



History and the Transformation of Jung

Lance Owens

With publication of *The Red Book: Liber Novus* in 2009 and the subsequent publication of Jung’s *Black Book* journals in 2020, understanding of Jung in his historical context has entered a generational period of transformation. I review here both the past understanding of Jung, and the potential effects of the forthcoming publication of a new and complete 26-volume edition of Jung’s writings. My comments are followed by an interview with Dr. Sonu Shamdasani, who has worked for decades on this historical project and is general editor of the new critical edition of Jung’s complete works.

Jung is being historically transformed. It began in 2009 with publication of documents he penned over a century ago, the once-sequestered records of his transformative journey. Jung stated that all of his later work flowed forth from his imaginative and visionary experiences between 1913 and the 1920s, events he contemporaneously recorded in his “Black Book” journals, and then partially transposed and amplified in *The Red Book: Liber Novus* (Jung, 2009).

Now we meet Jung anew, records in hand. Jung declared the centrality of this period of his life to Aniela Jaffé in comments she recorded from their conversation on October 12, 1957:

The years ... when I pursued the inner images were the most important time of my life. Everything else is to be derived from this. It began at that time, and the later details hardly matter anymore. My entire life consisted in elaborating what had burst forth from the unconscious and flooded me like an enigmatic stream and threatened to break me. ... Everything later was merely the outer classification, the scientific elaboration, and the integration into life. But the numinous beginning, which contained everything, was then. (Jung, 2009, p. vii)

But exactly what it was that happened—what he experienced, what he saw and heard and recorded in his ledgers of the journey—remained Jung’s mystery throughout his life and for five decades after his death.

Jung kept an extensive and detailed record. There were six sequentially dated journals, collectively known as the “Black Books” (Jung, 2020), which he began on November 12, 1913, and continued through 1932. These journals might be best described as his contemporaneous ledger of a voyage into imaginative and visionary reality. At the beginning, in December 1913, he called the coming odyssey “my most difficult experiments” (Jung, 2020, 16[v.1]).

By late 1914, as the magnitude of his experience penetrated him, he met the need for a more formal and elaborate record of the visions. With great artistic craft—employing antique calligraphic text and stunning artwork—Jung labored onward for 16 years translating the early and primary record of his experience from the journals into an elegant folio-sized leatherbound volume: this is *The Red Book* (Jung, 2009). In golden letters on the book spine, Jung titled it *Liber Novus* (The New Book).

Throughout his life, *The Red Book: Liber Novus* remained veiled. Only a handful of his closest students and colleagues were allowed to read it all; after his death in 1961 his family refused requests for access to the volume or to the journals. In later decades, the records were closed away in a Swiss bank vault.

Nearly a century after the record began, both *The Red Book* and his journals—the primary accounts of Jung’s transformative experience—were finally opened to study. These records have transformed, and continue to transform, comprehension of C. G. Jung. Integrating this trove into his life work will be a generational task.

PAST PATHS

To understand the historical transformation that is taking place in Jung Studies, one must consider the past. Publication of *The Red Book: Liber Novus* and the *Black Book* journals marked a caesura in understanding Jung. Looking back, where did things stand before their publication?

When I began my study of Jung around 1987, the two most common primary sources on Jung were his memoir, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung, 1961/1989), and the 18 volumes of his writings, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. Of course I read them. These sources have been repeatedly quoted in every book, essay, thesis, and dissertation about Jung I have encountered over many decades. I quoted them. Let’s reconsider these two sources anew in current perspective.

Memories, Dreams, Reflections was published in 1963 and became a best-seller. Over five decades, it remained a canonical work in understanding Jung. About a million copies of the English edition alone have been sold. It is the one book almost everyone interested in Jung eventually reads. It may be the most quoted single work attributed to Jung.

But readers seldom understood that Aniela Jaffé constructed most of the book’s content and then struggled with editorial impositions prior to publication—including the publisher’s marketing demand that C. G. Jung be credited as author. Jaffé did a great service to Jung in her effort on the memoir. She captured his voice as she knew it. Nonetheless, Jung penned only the first and last parts of the book.

During work on her biography of Jung in 1957, Jaffé conducted multiple interviews with Jung. He was then about 82 years old. Their conversations were wide-ranging: Jung talked about whatever came to mind on the day. Jaffé transcribed his words. Only edited fragments of those interviews are found in *MDR*. Jaffé’s 186-page typescript copy of the conversations, known as the “Memories Protocols” (Jung, 1995), has been publicly available in the Library of Congress archive since 1993. But the full typescript was known only to scholars who went looking. Until recently, complex copyright issues had blocked its publication.¹

A central chapter in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* is titled “Confrontation with the Unconscious” (Jung, 1961/1989, pp. 170–199). That account has fascinated many readers. Jaffé apparently constructed most of that crucial section from notes of Jung’s 1925 seminar—the only public account Jung gave about his extraordinary experiences

in the prior decade.² Jung also apparently offered Jaffé permission to quote the text of his *Red Book* in the memoir. She decided not to include any of that material. The only writing included from the period he worked on *The Red Book: Liber Novus* is the *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* (Seven Sermons to the Dead), composed and privately printed by Jung in 1916 (Jung, 1967). That document appeared as an appendix in later English editions of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Until publication of *The Red Book* in 2009, few readers understood the provenance and centrality of the *Septem Sermones* within Jung's imaginative journey.

