase of Jung's work was an organic development—a necessary additional stratum—in his extended hermeneutics of vision. His writings during this time constitute a major portion of the published *Collected Works*; readers of those volumes, however, were heretofore granted little understanding of what the man was actually doing or why he was doing it.

In remarks recorded by Aniela Jaffé on 3 October 1957, Jung stated that the development of his science—which implicitly included his comparative study of the individuation process and the religion-making process—was in fact an *ethical obligation* laid upon his shoulders by *Liber Novus*.

In preparation for her biography of Jung, between September 1956 and May 1958 Aniela Jaffé conducted a series of interviews with him. Jaffé made careful stenographic records of Jung's spontaneous and wide-ranging statements during these sessions (her transcript of Jung's remarks fills 391 typed pages, and is available in the Library of Congress). Unfortunately, many things Jung said to Jaffé were excluded from the heavily edited text of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. The transcript of the session on 3 October 1957 includes several examples of crucially important remarks that were not conveyed in the now quasi-canonical memoir Jaffé compiled.

Jung began his comments that day by stating his visions had taken him in mind or spirit (*geistig voraus genommen*) a few hundred years into the future. He added, "That is why I am considered 'wise.'"[21] Jung recounted that by engaging in his visions, he had figuratively fallen into an immense hole; his merit was, he supposed, that he had not been lost in it. From the visions and dreams his science came into being. Science was the "frightful means" by which he "wriggled out of the hole."[22]

Nonetheless, he added, images such as he had met imposed a tremendous obligation. "They come to a man with supremacy." If one does not regard the knowledge imparted by such things as an ethical

obligation, one falls into the trap of magic. When the ethical obligation is not seen, the knowledge thereby gained can be destructive—it can destroy the person and others.[23]

Jung continued, describing to Jaffé several events in *Liber Novus*: his fear during the visionary encounter with the devil;[24] and his struggle to heal Izdubar—the god from the East whom he had stricken unto death with his modernity.[25] Concluding, he gave a summary description of his *Red Book*:

> The Red Book is an attempt at elaboration [of the visions] in the sense of Revelation. It was my hypothesis that if I were faithful to the call, doing the best I could, I would then free myself.

Nonetheless, his elaboration of the revelation and faithfulness to the call were insufficient. There remained his ethical obligation, and that demanded a further hermeneutic step. He continued:

> But only then I saw that this [elaboration as Revelation] did not bring liberation. It became clear to me that I had to return to the human side. I understood that I had to go back to solid land, and that is science. From the insights I had to draw concrete conclusions. I have given my life for it. The elaboration in the Red Book was necessary, but this also led to an insight into the ethical obligation. I have paid with my life, and I have paid with my science.[26]

To that statement, Jung added a final verdict: "The first thing freed me, one way or the other."[27]

The elaboration of *Liber Novus* in the form of a revelation freed Jung—he had been "faithful to the call." It also encumbered him with heavy obligations, which he disbursed over the following 40 years with his life and with his science. In accepting the ethical onus laid upon him by *Liber Novus,* Jung gave birth to an extraordinary hermeneutics of human imagination and its unbounded psychic source.

Three Prophecies

Over the course of his life Dr. Jung said many strange things. Among them was the above quoted statement to Aniela Jaffé that he had mentally been taken several hundred years into the future. How will one interpret such words? Was this a form of madness, a delusion? Was it a bald-faced falsehood? Was it the testimony of a seer and revelator? Was it an event of consciousness that future generations will interpret in yet unseen ways? These are questions that must be engaged in a close reading of *Liber Novus*, and in a vigilant evaluation of the man Carl Gustav Jung.

Jung's sense of having seen into the future is documented in *Liber Novus*. There are several such junctures in his journals, but perhaps the most impressive is the account he titled "The Three Prophecies." He began his transcription of this section into *Liber Novus* with an introductory comment:

> Wondrous things came nearer. I called my soul and asked her to dive down into the floods, whose distant roaring I could hear. This happened on 22 January of the year 1914, as recorded in my black book. And thus she plunged into the darkness like a shot, and from the depths she called out: 'Will you accept what I bring?'[28]

This is the only place in the text of *Liber Novus* where Jung specifically references both his *Black Book* journal account and the exact date when the event occurred—those facts attest to the importance with which he endowed this experience.

