

Discover Your True Self: A  
Journaling Guide Inspired  
by the Ideas of Carl Jung

*Integrating the Unconscious  
through the Individuation  
Process*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

“Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. If they must contend, let it at least be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides. Both are aspects of life. Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too – as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an “Individual.””

(Carl Jung)<sup>1</sup>

You may be wondering why the idea of the discovery of ‘the true self’ has become such an important and popular topic throughout the last few decades. As our societies continue to evolve and modernize, are we losing touch with who and what we truly are? And if so, how can we reconcile our (technological) advancements as a species with the

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.288

development of each individual's unique self? Is there even a place reserved for an individual's true self in such a world?

As I discussed throughout my previous book, *Carl Jung and the Rebirth of the Soul*, our ancestors had different ways and methods which helped them in understanding their place in the world. In order to connect with an important part of their self, the unconscious, they could rely on another kind of 'truth'; a truth which spoke to the soul and consisted of myths, mysteries, and symbols. At the same time, more recently, people experienced a greater sense of connection with these more spiritual and unconscious parts of their self through their belief in God.

However, currently, in our modern scientific world, these myths and mysteries have lost most of their significance; modern science has proven that they are not true. However, is science capable of providing a truth which speaks to our soul? Moreover, as German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche already observed in 1882, God is dead<sup>2</sup>, a statement with which Nietzsche did not mean that God had died in a literal sense, instead, Nietzsche observed that the idea of the existence of God had

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<sup>2</sup> "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown – and we – we still have to vanquish his shadow, too." Friedrich Nietzsche, *They Gay Science*, p.167

died. Even though Nietzsche was critical of religion, he still argued that, as a result of the death of God, humanity became disoriented and began looking for new guidance in in all the wrong places:

“Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving?  
Away from all Suns? Are we not plunging continually?  
Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is  
there still any up or down? Are we not straying as  
through an infinite nothing? [...] has it not become  
colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? [...]  
God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed  
him.”<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, since myths and mysteries have been so valuable to our ancestors, should we be looking for a new kind of mystery? A mystery which can help us understand our place in the world and can help us establish a greater connection with the parts of ourselves which have for so long found refuge in myths, mysteries, and religion? As one of the greatest experts in ancient mythologies, Joseph Campbell, argued, we ourselves, as individuals, might fulfil this role as the new, greatest mystery:

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<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.181

“Not the animal world, not the plant world, not the miracle of the sphere, but man himself is now the crucial mystery. Man is that alien presence with whom the forces of egoism must come to terms, through whom the ego is to be crucified and resurrected, and in whose image society is to be reformed.”<sup>4</sup>

As a result, it is no surprise that many of us are currently already wrestling with this new crucial mystery of the modern era; who am I truly and what is my place in this world?

At the same time, however, as Joseph Campbell argued, it is only the individual him or herself who is capable of unravelling this crucial mystery, society will not be able to provide any help. Instead, as discussed throughout this book, society might only take us further away from our aim; as Campbell observed, it is the individual who must provide guidance to society: “It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal – carries the cross of the redeemer – not in the

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p.337

bright moments of his tribe's great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair.”<sup>5</sup>

This is at odds with many of the developments taking place in the world today. As our societies continue to dominate an increasing number of aspects of our lives, it becomes complicated for an individual to, on the one hand, successfully fulfil a role in society, with all its demands, while, on the other hand, remaining true to his or her true self. As you will observe throughout this book, there are certain parts of what we may consider our true self which we often neglect in our current societies. This unknown part of our self consists to a large extent of our unconscious personality. As you will learn as well, ignoring these crucial unconscious parts of our self, cannot be done in the long run without serious negative consequences.

Moreover, Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1875-1961) made a similar remark as Joseph Campbell made when it comes to the responsibility for the development of our self and our societies (Joseph Campbell was greatly inspired by Carl Jung). As Jung observed, although we are turning towards our societies and governments ever more often to solve

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, p.337

our problems, the problems we are currently facing may only be solved through the development of the individual.

Jung believed that the quality of our societies directly corresponds to the quality of the individuals who together form the society. This contradicts the perhaps more commonly held belief that the quality of the individual depends on the quality of his or her society: “A million zeros joined together do not, unfortunately, add up to one. Ultimately everything depends on the quality of the individual, but our fatally short-sighted age thinks only in terms of large numbers and mass organizations”<sup>6</sup> As such, the discovery of our true self, whereby our quality as an individual improves, is not only crucial to ourselves, but also to our societies: “The great problems of humanity will never be solved through general laws, but always only through the renewal of the attitude of the individual.”<sup>7</sup>

How then can we best go about discovering our true self? Many books have already been written on this subject, with numerous different, but often valid answers to the same question. This book aims to find an answer to this question by looking at the thoughts and theories

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<sup>6</sup> Carl Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*, p.39

<sup>7</sup> Carl Jung, *The Psychology of the Unconscious Processes: An Overview of Modern Theory and Method of Analytical Psychology*, p.4

of one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century, Carl Jung. For, as you will see, Jung became in many ways an expert when it comes to the discovery of the true self. Moreover, Jung's theories formed the basis for all kinds of ideas and concepts related to self-discovery, ideas which continue to grow in popularity to this day. These include, for instance, 'shadow work' and 'inner child healing'. Jung was even responsible for the re-introduction of Mandala drawings into Western culture; the mandala representing the idea of the self.

Many books have also already been written on these ideas and concepts introduced to us by Jung. However, surprisingly, the book which turned out to be the foundation for all of Jung's most important ideas, and also laid at the basis of many of the ideas related to self-discovery, has not been available until relatively recently: Carl Jung's Red Book. Jung's Red Book can be seen as Jung's own personal documentation of the discovery of his own true self. As such, if we study the Red Book carefully, which is done throughout this book, we acquire an understanding of arguably one of the most detailed and honest explorations of the mysterious world of the self. Therefore, the value which this book adds to the discussion on the discovery of the true self, is its focus on one of the most important and extensive works done in relation to self-discovery: Carl Jung's Red Book.

An important concept in relation to the discovery of the self, introduced by Carl Jung, is 'individuation'. This is the name Jung gave

to the process of integrating the unconscious, a part of ourselves which is usually ignored in our modern world, but may reveal itself in our dreams and fantasies. As the term suggests, the unconscious remains largely unknown to us, however, as Jung argued, it is just as important in determining who we truly are as our conscious personality. The unconscious includes, for instance, our shadow and anima/animus; concepts which are discussed in detail throughout this book. In this sense, the discovery of our true self is in many ways identical to the exploration of our unconscious world, since this is the part of the self of which the content is least known to us.

If we succeed in the individuation process, we will come to understand who we truly are, because we will be able to form a bridge between our conscious and unconscious world. Jung's Red Book can be seen as a documentation of Jung's own individuation process, during which he extensively explored his own unconscious world. As such, the Red Book is extremely valuable to anyone attempting to do the same. By studying the Red Book we can come to understand how ideas in relation to the discovery of the self, such as shadow work, have been developed, whereby we can learn how we may apply these ideas to our own lives. Studying Jung's discovery of his own self might, therefore, not only teach us a lot about Jung's journey of self-discovery, which is already extremely interesting on its own, but it may also inspire us to go on our



own journey and illustrate to us how we can bring such a journey to a successful conclusion.

In this sense, it is the aim of this book to inspire you to write your own version of a Red Book (or whichever colour you may prefer). This is done by providing several important journalling questions in relation to the discovery of the true self. Communication is often seen as a key element to a successful collaboration. If we learn to communicate with our unconscious, we may hopefully create a fruitful collaboration between these opposing forces within our self, the conscious and unconscious world. Moreover, as Jung argued, simply reading about the unconscious and observing our dreams and fantasies is not sufficient for achieving a proper understanding of our unconscious. Instead, Jung argued that we should study our own unconscious carefully, which will allow us to draw conclusions about our true self.

In order to successfully guide you along the individuation process, whereby the true self will be revealed, this book first establishes a theoretical basis throughout chapters two and three, since we need to clarify certain terms developed by Carl Jung which will help us throughout our process of self-discovery. Important concepts include: the shadow, the persona, the individuation process, and perhaps most importantly, the self. Throughout chapters two and three it is also discussed why we would benefit from discovering the self and why we might be interested in such a discovery at all. Additionally, throughout

these chapters, it is discussed in greater detail how Carl Jung's theories can help us in this process. Hereafter, throughout chapter four, the content of the Red Book is discussed in detail, followed by a discussion in chapter five on how you may create your own version of a Red Book.

Throughout this book several journalling exercises are provided, which will help you on your way to create your own version of a Red Book; meaning a document in which you explore the unconscious world of the self. After answering these questions and finishing this book, you will be able to create and answer your own additional questions in order to continue the dialogue with your unconscious. In this way you can continue to learn more about your true self long after finishing this book. In chapter five this book explores the methods which may be employed in order to be successful in this endeavour.

## **Initial Journalling Exercises – Your Starting Point**

Before delving deeper into the theoretical content, I believe it is extremely interesting and valuable to establish who you currently consider yourself to be; how would you currently describe your self? You will be prompted to answer some of these initial questions again at the end of this book. In this way you will be able to see how the insights you have gained by reading this book have had an impact on your answer.

You can write down the answers to the questions in whichever way you prefer. Throughout this book (particularly in chapter five) I am going to explain certain methods which you can use in order to answer these questions with less interference from the conscious mind. As such, it will also be interesting to observe how the answers you provide to the questions changes throughout this book, depending on which method is used.

### **What is Journalling?**

Journalling has become extremely popular throughout the last few years. Many interesting benefits have been attributed to incorporating a journalling habit into your life, in particular when it comes to self-knowledge and self-awareness. For this reason, journalling exercises are also provided throughout this book. There exist numerous journalling

techniques, however, essentially, journalling refers to the practice of writing down your thoughts and feelings in relation to whichever topic you want to write about.

The journalling exercises provide throughout this book are related to the idea of the discovery of the true self. It is the idea that, by writing down your answers to these questions, you can create a certain structure to your thoughts in relation to who you consider yourself to be. Initially this is done by the more traditional method of simply searching your conscious mind for an answer to these questions and then writing down the answer. There are no right or wrong answers and you can write as long or as short of an answer as you feel fit. In case you do not feel that you have an answer to the question, then it is of course also no problem to skip it and perhaps return to the question at a later moment.

**Journalling Exercise 1:** Who are you? (Since you have decided to read this book, I assume it is likely that you feel as if parts of your true self remain undiscovered to a certain degree. As such, even though you may not yet be aware of your true self, I would still like to invite you to answer this question to the extent that this is currently possible.)

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**Journalling Exercise 2:** What is your goal and purpose in life? (What do you hope to achieve throughout your life? You can write down multiple goals or purposes. In case you do not yet know your goal or purpose, you may write that down as well.)

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**Journalling Exercise 3:** How would others describe you? (Similar to exercise 1, but this time from the perspective of other people. In case you do not know how others might describe you, you may also ask some people in your environment for their input.)

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# **Chapter 2: Carl Jung and the Discovery of the Self**

## **Individual vs Collective Culture**

If you have picked up this book, then I assume that it is likely that you feel that there are some parts of your self which so far remain undiscovered. You may have this feeling because these parts of your self reveal themselves in dreams and fantasies. You may have a suspicion of what this true self is, however, whenever you try to grasp it, it may remain oddly out of reach.

At the same time, it is also quite likely that there are some parts of your self which you feel do not truly belong to you. You may act in a certain way in certain situations or around certain people which you feel is not in line with who you truly are. If this is the case, then you may be acting in correspondence with one of your ‘personas’.

The persona is the name which Carl Jung gave to a mask which you may put on in certain situations in order to fit in. Although it is natural for us to try to fit in, this can become problematic when we come to believe that our persona is equal to our true identity, as opposed to just an act. As Jung observed, the persona is the person which one, as well as those in one’s environment, believes to be, but which one is not: “One

could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is.”<sup>8</sup>

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*Carl Jung was a Swiss psychologist who lived between 1875 and 1961. Jung became a notable figure in the world of psychology. Initially Jung developed a strong connection and friendship with Sigmund Freud.*

*However, this friendship eventually ended due to theoretical differences. Hereafter Jung became well-known for his own theories, mostly in relation to psychological types. Jung, for instance, developed the terms introversion and extroversion. However, as you will see throughout this book, Jung’s influence is wider than usually expected by those less familiar with Jung’s ideas. Moreover, since Jung’s most important book, the Red Book, was only published in 2009, the content from the Red Book provides us with the opportunity to study Jung’s ideas from an entirely new perspective, long after Jung’s death.*

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<sup>8</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.123

In his book *Psychological Types*, Jung argued that, in our modern cultures, the collective culture has been highly developed, whereas our individual culture remains underdeveloped. A highly developed collective culture, which focuses on the functioning of an individual within society, appears to be beneficial to society. However, prioritizing the collective, can turn out to be detrimental to the individual. Jung considered this to be the case because there exists a conflict between who an individual is as a part of the collective, and who an individual is as an individual. As Jung argued, when societies prioritize the development of the role an individual must play within society, individuality is suppressed.<sup>9</sup>

The idea of the persona can help illustrate this point. Personas may, for instance, be necessary to function in society. As such, through our collective cultures, our personas may have become highly developed, whereas our true identity remains undiscovered. While being a part of the collective, many people must act in a way which does not correspond with who they truly consider themselves to be.

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<sup>9</sup> “There is a deep gulf between what a man is and what he represents, between what he is as an individual and what he is as a collective being. His function is developed at the expense of individuality.” Carl Jung, *Psychological Types*, p.74



## The Suppression of the True Self

Luckily, despite being suppressed, the true identity of an individual does not simply disappear, instead, if suppressed, the true identity may be concealed within an individual's unconscious. As Jung observed, although initially beneficial to the functioning of society, the suppression of an individual's true identity cannot last in the long run. According to Jung, the partially developed individual's repressed individuality must come to the surface someday:

“This one-sided development must inevitably lead to a reaction, since the suppressed inferior functions cannot be indefinitely excluded from participating in our life and development. The time will come when the division in the inner man must be abolished, in order that the undeveloped may be granted an opportunity to live.”<sup>10</sup>

However, as Jung further argued, if the repressed individuality, represented by an individual's unconscious world, comes to the surface in an uncontrolled and involuntary manner, this can have severe negative consequences. Not only will these consequences be negative for the

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<sup>10</sup> Carl Jung, *Psychological Types*, p.74

individual, they may also negatively impact society in general: “If we understand anything of the unconscious, we know that it cannot be swallowed. We also know that it is dangerous to suppress it, because the unconscious is life and this life turns against us if suppressed, as happens in neurosis.”<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, besides preventing the negative consequences of the sudden emergence of one’s repressed individuality, developing one’s individuality may well have some significant benefits on its own. Jung argued, for instance, that the collective culture may be responsible for hiding parts of an individual’s most interesting and decisive qualities:

“It may well be, as I have said, that beneath the neglected functions there lie hidden far higher individual values which, though of small importance for the collective life, are of the greatest value for individual life, and are therefore vital values that can endow the life of the individual with an intensity and beauty he will vainly seek in his collective function.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.288

<sup>12</sup> Carl Jung, *Psychology Types*, p.75

Being disconnected from these individual higher values is an important characteristic of inner division, whereby the unconscious hides extremely valuable aspects of the self of which the conscious personality is unaware.

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*This book is aimed at the discovery of 'the true self'. Throughout this book various concepts are used which are all either equal to the discovery of the true self or are an important part of the true self, such as: 'the voice deep within', 'the voice of nature', the unconscious, the soul, the individual, individual culture, etc...*

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Hopefully, since you have picked up this book, the voluntary development of your individual culture begins today. At the centre of the development of your individual culture lays the discovery of what we call 'the self'. As discussed in the following chapter, what we usually consider to be the self, is only a fraction of what the self really is. This is the case because parts of the self remain underdeveloped, partly due to this development of a collective culture at the expense of the inner culture.

Moreover, Jung observed that there exists a conflict within us arising from the fact that we are, essentially, animals behaving in a highly

civilized manner (usually at least): “Outwardly people are more or less civilized, but inwardly they are still primitives. Something in man is profoundly disinclined to give up his beginnings, and something else believes it has long since got beyond all that.”<sup>13</sup>

As such, there exist certain contradictions within every individual, which may result in a situation in which an individual’s true identity comes into conflict with what the individual and society expect from the individual. Several of these contradictions are listed in the figure below. However, as Jung observed, despite we ourselves and our societies favouring one at the expense of the other, they are all still important aspects of life, aspects which we cannot ignore in the long run without negative consequences.

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<sup>13</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.269

**Consciousness**  
**Collective Culture**  
**Civilized**  
**External**  
**Order**  
**Good**  
**Meaning**  
**Light**



**Unconsciousness**  
**Individual Culture**  
**Primitive**  
**Internal**  
**Chaos**  
**Evil**  
**Meaninglessness**  
**Shadow**



Therefore, in case we are interested in discovering our true self, we have to study these contradictions operating within ourselves carefully. Fundamentally, we want to become ‘whole’ individuals, who understand how these contradictions operate within ourselves. Here it is important to realize that these contradictions exist and that the fact that our societies and we ourselves only focus on one aspect, does not mean that its opposite does not hold any value. We may have to learn, for instance, that, even though we are often structured and organized, we are also unstructured and chaotic, even though we may be good, we are also capable of evil. Moreover, our unstructured, chaotic, or evil elements, may not only have negative implications. It may well be, for instance, that parts of our creativity and authenticity are hiding within these aspects of ourselves, waiting to be discovered.

As observed in the introduction, Jung called the process of becoming a ‘whole’ individual, in whom these opposites are united, individuation: “I use the term “individuation” to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological “in-dividual,” that is, a separate, indivisible unity or “whole.””<sup>14</sup> Jung elaborated on this point by arguing that what we usually consider to be the ‘whole’ of an individual, is equal to our

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<sup>14</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.275

conscious ego-personality. However, as Jung argued, our unconscious is just as much a factor in this idea of becoming ‘whole’.

## **Chapter 3: Important Definitions**

Now that we understand why the discovery of the self may be even more important than we thought at first, it is useful to discuss several important definitions in relation to the discovery of the self. As we have seen just now, Jung explored several crucial concepts in relation to the idea of the self, which include, the ego, the unconscious, the self, and individuation. What did Jung want us to understand about these concepts, and why are they so important when it comes to the discovery of the true self?

