

Liber Novus sed non Ultimus

*Neoplatonic Theurgy for our Time**

Bruce MacLennan

Jung's *Red Book* is remarkable: visually stunning, imposing (both the original and the facsimile), mysterious, illuminating the development both of C. G. Jung as an individual and of Jungian psychology as a movement. From another perspective, as I will argue, *The Red Book* is unexceptional (except for its aesthetic quality) for it is a typical product of a series of theurgical operations such as have been practiced for thousands of years. As such, *The Red Book* is especially valuable for our postmodern age, because it is an example of how the spirit of the depths can be encountered and accommodated in our time.

Theurgy Then and Now

The word “theurgy” (Grk. *theourgia*) is commonly explained as “god-work” and contrasted with “theology,” or “god-talk.”¹ It has been suggested that in this compound “god” should be interpreted both objectively and subjectively: our action is directed toward the gods and their action is directed toward us; in both cases we are dealing with *theia erga*: divine works, deeds, or actions.² In theurgy gods and mortals work together toward common ends, but words (*logoi*) are not enough; ritual actions (*erga*) are required, and the gods' actions (*erga*) accomplish what human action cannot.³ The term was apparently coined in the late second century CE by the Platonists Julian the Chaldean and his son, Julian the Theurgist, but their psychospiritual practices have their roots in prehistory.

Neoplatonic theurgy is best understood as a refinement and philosophical systematization of much older spiritual practices. In fact, many of the sages of ancient Greece, including Pythagoras, Parmenides, Empedocles, and others in the Platonic tradition, have the characteristics of shamans, and it is possible the ancient Greeks learned shamanic practices in the seventh century BCE when they came into contact with people living north of the Black Sea; in archaic Greece these sages were called *iatromanteis* “healer-seers” (what better term for Jungian analysts?).⁴ Indeed, Peter Kingsley has argued that the story of Pythagoras' meeting with Abaris reflects a spiritual empowerment from a Central-Asian Avar shaman, which seeded the Western spiritual tradition. The famous golden dart (*belos*) was in fact a ritual *phurba*.⁵ Thus there may be

* This is an unedited preprint of a chapter to appear in Murray Stein and Thomas Arzt (Eds.), *Jung's Red Book for Our Time: Searching for Soul under Postmodern Conditions, Vol IV*, pp. 99–145 (Ashville: Chiron, 2020).

common roots to Tibetan Buddhism and Greek theurgy. Other important sources for theurgy are Egyptian ritual practices, including institutional practices, such as “opening the mouth” to ensoul statues,⁶ and individual practices, such as found in the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri.⁷ In addition there is a vertical continuum of motive and practice between theurgy and lower forms of magic (thaumaturgy, *goêteia*).⁸

As James Hillman observes, “There are striking likenesses between the main themes of Neoplatonism and archetypal psychology.”⁹ As a distinct development in the Platonic tradition, Neoplatonism has its origins in Alexandria, a melting pot of Graeco-Roman, African, and Middle Eastern cultures and spiritual traditions. Aside from adopting the term “theurgy,” Neoplatonism developed a theoretical foundation for theurgical practice, which survives primarily in the work commonly known as *De Mysteriis (On the Mysteries)* by Iamblichus of Chalcis (c.245–c.325 CE), a Syrian who became head (*diadokhos*) of the Platonic Academy in Athens and codified the Pythagorean curriculum.¹⁰ The work’s actual title is “The Reply of the Master Abammôn to the Letter of Porphyry to Anebô, and the Solutions to the Questions it Contains.” It is commonly supposed that “Abammôn” is a pseudonym adopted by Iamblichus, but another possibility is that Abammôn was his inner guide who dictated the text, analogous to Philemon’s role in *The Red Book*: “he said things which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I.”¹¹ (We may also think of Jung’s attribution of the *Septem Sermones* to Basilides, the Alexandrian Gnostic.) In the text Abammôn identifies himself as the teacher of Anebô, to whom the letter was addressed and who is perhaps the alter ego of Iamblichus.¹²

Theurgy *sensu stricto* developed in the context of Pagan Neoplatonism, but it was sometimes imported along with other Neoplatonic ideas into the Abrahamic religions. In Judaism theurgy is found especially in the practices of medieval Qabalah. In Christianity, Neoplatonism is most apparent in the works of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (late 5th – early 6th cent. CE), which often borrow directly from Proclus (412–485 CE), a Pagan philosopher and also a head of the Platonic Academy. Theurgy was practiced in some forms of esoteric Christianity, for example, Swedenborgianism and Martinism (18th cent.). In Islam, theurgy is found in the Sufi tradition, in the illuminationist (*ishraqi*) philosophy of Suhrawardî (1155–1191), and in Ibn al-Arabi (1165–1240) and al-Bûnî (d. 1225).¹³