His Soul dived into the depths. She brought back three images: War, Magic, and Religion.

> From the flooding darkness the son of the earth had brought, my soul gave me ancient things that pointed to the future. She gave me three things: The misery of war, the darkness of magic, and the gift of religion. …
> These three mean the unleashing of chaos and its power, just as they also mean the binding of chaos. War is obvious

> and everybody sees it. Magic is dark and no one sees it. Religion is still to come, but it will become evident. Did you think that the horrors of such atrocious warfare would come over us? Did you think that magic existed? Did you think about a new religion? I sat up for long nights and looked ahead at what was to come and I shuddered. Do you believe me? I am not too concerned. What should I believe? What should I disbelieve? I saw and I shuddered.
>
> But my spirit could not grasp the monstrous, and could not conceive the extent of what was to come. … I felt the burden of the most terrible work of the times ahead. I saw where and how, but no word can grasp it, no will can conquer it.…
>
> I would like to avert my eyes, close my ears and deny all my senses; I would like to be someone among you, who knows nothing and who never saw anything. It is too much and too unexpected. But I saw it and my memory will not leave me alone.[29]

Had Jung seen into the future? Whether or not one might now believe him, he rejoined, "I am not too concerned. What should I believe? What should I disbelieve? I saw and I shuddered."

War, Magic, and Religion. War is obvious, and it continues. But magic? What is that? In his journal record, it is apparent that at the time Jung was struggling to grasp the nature of magic. The next night, 23 January 1914, the Soul compounded his confusion by presenting him with a mysterious magical gift.[30] In bewilderment he inquired, "Magic! What should I do with magic? I don't believe in it, I can't believe in it." The Soul replied, "Magic will do a lot for you." Four nights later his imaginative journey led on to the garden gate of an old magician named Philemon.[31] Philemon had more to teach about magic.

In his publications during later years, Jung frequently mentioned magic, usually in the context of primitive peoples' perception and interpretation of psychic phenomena. He explained in a 1928 essay,

"'Magical' is simply another word for 'psychic.'"[32] But of course for enlightened ones, "magic is dark and no one sees it."

"And religion is still to come, but it will become evident." The singular, overarching theme of Jung's revelations in *Liber Novus* is that we stand at the threshold of a new age. Synchronous with the turning of the heavens and the passage of the astrological age of Pisces, the two millennia-long aeon dominated by Christianity is now approaching its terminus. In the coming age—the new aeon of Aquarius—a new god-image and a new religion will eventually take form. This is the proclamation Jung presented on the first folio page of the *Red Book*; it is "The Way of What Is to Come."[33]

Tertium non datur

Jung took his role as a natural scientist very seriously; throughout the central years of his life, he frequently addressed himself specifically to the scientific medical and psychological communities of his time. But those communities never really embraced or understood Jung, and have now relegated him mostly to historical footnotes.

Many of Jung's writings focused on "experience of the numinous" and the nature of symbol formation in the development of religion. Furthermore, over the course of several decades, he engaged in dynamic and influential dialogues with prominent 20th-century scholars of both Eastern and Western religious traditions. Nonetheless, Jung's deliberations now find faint welcome in the curricula of academic religious studies programs. And, of course, within the theological cloisters of orthodox religion, Jung is generally spurned as an occultist or neognostic heretic.

It appears that Jung's perception of psychic reality positioned him within a shadowy domain now disowned within both the academies of science and religion. Why is that?

Wouter Hanegraaff recently identified a fundamental fault line in secular and religious scholarship, and I believe his analysis helps explain Jung's "nonreception" by either province. Dr. Hanegraaff—a professor at the University of Amsterdam and a prominent academic

voice in hermetic and religious studies—contends that the normative prototypes for the study of religion "are grounded in monotheistic, more specifically Christian, even more specifically Protestant, theological biases about 'true' religion."[34] Religion is further positioned as being in opposition to secular studies. However, both fields share a problematic blind spot:

> They both think that 'religion' stands against 'the secular.' However, the historical record shows that these two defined themselves not just against one another but, simultaneously, against a *third* domain…. This third domain that they both rejected has been referred to by different names, but the most well-known are *superstition* and *magic*.[35]

Religion and secular science positioned themselves in a dyadic or oppositional relationship, but in fact both defined themselves not only explicitly against each other, but implicitly against magic and superstition. For both domains, this other territory is a *tertium non datur*—a third and unexamined fact. "Magic is dark and no one sees it."