### **The Ego**

In the journaling exercises directly following the introduction, you have answered the question: ‘how would you describe yourself?’ Perhaps you have answered this question by listing several characteristics of your personality, maybe you have referred to your job, your family, your dreams and wishes. Perhaps you have referred to some important experiences or things you would like to experience. In any case, it is quite likely that the answer you have given relates closely to your conscious personality, as opposed to your unconscious personality. This is not a surprise, since the unconscious personality is, at least at this stage, largely unknown to most people.



Your answer is probably in line with what Jung considered to be the ego, which is the part of ourselves which is most familiar to us and those around us. Our ego is the identity of which we are consciously aware and which we show to the world. The existence of a conscious ego-personality is not a problem in itself, and is in many ways a necessity, however, an answer to questions such as the one above, which correspond to what your self truly is, can only be provided if we also incorporate our unconscious personality.

Incorporating unconscious elements into what we consider to be our true self is not an easy endeavour. There are several reasons for this, these reasons are discussed in more detail in the following sections. One of these reasons may be that the ego does not ‘like’ these unconscious aspects and therefore does not want them to be revealed. As a result, it can require significant effort to investigate the unconscious. Throughout this book we will attempt to bring to light these unknown aspects of our self.

To a large extent, our ego develops through our interactions with the world around us. For these interactions we need a cohesive and stable identity in order to function properly in society. However, as already mentioned, the ego consists only of those parts of an individual’s self which are conscious. As a result, content important for a complete understanding of the true self may be omitted: “This [the ego] would never amount to more than a picture of the conscious personality; all

those features which are unknown or unconscious to the subject would be missing.”<sup>15</sup>

In fact, Jung proposed that these unconscious features may even be more important than the conscious features. Meanwhile, the ego is most often not even aware of the existence of these unconscious contents. As a result, these unconscious characteristics can only be revealed to the ego after carefully studying these characteristics. “This unconscious portion, as experience has abundantly shown, is by no means unimportant. On the contrary, the most decisive qualities in a person are often unconscious.”<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, an interesting interpretation of the ego may be that, although we ourselves consider it to be extremely important, when we compare it to everything that is going on within our entire self, the ego becomes less relevant. Interestingly, it can even be argued that the ego has only existed for a relatively short time. As Erich Neumann observed in his book *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, the ego used to be a part of the unconscious, until it separated itself and eventually started to believe that it is more important than it actually is:

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<sup>15</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.5

<sup>16</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.5

“The mythological stages in the evolution of consciousness begin with the stage when the ego is contained in the unconscious, and lead up to a situation in which the ego not only becomes aware of its own position and defends it heroically, but also becomes capable of broadening and relativizing its experiences through the changes effected by its own activity.”<sup>17</sup>

Despite its relative short history, our egos have come to dominate our identity to a significant degree. For instance, when we say, ‘I want’, or ‘I like’, or ‘I cannot’, the ‘I’ usually refers solely to our ego. Thereby it does not provide you with a complete picture of what you, as an individual, truly wants, likes, or is capable of.

## **The Self**

The self, the exploration of which is the most important theme throughout this book, can be seen as the entirety of the personality of the individual. Jung provided us with the following definition: “I have elected to call it the “self,” by which I understand a psychic totality and at the same time a centre, neither of which coincides with the ego but

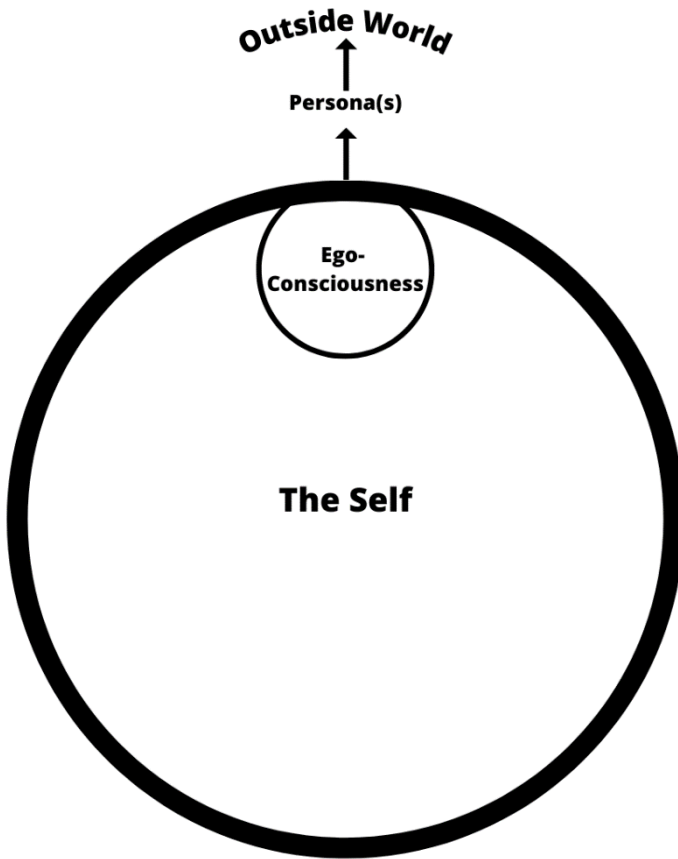
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<sup>17</sup> Erich Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, p.5

includes it, just as a larger circle encloses a smaller one.”<sup>18</sup> As such, it is composed of our conscious personality (the smaller circle which includes the ego), combined with our unconscious personality (the larger circle). This situation can be observed in the figure below, where the persona is included as well. As you can see, when interacting with the outside world, the persona, as well as the ego, function as some kind of ‘buffer zone’ between the self and the external world.

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<sup>18</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.142



*Figure 1: A Map of the psyche including the ego, the self, and the persona(s), prior to engaging in the individuation process.*

Jung argued that it is almost impossible for an individual to be entirely aware of all that is occurring within the self. At the same time, Jung observed that the ego is subordinate to the self and, usually unconscious to the ego, the unconscious aspects of the self may have a serious impact on how the ego behaves: “The ego is, by definition, subordinate to the self and is related to it like a part to the whole.”<sup>19</sup>

However, luckily, this is not a permanent situation. Jung indicated that it is possible for the individual to make a significant amount of the unconscious parts of the self conscious, thereby essentially aligning the ego to the self to a significant degree. This is also what Jung was doing while he was writing the Red Book. Throughout this book Jung’s methods are used so that we can attempt to accomplish the same.

As mentioned previously, the process of making the parts of the unconscious self conscious, is called individuation. This process is discussed in detail later in this chapter, however, in relation to the concept of the self, it is important to note that, through the individuation process, one can align the ego to the self: “The more numerous and the more significant the unconscious contents which are assimilated to the

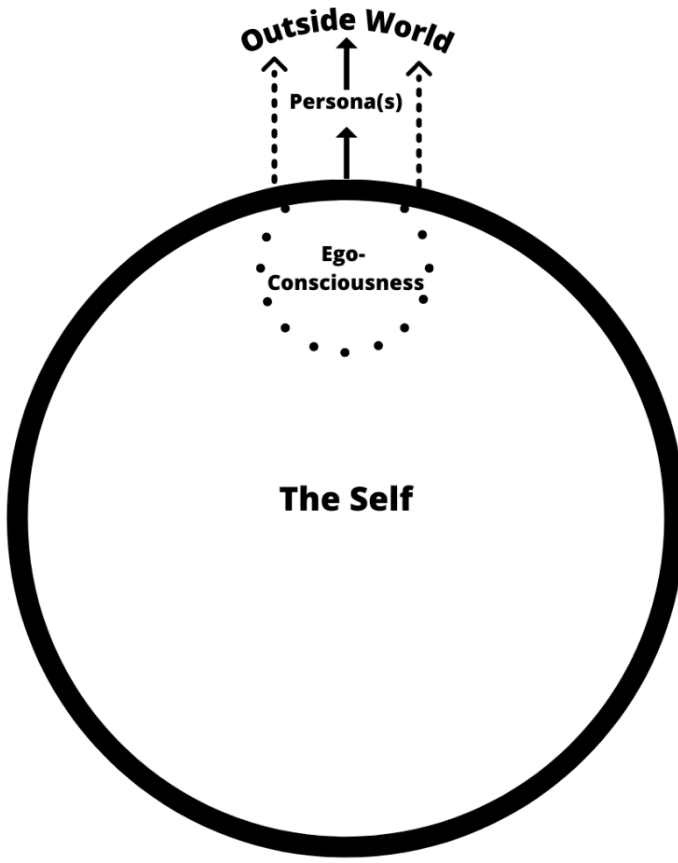
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<sup>19</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.5

ego, the closer the approximation of the ego to the self.”<sup>20</sup> If this is done successfully, the wall between the ego and the self is broken down, whereby the self may be revealed to the ego. This is visualised in the image below; where there is now also a direct interaction between the ego and the external world, without necessarily requiring a persona for every interaction.

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<sup>20</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.23



*Figure 2: A Map of the psyche including the ego, the self, and the persona(s) after engaging in the individuation process.*



It is perhaps understandable why the ego may feel threatened by the self and does not want the content of the entire self to emerge. As you can see in the figure above, it is possible for the self to ‘swallow up’ the ego entirely. For various reasons this is also not what we want to achieve, instead, as mentioned in Jung’s quote prior to the introduction, we want to give equal space to our conscious and unconscious elements, since both are important aspects of our true self. In case our ego becomes assimilated into the self, then the ego comes under the control of the unconscious and a certain ‘eternal dream-state’ may be the outcome, resulting from the fact that the conscious ego-personality is not sufficiently rooted in the real world. Essentially, there is then not enough order in the conscious world to counteract the chaos emerging from the unconscious world.

However, what usually happens, in our current age, is that the self becomes assimilated to the ego. In such a case “Room must be made for the dream at the expense of the world of consciousness.”<sup>21</sup> Here there is perhaps too much order in the conscious world, whereby there is no room at all for some of the chaos existing within the unconscious world to reveal itself. Our consciousness represents reason and order, while our unconscious represents the irrational and chaotic. As Jung argued, these

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<sup>21</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.25

are all important aspects of ourselves. As such, they should be allowed to collaborate, but also clash with each other. According to Jung, such a collaboration and conflict results in the emergence of a true individual.

## **The Unconscious**

So far, the unconscious has already been mentioned multiple times and it may appear as if it is comprised of several mysterious and perhaps even frightening and dangerous elements. However, this is mainly due to the fact that the unconscious remains largely unknown and unpredictable. What, therefore, is the unconscious?

Before answering this question, I believe it is interesting to answer the following journaling questions in relation to the unconscious.

**Journalling Exercise 4:** What do you think your unconscious is and how might it be distinct from your conscious personality? (You may, for instance, want to refer to some dreams or fantasies you have had which have left an important impression on you.)

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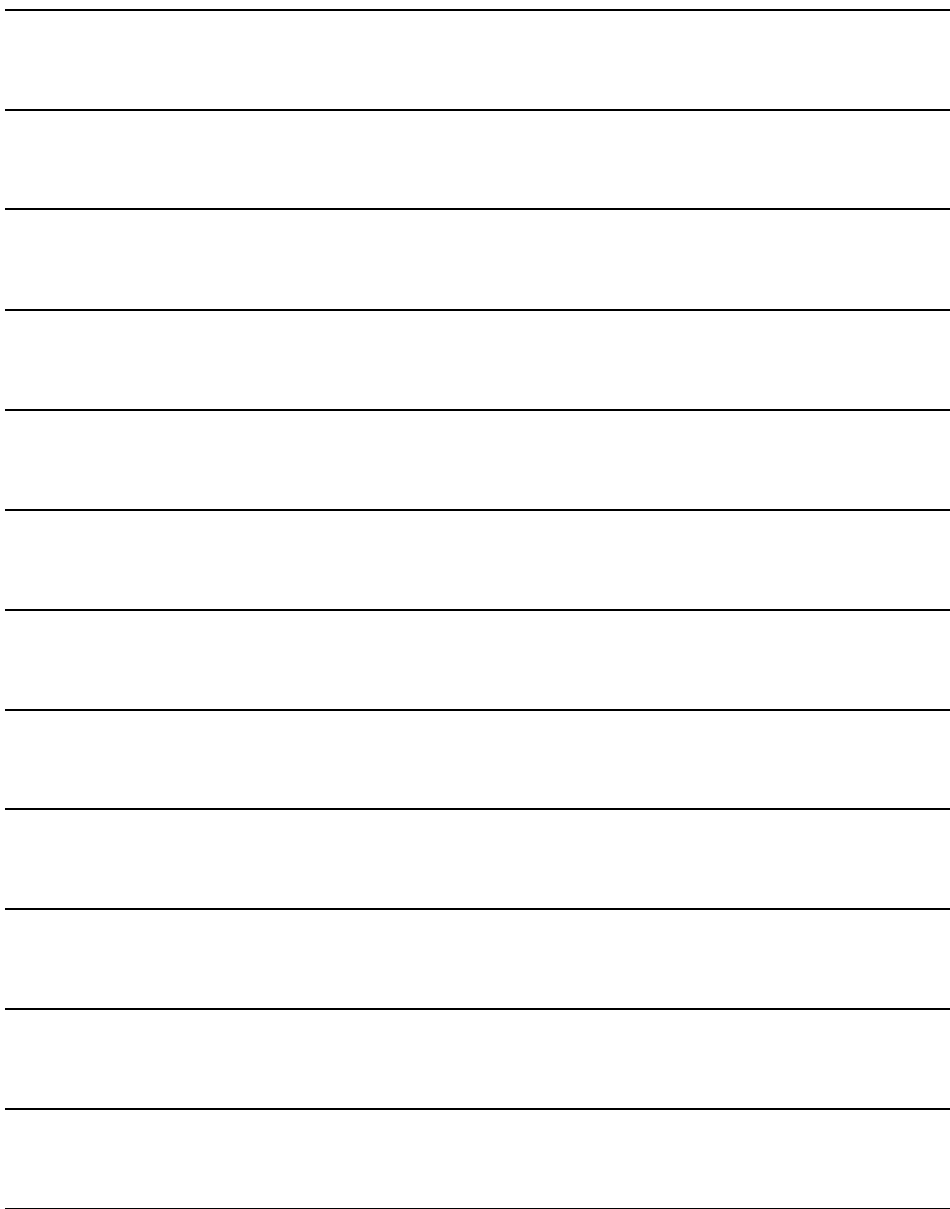
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**Journalling Exercise 5:** How do you think your unconscious may be influencing your behaviour? (Maybe it happens that you react in certain ways to certain situations without understanding why this is the case from a conscious perspective.)

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**Journalling Exercise 6:** Have you ever been able to observe your unconscious directly? (Maybe in dreams or fantasies?)

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Jung observed that our ego rests upon both, conscious and unconscious content existing within the self. Jung observed that this content can be divided into three categories: (1) ‘temporarily subliminal contents’, referring to our memory, which consists of the content which our mind can reproduce voluntarily. (2) ‘Unconscious contents that cannot be reproduced voluntarily’. (3) ‘Contents that are not capable of becoming conscious at all.’<sup>22</sup>

Categories 2 and 3 are the categories which belong to our unconscious and might scare us to some degree. The unconscious content of category 2 may spontaneously reveal itself to the conscious mind which, depending on its content, may severely disrupt the relatively peaceful and stable state of the conscious mind. Category 3 is, as Jung observed, hypothetical, however, its existence is a logical conclusion from the existence of categories 1 and 2. Category 2 consists of content which is yet to be revealed to the ego, whereas category 3 is composed of content which may never reveal itself.

Essentially, Jung argued that our mind is full of content of which we are not consciously aware, which may or may not at any point in time reveal itself. As observed earlier, in case the content reveals itself involuntarily, perhaps after the content has been suppressed for too long,

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<sup>22</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.4

it may have serious negative consequences. If, however, we choose to explore the content voluntarily, we can integrate the content before it has the opportunity to become disruptive. By answering the questions above you have already started to make some of the unconscious conscious.

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*Please be aware that the exploration of the world of the unconscious is not without risks. As indicated in the previous section while discussing the self, Jung observed that it is possible that our ego becomes assimilated into the self, which may result in a certain eternal dream-state. This may happen if the ego is not sufficiently rooted within the real world, meaning that there is not enough order in the real world to compensate the chaos emerging from the unconscious. As such, it is important to approach the unconscious carefully and to make sure that there is sufficient order within your conscious reality to compensate for the chaos to which you will inevitably be exposed.*

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## **The Personal and the Collective Unconscious**

Carl Jung further observed that there exist two different types of unconsciousness: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. In your answer just now, mostly the personal unconscious

has been addressed. The collective unconscious might, however, be of equal importance.

Jung observed that the personal unconscious is comprised of all that has occurred within the life of an individual, without these events having been consciously perceived and integrated (categories 2 and 3): “There are certain events of which we have not consciously taken note; they have remained, so to speak, below the threshold of consciousness. They have happened, but they have been absorbed subliminally, without our conscious knowledge.”<sup>23</sup> Even though these events have occurred below the radar of consciousness, their influence on the self can still be significant. These may be related, for instance, to childhood events, traumatic experiences, fantasies and dreams, or hidden desires.

As opposed to the personal unconscious, which develops throughout an individual’s life and is different for everyone, the collective unconscious is already present when an individual is born, according to Jung. As a result, the collective unconscious is not dependent on the personal experiences of an individual, instead, its content rests on the collective experiences of humanity.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the collective

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<sup>23</sup> Carl Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, p.5

<sup>24</sup> “A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the personal unconscious. But this personal unconscious rests

unconscious may be a bit harder to comprehend. At the same time, although it is relatively easy to observe the existence of a personal unconscious, the existence of a collective unconscious is harder to prove. I also believe that the collective unconscious consists mostly of category 3 content; content which may never be revealed.