Although theurgical practices were never absent from western Europe, they were advanced significantly by the formation of the Platonic Academy in Florence in 1462, arguably the single event most responsible for the Italian Renaissance. This was a direct consequence of George Gemistos’ (c.1360–1452) defense of Platonism against Aristotelianism at the Council of Union between the eastern and western churches at Ferrara and Florence in 1438–1439. He called himself Plêthôn and was, as was revealed after his death, a practicing Neopagan who hoped to establish Neoplatonism as a universal religion. Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), as founding head of the Platonic Academy, translated many Platonic and Neoplatonic texts, as well as the Hermetica, and explained theurgical practices in his *Three Books on Life*.¹⁴ As Hillman observed, “Ficino was writing, not philosophy as has always been supposed, but an archetypal psychology.”¹⁵ Ficino developed a Christian Neoplatonic theurgy, and his student Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) further integrated it with qabalah. The “Enochian” theurgy of John Dee (1527–1608) and Edward Kelley (1555–c.1597) is another well-known example of early modern theurgy.¹⁶

As will be explained later, theurgy makes use of ritual, which Robert Johnson defines as “symbolic behavior, consciously performed.”¹⁷ Therefore, theurgy is an important part of ceremonial magic, as presented, for example, in the influential *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*

by Henry Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535).¹⁸ In a monotheistic context, theurgy is understood not as congress with gods, but as a means for contacting angels or lesser spirits, and especially one’s “holy guardian angel,” as exemplified in *The Book of Abramelin*.¹⁹ Theurgical techniques—often in the context of Christian cabala—continued to be developed in nineteenth-century ceremonial magic orders, such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn with its numerous offshoots and competitors.²⁰

Theurgical practices also continued—albeit in a less magical/occult and more philosophical/scientific guise—in late nineteenth and early twentieth century movements such as theosophy, anthroposophy, and spiritualism. Historically, this brings us to the threshold of Jung’s discovery of active imagination and the beginnings of *The Red Book*. His experiments were not unprecedented, however, and Mary Watkins’ *Waking Dreams* provides a good survey of imaginative practices throughout history, and especially in the early history of psychology.²¹

There has been a resurgence of interest in practical theurgy in recent decades, evidenced by both books and groups. Books include Patrick Dunn’s *Practical Art of Divine Magic: Contemporary & Ancient Techniques of Theurgy*, which teaches theurgy as part of a Neopagan Neoplatonic practice.²² Brandy Williams’ *For the Love of the Gods: The History and Modern Practice of Theurgy, Our Pagan Inheritance* also takes a Neopagan Neoplatonic perspective, illuminating the historical continuity, and highlighting the often neglected contributions by women.²³ Jeffrey S. Kupperman’s *Living Theurgy: A Course in Iamblichus’ Philosophy, Theology, and Theurgy* is rooted in Neoplatonism but with a more Gnostic orientation.²⁴ Tony Mierzwicki’s *Graeco-Egyptian Magick: Everyday Empowerment* has a more Egyptian orientation grounded in the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri; it is focused on ascension through the celestial spheres.²⁵ Jean-Louis de Biasi’s *Rediscover the Magick of the Gods and Goddesses: Revealing the Mysteries of Theurgy* teaches theurgy in the Neoplatonic and Hermetic traditions, employing specifically the rituals of the Ordo Aurum Solis.²⁶ My own *Wisdom of Hypatia: Ancient Spiritual Practices for a More Meaningful Life* teaches a progressive system of spiritual practice through three “degrees of wisdom” corresponding to Epicurean, Stoic, and Neoplatonic spiritual practices and culminating in theurgy.²⁷ It is not limited to a Neopagan audience, but shows the value of these practices for people of many faiths, and even for agnostics and atheists. As reflected in these books, much contemporary theurgy is rooted in Neoplatonism and Hermeticism, which provide a theoretical basis for understanding theurgic practices, as will be explained later.

Less obviously, perhaps, theurgical practices are common in contemporary Neopaganism and Wicca.²⁸ In Wiccan ritual, for example, the priest and priestess may invoke the God and Goddess into themselves and then speak and act for these deities.²⁹ Neopagans similarly invoke the deities of their pantheons and expect to interact with them. This is called “aspecting,” which refers to various degrees of voluntary possession and requires training and skill in order to succeed. Direct interaction with deities is normal and expected in Neopagan and Wiccan religions, which is accomplished by effective rituals based on rich symbolic systems (drawing significantly from nineteenth-century ceremonial magic). Indeed, “a direct line of transmission can be traced from the Hermetic and Neoplatonic theurgy of late antiquity to the beginnings of the modern [Witch] Craft movement in the 1930s.”³⁰

Theurgy also continues in contemporary ceremonial magic, much of which is descended from or inspired by nineteenth century magical orders. In addition to “knowledge and conversation of one’s Holy Guardian Angel,” ritual practices include “assumption of god-forms,” a variety of deity yoga in which a practitioner internalizes a deity’s essence by

(physically or imaginatively) assuming an archetypal posture of a god and by using the god's name and other archetypal symbols.³¹ This is similar to Tibetan Buddhist deity yoga³² and to secular techniques such as deep trance identification.³³ In contrast, active imagination in analytical psychology avoids identification with and possession by unconscious personalities, since its goal is for the conscious ego to engage actively with unconscious content.