Hanegraaff employed the terms "superstition" and "magic" as shorthand for a range of alternative, nonorthodox currents in culture, potentially including folk magic, shamanic practices, Hermetic *magia*, alchemy, Paracelsian medicine, Mesmerism, 19th-century Spiritualism—and perhaps even the 20th-century science of C.G. Jung. Whether or not that latter name is properly appended to this list, Jung was nonetheless immensely interested in *all* of the former subjects.

"Did you think that magic existed?"

Jung's conception of the psyche encompassed—and reified—a domain of human experience articulated by terms such as "superstition" and "magic." He allowed that "magical" was simply another term for "psychic." As he perceived it, psyche was the preternatural fact pervading nature—and it was undeniably spooky. In the early 1950s,

Jung mused on its mystery using conceptual terms gleaned from theoretical physics[36]:

> 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.[37]

> If we consider the psyche as a whole, we come to the conclusion that the unconscious psyche … exists in a space-time continuum, where time is no longer time and space no longer space. Accordingly, causality ceases too.[38]

The psyche was both the boundless underpinning of consciousness and, imaginably, also its primal source. In 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.[39]

In the section of *Liber Novus* titled "The Three Prophecies," Jung asked future readers, "Did you think that magic existed?" One might now additionally inquire, "Do you think psychic reality exists?" Jung's views on the reality of the psyche certainly stand beyond what the "spirit of this time" accepts. But at the speculative edges of quantum theory, cognitive studies, and theoretical physics, eminent scientists have recently forwarded unitive panpsychic theories of consciousness and matter no less uncanny than Dr. Jung's.

Jung's affirmation of psychic reality was, nonetheless, not grounded in philosophical or quantum theoretical speculations. It grew organically from, and in an ethical obligation to, unique observations of psychic processes. Those observations were, of course, subjective; Jung confessed this ultimate subjectivity of his work on several occasions. Speaking in London at the Tavistock Clinic in 1935, he stated: "Never forget that in psychology the *means* by which you judge and observe the psyche is the *psyche* itself. … In

psychology the observer is the observed."[40] At the Eranos Conference in 1946, Jung explained further,

> The tragic thing is that psychology has no self consistent mathematics at its disposal, but only a calculus of subjective prejudices. … There is no medium for psychology to reflect itself in: it can only portray itself in itself, and describe itself. That, logically, is also the principle of my own method: it is, at bottom, a purely experiential process. …[41]

His method of science was "a purely experiential process." Experiences that Jung vigilantly recorded in his *Black Book* journals had apparently granted him vision into a vast continuum of time—to the coming of wars, of magic, and of the emergence of a new religion. In that context, his statements about the psyche being "independent of space, of time, and of causality," or existing "in a space-time continuum, where time is no longer time and space no longer space," are revealed as having a *subjective* empirical foundation.

I have read the section of *Liber Novus* titled "The Three Prophecies" many times, and I have on occasion sat into the night pondering his words: *War, Magic, and Religion*. Jung concluded his account of that vast future with grim words, "I saw and I shuddered." I do not, of course, know *what* he saw, nor do I fathom *how* he saw it. But following his path, I have seen foreshadowed there "the way of what is to come."

War is obvious, and everybody sees it. In 1914, Jung realized that his visions had foretold the coming of war. But was it just *one war*? I peer out across the continuum of time and sense that war is not done. War is yet to come. The horrendous wars waged by peoples of the West during the last three centuries were typically provoked by quests for geopolitical dominance, or by political ideologies and nationalistic agendas. Do we now approach an epochal conflagration evoked in the service of ancient gods at the twilight of their time? I see and I shudder.