The collective unconscious can also help us understand why so many cultures, despite being separated from each other by vast oceans and deserts, have developed similar myths and mysteries throughout the ages. Jung argued that the content of the collective unconscious is identical across humans to such an extent that they far outweigh cultural or racial differences:

“It is the same as with myths and symbols, which can arise autochthonously in every corner of the earth and yet are identical, because they are fashioned out of the same worldwide human unconscious, whose contents

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upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn.” Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the collective unconscious*, p.3

are infinitely less variable than are races and individuals.”<sup>25</sup>

Jung made a similar observation in relation to mandala drawings, which he also believed pointed to the existence of a collective unconscious. Jung considered this to be the case because the mandalas produced by numerous individuals with entirely unrelated backgrounds, some of whom had not even seen a mandala before, shared striking similarities:

“In view of the fact that all the mandalas shown here were new and uninfluenced products, we are driven to the conclusion that there must be a transconscious disposition in every individual which is able to produce the same or very similar symbols at all times and in all places.”<sup>26</sup>

Even though the existence of the unconscious appears to be real and undeniable, Jung observed that multiple philosophers and scientists do not believe in the existence of either the personal or the collective unconscious. According to Jung, this is the case because the existence of

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<sup>25</sup> Carl Jung, *Psychological Types*, p.121

<sup>26</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.384



the unconscious would imply that there exists more than one personality within the individual.<sup>27</sup>

Jung did not argue against this notion, instead, Jung indicated that it is indeed correct that the idea of the existence of the unconscious implicates the existence of two personalities within a single individual. This does not need to imply mental illness, and it also does not have to be an issue, according to Jung: “It is by no means a pathological symptom; it is a normal fact that can be observed at any time and everywhere. It is not merely the neurotic whose right hand does not know what the left hand is doing”<sup>28</sup> Jung believed that this situation is a natural consequence of the existence of the unconscious.<sup>29</sup> However, here as well, the potentially negative implications of these multiple personalities may be negated through the integration of the unconscious, whereby unwelcome situations can be prevented.

In the figure below the personal and collective unconscious are included in the map of the self. The collective unconscious arguably

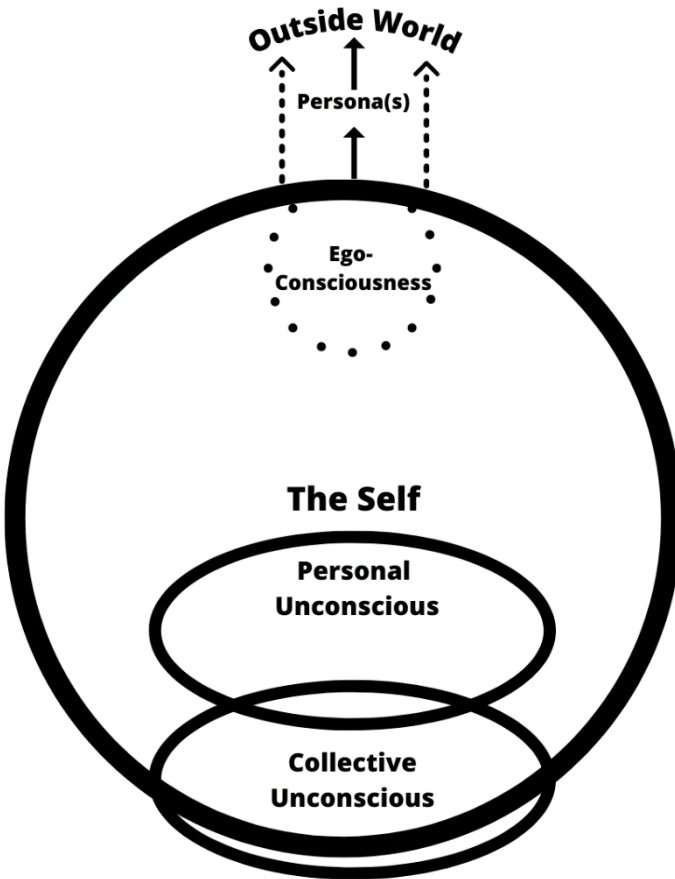
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<sup>27</sup> “They argue naively that such an assumption implies the existence of two “subjects”, or (to put it in a common phrase) two personalities within the same individual.” Carl Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, p.5

<sup>28</sup> Carl Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, p.6

<sup>29</sup> Carl Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, p.6

extends beyond the self, here the content may consist mostly of category 3 content, however, this is an entirely different topic for another book.



*Figure 3: A Map of the psyche including the ego, the self, the personas, and the personal and collective unconscious.*

## **The Persona**

As you have seen in the previous chapter, the persona is an extremely interesting concept as well. After learning in greater detail what the persona is, your persona(s) may be relatively easy to identify. This is the case because the persona is a part of the conscious self, as opposed to the unconscious. Moreover, previously you have answered the question in relation to how you believe others would describe you (journaling exercise 3). Other people may base their perception largely on your persona, which you may be using in order to interact with these people.

Essentially, the persona is the personality which we use to interact with the world. As a result, although it appears to be identical to the ego, the persona is different because the ego corresponds to the entire conscious self, whereas the persona is only a part of the conscious self. Moreover, whereas an individual only has one ego (with some problematic exceptions), he or she can have multiple personas.

As already discussed in the previous chapter, a persona may come into existence because, in order to function and fit into various environments, certain behaviour is expected from the individual. Without a certain amount of adaptation, functioning properly in some environments may be almost impossible. Jung defined the persona as: “The individual’s system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in

dealing with, the world.”<sup>30</sup> In this sense, as already observed in chapter two as well, the persona is merely an act, and an individual may have developed multiple personas for the various ways in which he or she deals with the world.

For instance, an individual may have one persona for friends, one for family, and one for work. This may also be observable to the individual him or herself when he or she feels that his or her own behaviour differs depending on whom the individual is interacting with, something which can be quite frustrating to the individual. The notion that ‘I can really be myself when I am with you’, is also used in relation to the existence of a persona, or in the case of such a statement, the lack of the necessity for a persona.

### **When can a Persona become a Problem?**

Jung further elaborated on the idea of the persona by using public personalities as an example. These examples also clearly illustrate the potential risks associated with the existence of the persona. According to Jung, many situations within a person’s life require a certain kind of behaviour in order for an individual to function according to the standards these situations may demand. As a result, the individual will

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<sup>30</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.122

alter his or her behaviour in order to fit into these situations. Hereby the individual may acquire the benefits he or she may derive from adapting to the standards favoured by society.

A persona does not necessarily have to be bad. I believe that there are many situations where a certain kind of (professional) behaviour is required and where it is not a problem that the individual performs a certain 'act'. For instance, I believe it is normal that we expect certain behaviour from politicians, judges, and police officers. As such, when an individual who belongs to these examples is suddenly caught behaving in a way which reveals that his or her behaviour was only an act (a persona), I also believe it is natural that this results in serious disapproval. However, what has then merely happened, is that the true face of the individual has been revealed. Nevertheless, it will be almost impossible for a public individual, whose true face has been revealed, to once again be trusted by the public; he or she will no longer be able to perform a successful act.

At the same time, even if the 'true face' is never revealed, a problematic situation may still arise from the existence of a persona. This may occur when the individual him or herself starts to identify directly with the persona. In this case, the individual may start to believe that the persona corresponds to the individuals' real identity, even though the persona is, essentially, only an act. If this occurs, then the true self is suppressed to a serious degree: "The danger is that they become

identical with their personas – the professor with his text-book, the tenor with his voice. Then the damage is done; henceforth he lives exclusively against the background of his own biography.”<sup>31</sup>

In such an instance, the act is performed so well that even the actor can no longer tell that he or she is acting. This may happen to politicians and police officers for example, but also to individuals carrying out their roles as a husband, a wife, or a friend. If the ‘act’ used to carry out these roles is performed too well, the act may mistakenly be seen as the true identity by the individual him or herself, as well as those in the individual’s environment,

After this has occurred, it can be extremely complicated to get rid of the persona. This is the case because, henceforth, the individual him or herself, as well as those familiar with the individual, will believe that the persona corresponds to the individual’s true identity. As a result, suddenly changing one’s behaviour may meet resistance from one’s surroundings, as well as from one’s self (the ego, in this case).

Nonetheless, one cannot simply decide to live without a persona. Being something which one in reality is not, can be rewarding, and perhaps even necessary in some situations. It might, for example, result

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<sup>31</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.123

in new opportunities at work or the development of new friendships. However, as soon as one adopts a persona for the benefits it may have to act contrary to one's true self, it may become even more complicated to identify and possibly get rid of a persona, since then the benefits acquired through the act may be at risk.

It appears almost impossible to live without a persona for at least some situations. It remains important, however, that the individual him or herself is aware that he or she is merely acting in these situations. At the same time, even if the individual is no longer aware that he or she is merely performing an act, something which is quite common, Jung observed that it is still possible to discover what the persona is hiding. Having said that, such examination requires some serious effort:

“Whoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face. Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But



the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face.”<sup>32</sup>

According to Jungian analyst Murray Stein, shame plays an important role in the existence of personas as well. In his book *Jung's Map of the Soul*, Stein discussed why the persona develops and why it can be so hard for an individual to get rid of the persona. Stein observed that the persona can be used in case one is ashamed of one's true identity. Therefore, the persona can be used in an attempt to avoid shame: “Shame is also a fundamental motivator. The persona protects one from shame, and the avoidance of shame is probably the strongest motive for developing and holding on to a persona.”<sup>33</sup>

In this sense, it is possible to argue that a persona may either be developed voluntarily or involuntarily. An example of an involuntarily developed persona is, for instance, a persona developed as a response to being bullied at school. In this instance, it may, for example, have become clear to the individual that he or she is bullied when he or she acts emotional. As a result, the individual may develop a persona to hide his or her emotions.

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<sup>32</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.20

<sup>33</sup> Murray Stein, *Jung's Map of the Soul*, p.121

An example of a voluntarily developed persona may be a persona used to improve an individual's chances in the dating market. However, if this is done because, if the individual remains truly him or herself, no partner can be found, then it remains the question how voluntarily this is actually done. Moreover, if a partner is eventually found through the use of a persona, the individual can then not simply let go of his or her act, without risking a separation from the newfound partner. The same applies to the job market, one may voluntarily develop a persona to find a job, however, when a job has been successfully found, one must (involuntarily) hold on to the persona in order not to risk losing the job.

At the same time, it is also possible that, in these situations, the individual holds on to a persona unnecessarily. It may just be the case that your partner, friends, or co-workers, may only appreciate you more when you let go of your persona and act in line with who you truly are. Essentially, as Stein observed, the persona may in this case only remain intact out of fear of the shame which may be the outcome when the true face is revealed.

### **Journalling Exercises Related to the Persona**

As we have seen, there are various reasons for the development of a persona. They may have been developed voluntarily, in case we want to excel at a certain career, for instance. In this case they are also easier to identify. At the same time, it is also possible that they have been

developed involuntary, when certain behaviour was expected from us when we were still a child. Moreover, personas may also have been developed involuntarily in response to being bullied or other forms of traumatic experiences, for instance, or because we use a persona because we are ashamed of who we truly are. If this is the case, then it may also be a bit more difficult to identify the persona.

In any case, I would like to invite you to answer the following journaling questions in order to identify your persona(s). For this you can, for instance, try to identify how your behaviour differs when you interact with your friends or with your family.

**Journalling Exercise 7:** Which persona(s) do you have? (Consider how you potentially behave differently while interacting with different kinds of people in different kind of environments. Do you, for instance, behave differently when you are at work, compared to when you are talking with your family or friends? If so, how does your behaviour differ?)

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**Journalling Exercise 8:** Which person(a) have you developed voluntarily? (A persona developed voluntarily may be one used at work to improve your chances of a better career, for example.)

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**Journalling Exercise 9:** What do you think will happen when you let go of the persona(s) in these situations? (Will you, for instance, feel ashamed for showing who you truly are? Or are you afraid that you will no longer be accepted by others?)

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**Journalling Exercise 10:** Which persona(s) have you developed involuntarily? (An example of an involuntarily developed persona may be a persona created in order not to be bullied at school. Perhaps you have developed a persona as someone who does not show his or her emotions due to a fear of being hurt.)

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**Journalling Exercise 11:** What do you think will happen when you let go of the persona in these situations? (Do you still need this persona or has it merely developed as a defence mechanism in the past?)

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## **The Shadow**

### **What is the shadow?**

Now that we have a better understanding of the ego, the self, the unconscious, and the persona, it is time for the real work to begin. Throughout this section we are going to begin to address and integrate our shadow, which forms an important part of our unconscious. Up until now the idea of the unconscious may be a bit abstract, however, when discussing the shadow, the idea of the unconscious may become more graspable.

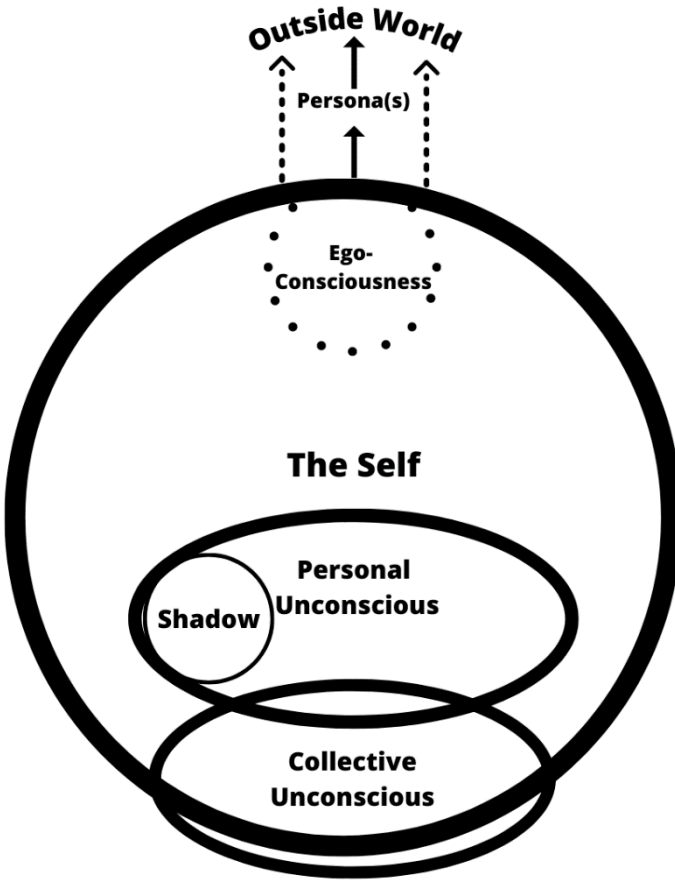
Before we begin with what is now commonly called ‘shadow work’, we have to establish what the shadow is and why we would want to work with it at all. Although the idea of shadow work has evolved significantly over the years, the idea of the shadow was introduced to us by Carl Jung. As you will see later when the content of the Red Book is discussed in chapter four, Jung himself made considerable efforts to integrate his shadow. As a psychologist, Jung also helped many of his patients with the integration of their shadow, whereby Jung’s understanding of the shadow and its different manifestations grew substantially.

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*'Integration' refers to the process of becoming aware of parts of the unconscious, and eventually accepting these parts of the unconscious, such as the shadow, as a part of your identity. As such, when integrated, these unconscious elements become a part of your identity, as opposed to being hidden somewhere deep within the unconscious.*

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The shadow is the name which Jung gave to the aspects of the self which the individual him or herself does not like, or which those in the environment of the individual, in particular during younger ages, did not like. Examples can be jealousy, selfishness, anger, and doubt. Since the individual comes to believe that these characteristics are detrimental to the individual's wellbeing, these characteristics are suppressed within the unconscious and together form the shadow. This suppression usually happens unconsciously, particularly when one is still a child. In the figure below, the shadow has been added to the map of the psyche.



*Figure 4: A Map of the psyche including the ego, the self, the personas, the personal and collective unconscious, and the shadow.*

The development of personas may be the consequence of this suppression. The ego can use personas to hide the characteristics of the shadow. This situation can be problematic, because even though the shadow consists of suppressed characteristics, these characteristics still exist, and, in some ways, far away from the conscious perception of the ego, they live a certain life of their own.

The shadow often forms a direct contradiction to the way in which the ego wants to be perceived. Therefore, the shadow can be seen as a threat to the seemingly stable ego. Because of this, it can require significant effort and determination to become conscious of the shadow, since one will need to face the darker elements of one's self: "The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real."<sup>34</sup>

Similar to the persona, the shadow is related to shame as well. The individual may be afraid of what will happen to him or her when others become aware of the individual's darker character traits. Even the individual's ego-personality may feel threatened by the shadow. Moreover, even though those around us when we were young had a large

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<sup>34</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.8

influence on which characteristics we have moved to our shadow, we cannot blame our parents, teachers, or other people for this. Without learning that certain behaviours are not welcome in certain environments, it may be extremely complicated to make friends or get a job, for instance. However, now that we are older, we ourselves can take responsibility for who we are. We will have to deal with the more negative aspects of our self by ourselves, and we must find a way to integrate and understand these aspects, since they are a part of our true self.

### **Why do shadow work?**

Since our shadow appears to be largely filled with darker characteristics and was even considered by Jung to be some type of ‘lower personality’, you may wonder why we would even want to become aware of the shadow at all. There are several reasons which make it almost a necessity to face our own shadow, in particular when self-discovery is our aim.

One of these reasons results from the fact that most of the parts of our shadow consist of traits which we have shown when we were children, but which our parents and teachers, for instance, have taught us to be bad. As such, we have learned that, in order to be accepted, we have to suppress these traits. However, since these traits are suppressed, we have

not been able to develop them appropriately. As a result, we cannot use them to our advantage when we might need to.

An example is anger, in case you have learned from a young age that anger is bad, you may have learned to suppress your anger, something of which you yourself are unconscious. However, if then many years later a situation arises where it may be important to be a bit angry, you may not know how to show your anger. Another example is selfishness, if you have learned that selfishness is bad when you were still a child, it can be difficult later in life to deal with a situation where some selfishness may be necessary. As such, it is important to note that the aspects which make up our shadow are not always absolutely negative, since they can prove to be useful and even necessary in certain situation.