CONSTRUCTING THE *COLLECTED WORKS*

The Collected Works, as translated and presented in the English edition, have been the standard source on Jung's writings for well over half a century. And it was often assumed that this collection was both authoritative and complete. But it was *not* complete, and it suffered many editorial limitations.

The elegant translations accomplished by R. F. C. Hull for the collection occasionally failed at conveying what Jung actually wrote. Hull sometimes reformed a passage to his taste. Translation is an art—but the art apart, accurate translation is an issue in understanding a major writer like C. G. Jung. Editorial introductions to the texts in the collection are modest in historical detail. Jung's frequent quotations in Latin and Greek were also occasionally left untranslated, a vexing issue for most modern readers.

The Collected Works are not a complete edition of Jung's writings; many things were left aside, some items may not then have been known. Nonetheless, the mass of material selected for inclusion ended up filling 18 volumes. Among them were topically-titled volumes with multiple shorter works. This arrangement unfortunately failed to convey the chronology of Jung's publications; it became a smorgasbord of his thoughts from different periods of life.

Jung rewrote several of his publications over decades. Versions changed subtly or substantially in progressive restatements. When there were multiple versions, editors of the *Collected Works* chose to include only the last published example. It was a reasonable editorial choice. Nonetheless, those earlier versions reveal how Jung evolved, how his thoughts matured. But to find those earlier editions, one must search outside the *Collected Works*.

The labor to produce a collected edition of Jung's writings began around 1945, when Jung was 70 years old. He still had 15 fertile years of work ahead; in those years, he went on to publish several more books and many more essays. All of that material eventually had to be brought together under the evolving concept of a *Collected Works*.

Three decades after the project began, and 18 years after Jung's death in 1961, the effort was declared done. The editors—Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, and William McGuire—had accomplished a monumental task, a historically essential work. But publishing a first—and 18-volume—collected edition of any important figure's writing is a monumental undertaking, especially if that person is alive and working at the project's inception.

Only time can tell whether a revised and more complete edition is warranted. It takes a century or so to determine if a person's work is in fact of ongoing historical merit. The earliest attempts at collecting writings of any author are by nature aspirational. Rare figures are deemed important enough by later generations to mandate a historically-informed and inclusive new scholarly edition of all their work. History now deems C. G. Jung one such figure.

THE WAY TO COME

In March 2024, Princeton University Press announced inception of an extraordinary publishing venture, a 26-volume *Critical Edition of the Works of C. G. Jung*. All of Jung's writings will be included in this complete scholarly edition; all material will be given new English translations. The volumes will be arranged in chronological order of authorship. About a third of each volume will be comprised of introductory essays offering context and historical background; complete annotations will be added throughout the texts. This project will include previously unpublished writings and all earlier variant versions of material later published in the *Collected Works*. This vast task has the full support of Princeton University Press and the Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung in Zürich. Dr. Sonu Shamdasani is the general editor of the project. Publishing all of the proposed 26 volumes in this new *Critical Edition* may take a couple of decades. It is a generational project. But it has begun; it is in progress.³

Importantly, the *Critical Edition of the Works of C. G. Jung* will be able to incorporate what Jung called “the numinous beginning that contained everything” into the trajectory of his work (Jung, 2020, p. 112[v.1]). Coming generations will never again meet Jung without meeting the foundational sources—the journals and *The Red Book*. In that primal revelation, all that followed takes a new tenor.

FINDING HISTORY

One scholar is preeminent in the last three decades of re-visioning C. G. Jung: Dr. Sonu Shamdasani. He is general editor of the new *Critical Edition*. Beginning around 1999, he helped encourage Jung's heirs to publish Jung's *Red Book*. He subsequently labored for over a decade to see the work into final form. The result was a magnificent facsimile publication. The translated text he helped develop in that volume included around 1,500 of his scholarly notations.

Publication of *The Red Book: Liber Novus* in 2009 was, of course, a major event in understanding Jung. It was soon followed by a “Reader's Edition” (Jung, 2012b), including the book's full text but without the facsimile art, a format more approachable than the large folio version. Together, these works are now relative bestsellers. *Memories, Dreams Reflections* may have sold about a million copies over a half century. The facsimile version of *The Red Book* sold over 100,000 copies in the first year. Versions of *The Red Book*, including an “Audible” spoken version (Jung, 2024), currently outsell by large margins other works by or about Jung.