Another contemporary spiritual practice with many similarities to theurgy is the shamanic journey, which is a modern adaptation of shamanic practices known from many indigenous cultures.³⁴ It can be conducted by individuals or by groups with a guide. Drumming or rattling, often accompanied by chanting, is used to enter an altered state. The actual journey may begin with guided visualization, but practitioners soon encounter spirits with which they interact in an unscripted manner.³⁵ Soul retrieval is a frequent aim, such as Jung achieved in *Liber Primus*.

The less formal practices of channeling and automatic writing, which generally have a spiritual motivation, are also contemporary manifestations of theurgy and largely descend from late nineteenth and early twentieth century spiritualism and theosophy.³⁶ These practices have on occasion produced significant channeled documents (with both beneficial and pernicious consequences), including *Oahspe*, *The Urantia Book*, *The Book of the Law (Liber AL vel Legis)*, *A Course in Miracles*, and *Conversations with God*.³⁷ Channeling and automatic writing are typically passive processes compared to the active engagement or even confrontation with spirits characteristic of both theurgy and active imagination.

The Red Book

It is in this broader context that we can consider Jung's *Red Book*. It is a remarkable piece of work, with aesthetic, spiritual, intellectual, biographical, and historical value, but we can ask what sets it apart from these other products of channeling, automatic writing, and similar practices. Certainly we are struck by the aesthetics of *The Red Book*. Off and on for 16 years, Jung transcribed his experiences and interpretations with elegant gothic calligraphy into a massive red-leather bound volume symbolic of the importance of the experiences to Jung and to Jungians. In it he has used symbolically potent images to express what could not be expressed in words. Some of these images are famous and familiar from Jung's published works, others are less familiar.

The Red Book is also exceptional for the transformative effect it had on Jung, which we can see in his account of these experiences. It displays for us the value but also the difficulty of an extended theurgic operation such as he undertook. These experiences are an essential part of Jung's biography and help us to understand the intellectual and spiritual development of this seminal figure. Summing up his account in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, he says:

The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life—in them everything essential was decided. It all began then; the later details are only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious, and at first swamped me. It was the *prima materia* for a lifetime's work.³⁸

Reading *The Red Book*, we can see the accuracy of his claim, and so *The Red Book* is significant as the founding document of analytical psychology. It is the wellspring of a system of ideas that has had enormous influence in literature, art, anthropology, science, religion, and of course

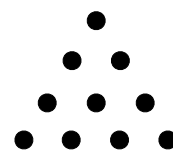
psychology. That is, while the ideas recorded in *The Red Book* were especially significant for Jung himself, they also have profound cultural significance.

We can compare *The Red Book* to the *Chaldean Oracles*, which resulted from the theurgy of the two Julians in the late second century CE and was said to have been “handed down by the gods” (*theoparadota*).³⁹ We read that Julian the Chaldean prayed that his unborn son (Julian the Theurgist) would have the soul of an archangel, and later effected a conjunction or alliance (*sustasis*: see below) of his son with the soul of Plato, which he was able to behold and to question at will.⁴⁰ For centuries the *Oracles* provided the central text around which Neoplatonists framed their philosophical commentaries; they were “the paradigmatic example of inspired, theurgic divination for the Neoplatonists,”⁴¹ much as *The Red Book* is the paradigmatic example of active imagination for Jungians. Unfortunately, the complete *Oracles* have been lost since at least the twelfth century and survive only in fragments, and so scholars are obliged to infer their content from surviving commentaries. Similarly, but in a different way, *The Red Book* was inaccessible for nearly a century, and Jungian scholars had to infer its content from some isolated extracts and from allusions in the writings of Jung and a few others who had seen it. (We may hope that someday a complete text of the *Chaldean Oracles* will turn up in a library somewhere!)

Nevertheless, despite the importance of *The Red Book* in the development of Jungian psychology, I think it is essential to recognize that it reflects a stage in Jung’s personal process of individuation, a particular developmental phase. He had the experiences he needed to have in order to progress. In the process, he made discoveries that are applicable to us all, but we cannot take *The Red Book* as gospel. It was indeed a revelation, but it was the personal revelation that Jung needed then. Like Jung, we need to separate the personal from the collective, and in addition we need to seek our own personal revelations. Theurgy is a means to do so.