Another example which illustrates why it is important to become aware of the shadow are individuals who have become angry at the world and everyone in it. Of course there may be justifiable reasons to be angry at the world, however, it may also be the case that such an individual 'projects' his or her own shadow upon the world. This individual might be angry at the world because he or she is him or herself extremely resentful, something of which this individual is not consciously aware. Through the shadow an image is projected upon the world, an image which does not correspond to how the world really is. As Jung argued, the individual may then build a fake relationship with a world which does not exist in reality, but only in the individual's mind:



“The effect of projection is to isolate the subject from his environment, since instead of a real relation to it there is now only an illusory one. Projections change the world into the replica of ones own unknown face. In the last analysis, therefore, they lead to an autoerotic or autistic condition in which one dreams a world whose reality remains forever unattainable.”<sup>35</sup>

The individual cannot do much about this situation, since such a situation emerges due to unconscious elements existing within the individual, of which the individual is not aware. The only solution, therefore, is to become aware of these unconscious elements. Perhaps more importantly, as Jung observed, all that is suppressed within the unconscious, will find its way to the surface eventually, albeit in an uncontrolled manner: “The will can control them only in part. It may be able to suppress them, but it cannot alter their nature, and what is suppressed comes up again in another place in altered form, but this time loaded with a resentment that makes the otherwise harmless natural impulse our enemy.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.9

<sup>36</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.27

This is also why we may have sometimes observed someone who appears to never be angry, suddenly become extremely angry and react in a way which surprises everyone and even the individual him or herself. Or, similarly, someone who projects his or her resentment or jealousy upon the world and its people, might suddenly do something which has a negative impact upon other people, without them having done anything wrong. This person is then projecting the shadow upon the world and is fighting this shadow outside of him or herself, while this person should, in fact, be wrestling with the shadow within the confines of his or her own self. School shooters are an extreme example of this, such individuals are angry at the world, however, their relationship with the world is not a real one since they project their own resentment upon the world and see the world through this projection.

Another important consequence of the integration of our shadow, and our unconsciousness in general, is that it may lead to increased creativity and awareness of our own interests and personality. As Jung indicated, we often have the false belief that we can only develop and enlarge our personality by consuming external content. Although this is definitely an important factor in this development, it is not the entire truth, and it may give us a false impression: “The more assiduously we follow this recipe,

and the more stubbornly we believe that all increase has to come from without, the greater becomes our inner poverty.”<sup>37</sup>

Instead, as Jung observed, if some external idea interests us, it is because it resonates with something deep inside of us:

“If some great idea takes hold of us from outside, we must understand that it takes hold of us only because something in us responds to it and goes out to meet it. Richness of mind consists in mental receptivity, not in the accumulation of possessions [...] Real increase of personality means consciousness of an enlargement that flows from inner sources.”<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, although perhaps painful and unpleasant, the integration of our shadow through shadow work can have many benefits. Not only can it prevent unfavourable situations from emerging, but it can also result in increased authenticity and creativity. The question that remains, however, is, how can we become aware of our own shadow?

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<sup>37</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.120

<sup>38</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.120

## How can we Observe the Shadow?

One of the most important ways in which we can observe the shadow is through the projections mentioned above. Jung observed that we often project our shadow upon other people, without realizing that these characteristics are a part of ourselves as well: “In this case both insight and good will are unavailing because the cause of the emotion appears to lie, beyond all possibility of doubt in the other person. No matter how obvious it may be to the neutral observer that it is a matter of projections.”<sup>39</sup>

Jung argued that the darker characteristics of an individual’s personality, together forming the shadow, are emotional in nature.<sup>40</sup> This is the case, according to Jung, because emotions are not an activity in which the individual engages, instead, emotions ‘happen’ to the individual, outside of the individual’s conscious influence. In this instance, Jung observed that the individual is a ‘passive victim’ of these emotions.

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<sup>39</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.9

<sup>40</sup> “They have an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive or, better, possessive quality.” Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.8

The emotional nature of the shadow reveals itself due to the fact that the individual believes that an emotional response is the result of events occurring outside of the individual, in other people, for instance. Instead, however, the emotional response resulting from the observation of behaviour of 'the other person', is the result of a projection of the individual's own shadow.

For instance, in case a person becomes extremely annoyed when someone behaves impatiently, the emotional response (being annoyed), is not the result of the behaviour of the other person, instead, it is caused by a projection of the shadow. The person him or herself is, in this case, secretly (even to the individual him or herself) impatient. In this example the individual meets his or her own shadow in the form of the other person and, instead of confronting the shadow within, might confront the other person.

The key to a successful integration of the shadow then becomes to, in this example, accept that you are capable of being impatient yourself. When this happens, then you may become less agitated when someone else behaves in a similar manner, because you are aware that you are also capable of such behaviour. Moreover, by accepting your own more negative characteristics, you can try to let them have a positive impact. For instance, if you discover through the exploration of your shadow, that you become jealous easily, you may use your jealousy as a means to become more motivated.

Moreover, the longer one waits to face one's shadow, the more difficult it will become for the conscious ego-personality to observe the illusory world it has created. Essentially, the individual is then interacting with the world through glasses which show the world in a way which is not real. The glasses are created and put on unconsciously by the ego, and the longer one wears these glasses, the harder it becomes to take them off and face reality.

It is also important to note that the shadow may have a collective nature as well, which can arguably result in the shadow's most dangerous form; a collective shadow, resulting from the suppression of the individual in favour of the collective:

“He never suspects that his own hidden and apparently harmless shadow has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams. As soon as people get together in masses and submerge the individual, the shadow is mobilized, and, as history shows, may even be personified and incarnated.”<sup>41</sup>

An example of this may be the collective resentment of the German nation after the First World War. Here the collective shadow became

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<sup>41</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.267

mobilized and created the opportunity for Hitler to emerge as the representative of the collective resentment, which existed within the shadow of many Germans at that time. The shadow was projected upon the Jews, as well as many other groups within the population, who were blamed by many for all the hardships experienced by the German people.

Whenever we blame others for something, Jung warned us that we should first look into ourselves, to see whether we are dealing with a projection of our own shortcomings upon those around us. In this way, many serious problems may be prevented.

### **Shadow Work Journalling Exercises**

Now that we understand what the shadow is, why it is valuable to pay attention to our shadow, and how we might recognize our shadow, we can begin with some journalling exercises in relation to the shadow. It is important to note that, while bringing to light those aspects of our self which we have shrouded in darkness, it is crucial not to judge that which emerges. We must have compassion with ourselves. As such, it is best to do these exercises in relation to your shadow when you feel you can be compassionate towards yourself. However, while being compassionate, it is also important to be truly honest with yourself. If you notice that it is painful to admit to something, then you may be on the right track towards discovering your shadow.

**Journalling Exercise 12:** Which behaviour of others do you find extremely annoying or agitating? Why do you think it is that you find this behaviour annoying?

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**Journalling Exercise 13:** Are you yourself also capable of such behaviour? If so, when do you behave in such a manner? Do you openly show such behaviour or do you suppress it?

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**Journalling Exercise 14:** What may this tell you about the contents of your own shadow?

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**Journalling Exercise 15:** How do you believe that these characteristics have become suppressed within your shadow? (Did, for example, others become angry at you when you showed such behaviour when you were a child?)

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**Journalling Exercise 16:** Were you to accept that these characteristics are a part of your self, would there be a way to let them have a positive impact on your life? If so, how could you turn these characteristics into something positive? (Consider for instance the example of jealousy being used as a form of motivation.)

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## The Archetypes

The archetypes are another important concept introduced to us by Carl Jung. The archetypes are interesting to discuss in relation to our topic because they have an important function within our unconscious. Essentially, Jung considered the archetypes to be an important part of the content of the collective unconscious: “Psychic existence can be recognized only by the presence of contents that are capable of consciousness [...] the contents of the collective unconscious [...] are known as archetypes.”<sup>42</sup> The archetypes can be defined as a set of universal symbols and images which have their origin within the collective unconscious: “One of the main proofs of this is the almost universal parallelism between mythological motifs, which, on account of their quality as primordial images, I have called archetypes.”<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, as the example of mandala drawings shows as well, individual’s themselves are capable of reproducing archetypal images. While having a similar appearance, the images reproduced in mandala drawings, for instance, also express a similar meaning. However, as Jung observed, an understanding of the source of these common images has sadly been forgotten: “Knowledge of the common origin of these

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<sup>42</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.4

<sup>43</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.58

unconsciously performed symbols has been totally lost to us. In order to recover it, we have to read old texts and investigate old cultures.”<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Jung argued that these archetypal symbols are themselves, in a sense, ‘alive’, to a degree which may be impossible for us to grasp currently: “When we penetrate a little more deeply below the surface of the psyche, we come upon historical layers which are not just dead dust, but alive and continuously active in everyone – maybe to a degree that we cannot imagine in the present state of our knowledge.”<sup>45</sup>

As Jung observed, there are some archetypes which are more personal, while others are more collective; they are part of a culture. Fairy tales, myths, and traditions are examples of cultural archetypes; however, they still had their origin within the personal unconscious: “Primitive tribal life is concerned with archetypes that have been modified in a special way. They are no longer contents of the unconscious, but have already been changed into conscious formulae taught according to tradition.”<sup>46</sup>

Personal archetypes manifest themselves in dreams and fantasies, and their nature is influenced by the uniqueness of the individual who

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<sup>44</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.384

<sup>45</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.384

<sup>46</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.5



experiences them. Still, however, despite their individual uniqueness, similarities between personal archetypes can be observed. For example, while studying the dreams and fantasies of his patients, Jung noticed that, besides similar situations occurring within the dreams of his patients, there were also figures with similar characteristics present within the dreams and fantasies of his patients. According to Jung, these similar figures represent some of the archetypes. Jung listed the following archetypal figures:

“There are human figures that can be arranged under a series of archetypes, the chief of them being, according to my suggestion, the shadow, the wise old man, the child (including the child hero), the mother (“Primordial mother” and “Earth Mother”) as a supraordinate personality (“daemonic” because supraordinate), and her counterpart the maiden, and lastly the anima in man and the animus in woman.”<sup>47</sup>

In this sense, the shadow is also an archetype. Even though the shadow is a collective archetypal figure present in the unconscious of every

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<sup>47</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.183

individual, the content which the shadow represents is personal since it differs for everyone.

In order to illustrate the idea of the archetypes, it is interesting to provide another example. One of the best examples is, in my opinion, the archetype of the hero. In order to discuss the archetype of the hero, it is interesting to turn to the ideas of comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell once again. Campbell noticed that, among all hero myths which exist all over the world, the hero depicted within these myths follows an identical path of: departure, initiation, and return:

“A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”<sup>48</sup>

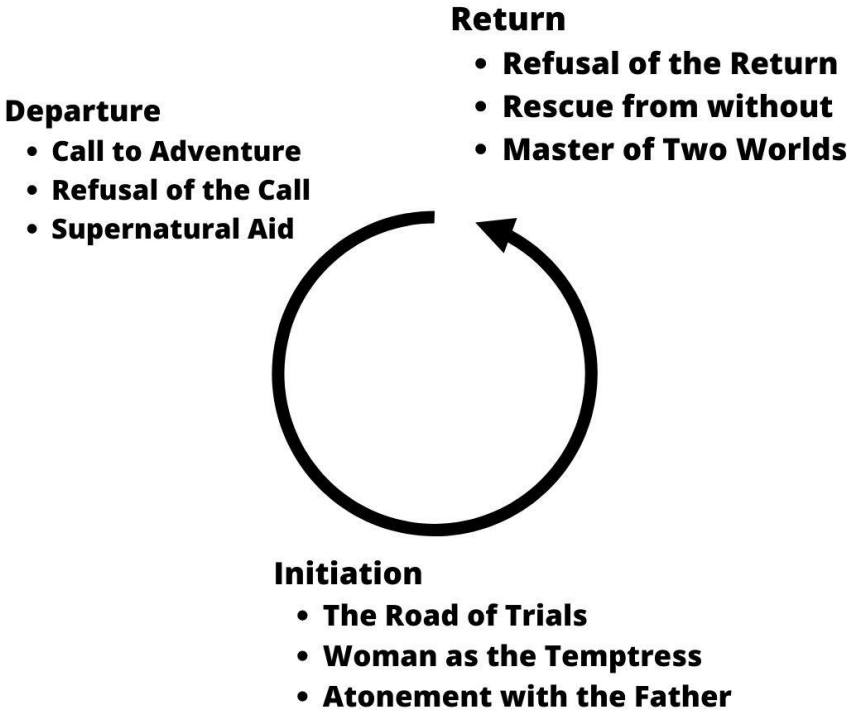
As a result of the existence of the archetypal image of the hero, it is possible for almost every individual to understand the journey of the hero. The journey is similar across cultures and it feels relatable to everyone. Even when we consider the heroes from modern Western

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<sup>48</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p.23

movies, we can observe that the heroes in these movies follow the same journeys. An example would be the hero from the Lord of the Rings movies, Frodo. At first, Frodo is hesitant to accept his call to adventure. However, with the aid of supernatural characters, Frodo crosses the threshold to the other world by leaving his safe environment, the Shire. Frodo goes on a heroic journey to Mordor, during which he is faced with many challenges and must overcome multiple temptations. Upon his return, Frodo has become a master of two worlds.

In figure six you can observe this archetypal journey of the hero as it was defined by Joseph Campbell. Each of the three phases; departure, initiation, and return, include several other characteristics common across varying types of stories related to the journey of the hero.



*Figure 5*

Joseph Campbell illustrated with the quote below that the journeys of heroes from fairy tales or ancient mythological stories follow the same pattern:

“Prometheus ascended to the heavens, stole fire from the gods, and descended. Jason sailed through the Clashing Rocks into a sea of marvels, circumvented the dragon that guarded the Golden Fleece, and returned with the fleece and the power to wrest his rightful throne from a usurper. Aeneas went down into the underworld, crossed the dreadful river of the dead, threw a sop to the three-headed watchdog Cerberus, and conversed, at last, with the shade of his dead father.”<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, despite all these heroes’ journeys following the same pattern, these stories, even after thousands of years, continue to inspire us. This is the case because they invoke a connection with deep archetypal symbols and images present within our unconscious. For example, the stories of Troy still interest us to a significant degree thousands of years later.

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<sup>49</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p.23

**Journalling Exercise 17:** Can you think of an archetypal image or symbol which you find important or inspiring? Why do you think it inspires you? (You may consider images or symbols from myths, fairy tales, religions, etc...)

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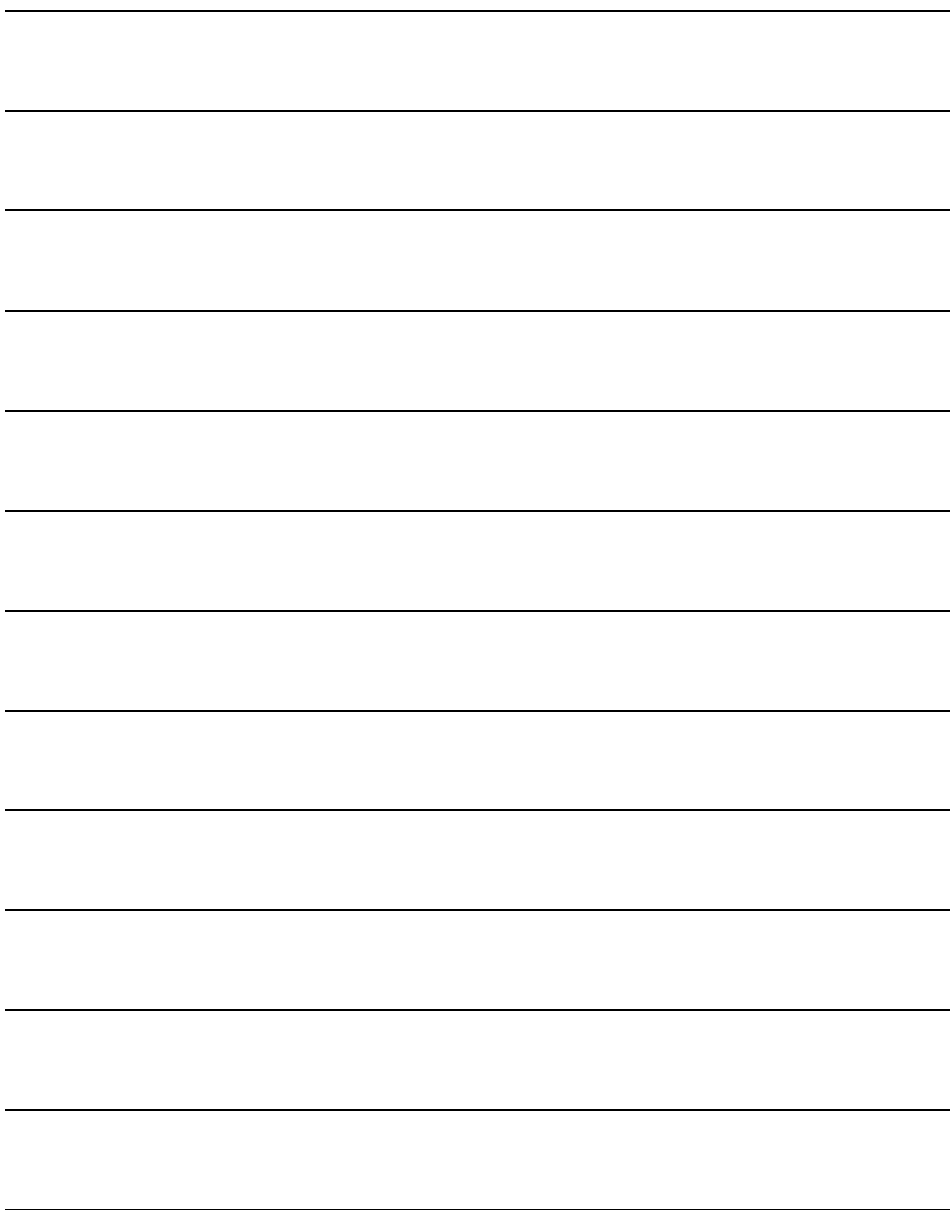
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## **The Anima/Animus**

Besides the shadow, the anima and animus are two other important archetypes in relation to our current exploration of the self. Jung believed that, within every man's unconscious, there exists an unconscious female personality, while, within every woman's unconscious, there exists a hidden masculine personality.<sup>50</sup> Similar to the shadow, the anima and animus may reveal themselves to an individual through projections.