During the years Shamdasani worked on *The Red Book*, and for another decade thereafter, he also worked on translating, editing, and annotating Jung's *Black Book* journals. That task resulted in their 2020 publication. Shamdasani's detailed introductory essay appears in the initial volume. The seven-volume set includes full facsimiles of Jung's handwritten journals, along with the English translation and well over a thousand explanatory notations to the journal entries.

Apart from the above noted works, Dr. Shamdasani has authored several books and dozens of articles on the history and evolution of modern psychology, including seminal studies focused on Jung. As a professor at University College London over the last couple of decades, he has encouraged a generation of new scholarship. He has lectured about Jung in many forums around the world. Few modern scholars have had greater impact on a major subject than Dr. Shamdasani has had on the historical legacy of C. G. Jung.



First Congress for Analytical Psychology, Zürich, August 1958.
Among the Los Angeles attendees were Kieffer E. Frantz, Hilde Kirsch, Rivkah Kluger,
Yehezkel Kluger, I. Jay Dunn, Esther Dunn, Sherry Peticolas, George Peticolas,
James Kirsch, Lore Zeller, and Max Zeller.

AN INTERVIEW

Upon notice of the coming publication of the *Critical Edition of the Works of C. G. Jung*—a task I knew Sonu had for decades hoped to accomplish—I reached out to him. We have known each other for many years, and he agreed to an interview. Our conversation, recorded on July 17, 2024, appears below. It has been lightly edited in content. What follows is the story of a historian and his journey.

- Lance Owens: I received a notice from Princeton University Press in the first week of March 2024 with a major announcement of their intention to publish a new multivolume critical edition of the complete works of C. G. Jung. I was aware that this had been a thing on your map of the future, going back at least 20 years. And it was a project I thought was so immense, and so complicated, so expensive that it would never happen. But now it is. Tell us what is being done.
- Sonu Shamdasani: What the project will be is a critical edition of the works of Jung. So that means it will comprise everything in his existing *Collected Works*, together with unpublished items that only came to light after the contents of *The Collected Works* had been set. These materials will be presented in a new translation with the full scholarly apparatus. Roughly 35% of each volume will be the apparatus of introduction, detailed chronology, and references, drawing on correspondence and other unpublished items. The project will take between 16 and 20 years, and result in the publication of 26 volumes.
- LO: When I read this announcement, Sonu, I thought it was one of the more extraordinary historical projects that a major publisher has undertaken, at least to my level of knowledge. In my early readings of Jung and *The Collected Works*, one of the things I was always trying to figure out is when he said or wrote different things—because it's all shuffled into the *CW* in various volumes, placed in rough general categories, but without any timeline. My problem in putting together the story of Jung's thoughts was deciphering the timeline and setting material in historical order. And of course there are essays in the *CW* that had several prior forms. Where is the original? What changed over the versions? Things did change. Now you are doing all of that, bringing it all together. I can't believe you actually got this going. It is an amazing project. Do you know of any other academic project of this scope in recent years?
- SS: Well, at Princeton University Press there are two projects that I would say are of even larger scope. One is the Thomas Jefferson papers project, and the other is the Einstein works. So that's where this slots in.
- LO: So, Thomas Jefferson, Albert Einstein, and C. G. Jung ...
- SS: Yes. (laughter)
- LO: The Princeton University Press announcement is quite complete as to what you're doing. I suspect you had a good hand putting that material together in the Princeton announcement.
- SS: Yes.

- LO: Having opened with those questions, what I am really interested in talking to you about today is your journey as a historian. Here you are at age 62 or so. You have been doing this Jung stuff since you were in your 20s. Now you have reached this major juncture. What I wanted to explore with you is the path here—if you are willing to do so.
- SS: The words of Blake come to mind, “A fool who persists in his folly ...”⁴
- LO: Let me push back to the beginnings. You’ve spoken publicly about the event that happened in India when you were 19 or so, when you went off to find a guru and ended up with a copy of Jung’s (1929/1983) *The Secret of the Golden Flower* in hand. Sometime after that, you went back to university at Bristol. You appeared on a podcast with an old friend from those days. He mentioned how much you had been interested in Jung back then. What happened in those years? I think you graduated from Bristol around 1984. There you were, trying to figure out Jung. What was going on?
- SS: That was my introduction to psychologies in all terms. I was studying philosophy, then exploring philosophy and psychology. My initial interests were in Jung, and then psychotherapy. I increasingly began to feel that the field was a mess. I wanted to understand how it got into that state. That led me to the history of psychology, and that’s where I have been ever since.
- LO: But there are lots of steps on the way. When you finished at Bristol, where were you going? I mean, there you were—what were you, 23 or 24?
- SS: Younger. At that stage, I thought I did not know what I wanted to go into. I was painting at that point, and deciding whether I wanted to pursue that or go into psychology. Then I started doing social work, working in mental hospitals or people’s homes, helping people with learning difficulties. I found that tremendously rewarding at a personal level. It was good to be out of the library and just talk to people who did not know who Kant was, or what a footnote was. So it did me a lot of good. But yes, just generally exploring the world of psychology.
- LO: At some point, this path starts to take on a rather large area of focus. At what point did you decide that you were going to graduate school?
- SS: I spent nine years outside academia before going back in. These are long stories.
- LO: Well, you’re here to tell a long story. It’s a history, right? And historians are interested in history. You have one; let’s hear it.
- SS: There’s a statement of Nietzsche—something like, we are the dung out of which our works grow.⁵ So I’d say that doors opening and doors closing led me to continue the work I was starting to do independently, which is researching Jung history.