Neoplatonic Cosmology

To explain Neoplatonic theurgy it will be useful to review briefly Neoplatonic cosmology from a Jungian perspective.⁴² This cosmology varies, of course, among Neoplatonic philosophers, but for our purposes the relatively simple system of Plotinus will suffice.⁴³ The four levels of reality are symbolized well by the Tetractys, the sacred symbol of the Pythagoreans (see figure).



Essential to any Platonic philosophy, of course, are the Platonic Forms or Ideas, which are understood as the immaterial and eternal causes of the things and processes in material or sensible reality. Traditionally sensible reality was understood in terms of the four elements (earth, water, air, fire) and their opposed qualities (warm/cool, moist/dry), and so it is represented by the lowest row of the Tetractys. This “Cosmic Body,” which exists in (four-dimensional) time and space, is the realm of Becoming. The realm of the Platonic Ideas, in contrast, is understood as a kind of Cosmic Mind or Intellect (Grk. *Nous*) in which the Ideas reside in timeless relationship. It is the realm of Being, of what is or is not, of duality (hence represented by the row of two in the Tetractys). Significantly for theurgical purposes, the Cosmic *Nous* is the ontological level where the gods, as atemporal essences, also reside.

The timeless, non-spatial realm of the incorporeal Ideas is opposed to the spatiotemporal material world, and according to Pythagorean principles, any *coniunctio oppositorum* requires a mediating third, which shares characteristics with each of the opposites. The necessary mediating element that joins the Cosmic Mind and Cosmic Body is the Cosmic Soul (Psyche) or *Anima*

Mundi, which is incorporeal, but exists in time and space; it is represented by the row of three. This intermediate level of reality is important as the realm where the *daimones* reside, for they are emanations of the gods and serve as the mediating spirits who allow time- and space-bound beings such as us to interact with the (timeless, non-spatial) gods.⁴⁴ They are the gods' ministers, for they carry out the eternal gods' intentions in the material world.

To complete the picture, Platonists postulate an ultimate principle of unity, The Ineffable One (*to arrhêton hen*), symbolized by the apex of the Tetractys. Because it is above the level of the Cosmic Mind, where duality resides, The One is paradoxical (like the Jungian Self): it cannot be said to exist or not to exist, or even to be or not to be. Therefore it is called *arrhêton* (unsayable, unspeakable, ineffable, not to be divulged). The Neoplatonic *Theology of Arithmetic* says that because The One organizes and contains everything potentially, it must comprise things that are opposed in actuality, and so it is called Androgyne; it is also named Proteus, after the many-formed god, and Chaos, out of which the gods are born. As the unifying principle of the cosmos, it is also called God, Providence, sun-like, and ruling.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it is ineffable and can be known only through mystical union. As Philemon tells the dead:

I begin with nothingness. Nothingness is the same as the fullness. In infinity full is as good as empty. Nothingness is empty and full. You might just as well say anything else about nothingness, for instance, that it is white, or black, or that it does not exist, or that it exists. That which is endless and eternal has no qualities, since it has all qualities.⁴⁶ ... We call this nothingness or fullness the *Pleroma*. Therein both thinking and being cease, since the eternal and endless possess no qualities.⁴⁷

Jung identifies the *Pleroma* with the *Unus Mundus*, the ultimate principle of cosmic unity.⁴⁸

Although Neoplatonic ideas and practices, including theurgy, have been absorbed into monotheistic religions, they are most at home in polytheism, which recognizes that the various gods and *daimones* have their own agendas and pull us in different directions. Some of them may be better or worse for us as individuals or for the world as a whole, but that does not imply they are absolutely good or evil. Monotheistic religions often feel obliged to interpret such differences as clashes of good and evil, whereas ancient polytheistic religions understood that the various (non-omnipotent, non-omniscient) gods might have conflicting intentions. The value of a polytheistic perspective has been recognized in archetypal psychology as well.⁴⁹ Quoth Philemon:

Happy am I who can recognize the multiplicity and diversity of the Gods. But woe unto you, who replace this incompatible multiplicity with a single God.⁵⁰

In Neoplatonism The Ineffable One is an abstract principle of unity and not a personified god per se; the actual gods are images or emanations of The One in the Nous. Although Platonists identify The One with The Good, it is a very abstract notion of the good, which is far removed from ethics and accommodates a diversity of gods with diverse interests. The Good itself is formless (because prior to the Forms), but the gods' desire for The Good causes them to "seek life, eternal existence, and activity."⁵¹ Therefore The Good

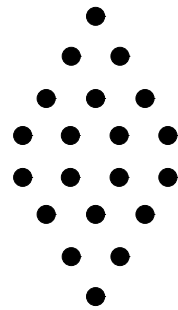
preserves those things in being and makes the thinking things think and the living things live, inspiring thought, inspiring life and, if something cannot live, inspiring it to exist.⁵²

Analogous to light, which makes visible things visible, The Good is the formless vital energy by which the Forms move us; psychologically, it is the libido of the archetypes, which is beyond good and evil.