Magic is the second mysterious movement within Jung's "Three Prophecies." What is this dark and unseen power, and what role does

it play in his vision of the future? Again, lacking answers, I can only offer intuitions. In *Liber Novus*, Jung was forced to give magic focused attention. He subsequently described it as an aspect of the psyche. The "magic" of the psyche grants vision into past, present, and future and opens states of consciousness where "time is no longer time, and space no longer space." Throughout human history, however, magic has been portrayed as following two divergent paths, each with very different objectives. Magic could be used to manipulate matter and people for personal gain; historically, this was labeled black, low, or *goetic* magic. In contradistinction, the higher road of magic sought knowledge about the self and its relation to divinity; this was the objective of *theurgic* magic. What magic awaits people of the future? Which of these two ancient paths will be pursued?

Imagination is the doorway into the psychic realm, as Jung affirmed.[42] It is an infinitely creative source; it can foreshadow things not yet materially existent. And, like magic, it can be plied to very different purposes. Modern technological culture has made every effort to monetize the power of creative imagination. The results now abound. They enwrap us like a web. But does a magical hungry spider weave this web? It so, it feeds off our attention and, ultimately, it sucks the blood of human life. Vampiric feeding is a squalid legacy of *goetia*, the black magic method to *means*.

The psyche can be milked; it offers nourishment to human creativity. But its nature and ultimate source remain a mystery to our age. Perhaps when Jung looked into the future, he saw a coming time that comprehended the psyche's fundamental reality and acknowledged, "All existence emanates from it, and all separate forms dissolve back into it." Whether mankind follows a high or low road into the future, Jung envisioned that a confrontation with the magic of the psyche loomed on the way.

"A new religion is still to come, but it will become evident." This is the last movement in Jung's "Three Prophecies." Throughout *Liber Novus*, Jung looked toward that coming religion, and he associated it with a heritage of so-called heresies rejected by the passing age—suppressed nonorthodox traditions that had affirmed the indwelling mystery of divinity in humankind. "What will come to you lies within

yourself. But what lies there!" When a future new religion does finally form, it will evolve in reflection of that indwelling wonder.

In conclusion to this profound prophetic outpouring, Jung exclaimed in exhaustion:

> How can I fathom what will happen during the next eight hundred years, up to the time when the One begins his rule? I am speaking only of what is to come. … The future should be left to those of the future. I return to the small and the real, for this is the great way, the way of what is to come. I return to my simple reality, to my undeniable and most minuscule being.[43]

The Prophet Puzzle

It is difficult to prophesy, especially about the future.[44] Nonetheless, during his 9 October 2009 address on occasion of the publication of *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, Sonu Shamdasani was asked to prophesy about the effect this work would have on the future. He replied:

> I think, donning my prophet's garb, I would say that I feel quite certain, in ten years hence, this will indeed transform our understanding of Jung, such that no one will bother with the biographical literature of the previous period, and there will be a whole new translation of Jung's scholarship. … I am certain this will completely transform the understanding of Jung.[45]

I agree with Dr. Shamdasani. However, surveying the situation now nearly 10 years henceforth, it appears the time frame foreseen in his prophecy was far too short. Entrenched interpretations are not displaced in a decade. The transformation of our understanding of C.G. Jung—now freshly illuminated by *Liber Novus*—is unavoidably a multigenerational task.

Jung elaborated *Liber Novus* as a revelation. It was crystalized from the molten magma of visionary experience. It contained a prophecy of a coming new age and the coming of a new religion. Who

(except a proper prophet) can foretell how such facts will affect future understanding of Jung or of the future itself? And inevitably, the above assertions evoke a further disquieting question: Was Jung a prophet? What might the archaic word "prophet" signify to our own time or to a coming new age? These are all pieces of the insoluble "prophet puzzle" bequeathed us by Carl Gustav Jung. In *Liber Novus,* Jung proffered a vision of the way to come. But only time can tell its tale.

Endnotes

I thank Vicky Jo Varner for her expert editorial assistance with this essay.

[1] C. G. Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani, tr. John Peck, Mark Kyburz, and Sonu Shamdasani (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 264. Hereafter cited as *Liber Novus*. This work is often referenced simply as the "Red Book." For clarity, a distinction must be made between the terms *Liber Novus* and the "Red Book." The *Red Book* is the illuminated calligraphic red-leather-bound volume into which Jung eventually transcribed about two-thirds of his draft manuscripts of *Liber Novus.* When speaking hereafter about the "Red Book," I specifically reference the physical folio volume transcribed and illuminated by Jung. Citations to *Liber Novus* reference the published edition of Jung's manuscripts, as edited and compiled by Sonu Shamdasani.