- LO: Something critical happened along the way. There were people on the road. One fellow became pretty important for you: Michael Fordham.
- SS: Yes.
- LO: How did you get hooked up with Michael Fordham? I think that was in the later 1980s, was it not?
- SS: Yes. At that stage I'd started researching Frank Miller, the subject of Jung's *Transformation of the Libido* (Jung, 1952/1977). And that was a thread that led me into the labyrinth of the archives—which I have never really left since. In that connection, the first informant I had was William McGuire.
- LO: That was in the late 1980s or so?
- SS: Yes. And I learned from him that the editors of *The Collected Works* had already engaged in research on Frank Miller's identity. But according to McGuire, they hadn't been successful. So he said I should go and contact Fordham.
- LO: You were doing all this independently. You didn't have a publisher. You didn't have a graduate thesis to write. You were just doing this out of curiosity?
- SS: Yes. I contacted Fordham and went down to meet him. He picked me up from the train station. And in that very first conversation, I learned, to my surprise, what I hadn't learned from McGuire: that they had actually managed to get hold of some records on Frank Miller.

Fordham was driving very fast. Half of the front dashboard was burnt from where he'd put his pipe down. And he had this habit—when he was talking to you, even in the car—of leaning over and looking at you and not at the road. I learned something important—but was I going to get out of this car alive? That started an important friendship—he became a mentor.

As my research was evolving, the first thing I would do was say to myself, "I wonder what Michael would make of this?" And I would go down and spend the day with him. Memorable conversations. He encouraged my historical research.

- LO: Fordham had—in his garage and his boxes—an extraordinary archive, right?
- SS: Yes, it was there. I assumed it was received knowledge that *The Collected Works* was complete. I was surprised to learn there were a couple of unpublished papers. And, from the correspondences around *The Collected Works*, there was a lot more. But the representatives of the publishers met with the Jung estate and decided to close off the addition of more material to *The Collected Works*—despite the protestations of both the editors, Adler and Fordham. The publishers made a few concessions, which were included in what they called the "junk volume," Volume 18. Otherwise, the rest was left to one side. This was my first inkling that there was unpublished material.

- LO: The Bollingen project and the work on *The Collected Works* ran from around 1950 through the late 1970s. Did the project stop at that point due to lack of funding?
- SS: I don't think it was really a question of funding per se. It's simply a fact with large-scale projects. They sometimes run aground. There really is no one at the helm.
- LO: At that point, Fordham, McGuire, and Adler were also getting older. And Adler and Fordham didn't get along well—or did I miss something there?
- SS: You did not miss something there.
- LO: How was McGuire with this pair?
- SS: Fordham and Adler had a longstanding enmity. But I would say when you looked at their correspondence around *The Collected Works*, it was professional; they managed their collaboration. You didn't see that there were ongoing duels played out in that domain. McGuire was somewhat of a diplomat who was on good relations with all sides.
- LO: You have spent probably more thousands of hours inside archives than any historian I've met. And your work is a representation of those thousands of hours. People who have not done that sort of work do not know what it's like to walk into some of those archival rooms with a pad and pencil. You often cannot make copies of stuff. You have to go through it page by page. Figure out what it is, where it is, and take notes about it. Then remember it.
- When did you first fall into that archival process? Was it with Fordham's stuff at his home?
- SS: Again, serendipity. I had a friend tell me they were looking for volunteers to catalog the archive at the Institute of Psychoanalysis in London. And I volunteered. This was about 1987. I would go there every week for a couple of hours. I just found stuff riveting in terms of—it was the unwritten history of psychoanalysis. And I just asked them, "will you give me a job?" And they said "yes." So I got a part-time job and worked half the week there. That was an education in the difference between the written and unwritten history in terms of what's in the archives. In this case, it was the Ernest Jones archive. I had access to the library on a daily basis. It was an education in the history of psychoanalysis.
- LO: Did that lead to some of your early work on Freud?
- SS: At that stage, I would say Freud history was—and still is—in a more developed stage than Jung history. I was learning, in a sense, why aren't people asking these questions about Jung? It was an education in the types of work one can do, the types of research and findings one could make—looking at the work that historians were doing, like identifying Freud's cases and the Freud case histories. Why isn't that being done with Jung? Start asking these questions—see what sort of work is possible. Just start writing to people; start making inquiries and see what you come up with.