As Philemon told the dead, “If the Pleroma had an essence, Abraxas would be its manifestation” for the nature of this god is effectiveness, which unfolds without limit.⁵³ However, “Abraxas is the God who is difficult to grasp” because he is “a God to whom nothing can be attributed, who has all qualities and therefore none”; Abraxas transcends God and Devil, good and evil.⁵⁴

Truly, this God is and is not, since from being and nonbeing everything emerged that was, is, and will be.⁵⁵

The microcosm mirrors the macrocosm, and the individual human is a mirror of the cosmos, which can be symbolized by an inverted Tetractys (see figure). Jung referred to the Gnostic symbol of the reversed cones in connection with his vision on the third day (“Resolution”).⁵⁶ Elijah told him “it is just the same, above or below.”⁵⁷ Heraclitus likewise taught: “the way up, down: one and the same.”⁵⁸



As we each have our individual material body, so we also have an individual *nous*, or intuiting mind, in which reside images of the eternal Ideas in the Cosmic Nous. These are the archetypal ideas for, as Jung explained, “‘Archetype’ is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic εἶδος.”⁵⁹ The archetypes are

active living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions.⁶⁰

Among the Ideas are the gods, and therefore many of the archetypes are eternal Forms of behavior or personalities. Jung called them “the ruling powers, the Gods, that is, images of dominating laws and principles, average regularities in the sequence of images, that the brain has received from the sequence of secular processes.”⁶¹ As the gods emanate their ministering *daimones*, so their archetypal structures in the individual psyche engender personal *daimones*, which develop along with the individual and adapt the archetypes to an individual’s life and experience. They are the complexes which develop from the archetypes and can possess or inspire a person, for “complexes behave like independent beings.”⁶² Moreover, our experiences are not completely personal, and many are shared with larger groups: families, communities, nations, cultures; therefore, not all *daimones* are personal (*oikeioi*) *daimones*, but some are shared within these groups.⁶³

Finally, in each person’s psyche there is an image of The Ineffable One, its paradoxical center and circumference, which Jung called the Self and the God-image within.⁶⁴ Proclus called it “the flower of the whole soul” (*anthos pasês tês psukhês*)⁶⁵ and the way by which we can approach The One:

For every thing therefore entering into the unspeakable depths [*arrhêton eisduomenon*] of its own nature, finds there the symbol of the father of all [*to sumbolon tou pantôn patros*].⁶⁶

Since the conscious ego is the spatiotemporal mirror of sensible reality, it is associated with the body; it is located in time and space. The conscious ego is also the home of the faculty of discursive reason, which is articulate and proceeds in time. The Neoplatonists recognized that

we have an unconscious mind as well, and Plotinus, for example, described unconscious archetypes and complexes:

For not everything which is in the soul is immediately perceptible, but it reaches us when it enters into perception ... And further, each soul-part [*psukhikôn*], since it is always living, always exercises its own activity by itself; but the discovery of it comes when sharing with the perceptive power and conscious awareness takes place. If then there is to be conscious apprehension of the powers which are present in this way, we must turn our power of apprehension inwards, and make it attend to what is there.⁶⁷

The unconscious mind is the home of the individual manifestations of the *daimones*, gods, and Ineffable One.

Neoplatonic Theurgy

With this background, we now can explain the theoretical basis of theurgy.⁶⁸ According to Neoplatonism, everything exists in lines or rays of emanation or irradiation from The One, which are called *seirai* (chords, chains, lines, series, lineages). That is, the gods and other archetypal Ideas are images descendent from The One, and the *daimones* and other psychical forms are images descendent from the gods and other Platonic Forms in the Nous. Finally, sensible objects and processes are material images of the psychical forms in the *Anima Mundi*. This includes humans, who also belong to these divine lineages. Proclus concludes:

Thus, all things are full of gods: Things on earth are full of heavenly gods; things in heaven are full of supercelestials; and each chain [*seira*] continues abounding up to its final members. For what is in the One-before-all [*heni pro tôn pantôn*] makes its appearance in all, in which are also communications between souls set beneath one god or another.⁶⁹

Objects and processes that are in the chains or lineages of particular archetypal Ideas incorporate the characteristic action or energy (*energeia*) of these Ideas; they bear the signatures of their archetypal progenitors. These objects and processes can then be used in theurgy for reconnecting with the *daimones* and gods in their lineage. Because everything in material reality partakes of divinity, material reality provides the means for contacting divinity. Proclus explains:

So by observing such things and connecting them to the appropriate heavenly beings, the ancient wise men brought divine powers into the region of mortals, attracting them through likeness. For likeness is sufficient to join beings to one another.⁷⁰

When an object or process is used in theurgy in this way it is called a *symbolon* (symbol, sign, permit, covenant) or *sunthêma* (pre-agreed signal, watchword, agreement). Such symbols tune theurgists' souls to particular archetypal energies and allow them to ascend a divine chain. As emanations of particular gods, these symbols have an inherent affinity for those gods. As Iamblichus explains,

it is the accomplishment of acts not to be divulged, and the power of unutterable symbols, understood solely by the gods, to whom these symbols relate, that establishes theurgic union. Hence, we do not bring about these things by intellection alone... For even when we are not engaged in intellection, the symbols themselves, by themselves, perform their appropriate work, and the ineffable power of the gods, to whom these symbols relate, itself recognizes the proper images of itself, not through being aroused by our thought.⁷¹

Since all material objects are divine emanations, they all have ritual power as symbols, though some are more potent than others. Therefore, theurgists invoke particular divine energies by using fruit, flowers, and other plants; metals, gems, and stones; oils and incenses; feathers, bones, and other animal products; and artifacts such as rings, icons, and statues. Theurgists also make use of more abstract symbols, “characters” (*kharaktêres*) such as diagrams and engraved figures. Hymns, chants, and prayers also function as immaterial theurgical symbols and use names, epithets, and mythological allusions to engage a particular divine energy. Finally, theurgists may apply electional astrology to the timing of a ritual, using in effect the configuration of the heavens as a symbolic connection. Theurgists combine appropriate symbols to create a powerful ritual instrument to contact a particular god (i.e., to constellate a particular archetype). According to Proclus,

the authorities on the priestly art [theurgy] have thus discovered how to gain the favor of powers above, mixing some things together and setting others apart in due order. They used mixing because they saw that each unmixed thing possesses some property of the god but is not enough to call that god forth. Therefore, by mixing many things they unified the aforementioned influences and made a unity generated from all of them similar to the whole that is prior to them all.⁷²

Ancient theurgists speak of congress with gods and goddesses, but I think Plutarch stated correctly that these interactions are with the *daimones* generated from these gods and goddesses.⁷³ If we understand deities to be outside of time and space (either literally or effectively so), then we cannot expect them to respond to our time-bound rituals; they are impassible. Their *daimones*, however, are specifically their projections into time and space, and into our individual psyches; their function is to adapt the divine eternal and universal archetypal gods to particular times, places, and individuals. Therefore *daimones* often go by the same names as their progenitor gods; as Plutarch says

if we call some of the *daimones* by the current name of gods, that is no cause for wonder; for each of them is wont to be called after that god with whom he is allied and from whom he has derived his portion of power and honor.⁷⁴

As a consequence, our theurgy is primarily with our personal *daimones*, which is as it should be, for this is the gods’ way of caring for us as individuals. Indeed, Jung said he communicated with the archetypal Anima only after many years of dealing with her emissaries.⁷⁵

Neoplatonic theurgical operations (*praxeis*) fall into five broad categories: incubation, animation, alliance, binding, and ascent.⁷⁶ Ancient Neoplatonists, like modern analytical psychologists, paid a lot of attention to dreams, and they practiced incubation (*egkoimêsis*)—often in caves, temples, or other sacred places—to seek dreams for divination or healing.⁷⁷ This practice built on a much more ancient tradition of seeking healing dreams in the temples of

Asclepius.⁷⁸ Rituals for dream divination are also found in the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri,⁷⁹ and a Neoplatonic treatise on dreams was composed by Synesius of Cyrene, a student of Hypatia.⁸⁰

“Animation” refers to the ensouling (*empsukhōsis*) of a divine image (*agalma*). An image of a deity is already a symbol of that deity, and the symbolic connection is strengthened by incorporating other appropriate symbols (e.g., attributes, characters, gems). The animation ritual (*telestikê*) is consummated by invoking the spirit into the image as it is completed (e.g., painting the eyes or mouth). This practice can be compared to the Egyptian ritual for “opening the mouth,” which was used to animate statues as well as mummies.⁸¹ Tibetan Buddhist *thangka* paintings, which are symbolically precise, provide another informative comparison: painting them is a contemplative practice in which the first mark is the deity’s seed syllable and “Last to be painted are the pupils of the deity’s eyes, which brings the deity to life, an act that is usually performed by the teacher.”⁸² I would be surprised if Jung’s creation of the images in *The Red Book* and around Bollingen were not similarly symbolically precisely executed.

Once the image has been animated, it can be used as a vehicle for communicating with the indwelling spirit. Although the operation is sometimes described as “making a god,” it is more like constructing a radio that operates on a particular frequency band. The god is not in the image (or anywhere else in space), but its particular energy is focused in the animated image. When the theurgist’s mind is similarly focused, the image becomes a shared space for their interaction.