[2] For a detailed introduction to these events, see Lance S. Owens, "The Hermeneutics of Vision: C. G. Jung and *Liber Novus*," *The Gnostic: A Journal of Gnosticism, Western Esotericism and Spirituality*, Issue 3 (July 2010), 23–46. (Online edition available.)

[3] *Black Book 2*, 58; *Liber Novus*, 200 n67; C. G. Jung, *The Black Books of C. G. Jung (1913-1932)*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani, (Stiftung der Werke von C. G. Jung & W. W. Norton), forthcoming.

[4] Cary F. Baynes papers; *Liber Novus*, 213.

[5] Owens, "The Hermeneutics of Vision: C. G. Jung and *Liber Novus.*"

[6] *Liber Novus*, 230.

[7] X. Roelli translation of "Memories Protocols," pg. 31; Carl G. Jung Protocols, Box 1, Library of Congress.

[8] C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Aniela Jaffé, ed. (Rev. ed., New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1963), 183.

[9] Cary F. Baynes papers, Jan 26, 1924; *Liber Novus,* 213.

[10] This image of Philemon in *Liber Novus* was probably completed in late 1924 or early 1925; at some point Jung added in the margin beside the painting an English quote from the Bhagavad-Gita about the nature of the avatar: "The bhagavadgita says: whenever there is a decline of the

law and an increase in iniquity, then I put forth myself. For the rescue of the pious and for the destruction of the evildoers, for the establishment of the law I am born in every age." *Liber Novus*, 317 n281.

[11] Jung began construction of the Tower at Bollingen in 1923. It is unknown when he painted the mural of Philemon, but it was probably before 1930. The Greek inscription on the Tower mural reads: "ΦΙΛΗΜΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΠΑΤΩΡ." The final word, *Propator*, implies both "forefather" and "the very first" or primal father.

[12] Jung's last four major works, which I have called the "Last Quartet," are all a mature commentary on *Liber Novus*. For a discussion of Jung's "Last Quartet" see Lance S. Owens, *Jung in Love: The Mysterium in Liber Novus* (Gnosis Archive Books, 2015), 7-9; "Jung in Love: The *Mysterium* in *Liber Novus,*" in Thomas Arzt, ed., *Das Rote Buch: C. G. Jungs Reise zum "anderen Pol der Welt." Studienreihe zur Analytischen Psychologie*, Bd. 5 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015), 215-7. (Online edition available.)

[13] *Liber Novus*, 211-2.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Das Rote Buch ist der Versuch einer Elaboration im Sinne der Offenbarung." Jaffé's typescript of her September 1956 to May 1958 interview sessions with Jung is available in the Library of Congress; "Memories Protocols, " Carl G. Jung Protocols, Box 1, Library of Congress, p. 148; hereafter cited as MP. All translations and paraphrases of MP are my own; in notations I have included the original Jaffé transcription of key sections, in the original German.

[17] Shamdasani, *Liber Novus,* 212-15.

[18] *Liber Novus,* 212.

[19] *Liber Novus*, 219.

[20] The near-death visions in 1944 reoriented Jung; on the nature of his work in the following period. See Lance S. Owens, *Jung in Love: The Mysterium in Liber Novus* (Gnosis Archive Press, 2015), 6-10; and "Jung and *Aion*: Time, Vision and a Wayfaring Man," *Psychological Perspectives* (Journal of the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles, 2011) 54:259-266. (Online editions available.)

[21] 3 October 1957, MP, 147; Jaffé transcribed: "Ich habe ja geistig einige 100 Jahre voraus genommen, das heisst, es hat mich um einige 100 Jahre in die Zukunft versetzt. Darum gelte ich für 'weise.'"