- LO: My observation, having done that a few times in the past, is that people are quite happy to respond. They appreciate that someone is interested.
- SS: Yes, often true—back in the days when people wrote letters and responded to letters.
- LO: At that time you were meeting many people, some of whom had known Jung during his lifetime. Were there other important figures for you during that period, in addition to Fordham?
- SS: Certainly James Hillman. I read his work with tremendous enthusiasm. You could also say he opened the doors to all my historical research. I would say the support of those two figures at that point held me in good stead in terms of dealing with more hostile receptions from sectors of the Jungian community in subsequent years. If those two people thought highly of what I was doing, it must be worth pursuing.
- LO: So Hillman and Fordham saw the value.
- SS: They were both controversial figures in terms of being people who lived with a lot of hostility.
- LO: My immersion in Jung Studies began around 1987. At that time, many people felt you could not know anything about Jung unless you'd had an analysis—and maybe you had to go to Zürich to figure out who Jung was. Did you meet those criteria?
- SS: I had a lengthy analysis that did me a lot of good. It was not teaching me about Jung, but teaching me about myself. And I see the two things as the same.
- LO: Was that analysis with somebody who worked with Jung, or had been in that circle of disciples?
- SS: No.
- LO: But that didn't really make a difference. It was just the process for you. So at this point, you're exploring the psychoanalytic archives in London. You knew Michael Fordham and his personal archive. And you're writing letters to people trying to find things out. At some point, I suppose, you became aware that there was a huge archive on Jung behind closed doors. When did you become aware of what was there?
- SS: Those archives did *not* have closed doors. I remember once I was at the Library of Congress archive early on, looking at the Bollingen archive. The archivist said no one else wanted to look at the Bollingen archive. But yes, the material was just sitting there. Or the Jung papers at the ETH [*Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule*]. It wasn't Grand Central Station, but the papers were there. People could find and look at stuff. It's just that people weren't doing that. Then I was appointed the editor of Jung's (1996) seminars on Kundalini yoga [for Princeton University Press], and that took me to Zürich.

- LO: How did you end up with that task? McGuire knew you at that point, obviously.
- SS: Yes, I used to meet him when I was in the United States, and he introduced me to the editors at Princeton University Press. That began my connection with them. I was asked to edit Jung's seminars on Kundalini yoga.
- LO: That would have been around 1992.
- SS: Yes, I was asked to do it in 1992; it came out in 1996. That started my research in Zürich [in the Jung archives there] in 1994. The archivist in Zürich gave me a copy of—actually *sold* me a copy of—the catalog that had been produced in 1993. That was the first catalog of Jung's manuscripts. Again, there was a mass of material in there not in *The Collected Works*. So if you just think for one moment: *The Collected Works* were finished in the late 1970s. You had—separate to that—the seminar series [publication of Jung's recorded seminars] that was still ongoing, or, at that stage, projected. But then you have publication of the first catalog of the archival holdings taking place in 1993, well over a decade after the edition [of Jung's *Collected Works*] is complete? There was a mass of [unpublished] material there that I was going through.
- LO: How much of that material was publicly accessible at that point?
- SS: All—all of it was accessible.
- LO: There was something else that happened about that time that I've been interested in. I think it was important. Richard Noll published his books about Jung: *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Noll, 1994) and then followed with *The Aryan Christ* (Noll, 1997). You made a strong response to Noll in your book *Cult Fictions* (Shamdasani, 1998). How did your book come about?
- SS: He put forward certain contentious claims that needed to be addressed and clarified. At that stage—a fact I didn't put in my book *Cult Fictions*—I had already found the transcription of Jung's *Red Book* and was working through it. On that basis, I knew the portrait Noll painted of Jung was, in my view, incorrect. That was really the element that gave me evidential grounding. I thought: "Okay, these claims need to be addressed and cleared out of the way before we can get onto looking at what was really going on."
- LO: Your book was important at that time. It was to me. I had the impression that book might have put you on the map for the Jung family.
- SS: I wouldn't say so, in the sense that I was already in communication with them since 1994.
- LO: That was when you were working on the Kundalini seminars?
- SS: Yes.