Another fundamental theurgical operation is *sustasis*, which may be translated as meeting, conjunction, communication, protection, friendship, or alliance; it is the closest analogue to active imagination. By this process a theurgist establishes a relationship with a god or *daimôn*—a pact, if you will—for their mutual accommodation. Interests are communicated and arrangements are made. Julian the Theurgist is supposed to have had a *sustasis* with the soul of Plato through which he received the *Chaldean Oracles*.⁸³ The god or *daimôn* may teach the theurgist the symbols and rituals by which they are best invoked, as Proclus explains:

Beginning with these things and others like them, they gained knowledge of the daimonic powers, how closely connected they are in substance to natural and corporeal energy, and through these very substances they achieved association with the [*daimones*], from whom they returned forthwith to actual works of the gods, learning some things from the [gods], for other things being moved by themselves toward accurate consideration of the appropriate symbols. Thence, leaving nature and natural energies below, they had dealings with the primary and divine powers.⁸⁴

“Binding and release” (*desmos kai ekklusis*) is the operation by which a deity is invoked into another person so that they are possessed, “held down” (*katokhos*), by the god or *daimôn*. The goal is to allow more direct interaction with the deity than what might be possible through alliance or an animated image. In ancient times a prepubescent child was often used as the receiver (*dokheus*) because they were believed to purer receptacles (a result, I suspect, of having less developed personal *daimones*/complexes). It seems plausible that this operation is how Julian the Chaldean first introduced his son to the soul of Plato.

A fifth important operation is the theurgical ascent (*anagôgê*) by which a theurgist ascends a god’s chain to achieve contact and union with the deity. Although The One is ultimately ineffable, in the Platonic tradition it is said to have three primary attributes: its beauty,

wisdom, and goodness, which provide three primary paths of ascent correlated with the three “Chaldean virtues”: love (*eros*), truth (*alêtheia*), and trust (*pistis*).⁸⁵ These ascents (erotic, contemplative, operative) proceed through stages of awakening, purification, illumination, and union (*henôsis*, also called completion, *teleiôsis*, or deification, *theôsis*), which are symbolized by the Tetractys and are parallel to initiations in the ancient mysteries. If we are drawn upward by the beauty of The One, then we are following the Path of Love, which is outlined in Plato’s *Symposium*; the theurgist progressively contemplates beauty in the body, beauty in the soul, Ideal beauty, and ultimately the beauty of The One. This contemplative path has further elaborations in the Western tradition, including Ficino’s *Symposium*, Pico’s *Commentary on a Canzone of Benivieni*, Castiglione’s *Courtier*, and Leo (Hebraeus) Abrabanel’s *Dialogues of Love*. The Path of Truth is focused on the wisdom of The One and makes use of dialectical, allegorical, and symbolic reading and interpretation; on contemplation of the Ideas in nature; and ultimately on apophatic comprehension of The One. Finally we have the Path of Trust (*pistis*), which is directed toward the goodness of The One. This approach makes the greatest use of material symbols and is less contemplative and more ritualistic than the others. It may involve a ritual of death and rebirth.⁸⁶

Given these rites of ascent toward The One, the reader might ask about theurgical rituals of descent, which don’t fit so well with Platonic ideals of illumination and elevation (think of Plato’s cave allegory). Thus Neoplatonic theurgy might seem to be one-sided and unbalanced, repressing the dark depths.⁸⁷ In ancient Greek and Roman religion, deities were imagined, for the most part, above the earth, and so one ascended to reach them. Sacrifices to chthonic powers were often apotropaic rather than communal, intended to keep them away rather than bring them close. On the other hand, we have the significant example of the Eleusinian Mysteries which culminated in a direct encounter with Persephone, the queen of the underworld, which was a transformative, positive experience for initiates, but she ascended to greet the initiates.⁸⁸ Mithraic references pervade Jung’s oeuvre, and Mithraic initiations were conducted underground, but the initiatory degrees ascended through the planetary spheres.

Descents do appear in classical literature, notably, Odysseus’ necromancy in *Odyssey XI* and Aeneas’ *katabasis* in *Aeneid VI*, but these *nekyiai* are necromantic rituals to communicate with the ancestors, not to reach the gods. Most other *katabaseis* in classical mythology are to rescue someone from Hades (e.g., the descents of Orpheus and Heracles). One notable exception is Psyche’s descent in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius Madaurensis, the second century CE Platonist and mage. These literary descents were not pleasant affairs, but neither were Jung’s descents as described in *The Red Book*.