Although already difficult, with significant moral effort, the shadow can be revealed to the individual's ego, because the shadow is a result of a person's own inferior personality and can be observed through its projection upon an individual's environment. However, as Jung argued, after a certain moment, these projections even reach beyond the individual's own negative personality; beyond the individual's shadow. Instead, their source may be found in figures and symbols which represent the opposite sex of the individual, in a man this is called the anima, and in woman it is called the animus. Jung observed that the anima and animus are archetypes a lot further removed from an individual's own conscious personality. As such, they are almost impossible to comprehend: "It is quite within the bounds of possibility

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<sup>50</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.284

for a man to recognize the relative evil of his nature, but it is a rare and shattering experience form him to gaze into the face of absolute evil.”<sup>51</sup>

Jung used the concepts Eros (love) and Logos (reason) to illustrate the significance of the Anima and Animus. Jung made the generalization that the conscious personality of a woman is more often than not characterized by “the connective quality of Eros than by the discrimination and cognition associated with Logos”<sup>52</sup>, whereas, in a man, “Eros, the function of relationship, is usually less developed than Logos.”<sup>53</sup>

However, although not usually a part of a man’s conscious personality, Eros still exists within a man, whereas Logos still exists within a woman. As a result, since these are not developed properly and, therefore, essentially exist in a more primitive form within the individual’s unconscious, they may project themselves upon the environment of the individual in an unrefined manner. In such a case, Jung believed that a man becomes ‘anima-possessed’, and a woman becomes ‘animus-possessed’. When this occurs, it may happen that, when a man and woman interact with eachother while they are

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<sup>51</sup> Carl Jung, Aion, p.10

<sup>52</sup> Carl Jung, Aion, p.14

<sup>53</sup> Carl Jung, Aion, p.14

‘possessed’, they are essentially interacting with an inferior form of the characteristics common to the opposite sex; a woman might act overly aggressive through her animus, whereas a man might act extremely seductive through his anima “When animus and anima meet, the animus draws his sword of power and the anima ejects her poison of illusion and seduction.”<sup>54</sup> Men may then become possessed by an irrational temper, whereas women may become possessed by irrational beliefs: “It seems a very natural state of affairs for men to have irrational moods and women irrational opinions.”<sup>55</sup>

Jung further argued that, whereas the contents of the anima and animus may be made conscious, the anima and animus themselves, being archetypes, cannot be made conscious. However, by being aware of the anima and animus, and by integrating the contents produced by these archetypes, they can play an important role as a compensatory force:

“It is, in fact, one of the most important tasks of psychic hygiene to pay continual attention to the symptomatology of unconscious contents and processes, for the good reason that the conscious mind

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<sup>54</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.15

<sup>55</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.17

is always in danger of becoming one-sided, of keeping to well-worn paths and getting stuck in blind alleys.”<sup>56</sup>

As such, a man can develop his Eros by paying attention to the content of his unconscious, whereas a woman can develop her Logos in the same way. Instead of a man then becoming possessed by an inferior form of his Eros, he can use it as a compensatory force when his Logos dominates his conscious mind. Alternatively, instead of a woman becoming possessed by an inferior form of Logos, she can, after studying the content of her animus carefully, use her Logos as a compensatory factor when her Eros dominates her conscious mind.

We are often taught to suppress our characteristics and interests which emerge from the personality of the opposite sex within us. As we have learned from the discussion on the shadow, over time, this can result in some significant issues. Jung provided an interesting example of the anima archetype:

“When, for instance, a highly esteemed professor in his seventies abandons his family and runs off with a young red-headed actress, we know that the gods have claimed another victim. This is how daemonic power

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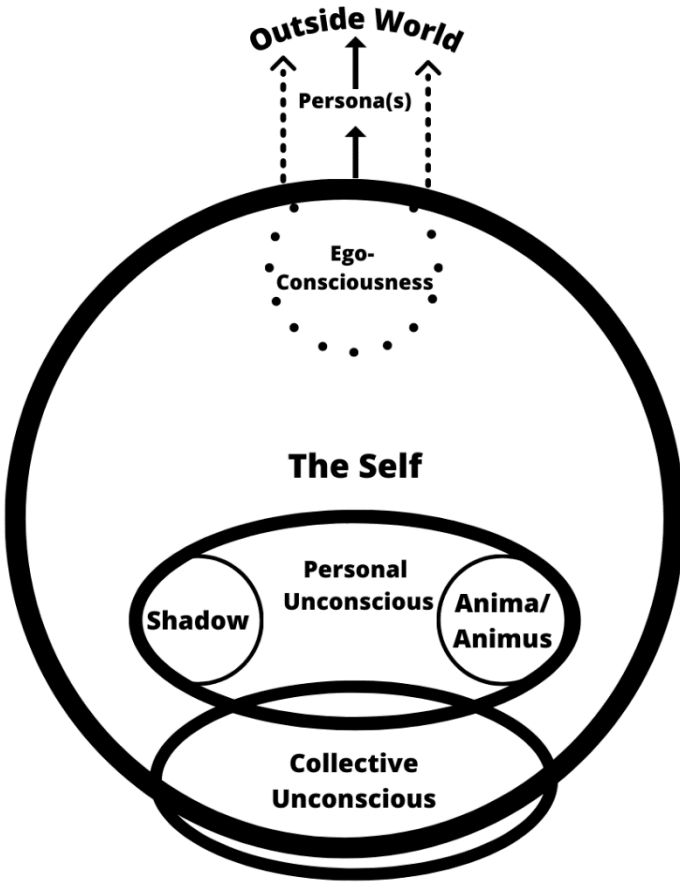
<sup>56</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.20

reveals itself to us. Until not so long ago it would have been an easy matter to do away with the young woman as a witch.”<sup>57</sup>

Previously the woman may have been called a witch, but it is not the woman that is bewitching the professor, instead, the ‘bewitching evil force’, which causes this professor to ‘run off with a young woman’, can be found within the professor’s own psyche. Essentially, what has happened in this example, is that the professor has been gripped by an undeveloped form of Eros, which he has not learned to control. This situation may have been prevented if the professor had consciously attempted to develop his unrefined Eros earlier in his life. Below you can see the anima/animus included in the map of the self.

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<sup>57</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.30



*Figure 6: A Map of the psyche including the ego, the self, the personas, the personal and collective unconscious, the shadow, as well as the anima/animus.*

**Journalling Exercise 18:** Can you think of moment when you have been anima/animus possessed? (This might be a moment where your Eros (love) or Logos (reason) has expressed itself in an uncultivated way. For a man this may be through sexual impulses, for instance, whereas, for a woman, this may be through a sudden aggressive impulse or through strong irrational opinions.)

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## Free will

After all that has been discussed so far, it may appear as if we are not really in control of our own personality. We have seen that our conscious ego-personality is constantly under the influence of our unconscious, through our shadow, for instance. As such, you may wonder in how far we are actually capable of making our own conscious decisions. Jung wrote the following, for instance: “Inside the field of consciousness it [the ego] has, as we say, free will. [...] But, just as our free will clashes with necessity in the outside world, so also it finds its limits outside the field of consciousness in the subjective inner world, where it comes into conflict with the facts of the self.”<sup>58</sup>

As such, just as events which occur in the external world impact our behaviour beyond our control, it is also possible that events within our internal world have an impact on our behaviour: “Just as circumstances or outside events happen to us and limit our freedom, so the self acts upon the ego like an objective occurrence which free will can do very little to alter.”<sup>59</sup>

If this does not already frighten you to some extent, the following might do so. Jung believed that the ego can at any point in time be

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<sup>58</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.5

<sup>59</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.6

completely changed by the unconscious parts of the self: “It is indeed well known that the ego not only can do nothing against the self, but is sometimes actually assimilated by unconscious components of the personality that are in the process of development and is greatly altered by them.”<sup>60</sup> In this sense, it appears as if we are not even in control of the only aspect of ourselves of which we are consciously aware.

The shadow is an example of one of these forces which may have such an influence due to its capability of instigating unexpected emotions. As discussed throughout the section on the shadow, the shadow has an emotional nature, meaning that the individual, under the influence of the shadow, does not engage in being emotional, instead, the emotions simply ‘happen’ to him or her. The same can be said about the anima or animus; the professor from the anima exemplified is ‘bewitched’ by the content of his own unconscious anima. Therefore, it can be argued that the shadow and the anima/animus archetypes impact the individual’s free will.

Luckily, even though Jung may have been able to frighten you at this point, there is a solution to this problem as well. And, even better, through reading this book and working with the journalling exercises, you are currently already working on the solution. Jung observed that, by integrating the unconscious forces which limit our free will, we can

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<sup>60</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.6

make them conscious and thereby negate their impact. As mentioned before, Jung called this process individuation. This process is discussed in detail in the following section. Before moving to the next section, I would like to invite you to answer the following journaling question in relation to free will and the unconscious.

**Journalling Exercise 19:** Can you think of moments where unconscious thoughts or beliefs have impacted your capability to make your own conscious choices? If yes, when did this happen and what may this tell you about your unconscious? (An example may be that you wanted to join a gym but were somehow too afraid to do so.)

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## The Individuation Process

From what has been discussed so far, it is possible to conclude that our unconscious is in many ways a double-edged sword. On the one hand, if it is not integrated, it will have an overwhelming power over the ego and thereby limit our ‘free will’. On the other hand, if we succeed in integrating our unconscious, the unconscious can serve as a powerful ‘compensating force’, preventing the conscious from becoming too ‘one-sided’.

If it is the case that the unconscious is suppressed to a significant degree, it may be the result that it cannot play a successful role as a compensatory force. Jung observed that, the more complicated our lives have become, the less we can observe the voice of the unconscious: “The more civilized, the more unconscious and complicated a man is, the less he is able to follow his instincts. His complicated living conditions and the influence of his environment are so strong that they drown the quiet voice of nature.”<sup>61</sup>

Since our societies mainly value conscious rational thoughts and beliefs, this ‘quiet voice of nature’ is drowned even further and is replaced entirely by rationality. Moreover, as Jung observed, a focus on

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<sup>61</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.21



conscious rational beliefs only further tips the scales in favour of the conscious mind, as opposed to the unconscious.<sup>62</sup> Fundamentally, our ego will consider itself to be increasingly more important. Since this development is unlikely to change, the unconscious will only grow in importance as a compensatory force throughout the coming decades. Moreover, when our ego considers itself to be ever more important, it will only become harder to accept that it must share some of its power with the unconscious.

As a result, the longer we do not become aware of our inner opposition between our conscious and unconscious, the more we will project this inner division upon the world. As a result, Jung argued that, due to our inner conflict, the world will bear the consequences of our own inner division:

“The psychological rule says that when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside, as fate. That is to say, when the individual remains undivided and does not become conscious of his inner

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<sup>62</sup> “Opinions, beliefs, theories, and collective tendencies appear in its stead and back up all the aberrations of the conscious mind.” Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.21

opposite, the world must perforce act out the conflict and be torn into opposing halves.”<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, Jung argued that the only way in which the world can be changed for the better, is through positive changes within the individual.<sup>64</sup>

At the same time, Jung believed that we should not merely accept the positive notions of the unconscious, but also the more negative aspects of the unconscious. This is important, according to Jung, because, by paying attention to them, we can negate the evil forces lurking within the unconscious. This is the case, because, as mentioned previously, the less we leave our unconscious in the dark, the less it will be able to control us:

“Today as never before it is important that human beings should not overlook the danger of the evil lurking within them. It is unfortunately only too real,

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<sup>63</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.7

<sup>64</sup> “Only the change in the attitude of the individual is the beginning of the change in the psychology of the nation.” Carl Jung, *The Psychology of the Unconscious Processes: An Overview of Modern Theory and Method of Analytical Psychology*, p.4

which is why psychology must insist on the reality of evil and must reject any definition that regards it as insignificant or actually non-existent.”<sup>65</sup>

This evil mostly resides within the shadow, as such, it can be extremely difficult for an individual to accept the reality of his or her own evil.

The only way in which this can really be done is by being brutally honest with one's self. Perhaps a bit of an unexpected detour, but an interesting example of such a situation can often be observed within Gordon Ramsay's series 'Hotel Hell'. In this reality series, Ramsay attempts to save various hotels from bankruptcy. He mainly does so by being brutally honest to those managing the hotels. At first the owners do not want to admit to the obvious fact that they are doing something wrong and will move themselves in all sorts of positions to find excuses for their actions. For example, they unrightfully blame their staff for causing all the problems within their hotel. However, due to Ramsay's persistent honesty, after a while, something suddenly 'clicks' within some of these owners, at this moment we can clearly observe that these individuals are faced with their own shadow and can finally see

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<sup>65</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.53

themselves and their situation as it truly is. Hereafter they are willing to face their problems and can start to work towards solving them.

Besides hotels being in bad shapes due to owners who are disconnected with their own reality, Jung even argued that, if a group of individuals, an entire society, or perhaps even the entire world, loses touch with the unconscious world, mass hysteria can be the outcome. This is the case, according to Jung, because, in the past, symbols such as myths and mysteries functioned as an important link between the conscious and unconscious world. As Joseph Campbell observed as well, these symbols are slowly eroding. As a result of this lack of a connection between the conscious and the unconscious, mass hysteria becomes possible, according to Jung, because these symbols no longer protect the mind against dangerous ideas.

An ever-increasing breakdown of traditions plays a role in this development as well. As Jung argued, when a society breaks down its traditions and loses its roots, mass hysteria becomes a possibility: “Loss of roots and lack of tradition neuroticize the masses and prepare them for collective hysteria.”<sup>66</sup> Jung believed that materialism only further fuels

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<sup>66</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.181

this development and that, in response to this mass hysteria, liberties are slowly abolished, since a form of ‘mass therapy’ becomes necessary.<sup>67</sup>

As such, it is undeniable that a divided individual can be a great risk to him or herself, those in the individual’s environment, and society in general (even hotels are not safe). Naturally, the individual can decide for him or herself whether he or she wants to integrate the unconscious. However, as Jung observed, if the unconscious is not integrated voluntarily, it might suddenly force itself upon the individual in an uncontrollable manner: “If he voluntarily takes the burden of completeness on himself, he need not find it “happening” to him against his will in a negative form.”<sup>68</sup>

As a result, we can conclude that a voluntary integration of the unconscious may be one of the most important achievements in an individual’s life; it may significantly improve one’s wellbeing and prevent serious involuntary negative consequences to the individual him or herself, as well as to the world at large. Since you have picked up this

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<sup>67</sup> “Collective hysteria calls for collective therapy, which consists in abolition of liberty and terrorization. Where rationalistic materialism holds sway, states tend to develop less into prisons than into lunatic asylums.” Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.181

<sup>68</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.70

book, you have most likely decided to explore the integration of the unconscious voluntarily through the individuation process, instead of waiting for the unconscious to ‘happen’ to you, with all its negative consequences.

In chapter five we are going to go through the individuation process in detail. Essentially, we are going to create an opportunity and space for our unconscious to reveal itself. There are several practical ways in which this is possible, these are discussed in chapter five as well in relation to the Red Book, which, as mentioned in the introduction, can be seen as the original document of shadow work, inner child help, as well as many other concepts which have evolved over the years.

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*Through the journaling exercises up until this point the unconscious has already been revealed to some degree. However, throughout these exercises, the questions were most likely answered by consciously thinking about an answer, whereby the conscious mind still had an influence on the answer. In the journaling exercises later in this book, we attempt to answer the questions without any interference from our conscious mind.*

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Moreover, it is interesting to note that an important bridge between consciousness and unconsciousness has always existed but has sadly been broken down over the years. Jung observed that fairy tales, myths, and mysteries functioned as a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious in the past. This is the case because these stories represent a symbolized version of events which cannot be grasped consciously, as such, we need a metaphor or a symbol in order to understand them. Essentially, such a symbol connects the world of the unconscious to the conscious world: “That is why it is so extremely important to tell children fairy-tales and legends, and to inculcate religious ideas (dogmas) into grown-ups, because these things are instrumental symbols with whose help unconscious contents can be canalized into consciousness, interpreted, and integrated.”<sup>69</sup>

As indicated in the introduction, most of these stories turned out to be incompatible with scientific truth, which has become the yardstick to measure the usefulness of any idea these days. However, even though these stories and symbols are not true in a scientific sense, they are true in a different way, in the sense that they represent a truth to our unconscious world, a truth to our soul. Jung even stressed that such an overemphasize on rationality, without a compensating factor, can be

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<sup>69</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.169

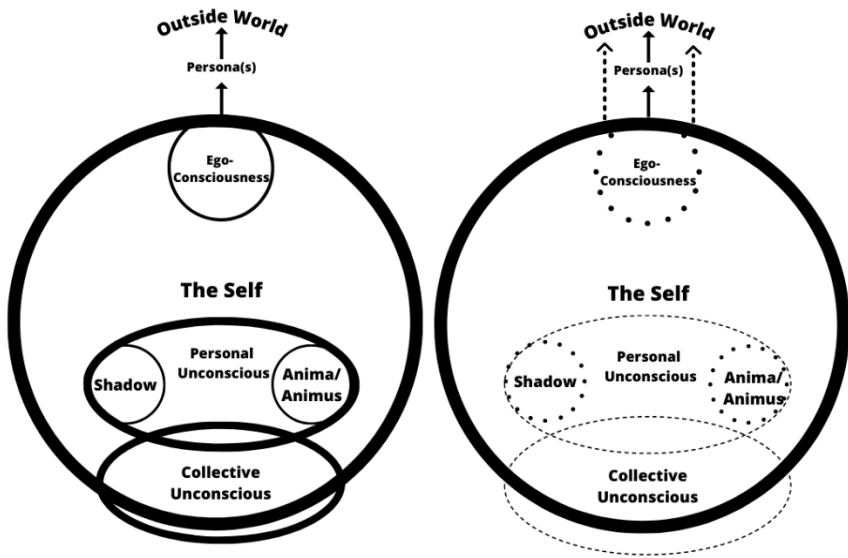
extremely dangerous: “With the loss of symbolic ideas the bridge to the unconscious has broken down. Instinct no longer affords protections against unsound ideas and empty slogans. Rationality without tradition and without basis in instinct is proof against no absurdity.”<sup>70</sup>

In order to integrate our unconscious, we must, therefore, create our own bridge. Fundamentally, what this bridge does, is opening the wall which separates the unconscious from the conscious world, which you can see in the figure below; where there used to be closed circles, there are now open circles, whereby interaction becomes possible. This is the essence of the individuation process.