- LO: There is another figure in your journey who I think is historically important. That was Ximena de Angulo, Cary de Angulo Baynes' daughter.⁶
- SS: Yes.
- LO: When did you meet her, or get to know her?
- SS: In 1995. I'd read some letters between Jung and Cary Baynes. They sparked my interest. One was the personal tone, which was quite different from that of most people who corresponded with Jung on a first-name basis.
- LO: You saw those letters at the ETH archive?
- SS: It was at the archives in the Library of Congress. And indications, also found there, that she considered writing a biography based on *The Red Book*. My ears pricked up at that. Clearly she was someone on very close terms with Jung.
- I wasn't sure I could find her papers. William McGuire told me that Cary's daughter Ximena was alive and he gave me contact details. I then contacted her and went to visit. That was a long and crucial friendship for me.
- LO: She had all the Cary Baynes material, which was unavailable to anyone?
- SS: Yes, she hadn't looked at it. It was just lying in a trunk. When her mother's health was poorly and she was moving her mother from the U.S. to Switzerland, she found this box of papers marked "Zürich papers." If she had asked her mother what to do with it, her mother would have said, "Just destroy it." She didn't ask, and she just shipped them.
- LO: Yes, a good archivist.
- SS: Yes. When I met her, she was hot under the collar after reading Richard Noll's book. At that point, I have to say, they [the Noll books] made it harder for people to conduct historical research because it put historians in "not a good odor," or not in a good light. I showed Ximena the work I had done, and she trusted the work I was doing. She was not a rationalist, but was interested in comparative religion. The work I was doing helped explain some of the world she was in but not part of. It was so much part of a background.
- LO: In all of Cary's letters that you have quoted in your publications, it was clear that Cary [Ximena's mother] was quite close to Jung during these key years.
- SS: Cary did not practice analysis herself, so there wasn't any element of being the "sorcerer's apprentice."
- LO: I remember you saying it was Ximena that you asked to look through her mother's papers, to see if she could find something like *The Red Book*.

- SS: I found letter drafts where Cary Baynes was describing her work transcribing Jung's *Red Book*, and this was tantalizing.
- LO: I should think so!
- SS: A few months later, Ximena sent me a photocopy, saying, "Could this be what you're looking for?" It happened that there were only, I think, two passages of *The Red Book* that have been cited by others—one published by Aniela Jaffé in 1972.
- LO: Jaffé quoted the opening passages of *The Red Book* in an article, "The Creative Phases in Jung's Life" (Jaffé, 1972).
- SS: And this matched. So Cary just found it while tidying up. It's basically—there were these two bound volumes that Cary Baynes kept alongside her copies of Jung's seminars. That is the sort of item that could have ended up unidentified with a secondhand book dealer.
- LO: Or in the trash. This was Cary Baynes's typescript of *The Red Book*—the one she did for Jung in 1925, when Jung was in Africa?
- SS: It was that typescript, yes.
- LO: So there you are, around 1996. You have the typescript of *The Red Book* done by Cary Baynes. You've made contact with the Jung family to some degree. I am quite aware, from conversations with members of the family, how cautious the Jung family was about some probings. They were protective of Jung's legacy. How were things going for you with the Jung family at that time?
- SS: They have been supportive of my work. When I was doing the Kundalini seminar editing, I got into conversations with them about *The Collected Works* and publishing. It was a context of trust as far as I was concerned. That was the context in which those discussions took place.
- LO: So in 1996 you were just finishing off your PhD dissertation, which was published as *Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology: The Dream of a Science* (Shamdasani, 2003). That subtitle, "Dream of a Science," amused me.
- SS: I actually wanted that as the book title. (laughter)
- LO: You had probably almost completed that book. All of a sudden, now you have *The Red Book*.
- SS: I would not say I had completed it. I had done several sections of it, and projected a larger work. And then this material landed on my desk.
- LO: When I finished reading *Dream of a Science*, I had the impression that you saw a path forward that was going to be somewhat different from the path you had taken up to that point. Is that a valid observation?
- SS: I wouldn't say so. It was only that before completing some of the planned sections, I needed to deal with this time period between 1914 to 1930 or so of Jung's self-experimentation.

- LO: Now you had a typescript of *The Red Book*. How confusing was it when you first had this thing without any clear timeframe of what was going on when it was done?
- SS: It felt far away from the myths and legends of what the work was. This was not the ravings of a lunatic. This was not a piece of automatic writing, but a highly ornate, constructed work for literary, theological inter-texts. So I stopped trying to understand it, but tried to enter into it. I started by making a translation for my own purposes, as an exercise of entering into it—doing a couple of pages each day. Simply try to enter into its world—to step into it rather than understand it. That took many years.
- LO: In that early process, when was the first time you actually saw all of the images in the book? When did you have control of the images themselves—the facsimiles of the book itself?
- SS: I was shown a photographic facsimile around 1999 or thereabouts.
- LO: So you had seen it. You had the text. You had seen what the visuals were.
- SS: Yes. I was working from a colored first copy.
- LO: When did the project leading towards publication really begin?
- SS: I felt that the project started, or got underway, at the end of 2000. And I felt only when I read *The Black Books*, which was around the summer of 2001, that I thought, “Okay, this is what we’re putting together.” I began to feel I had the beginnings of an understanding. So it took five years to feel “I’ve got a handle on it.”
- LO: At this time, you were having several conversations with the Jung family.
- SS: There were ongoing conversations. I think when it became clear that this was a work intended for publication—although not published—and it formed the basis of *The Collected Works*. Also, there were copies loose in the wild. So there was no reason *not* to publish it. That discussion took a couple of years.
- LO: Up until the publication of *The Red Book: Liber Novus* in October 2009, there were many difficult junctures. It was a struggle.
- SS: It was a struggle, yes.
- LO: As the book progressed, there were moments when it looked like it might not happen.
- SS: That’s right.
- LO: Finding the right publisher was one problem.
- SS: It wasn’t a straightforward process to find a publisher. Eventually, Nancy Furlotti helped refer me to Jim Mairs at Norton. And I got clearance from the Jung Estate to enter into communication with him and conduct the negotiations, which I did. That resulted in a publishing contract.