[22] Ibid.; Jaffé transcribed: "Ich bin in ein immenses Loch gefallen, – das ist die Tatsache. Mein einziges Verdienst ist, dass ich nicht darin ersoffen bin, sondern ich habe mein Leben daraus gerettet. ... Aus den Visionen und Träumen ist meine Wissenschaft entstanden, sie war das ängstliche Mittel, mich aus jenem Loch herauszuwinden; sie war die einzige Möglichkeit. …"

[23] Ibid.; Jaffé transcribed: "Es ist eine ungeheure Verpflichtung, die einem mit solchen Bildern auferlegt wird. Es kommt mit Uebermacht an den Menschen heran. Wenn er aber glaubt, es sei mit dem Wissen getan, dann ist das ein gewaltiger Irrtum. Wer aber seine Erkenntnis nicht als ethische Verpflichtung anschaut, der verfällt der Magie. Die Erkenntnis wirkt dann aus dem Menschen. Sie kann auch gute Wirkungen haben; aber sie hat, wenn die ethische Verpflichtung nicht gesehen wird, auch destruktive Wirkungen. Und sie zerstört nicht nur andere, sondern auch den Menschen selber. Die Konsequenzen solcher Imaginationen gehen bis ins Leben. Sonst werden die Menschen von ihnen gefressen, und es wirkt unbewusst - als Magie - durch sie."

[24] *Liber Novus*, 288-9.

[25] *Liber Novus*, 277-88.

[26] MP, 148; Jaffé transcribed: "Das Rote Buch ist der Versuch einer Elaboration im Sinne der Offenbarung. Es war meine Hypothese, dass, wenn ich getreu der Aufforderung entspreche, dabei das Beste tue was ich konnte, dass ich mich dann befreien würde. Ich habe aber dann erst gesehen, dass das noch gar nicht die Befreiung bewirkt. Es wurde mir klar, dass ich noch ganz auf die menschliche Seite wieder zurückkommen müsse. Ich verstand, ich müsse wieder auf das feste Land, und das ist die Wissenschaft. Aus den Einsichten musste ich die konkreten Schlüsse ziehen. Ich habe mein Leben dafür gegeben. Die Elaboration im Roten Buch wer nötig, aber damit kam auch die Einsicht in die ethische Verpflichtung. Ich habe mit meinem Leben bezahlt, und ich habe mit meiner Wissenschaft bezahlt. Das erst hat mich befreit, das eine wie das andere."

[27] Ibid.

[28] *Liber Novus*, 305.

[29] *Liber Novus*, 306.

[30] *Liber Novus*, 307.

[31] *Liber Novus*, 312.

[32] C. G. Jung, "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious," in *CW*, vol. 7 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), par. 293.

[33] For an extended discussion of Jung's vision of the new aeon, see Lance S. Owens, "Jung and *Aion*: Time, Vision and a Wayfaring Man," *Psychological Perspectives* (Journal of the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles, 2011) 54:253-89. (Online edition available.)

[34] Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Reconstructing 'Religion' from the Bottom Up," *Numen*: *International Review for the History of Religions,* 63 (2016), 577–606.

[35] Ibid., 577, 591.

[36] Jung had a close and influential association with the Nobel Prize winning physicist Wolfgang Pauli, a founder of quantum theory; their personal relationship extended from 1932 until Pauli's death in 1958. Each man highly valued the insights of the other. See Suzanne Gieser, *The Innermost Kernel: Depth Psychology and Quantum Physics - Wolfgang Pauli's Dialogue with C .G. Jung* (Berlin: Springer, 2005).

[37] 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.

[38] Gerhard Adler, ed., *C. G. Jung: Letters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), Vol. 1, 547.

[39] C. G. Jung, "Psychological Commentary on 'The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation'" (1939), in *CW*, vol. 11 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969, par. 771.

[40] C. G. Jung, "The Tavistock Lectures" (1935), in *CW*, vol. 18 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), par. 277.

[41] C. G. Jung, "On the Nature of the Psyche" (1946), in *CW*, vol. 8 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), par. 421.

[42] C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Conjuntionis*, in *CW*, vol. 14 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), par. 752.

[43] The first statement appears only in the draft manuscript; *Liber Novus,* 306 & n236.

[44] This Danish adage has been attributed to numerous persons over the last fifty years, but never to C. G. Jung.

[45] My transcription; Sonu Shamdasani, 9 October 2009 address at the New York Academy of Medicine, New York City.