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<sup>70</sup> Carl Jung, *Aion*, p.248





*Figure 7: On the left you can see the situation prior to going through a successful individuation process. On the right you can see the situation that ideally arises after the individuation process.*

Jung managed to create a bridge between his conscious and unconscious world by writing the Red Book, which we can, therefore, use as an inspiration. Before we attempt to create our own Red Book, I am first going to discuss what the Red Book is and what we can learn from it.

## Chapter 4: Carl Jung's Red Book

### What is the Red Book?

Those of you who were not that familiar with Carl Jung prior to reading this book may have previously considered Jung to be a boring old Swiss scholar who wrote some things about personality types, such as introversion and extroversion. This is also what Jung is best known for today, and whenever we take a personality test, we can be certain that it was inspired by the ideas of Jung. As mentioned previously, the same applies to many of the self-help terms we use today, such as: shadow work, inner child development, self-acceptance, etc... Although they are now far removed from their original source, these ideas were all developed by Carl Jung.

Moreover, all these ideas which we still find relevant today, had their origin within the Red Book. As such, hidden behind Jung's well-known theories on typology, lays a depth which has long been hidden from the world by Jung himself. Even those more familiar with Jung's work might be surprised by this depth. At the basis of all of Jung's theories lays Jung's discovery of his own self. Jung documented this discovery in the Black Books and the Red Book, which remained inaccessible to the public until they were eventually published in 2009 (the Red Book) and 2020 (the Black Books), many years after Jung's death. As the editor of the Red Book, Sonu Shamdasani, observed, the Red Book's main theme

is the rediscovery of the soul: “The overall theme of the book is how Jung regains his soul and overcomes the contemporary malaise of spiritual alienation.”<sup>71</sup>

The content of the Red Book is in many ways unique and controversial. Essentially, throughout the Red Book, Jung is interacting with his own unconscious, which appears to guide Jung at an important time of his life. Some readers might see in this content only the delusions of a man going through a psychosis, while others find the content extremely inspiring, eye-opening, and perhaps even life changing. Jung himself recognized this as well, and observed later that the difference between his undertaking and a psychosis is not that big, the difference mainly being that Jung managed to integrate his insanity: “The reason why the involvement looks very much like a psychosis is that the patient is integrating the same fantasy-material to which the insane person falls victim because he cannot integrate it but is swallowed up by it.”<sup>72</sup>

Interestingly, the ‘unscientific’ research which Jung was undertaking at this time, formed the basis for all of Jung’s most important theories and ideas: “All my works, all my creative activity, has come from those

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<sup>71</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.207

<sup>72</sup> Carl Jung, *Collected Works* 14, 756

initial fantasies and dreams which began in 1912.”<sup>73</sup> Therefore, as Sonu Shamdasani observed as well, despite not having been published until recently, the Red Book already had an impressive influence: “There can be few unpublished works that have already exerted such far-reaching effects upon twentieth -century social and intellectual history as Jung’s Red Book.”<sup>74</sup> This is the case because Jung’s Red Book was the main source of Jung’s ideas, whereas Jung’s ideas had a major influence, even stretching beyond the world of psychology “Jung and Freud are the names that most people first think of in connection with psychology, and their ideas have been widely disseminated in the arts, the humanities, films, and popular culture. Jung is also widely regarded as one of the instigators of the New Age movement.”<sup>75</sup>

Jung’s exploration of his own self can be used as a template for the discovery and exploration of our own self. It is important to note that Jung did not preach a ‘certain way’: “It is no teaching and no instruction that I give you. On what basis should I presume to teach you? I give you news of the way of this man, but not of your own way. My path is not your path, therefore I cannot teach you.”<sup>76</sup> It is, therefore, also not the

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<sup>73</sup> Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.192

<sup>74</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.193

<sup>75</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.193

<sup>76</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.125

aim of this book to provide you with a certain way, instead, it provides a template based on Jung's unique theories, while also leaving room for you to find your own unique way. Be aware that this is not an easy process, since we might discover aspects of ourselves which we will find hard to accept. However, Jung is often paraphrased as having observed that: "That which you most need to find, will be found where you least want to look."

### **How did Jung Write the Red Book?**

In 1913 Jung began an experiment on himself which lasted until 1930, an experiment characterized by a confrontation with the unconscious. Jung first recorded his experiences with this confrontation in the Black Books, before eventually copying them into a book called *Liber Novus*, or, as it is more commonly called, the Red Book. Besides copying the fantasies from the Black Books, Jung also added commentary describing the significance of the fantasies. In this sense, the Black Books can be seen as a personal journal of Jung's fantasies, whereas the Red Book can be seen as a document intended to be read by others.

Jung, however, never published the contents of the Red Book, and only a few people close to him knew of its existence. Even though Jung considered publishing the Red Book, as I have also written in my book *Carl Jung and the Rebirth of the Soul*, Jung may have decided against

publishing the Red Book because he feared that its rather mysterious and irrational content might have harmed his scientific reputation.

As a result, Jung decided that he first had to find a scientific basis for the discoveries he made while he was discovering his own self. In this sense, Jung was experimenting with his own unconscious world in order to, eventually, after carefully studying his experiences and those of others, draw scientific conclusions from them:

“The knowledge I was concerned with, or was seeking, still could not be found in the science of those days. I myself had to undergo the original experience, and, moreover, try to plant the results of my experience in the soil of reality, otherwise they would have remained subjective assumptions without validity.”<sup>77</sup>

As Sonu Shamdasani indicated, Jung conducted this experiment by switching off his conscious mind. Jung would then observe and interact with the content that emerged from the unconscious. The existence of dreams made Jung aware that there was something going on in the background, below the threshold of consciousness, that was worth

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<sup>77</sup> Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.228

investigating.<sup>78</sup> By creating a space for the unconscious to reveal itself, all sorts of irrational and chaotic content began to emerge from Jung's unconscious, and the acceptance and integration of the irrational and chaotic within the self became the main theme throughout the Red Book.

Later, in his autobiographical work *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung observed that, at this point in his life, numerous fantasies were revealed to him, and it took considerable effort to comprehend them without losing his sanity: "An incessant stream of fantasies had been released, and I did my best not to lose my head but to find some way to understand these strange things."<sup>79</sup>

## **Important Lessons from the Red Book: A Summary of the Main Ideas**

You may notice that some of the ideas discussed previously, such as the shadow or the anima/animus, return throughout this summary of the most important lessons and ideas from the Red Book. This is the case

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<sup>78</sup> "In retrospect he recalled that his scientific question was to see what took place when he switched off consciousness. The example of dreams indicated the existence of background activity, and he wanted to give this a possibility of emerging." Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.200

<sup>79</sup> Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.212



because, as indicated, these ideas had their origin within the Red Book, before Jung managed to develop these ideas further. I believe, however, that it is valuable to observe how Jung initially developed these ideas through a confrontation with his unconscious. Jung's endeavour shows us clearly what is possible when we turn our attention inwards and Jung's journey may, therefore, inspire us to do the same.

It must be noted that, since Jung had a deep understanding of ancient religious texts, mythology, and philosophy, some of the content of the Red Book is immensely philosophical or religious as well. Because of all of this knowledge Jung had, the content of Jung's unconscious relates to some of this knowledge. Since not many people exist who possess such an in-depth knowledge of philosophy, religion, or mythology, comparable to Jung, it is normal that the content of your unconscious may not have the same mystical/religious depth as the content which Jung shared with us throughout the Red Book.

Resulting from Jung's knowledge, the content of the Red Book can be quite complicated. I had to read through everything several times before understanding clearly what Jung was expressing. As such, it is normal that you may find the content itself a bit demanding. Therefore, I have also listed the key take-aways below the summary. At the same time, if you do feel a bit philosophical, then I definitely recommend you to read through the summary carefully. Just remember that, if you discover that

the content of your unconscious is more straightforward, then this is only natural; try not to judge the content of your own unconscious.

### **The spirit of the Times and the Spirit of the Depths**

At the beginning of the Red Book Jung made a distinction between two ‘spirits’, the spirit of the times and the spirit of the depths. The spirit of the times judges everything based on its usefulness and value and changes with each generation, its most important values are reason and knowledge. The spirit of the depths, however, as observed by Jung, although usually hidden from the world of consciousness, is much more powerful and lasting. Fundamentally, the spirit of the depths forms the undercurrent to everything that is happening, has happened, or will happen. Accepting the spirit of the depths as a force to be reckoned with required Jung to sacrifice some of his beliefs regarding science, as well as the significance of his own knowledge:

“The Spirit of the depths has subjugated all pride and arrogance to the power of judgment. He took away my belief in science, he robbed me of the joy of explaining and orderings things, and he let devotion to ideals of

this time die out in me. He forced me down to the last and simplest things.”<sup>80</sup>

It is possible to compare the spirit of the times with the conscious material world which we can feel and understand to a certain degree. At the same time, the world of the spirit of the times has rules and is relatively organized. However, below this conscious and rational world lays a powerful hidden unconscious world, characterized by the spirit of the depths. The spirit of the depths can be compared to more of an unconscious spiritual world, which is always present but only clearly observable to those who direct their attention to this world. In this world there is no structure and there are no rules. As such, reason and knowledge are not helpful in this world. The spiritual world of the spirit of the depths is harder to comprehend, however, this world may still reveal itself on occasion in the form of dreams and fantasies.

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<sup>80</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.229

### **Spirit of the Times**

- **Consciousness**
- **External**
- **Reason**
- **Order**
- **Temporary**

### **Spirit of the Depths**

- **Unconsciousness**
- **Internal**
- **Irrational**
- **Chaos**
- **Everlasting**

*Figure 8: A comparison between the characteristics of the spirit of the times and the spirit of the depths.*

Initially, Jung was not yet willing to discard knowledge and reason in order to shift his attention away from the spirit of the times towards the spirit of the depths. However, Jung observed that, during the time that he was writing the Red Book, the spirit of the depths took control over him:

“The spirit of the depths took my understanding and all my knowledge and placed them at the service of the inexplicable and the paradoxical. He robbed me of speech and writing for everything that was not in his service, namely the melting together of sense and nonsense, which produces the supreme meaning.”<sup>81</sup>

Jung found it hard to accept or understand the inexplicable and irrational and, therefore, kept trying to return to his reason and knowledge, the spirit of the times. Jung did not want to sacrifice his knowledge and reason, but the spirit of the depths argued that some sacrifice would be necessary if Jung wanted to complete his task.

### **The Rebirth of the Soul**

Subsequently, Jung wrote that he started to be presented by visions, of which the first one appeared on a train journey during October 1913,

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<sup>81</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.229

during which Jung saw an immense flood which spread across Western Europe. Jung did not understand this vision and when it reappeared two weeks later, Jung worried that he might be going insane. Eventually, however, when the first World War broke out in 1914, Jung understood what his vision had meant.

Jung observed that these visions commenced at a significant moment in his life; a moment at which he had achieved everything he had wished for, at least in the external world/spirit of the times.<sup>82</sup> Jung could not enjoy his material accomplishments for long, since he discovered that, within his internal unconscious world, something important was missing, a discovery which horrified Jung.<sup>83</sup> Despite the interest Jung developed in exploring the hidden unconscious world, Jung did not yet understand the spirit of the depths, however, after realizing that his visions regarding the war were valid, Jung turned towards the world of the soul and wrote down the following: “My soul, where are you? Do you hear me? I speak, I call you – are you there? I have returned, I am here again. I have

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<sup>82</sup> “I had achieved everything that I had wished for myself. I had achieved honour, power, wealth, knowledge, and every human happiness.” Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.232

<sup>83</sup> “Then my desire for the increase of these trappings ceased, the desire ebbed from me and horror came over me.” Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.232

shaken the dust of all the lands from my feet, and I have come to you, I am with you.”<sup>84</sup>

Jung argued that he was happy to finally return to the lost world of his soul. Jung argued that one must live according to one’s own way, and Jung’s own way had now guided him to his soul. According to Jung, he had always been judging his soul and had turned his soul into a ‘scientific object’, which made sense when living in accordance with the spirit of the times, which sees the soul as an object under the control of the individual. The spirit of the depths, however, forced Jung to see his soul as a self-existing entity, with which he had lost connection.

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*You may be wondering at this point how Jung managed to interact directly with his soul. For this Jung used a method called active imagination, whereby, through the suppression of the conscious mind, the unconscious world is allowed to express itself. There are different ways in which this can be achieved, these various methods are discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Throughout the journalling exercises presented in the following*

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<sup>84</sup> Carl Jung, The Red Book, p.232

*chapter, you are invited to employ these methods as well.*

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Jung argued that, in order to live in accordance with the spirit of the depths, one must live one's own life and think for oneself. Jung argued that one might not do so in order to flee one's self, however, since your self is always with you, this is not possible. Nonetheless, Jung continued to find it hard to completely trust his soul. It felt to him as if he was being faced with meaninglessness and as if all the knowledge he had was no longer useful to him for an understanding of this new world he was facing. Jung found it strange, however, that he could not trust his own soul, since he easily trusted other people. As a result, from that moment onwards, Jung decided to completely trust his soul.

Moreover, Jung came to the realization that the feeling of meaninglessness which overwhelmed him was normal, because it belongs to the world as well. As such, Jung argued that meaninglessness should not be avoided, since then one will be avoiding the other, equally important part of the world.<sup>85</sup> As Jung further elaborated, order and

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<sup>85</sup> "If you take a step toward your soul, you will at first miss the meaning. You will believe that you have sunk into meaninglessness, into eternal disorder. You will be right! Nothing will deliver you from disorder and



meaning grow out of meaninglessness and disorder. Therefore, as Jung realized, true meaning is created by combining order and chaos: “You open the gates of the soul to let the dark flood of chaos flow into your order and meaning. If you marry the ordered to the chaos you produce the divine child, the supreme meaning beyond meaning and meaninglessness.”<sup>86</sup>

However, if the initial meaninglessness and emptiness is too powerful, then the task may fail and the connection with the spirit of the depths may be lost forever. The individual may then continue to be led by blind desire for all the material objects in the world, whereby the way to the soul will be lost: “He will run after all things, and will seize hold of them, but he will not find his soul, since he would find her only in himself.”<sup>87</sup> Desire is not necessarily the problem, as Jung observed, instead, desire should be turned inward, instead of outward, and in this way, desire can be controlled by the individual, instead of desire controlling the individual: “He could find his soul in desire itself, but not in the objects of desire. If he possessed his desire, and his desire did not

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meaninglessness, since this is the other half of the world.” Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.235

<sup>86</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.235

<sup>87</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.232

possess him, he would lay a hand on his soul, since his desire is the image and expression of his soul.”<sup>88</sup>

## **The Desert**

Jung realized that he had cultivated the spirit of the times in his self (the external world) but that, by neglecting his soul, his soul had remained an empty desert (the internal world). Jung observed that, in order to enter the world of the soul, one cannot be focused on external events, other people, or even one’s own thoughts. Therefore, after focusing less on events, other people, and his own thoughts, Jung came to the desert of his soul. In order to cultivate this desert, Jung indicated that one’s desire and creative force must be directed inwards: “If your creative force now turns to the place of the soul, you will see how your soul becomes green and how its field bears wonderful fruit.”<sup>89</sup>

This requires patience and for many this is too demanding, as Jung observed. Therefore, those who fail at this task, return to the external world, and remain a slave to their thoughts, external events, and other people. This does not mean that Jung argued that one should live without these things, instead, Jung observed that one must prevent becoming a

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<sup>88</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.232

<sup>89</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.236

slave to these external objects. Hereby a healthier relationship with the external world can be developed: “He whose soul is a garden, needs things, men, and thoughts, but he is their friend and not their slave and fool.”<sup>90</sup>

Jung continued to struggle in the desert of his soul. Jung’s soul argued that he was too impatient and that intentions and desires were limiting him.<sup>91</sup> As a result, Jung wrote the following: “We believe that we can illuminate the darkness with an intention, and in that way aim past the light. How can we presume to want to know in advance, from where the light will come to us?”<sup>92</sup> Eventually, through the hardships Jung experienced while wandering through the desert of his soul, Jung came to the realization that he had to murder the God within himself. Jung’s new God had to be different than his old one, in the sense that the new God should be based on the fulness of life, which, besides the good and the beautiful, also encompasses the evil and the ugly:

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<sup>90</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.236

<sup>91</sup> “You are full, yes, you teem with intentions and desirousness! – Do you still not know that the way to truth stands open only to those without intentions?” Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.236

<sup>92</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.237

“I understood that the new God would be in the relative. If the God is absolute beauty and goodness, how should he encompass the fulness of life, which is beautiful and hateful, good and evil, laughable and serious, human and inhuman? How can man live in the womb of the God if the Godhead himself attends only to one-half of him?”<sup>93</sup>

### **Elijah and Salome**

Hereafter Jung became aware of an image which represented these contradictions. Within this image, Jung started to interact with two figures, Elijah and Salome, who are accompanied by a black serpent. Elijah was a Hebrew prophet, whereas, through the interaction, it becomes clear that Salome, who is blind, is the daughter of Elijah. Salome tells Jung that she loves him, however, according to ancient stories, Salome was responsible for the death of John the Baptist, a preacher in some ways similar to Elijah. As a result, Jung does not understand why Salome and Elijah are together, since they form a serious contradiction.

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<sup>93</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.243

Jung came to believe that Elijah and Salome are representatives of two principles, forethinking and pleasure. According to Jung, both cannot exist independently of each other, instead, each individual needs both. However, since one cannot be in forethinking and pleasure at the same time, one must take turns between these two. The serpent is the third principle and represents this changeability.

Despite needing both principles, Jung observed that one always has a preference for either one of these two principles:

“Some love thinking and establish the art of life on it. They practice their thinking and their circumspection, so they lose their pleasure. Therefore they are old and have a sharp face. The others love pleasure, they practice their feeling and living. Thus they forget thinking. Therefore they are young and blind. [as is Salome]”<sup>94</sup>

In this sense, Elijah and Salome, who appear incompatible at first, form indeed an extreme contradiction, but also an important union: “Those who think base the world on thought, those who feel, on feeling. You

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<sup>94</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.247

find truth and error in both.”<sup>95</sup> As a result, the serpent represents an important symbol as well: “The way of life writhes like the serpent from right to left and from left to right, from thinking to pleasure and from pleasure to thinking.”<sup>96</sup> Although the serpent, therefore, represents this contradiction, it also forms a necessary bridge between both principles.