- LO: I remember seeing you standing outside the New York Academy of Medicine on the evening of October 8, 2009, staring at the rain. You had a pensive look on your face. It was about 30 minutes before your inaugural presentation on the publication of *The Red Book*. It is a memorable image. Of course, there was a great deal of publicity around the book's publication in 2009. You sat for many interviews during that period. In one of those, you commented—when asked about the importance of *The Red Book*—that in 10 years Jung Studies would be completely transformed by publication of this book, and thereafter no one will even look at the prior biographies or assessments of Jung. We are now 15 years on. How's that going?
- SS: That's happened. I'm glad to see the level of work that has come out, which simply would not have been imaginable when I started. My students have put together a multilingual open access online journal for Jung Studies. If you look at the quality of work that's come out there, and the level of the theses that have been done on Jung, it's fantastic.
- LO: As a historian, you have also always been a teacher. I've witnessed you with students. The fact that a journal exists now has something to do with your professorial talents in drawing people to the subject.
- SS: That's what universities are great for. You're in a privileged situation. You have bright students, and your task is to open doors and facilitate—people can take this work, these studies, way beyond what you have done. There is a statement by Allen Ginsberg, quoting some Buddhist monk saying: "You are not much of a teacher if your students don't pass you."⁷
- LO: Surpassing you is going to be quite a task.
- SS: Oh, it happens.
- LO: You started on a path 40 years ago, and that path branched so many different ways that were unexpected, fortuitous, and sometimes extremely difficult. Here we are. And you have, in the last decade, edited and helped get Jung's *Black Book* journals published in 2020, 11 years after you did *The Red Book*.
- But I have met knowledgeable people who have been interested in Jung for decades who are still having trouble with *The Red Book*, and many who have not made it through much of *The Black Books*. Nor understood any of it. What's your perception of the reception—academically, culturally, or in any fashion—to this incredible historical trove of material?
- SS: I think that change in disciplines is often generational. You have a context where someone approaching Jung for the first time might turn to *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung, 1961/1989) or *Man and His Symbols* (Jung, 1964), but now they will turn directly to *The Red Book*, or *The Black Books*—going to the source itself. I think it gives people an incomparable advantage. Approaching these works without being confronted with myths, with legend, with hagiography

on the one hand and character assassination on the other. They can simply go to the source documents. All of them are far richer than the pale legends and myths. That's where transformation happens with people approaching these texts for the first time.

LO: The volumes in the project now forthcoming will also come with detailed introductions by you and others. Your prior published introductions to *The Red Book* and *The Black Books* are probably the best introductions available to this material—and certainly the only ones with enough detail. But that brings me to the last subject, which is generational projects.

So here you are. You have started a generational project in the 26 volumes of a complete and critical edition of Jung's works. You said that you hope to publish two or so volumes a year in that 26-volume edition. That seems optimistic. On the other hand, you've helped gather young scholars to the subject. As I looked at the notice from Princeton University Press, what I saw was that you are helping build a new edifice for Jung Studies, a work that will stand for coming generations. A generational work. Am I missing something?

SS: It seems to me—when you look at the history of scholarship in various fields—I think a field is only as good as its primary literature. That's the foundation. You see this, for instance, in the work in Nietzsche Studies, with the work of recent scholars. It lays the basis. You've got to get that done as well as possible as a foundation. And that's what we're trying to establish.

We are even finding, in the works we've tackled so far, often a presentation of the text in *The Collected Works* is really shoddy. It simply does not match what was in the first publications. It has already been copy edited—to my mind, to an unwarranted degree. Therefore, establishing the basic philology of Jung's texts is a priority. Yes, this work will lay a basis. And hopefully that will give rise to new studies that will enable further work.

LO: You said to me once that Jung Studies are not one thing. They are an immense number of things. The scope and breadth of Jung Studies can be amazing. I think the primary material you have published and are presently putting together will be a basis for a new generation of study—perhaps for several generations of study.

SS: I will say one more thing. Right now, the volume I am working on is Jung's time at the Burghölzli, in 1904. It is really rich to look at his early work as a young psychiatrist, and look at case files in the Burghölzli in terms of looking at what he was up against. Looking at the forensic reports. Looking at the material he was trying to comprehend, and putting that together with the work he was publishing at that time. It is just fascinating for me to look at that stuff.