Jung continued with the argument that those who focus too much on thinking lack pleasure, however, since these individuals still have feeling, their feeling does not develop and becomes rotten: “He who prefers to think than to feel, leaves his feeling to rot in darkness.”<sup>97</sup> The same is true for those who focus on feeling and pleasure; their thinking is left in the dark and starts to ‘rot’. For this reason, the thinker will only become more suspicious of his feelings since his feelings are indeed negative and underdeveloped. Similarly, one who feels will come to despise his thinking, since his thoughts are not well developed: “What a thinker does not think he believes does not exist, and what one who feels does not feel he believes does not exist.”<sup>98</sup> Therefore, Jung concluded

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<sup>95</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.247

<sup>96</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.247

<sup>97</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.248

<sup>98</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.248

the following: “May the thinking person accept his pleasure, and the feeling person accept his own thought. Such leads one along the way.”<sup>99</sup>

Jung observed that he himself was a thinker and had, therefore, been ignoring a part of himself by only focusing on the thoughts which he understood. As a result, Jung indicated that he had been pushing all thoughts which did not fit these criteria away from him. However, these more chaotic thoughts, based on feelings instead of rational thinking, still exist.

In more practical terms this means that we should carefully consider our character traits, even beyond thinking and feeling, and see where we might be out of balance. Jung used conscientiousness as an example, individuals who are extremely conscientious might attempt to ‘let go a bit more’, thereby consciously losing some control and, as a result, give away some control to one’s unconscious:

“It is not a question, as one might think, of relaxing morality itself but of making a moral effort in a different direction. For instance, a man who is not conscientious enough has to make a moral effort in order to come up to the mark; while for one who is

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<sup>99</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.248

sufficiently rooted in the world through his own efforts it is no small moral achievement to inflict defeat on his virtues by loosening his ties with the world and reducing his adaptive performance.”<sup>100</sup>

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*In case you are wondering which character traits you have developed properly, and which ones you may want to pay some more attention to, it is interesting to do a personality test. For this purpose I would recommend the free personality test which you can find on: [16personalities.com](http://16personalities.com). It is interesting to remember, while you are conducting this test, that the test was inspired by the ideas of Carl Jung, who, in turn, found his inspiration for his discussion on these character traits while he was writing the Red Book.*

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## **The Red One**

After conversing with the figures of Salome and Elijah, Jung enters into a conversation with ‘The Red One’, who Jung immediately identifies as the devil. Eventually, however, The Red One turns into joy, and Jung

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<sup>100</sup> Carl Jung, Aion, p.25



recognizes that the devil and joy are connected, since joy, when unrestrained, may lead to pleasure, which in turn may turn into one's own kind of hell: "The devil is an evil element. But joy? If you run after it, you see that joy also has evil in it, since then you arrive at pleasure and from pleasure go straight to Hell, your own particular Hell, which turns out differently for everyone."<sup>101</sup>

Similar to the previous interaction with Salome (feeling) and Elijah (thinking and rationality), Jung observed that it is important to find the right balance between seriousness and joy:

"Through my coming to terms with the devil, he accepted some of my seriousness, and I accepted some of his joy. This gave me courage. But if the devil has gotten more earnest, one must brace oneself. It is always a risky thing to accept joy, but it leads us to life and its disappointment, from which the wholeness of our life becomes."<sup>102</sup>

The pursuit of joy can be dangerous according to Jung because it may, in turn, lead to blind desire. As such, Jung argued that one must pay

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<sup>101</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.261

<sup>102</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.261

attention as to whether pleasure is beneficial or not, if it leads to blind desire, it is not. In this case, desire will be controlling you, instead of you controlling desire.

### **The Anima and Animus**

In a following fantasy Jung finds himself in an old castle where he has found lodging for the night. Jung cannot sleep and starts to imagine that the old owner of the castle is hiding his beautiful daughter within the castle. Jung cannot stand that such an imagination comes to him since it merely represents a commonplace story for an unoriginal novel. Jung's bad novel becomes reality when a girl is suddenly standing in his room.

Since Jung disliked such stories due to their unoriginality, Jung starts to worry that his unconscious world is merely filled with such simple stories. After interacting with the girl, however, Jung decides that she might be real and asks how he can help her. The girl responds by saying that Jung's decision to take her seriously is already enough. Jung responds with the observation that the unoriginal novel now turns into more of a fairy tale. To this the girl indicates that fairy tales are extremely valuable:

“The fairy tale is the great mother of the novel, and has even more universal validity than the most-avidly read novel of your time. And you know that what has

been on everyone's lips for millennia, though repeated endlessly, still comes nearest the ultimate human truth."<sup>103</sup>

Since Jung notices that the girl is clever, he asks her where ultimate truths can be found, since Jung had not been searching for them in fairy tales: "I found it very strange to seek them [ultimate truths] in banality. According to their nature, they must be quite uncommon."<sup>104</sup> The girl responds by indicating that it is exactly in what Jung considers to be unoriginal, that the highest truths can be found. Hereupon the girl brings Jung the greetings of Salome and disappears again.

Following this interaction, Jung commences a discussion on masculinity and femininity, here it is also clear how Jung's Red Book influenced his later thoughts, in this case on the Anima and Animus. According to Jung, each man has a certain femininity in himself (the Anima), and each woman masculinity (the Animus): "You, man, should not seek the feminine in women, but seek and recognize it in yourself, as you possess it from the beginning. It pleases you, however, to play at manliness, because it travels on a well-worn track."<sup>105</sup> The same applies

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<sup>103</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.262

<sup>104</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.262

<sup>105</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.263

to women, according to Jung: “You, woman, should not seek the masculine in men, but assume the masculine in yourself, since you possess it from the beginning. But it amuses you and is easy to play at femininity, consequently man despises you because he despises his femininity.”<sup>106</sup>

This is a similar argument as Jung made with regards to feeling and thinking, those who think despise their feeling because it remains undeveloped, whereas those who focus on feeling despise their thinking for the same reason. Jung argued that the opposite sex can be found in one’s soul, and as long as one does not recognize this, Jung observed that one will remain a slave to what one actually requires within one’s soul: “You are a slave of what you need in your soul. The most masculine man needs women, and he is consequently their slave. Become a woman yourself, and you will be saved from slavery to woman.”<sup>107</sup>

Jung’s observations do not imply that a man should become a woman and a woman a man, instead, Jung meant that one should accept the

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<sup>106</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.263

<sup>107</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.263

opposite sex within oneself, for this leads to wholeness.<sup>108</sup> According to Jung, this brings one closer to one's soul: "As a man you have no soul, since it is in the woman; as a woman you have no soul, since it is in the man. But if you become a human being, then your soul comes to you."<sup>109</sup>

At this point it is interesting to remember the terms Eros and Logos discussed throughout the section on the anima and animus. Jung used these terms years after writing the Red Book in order to illustrate his observation on femininity and masculinity. As Jung observed, a man should accept his Eros (love and affection) within himself, and a woman her Logos (rationality) within herself, since this leads to completion. If a man instead looks for his Eros outside of himself, and a woman for her Logos outside of herself, they both will remain divided and a slave to the opposite sex.

This is the same reason why the old professor discussed in the section on the anima and animus managed to become 'bewitched' by a young woman. This professor was missing something important in his soul, and

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<sup>108</sup> "The acceptance of femininity leads to completion. The same is valid for the woman who accepts her masculinity." Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.264

<sup>109</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.264

instead of searching it within his own self, he sought it in the external world, whereby his soul still remained empty.

### **The Death of Ideals**

In another fantasy Jung learns that he must accept the reality of death, which Jung eventually does. After accepting the reality of death, Jung indicated that his thirst for the deepest knowledge had increased severely. After accepting his own mortality, Jung also came to realize that all his ideals were essentially worthless and mortal, for they are just a part of the spirit of the times:

“He who believes he is really living his ideals, or believes he can live them, suffers from delusions of grandeur and behaves like a lunatic in that he stages himself as an ideal; but the hero has fallen. Ideals are mortal, so one should prepare oneself for their end.”<sup>110</sup>

As such, if one identifies oneself too much with these fleeting ideals, as soon as the ideal comes to an end, you yourself will as well, according to Jung.

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<sup>110</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.276

Therefore, Jung, through the writing of the Red Book, freed himself from many of his ideals. As Jung argued, ideals are merely a tool which can be used, not something with which an individual should identify him or herself: “The ideal is also a tool that one can put aside anytime, a torch on dark paths. But whoever runs around with a torch by day is a fool. How much my ideals have come down, and how freshly my tree greens.”<sup>111</sup>

After rejecting his ideals, Jung continues his way without the heavy burden of these ideals, such as good and evil, since these are not absolute but merely constructions of the spirit of the times: “Neither good nor evil shall be my masters. I push them aside, the laughable survivors, and go on my way again [...] The quarrelling powers that for so long stood between me and myself lie behind me.”<sup>112</sup> Fundamentally, Jung believed that, when one identifies one’s self too much with one’s ideals, this may prevent one from discovering one’s true self. For example, if one has a strong opinion about what is right and wrong, during one’s exploration of one’s self, these opinions may form a limitation, since the true self may be judged too soon; the evil within one’s self may not be identified and, therefore, also not integrated.

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<sup>111</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.276

<sup>112</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.277

## The Underworld

Hereafter Jung became aware that he had entered the underworld. Jung stressed that, since he wanted to give birth to a new God within himself, evil was necessary as well: “Because I wanted to give birth to my God, I also wanted evil. He who wants to create an eternal fullness will also create eternal emptiness. You cannot undertake one without the other.”<sup>113</sup> According to Jung, the inner world can only be fully reached and understood after the acceptance of evil, including the evil within one’s self. The recognition and acceptance of this evil only becomes possible after one’s ideals have been surrendered.

Eventually, while navigating the underworld, Jung comes upon a woman standing next to the body of a dead girl. The woman asks Jung to take out the liver from the dead girl’s body. Jung refuses of course; however, the woman responds by saying that she is the soul of the dead girl. Jung reluctantly does what the woman asks and takes out the liver. The woman then asks Jung to perform ‘the healing act’, by eating a part of the liver. Jung reluctantly does what he is asked and eats a part of the liver. Hereupon the woman throws back her veil and they have the following conversation:

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<sup>113</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.289



S: “Do you recognize me?”

J: “How strangely familiar you are! Who are you?”

S: “I am your soul.”<sup>114</sup>

### **The Imitation of Christ**

In a following fantasy Jung has entered a library. The librarian asks Jung which book he is looking for, whereupon Jung responds that he is looking for Thomas a Kempis’s book *The Imitation of Christ*. Hereby Jung contemplates the idea of the imitation of Christ. Jung argues that, instead of imitating the life of Christ directly, one should imitate the life of Christ in the sense that Christ lived His own life focusing on His own individual uniqueness:

“If I am truly to understand Christ, I must realize how Christ actually lived only his own life, and imitated no one. He did not emulate any model. If I thus truly imitate Christ, I do not imitate anyone, I emulate no

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<sup>114</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.290

one, but go on my own way, and I will also no longer call myself a Christian.”<sup>115</sup>

Hereafter Jung is arrested and put in prison. He is, however, allowed to take the book with him to his cell. While in prison, Jung enters the place of his feeling, which, as opposed to the place of his thinking, has remained unfamiliar to him. Here Jung concludes that he has found Christ.

However, at the same time, Jung has also discovered the abyss of eternal chaos. Within this abyss, Jung observes that there is still a quiet place within everyone’s soul where everything remains logical: “Where everything is self-evident and easily explainable, a place to which he likes to retire from the confusing possibilities of life, because there everything is simple and clear, with a manifest and limited purpose.”<sup>116</sup> However, as soon as one breaks through the wall of this place, Jung observed that a flood of chaos will inevitably flow into this quiet place. This chaos is not empty or dead, but filled with live and ‘figures’, figures which are profound since they represent ‘fullness’: “Chaos is not single, but an unending multiplicity. It is not formless, otherwise it

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<sup>115</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.293

<sup>116</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.295

would be single, but it is filled with figures that have a confusing and overwhelming effect due to their fullness.”<sup>117</sup>

As such, removing that wall is not for everyone, since the mysteries hiding behind it, which are often placed there by oneself, are waiting there. This wall can be seen as the wall separating the conscious world of the ego from the unconscious world of the self. Jung indicated that one should wrestle with these mysteries and the dangerous shadows in solitude, for no one will be able to help the individual overcome what he or she has to overcome in him or herself. Jung decided to accept the chaos of all these mysteries and hereupon Jung’s soul approached him again.

Jung’s soul made him aware that he had to accept this madness within himself. According to Jung’s soul, if one does not accept madness, one can run the risk of becoming its victim. Reason is used as an attempt to make rules for the individual, however, according to Jung’s soul, life itself is illogical and filled with madness and has no rules at all (within the dimension of the spirit of the depths there are no rules). As such, Jung is once again pointed to the relative valuelessness of knowledge, which he had held in such high regard before the exploration of his self.

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<sup>117</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.296

## **Hell and the Shadow**

Jung hereafter realizes that he is lost and filled with chaos. He learns that he is in Hell. After Jung indicates that he is lost, a stranger's voice responds by saying that there is no need to find a way now. Hereupon Jung observes the following:

“The way, or whatever it might be, on which people go, is our way, the right way. There are no paved ways into the future. We say that it is this way, and it is. We build roads by going on. Our life is the truth that we seek. Only my life is the truth, the truth above all. We create the truth by living it.”<sup>118</sup>

Through all of this Jung comes to the realization that one must accept the lowest within oneself, since no one else will.<sup>119</sup> Accepting the lowest (the shadow) will be hard, but it will be the first step in discovering one's self.

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<sup>118</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.299

<sup>119</sup> “Who should accept the lowest in you, if you do not? But he who does it not from love but from pride, selfishness, and greed, is damned.” Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.300

If one does not face the lowest in one's self and accept that it is also a part of one's self, Jung observed that one will come to believe that the lowest comes from the outside, even though it is just as much a part of the individual. If this happens, then the individual will come to see the lowest within one's self within others, and will start to fight others, instead of confronting the same lowest within one's self: "You think that the other [the lowest] comes somehow from without and you think that you also catch sight of it in the views and actions of your fellow men which clash with yours. You thus fight the other and are completely blinded."<sup>120</sup>

This conclusion relates closely to the idea of the projection of the shadow discussed in chapter three. As such, here we can once again clearly observe how Jung's most important ideas came to him while he was writing the Red Book. In case one does accept the lowest within one's self, as opposed to projecting one's shadow upon the world, Jung observed that the following will happen: "He who accepts what approaches him because it is also in him, quarrels and wrangles no more, but looks into himself and keeps silent."<sup>121</sup> Jung questioned how many

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<sup>120</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.301

<sup>121</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.301

people must still suffer, before everyone sees that the real enemy is not without, but within:

“What suffering must be brought upon humanity, until man gives up satisfying his longing for power over his fellow man and forever wanting others to be the same. How much blood must go on flowing until man opens his eyes and sees the way to his own path and himself as the enemy.”<sup>122</sup>

## **Key Takeaways from the Red Book**

The most important topic present throughout the Red Book is the exploration of the opposites which can be found within the self. True meaning, according to Jung, can be found by looking for and uniting the opposites founds within one’s self, as opposed to believing that these opposites merely exist outside of one’s self.

It is also interesting to note the association which Jung made between his own character traits and the world around him. For Jung, the character trait thinking, became associated with order, knowledge, thoughts, and reason. Feeling, however, became connected to hell, the

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<sup>122</sup> Carl Jung, The Red Book, p.310

devil, the underworld, and chaos. For instance, when Jung entered the place of his feeling, he also found himself in hell. Nevertheless, this is also where Jung found what he was looking for; it is here that Jung ‘found Christ’. As such, it might be exactly the other way around for someone who usually focuses on feeling. For this individual, thinking may be associated with chaos and hell, however, this may also be the place where this person may find what he or she is looking for. As observed earlier, according to Jung, that which one needs the most, may be found where one least wants to look.

Below you can find a list of the most important observations to remember from the Red Book:

- According to Jung, there exist two separate dimensions or spirits, the spirit of the times and the spirit of the depths. The spirit of the times can be compared to our conscious, material world, where we spend most of our time. This world appears to be extremely important and everlasting and reason and knowledge are used to comprehend this world. However, according to Jung, the spirit of the times changes with each generation and is, therefore, less important and less permanent than we consider it to be. Instead, below all that is happening in the conscious world (the spirit of the times), resides another spirit/dimension, the spirit of the depths. This world is everlasting and can be compared to more of an unconscious/spiritual world. Parts of this

world may reveal themselves in dreams and fantasies. Jung believed that the soul also resides in this world.

- In order to explore the world of the spirit of the depths, one must stop relying on knowledge and reason. Instead, one must focus on the irrational and the unexplainable. Jung believed that, by combining the irrational and the rational, chaos and order, consciousness and unconsciousness, true meaning can be discovered. Within the world of the spirit of the depths, Jung saw his soul as an independent entity with whom he could interact.
- In order to discover the spirit of the depths one must turn one's desire, which is usually focused outwards, towards the material world, inwards, towards the world of the soul and the unconscious.
- Upon the initial exploration of the unconscious world of the soul (the spirit of the depths), one may be faced by emptiness, according to Jung; the world of the soul may be an empty desert. This is only natural, observed Jung, because this world has not yet been cultivated, since we spend most of our time focusing on the external world, other people, and our own thoughts. Our own thoughts are often a production of our ego which, as we have seen, is not the same as our entire self. After drawing attention away from these thoughts, we can focus on the world of the soul.
- Jung believed that the intentions one may set at the beginning of the exploration of the unconscious world may be limiting the



outcome of one's endeavour. According to Jung, it is not possible to know where true meaning may come from at the beginning of the exploration of the unconscious world.

- Jung became aware of a contradiction between thinking and feeling. Jung observed that some prefer thinking while others prefer feeling. Those who prefer to think do not develop their feeling, whereas those who prefer to feel do not develop their thinking.
- Jung indicated that ideals are also a part of the spirit of the times since they change with each generation. If one focuses too much on one's ideals, then they may replace one's own true identity. Ideals can be an important tool, but they should not be mistaken for inherent parts of one's identity.
- In order to fully discover the inner world, one must also face and accept the evil within (the shadow).

## **Chapter 5: Creating your own Red Book – Reconnecting with your Self through the Individuation Process**

### **Creating your own Red Book**

After reading through the summary of the Red Book, you have hopefully achieved some understanding of what a confrontation with the unconscious may look like. In this chapter we are going to attempt to create our own version of the Red Book. As mentioned previously, Jung stressed that he was not attempting to give his readers a certain teaching or instruction. Jung only illustrated his own way and approach to the individuation process. As such, it is also not the goal of this book to show you a certain way, instead, all the exercises, instructions, and explanations, including the ones in this chapter, merely function as an inspiration for you to find your own way.

You might want to ask yourself different questions than the questions I have written down for you later in this chapter. You may even, instead of writing some version of a Red Book, choose to express the images arising from the internal world in an entirely different form, such as a painting, for instance. Personally, I find the template used by Jung extremely useful, as such, this is also the one that I develop further here.

Whichever way you may find for yourself, Jung observed that one of the most important characteristics of a successful journey towards your own way, is that we should turn our creative energies inward. Jung managed to do so mainly through active imagination and automatic writing. As such, although we should all find our own way, it can be extremely valuable to pay attention to some of the lessons which Jung learned from his own experiences.

### **Active Imagination**

The journalling exercises so far have most likely been answered through the usual practice of consciously thinking about an answer and then writing the answer down. For the exercises from this moment onwards, I would like to invite you to use the active imagination technique, whereby you attempt to answer the question with as little possible influence from your ego-consciousness. As the editor of the Red Book, Sonu Shamdasani, observed, Jung believed that everyone has the capability to practice active imagination: “Everyone, he [Jung] claimed, had this ability to hold dialogues with him- or herself. Active imagination would thus be one form of inner dialogue, a type of dramatized thinking.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Sonu Shamdasani, *The Black Books*, p.101

Through practicing active imagination, various visions, images, or streams of words may be presented to the individual. These visions do not mean that you are hallucinating or losing your mind, they are simply the contents of your unconscious revealing themselves: “These “visions” are far from being hallucinations of ecstatic states; they are spontaneous, visual images of fantasy or so-called active imagination. The latter is a method (devised by myself [Carl Jung]) of introspection for observing the stream of interior images.”<sup>124</sup>

While practicing active imagination, Jung stressed that one must observe all that comes up objectively, that is, without any form of judgement. Moreover, your conscious mind may be telling you that these images, words, or fantasies are random, however, according to Jung this is only an attempt made by one’s ego to remain in control:

“All criticism must be suspended and the happenings observed and noted with absolute objectivity.

Obviously, too, the objection that the whole thing is “arbitrary” or “thought up” must be set aside, since it springs from the anxiety of an ego-consciousness which brooks no master besides itself in its own house.

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<sup>124</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.190

In other words, it is the inhibition exerted by the conscious mind on the unconscious.”<sup>125</sup>

## **Automatic Writing**

One of the most accessible methods of active imagination is automatic writing, whereby you just write or type directly without thinking about it. While doing so, your consciousness will not be able to interfere in the answer which you come up with. In this way you essentially start to create your own version of a Red Book. As mentioned, there are also other possibilities besides writing, such as drawing, painting, or even sculpting. In case you prefer these methods than these can accomplish the same goal.

Now I am going to list some questions based on the contents of the Red Book. As opposed to the previous questions in this book, I would like to invite you to answer the questions that follow using the automatic writing technique (writing without consciously thinking about what you are writing). Some questions asked previously will return here and it will be interesting to analyse how your answer potentially differs when using

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<sup>125</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.190

this technique. You may even revisit the exercises provided earlier in this book and answer them again using a form of active imagination.

I have also left some space for you to create your own questions, you can even create these questions using the active imagination technique; writing down a question without consciously thinking about it, i.e., just writing down the question that comes up. In case the space I have left is too little, then of course feel free to continue elsewhere.

After the first four parts of the journalling exercises, you can find the conclusion to this book. After the conclusion I have left some space for part five of the journalling exercises, where you can, in case you feel inspired, continue writing down whatever emerges from the unconscious.

## **Journalling Exercises for the Creation of your own Red Book**

### **Part 1: Shadow work**

“If you want to create yourself, then you do not begin with the best and the highest, but with the worst and the deepest.”<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.189

As observed, facing our shadow is an essential part of the individuation process. As discussed previously, we often avoid a confrontation with our shadow by projecting everything negative upon our surroundings: “For the meeting with ourselves belongs to the more unpleasant things that can be avoided as long as one can project everything negative into the environment.”<sup>127</sup> Facing our shadow may indeed be frightening, because we are going to be faced with the things we might not want to know. Which, however, as mentioned previously, may be exactly what we need to know.

Jung’s own confrontation with his shadow may be useful as an inspiration. Through his confrontation with his shadow, Jung learned that he always attempted to appear wiser than he was. He wanted others to comment on his wisdom, however, he always attempted to be modest, whereby he would feel dissatisfied if others did not comment on what he had accomplished: “You play at modesty and do not mention your merit, in the certain hope that someone else will do it for you: you are disappointed and withdraw hurt if this doesn’t happen.”<sup>128</sup> At the same time, Jung always attempted to appear calm and in control, however, after studying his shadow, Jung became aware that this is only an act since, deep within, he was not calm: “You preach hypocritical

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<sup>127</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.43

<sup>128</sup> Carl Jung, *The Black Books, Volume 5*, p.220

composure, but when it really matters, are you calm? No, you are not, pathetic liar.”<sup>129</sup>

In the following journalling exercises you are invited to explore your shadow. Several exercises in relation to the shadow are similar to those already provided in chapter three, however, this time, it might be interesting to answer the questions in relation to the shadow using the automatic writing method. In this way your conscious ego-personality will not be able to interfere in your answer.

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<sup>129</sup> Carl Jung, *The Black Books*, Volume 5, p.221



**Journalling exercise 20:** Which ‘negative’ characteristics do you not really want to admit you have? (Please remember to write down the answer without thinking, just let your pen, pencil, keyboard, etc... do its job.)

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**Journalling exercise 21:** What do you think will happen if you accept these parts of yourself? Is there a way in which you can turn these more negative characteristics into something positive? (Please remember to write down the answer without thinking)

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## **Part 2: Are you living by an example?**

Throughout the Red Book, Jung continuously stressed the importance of living one's own life, since, if you do not, who else should live it? "Woe betide those who live by way of examples! Life is not with them. If you live according to an example, you thus live the life of that example, but who should live your own life if not yourself? So live yourselves."<sup>130</sup> Living in accordance with an example set by others may often be done unconsciously. As such, throughout the following questions, it may be revealed whether or not this is the case for you.

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<sup>130</sup> Carl Jung, The Red Book, p.125

**Journalling exercise 22:** Are you living in accordance with certain examples set by others? (Consider for instance the example set by your parents, friends, famous actors, etc., again, remember to write down your answer without thinking, just let your pen/keyboard do its job.)

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**Journalling exercise 23:** If you are inspired by certain examples, can you explain why these examples inspire you? Are these examples truly in line with who you yourself are and what you believe in?

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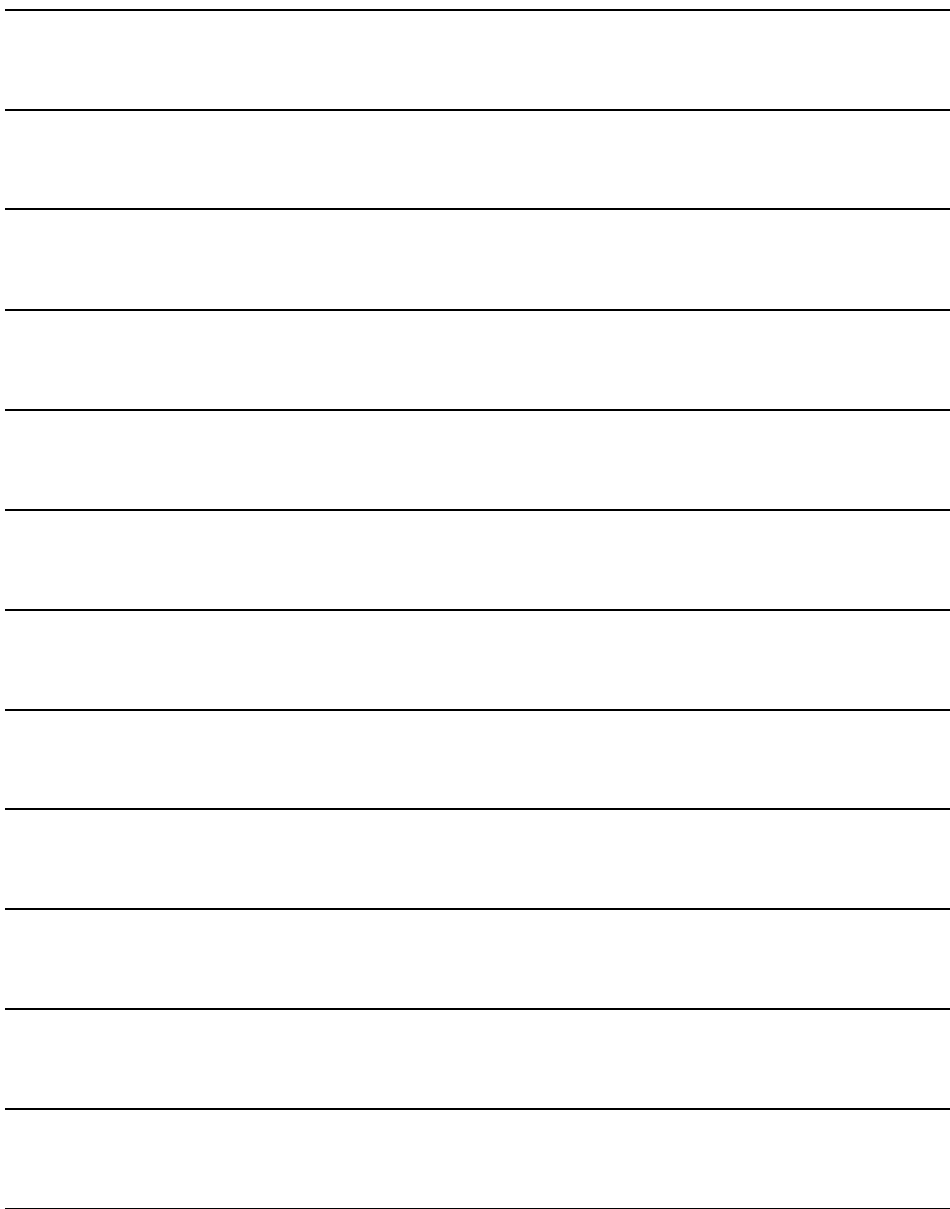
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### **Part 3: Your Virtues & Ideals**

Besides being wary when it comes to living in accordance with examples set by others, Jung also pointed to the danger of one's virtues and values. Jung believed that one may become a slave to one's virtues, in the same way as one can become a slave to one's vices: "If your virtues hinder you from salvation, discard them, since they have become evil to you. The slave to virtue finds the way as little as the slave to vices."<sup>131</sup>

In the case of virtues, an example may be that you consider forgiveness to be one of your most important virtues. However, upon carefully studying this virtue, you may realize you like to identify yourself with this virtue, and you may consciously forgive people who do you harm, while, in fact, you may remain, unconsciously at least, revengeful. In this example, forgiveness may be a part of your persona, and not of your true self. It is then important to learn that there is nothing wrong when you find it hard to forgive someone, since this is who you truly are.

The situation with ideals is similar to the situation with virtues. An example may be compassion. If you believe compassion is an extremely

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<sup>131</sup> Carl Jung, *The Red Book*, p.140

important ideal, it may be interesting to explore why this is the case; do you consider compassion to be truly important or do you consider it to be the ‘right’ thing to believe in? Remember that there is no right or wrong, you should not judge your self if you discover, for instance, that you do not truly believe in compassion. Being completely honest is the way in which you will discover which ideals, virtues, and values are truly yours, however, even then, Jung believed that these virtues should merely be used as a tool.

Since I recognize that this may be quite a demanding task, I will provide an example from one of my own virtues/ideals. I always considered patience to be one of my most important virtues. However, upon carefully studying this virtue through the questions you are invited to answer shortly hereafter, I realized that, whenever I consider myself to be patient, I am not patient at all. Deep down I am extremely impatient and anxious; my patience is only an act. The reason that I pretend to wait patiently is, therefore, not that I am truly patient, instead, it may be because I do not want to be seen as a burden to others.

**Journalling exercise 24:** Which of your virtues are important to you? Are these virtues truly a part of your self or are they just a part of one of your personas, i.e., are they just an act? (Examples of virtues are courage, forgiveness, loyalty, etc...)

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**Journalling exercise 25:** Which ideals are important to you? Are these ideals truly important to your self or do you simply believe in them because you consider them to be ‘right’. (Examples of ideals are equality, justice, freedom, compassion, etc…)

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## **Part 4: Your Self**

In this part some of the journalling exercises found earlier in the book return. I would like to invite you to answer these questions once again, this time, however, using the active imagination technique (Just write down whatever comes up).

**Journalling Exercise 26:** Who are you? (How would you describe your self?)

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**Journalling Exercise 27:** What is your goal and purpose in life?

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**Journalling Exercise 28:** Has your answer changed compared to your answer to these questions at the beginning of this book? If so, what may this tell you about your true self?

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## Chapter 6: Conclusions

As you may have observed throughout this book, Joseph Campbell's argument, that the individual is the true crucial mystery of our age, might be true. Unravelling this mystery on the individual level is a genuine achievement. As Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, a political prisoner of the Soviet Gulag system for many years, argued, the line separating good from evil can be found within the individual:

“If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people doing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?”<sup>132</sup>

By coming to understand the good and evil within us, we will be able to control our own darker personality, instead of these potentially evil elements, lurking deep within the unconscious, controlling us. In this way, we can turn them into something positive, instead of merely projecting them upon our environment.

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<sup>132</sup> Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, p.75



Imagine a world where everyone has gone through the process of individuation, including world leaders, soldiers, and scientists, for instance. As Jung observed, this is the only way in which we can prevent scientific developments from being used for the wrong evil purposes: “Can we not understand that all the outward tinkering and improvements do not touch man’s inner nature, and that everything ultimately depends upon whether the man who wields the science and the technics is capable of responsibility or not?”<sup>133</sup>

Jung questioned what horrors we must still experience before those in control become able to manage their own temptation to evil: “What depths of despair are still needed to open the eyes of the world’s responsible leaders, so that at least they can refrain from leading themselves into temptation?”<sup>134</sup> Managing one’s evil only becomes possible after we have come to recognize the evil existing within ourselves.

Jung continually stressed that we, as individuals, should take responsibility for our own actions and wellbeing. Jung argued that often an individual who is not living in line with his or her true self, looks to the outside world for a solution to the problem, a problem which such an

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<sup>133</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.254

<sup>134</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.267

individual believes comes from the outside as well. Instead, however, the problem originates from within the individual's own psyche: "He then looks to the State for salvation, and makes society pay for his inefficiency. He thinks the meaning of existence would be discovered if food and clothing were delivered to him gratis on his own doorstep, or if everybody possessed an automobile."<sup>135</sup>

In this case, the individuals' shortcomings, emerging from the individuals' unconscious, will continue to remain unconscious, whereby the individual will remain dependent upon his or her environment for salvation. As a result, the ability to think for one's self and decide for one's self what is good and evil, is not developed: "As a result of these prejudices, the individual feels totally dependent on his environment and loses all capacity for introspection. In this way his code of ethics is replaced by a knowledge of what is permitted or forbidden or ordered."<sup>136</sup> In such an instance, Jung observed that we cannot expect a soldier to carefully consider for him or herself whether an order given to him or her should be carried out or not.

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<sup>135</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.267

<sup>136</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.267

The same may apply to other individuals in various professions who are merely ‘following orders’. At the same time, however, it also applies to anyone who is just ‘going with the flow’ of the spirit of the times, without thinking for him or herself. As observed, such an attitude may result in mass psychoses, where people are fighting and opposing each other due to their inner division. As a result, the development of the individual will be hindered significantly.

It was the aim of this book to provide room for your own unique and independent self to express itself through the words, images, and everything else that emerges from the unconscious. As Jung observed, this is something we usually fail to do, even though we may be wondering about our dreams and fantasies, we do not investigate them thoroughly and just go about our day, ignoring whatever our unconscious is trying to tell us about who we truly are and what we should be doing.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> “That is what we usually neglect to do. We allow the images to rise up, and maybe we wonder about them, but that is all. We do not take the trouble to understand them, let alone draw ethical conclusions from them.” Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.229

As I wrote in my previous book as well, Jung's emphasize on self-exploration provides a welcome approach in modern times where we are almost forced to think according to certain ideological structures. Through Jung's approach, more responsibility is given to the individual to develop his or her own individual uniqueness and way of thinking. If we do not develop our own way of thinking, our individuality, then we will remain a subject to the spirit of the times:

“Jung's focus on the discovery of every individual's uniqueness, provides a refreshing reminder in our current age that no one should be capable of deciding for another individual how he or she should think. Jung's theories illustrate the relative unimportance of polarizing ideologies or other divisive political ideas in the face of each and everyone's individual uniqueness.”<sup>138</sup>

As a closing remark, it is important to note that, if, through this book, anything has been achieved when it comes to the discovery of the self, it is important to remember that self-discovery is a never-ending process. As Jung observed, the self is not a stable entity, instead, it will continue

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<sup>138</sup> N. Wauben, *Carl Jung and the Rebirth of the Soul*, p.110

to evolve, meaning that self-discovery is a lifelong journey. Hereafter I have left a few pages of space for you to continue this journey. Enjoy!

“You cannot at the same time be on the mountain and in the valley, but your way leads you from mountain to valley and from valley to mountain.”<sup>139</sup>

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*I would, find it extremely valuable if some of the readers of this book would be open to share their experiences with the creation of their own version of a Red Book, this can be done by leaving a review on Goodreads, Amazon, or any other place where you may have found this book.*

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<sup>139</sup> Carl Jung, The Red Book, p.265





























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