LO: Another question that's still pending—and I know you were quite interested in seeing this done a couple of decades ago—is publishing the tens of thousands of unpublished letters of Jung in the archives.

Perhaps publishing them in context, even adding the letters of the persons who wrote to him. Any chance of that? I suppose some of these will show up in footnotes in the new edition. But the whole huge, unpublished collection of letters?

SS: It would be great if they did. I have had colleagues involved in the Darwin correspondence project, which is a magnificent project, where they are publishing every letter Darwin ever wrote. In terms of scale, the material, if you published it in print volumes, would run to 80 volumes. That's the level of the scale one is talking about. So again, like the Darwin project, this could lend itself to being presented in an online digital format. It is a project that's doable. It simply requires people with enough interest and the means to make it possible.

LO: Let me say, in ending, I think that as a scholar you found a rich path, an unexplored archival path into a treasure trove of history—one that awaited a scholar to finally dig in, to go down the rabbit hole. You have, over several decades, done tireless digging for history. I thank you for your work. And thank you for talking about it all today, Sonu.

SS: Thank you.

POSTSCRIPT

In a postscript to our interview, I will add a personal comment. Readers should understand that Dr. Shamdasani is a professional *historian*. He works as a scholar of history, not as a Jungian psychologist—and those are quite different vocations. Over many decades, Jungian psychology has evolved to where there are now several “Jungian psychologies.” Some branches on this vast tree of psychologies are more conceptual or divergently evolved from others, but they all link back to Jung's name as their root. Detailed historical investigations into Jung's life and work have not been their focus.

Now, history meets Jung in deeper detail, including his once unknown and essential imaginative foundation, the records of which include *The Red Book* and his journals from this transformative period. It is essential to meet the facts of this man and his source.

The work of a historian is to find the documents and facts, and then add context. It is a detailed labor of digging out sources, evaluating their place in time, and adding previously unseen or unknown materials to the sum. The goal is to give firm ground to future understanding of the life and work of C. G. Jung. The historical work that is now in progress is a generational project, and will proceed over decades.

At my age, I will probably see few of the fruits of this current labor. But I have already imagined its culmination. The focus of current efforts is on the future, adding a firm ground to all coming studies of Jung and his works. Jung stated privately that he would only be understood posthumously. Knowing that, he restricted access to his journals and delayed publication of his *Red Book* to some later time, leaving their disclosures to an unknown future when they might be understood. His family confronted that daunting task without clear guidance regarding what the right time would be. Jung said he thought it might take over a hundred years after his death to understand him. Well, that time has arrived.

For four decades, Dr. Shamdasani has labored tirelessly to bring Jung's story into clearer focus through meticulous historical documentation. As Sonu stated in our

interview, accurate primary sources are essential in any historical field of study. Until now, Jung's work has lacked rigorous historical evaluation, as well as modern, complete, and properly annotated editions. That work is now underway. The way of coming is upon us.

NOTES

1. Aniela Jaffé's original transcript is now approaching publication: *The Original Protocols for Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, edited and introduced by Sonu Shamdasani (Jung, C. G., & Jaffé, A., in press).
2. The seminar notes were eventually published in 1989, *Analytical Psychology: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1925 by C. G. Jung* (Jung, 2012a).
3. For details about the publication, see the Princeton University Press announcement, <https://press.princeton.edu/news/critical-edition-c-g-jung-news>.
4. The full quote reads: "If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise" (Blake, 1994, p. 31).
5. The full quote reads: "He is, after all, only the precondition of his work, the womb, the soil, sometimes the dung and manure on which, out of which, it grows—and therefore in most cases something one must forget if one is to enjoy the work itself" (Nietzsche, 2000, pp. 536–537).
6. Ximena de Angulo, the daughter of Cary de Angulo Baynes, had known and been a friend to Jung since about the age of six, beginning in the early 1920s.
7. It seems likely Ginsberg was paraphrasing Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, a practitioner of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism, who wrote: "The heart of education lies in the process of teacher and pupil learning together, the teacher drawing forth the pupil's potential and raising the pupil to surpass the teacher in ability" (Makiguchi, as cited in Ikeda, 2001, pp. 181–182).

Lance S. Owens is a physician, historian, and expert on Jung, Gnosticism, and the Western visionary traditions. He has served on the clinical staff of the University of Utah specializing in Emergency Medicine for over two decades, and has written and lectured extensively on the history of C. G. Jung. He is the author of Jung in Love: The Mysterium in Liber Novus, and editor of Alfred Ribi's The Search for Roots: C. G. Jung and the Tradition of Gnosis, for which he contributed a detailed introduction on Jung's interest in Gnosticism. His book chapters, essays, and past publications in Psychological Perspectives are all available at academia.edu.

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Top: James Kirsch, Joseph B. Wheelwright. Bottom: Edith Sullwold, Glenn Foy.