We also have hints of philosophical descents, which come closer to theurgy. For example, the surviving fragments of Parmenides’ poem appear to record a descent into the underworld and a meeting with Persephone, but we don’t know the details of the procedure.⁸⁹ Biographies of Empedocles say he ended his days by jumping into the crater of Mt. Etna, and the associated symbols suggest an underworld destination and an alchemical transformation in the central fire; this legend might record an imagined descent analogous to Jung’s descents in *The Red Book*.⁹⁰ Epimenides, according to Diogenes Laertius, slept in a cave for 57 years and emerged a prophet and healer.⁹¹ And Pythagoras is supposed to have gone with Epimenides into the cave on Mt. Ida, and also to have constructed an underground chamber into which he disappeared for an extended time during which he visited Hades.⁹² These stories might reflect theurgic descents in the imagination, which nevertheless could have been conducted in an actual cave or underground chamber. For example, consulting the Oracle of Trophonius involved

physical descent into a cave.⁹³ Moreover, incubation to consult the dead often took place in caves or underground chambers. Although, necromancy was widely proscribed in ancient Greece and Rome, since it disrespected and disturbed the dead, communication with the souls of the dead by dream incubation in the *nekromanteia* (oracles of the dead) at Cumae and other places was tolerated.⁹⁴ Therefore we do find some parallels to the descents to the underworld and communication with the dead that are described in *The Red Book*. In Neoplatonic theurgy one typically ascends to reach the gods and *daimones*, but similar techniques permit theurgic descents to the underworld; often the gods show us the way.

There is an apparent opposition between Olympian and Chthonic cult in ancient Greece: “On the one hand there is exaltation, on the other despondency.”⁹⁵ Nevertheless, here too is a *coniunctio oppositorum*, because

the opposition between Olympian and Chthonic constitutes a polarity in which one pole cannot exist without the other and in which each pole only receives its full meaning from the other. Above and below, heaven and earth together form the universe.⁹⁶

Often Olympian gods have (sometimes mortal) Chthonic counterparts (e.g., Zeus Hypsistos and Zeus Chthonios, Artemis and Iphigeneia). Thus ancient cult preserved a balanced approach to reality:

The contour of the everlasting Olympian figures provided a standard and sense of direction; and yet in the reality of the cult their darker counterparts were retained in such a way that superficiality was avoided.⁹⁷

In ancient Greek religion, heroes occupied an intermediate position between gods and mortals: on one hand, they received offerings and prayers like the gods; on the other, they had died, descended to the underworld, and had tombs like other mortals. They were not feared, but often invoked as saviors (*sôtêres*). In Neoplatonic theurgy they are understood as a kind of *daimôn* and invoked especially to aid in the spiritual ascent, for they counteract the material (*hulikoi*) *daimones*, who are responsible for embodiment and incarnation.⁹⁸ Some philosophers, including Parmenides and Plato, were venerated as heroes.

Jung’s experiences—both his spontaneous visions and active imaginations—were disturbing, even traumatic.

I stood helpless before an alien world; everything in it seemed difficult and incomprehensible. I was living in a constant state of tension; often I felt as if gigantic blocks of stone were tumbling down upon me. One thunderstorm followed another. My enduring these storms was a question of brute strength.⁹⁹

Are such experiences a necessary concomitant of theurgy? Must all prophets “purposely expose themselves to the danger of being devoured by the monster of the maternal abyss”?¹⁰⁰ While encounters with gods and *daimones* can be expected to be sometimes bizarre, uncomfortable, threatening, and even dangerous, with appropriate training, guidance, and initiation theurgy need not be traumatic. Although theurgy has existed for millennia, Jung was a pioneer in its use in psychology; he was flying blind, finding his way as he went, “a voyage of discovery to the other pole of the world.”¹⁰¹ Unlike ancient theurgists, he had not been properly initiated; he did not know what to expect. Thanks to his investigations and those of other analytical psychologists, we now know better how to engage in active imagination. The tradition of theurgy also provides a

context of practice that enhances the psychospiritual value of these practices and decreases their dangers.

Since Jung's experiences were more Gnostic than Neoplatonic, we might look to Gnostic theurgy for closer parallels to *The Red Book*, but not so much is known about ancient Gnostic practices. We may assume that they were similar to Neoplatonic theurgy, since Gnosticism and Neoplatonism shared a common Middle-Platonic background, and they were close enough for Plotinus to feel obliged to exaggerate the differences.¹⁰² I suspect, however, that Jung's Gnostic experiences in active imagination were compensatory to his conservative Protestant upbringing; it is what he needed to undergo. He needed to explore darkness and the depths of material embodiment, but others have different needs and different experiences. In any case, the theurgical practices for ascending to the gods are similar to those for descending into the depths of the collective unconscious; as Heraclitus taught, the way up and the way down are the same.

Neoplatonic Spirituality for our Time

How then should we—in the twenty-first century, a century after it was written—respond to *The Red Book*? It is a result of theurgical practices, which are central to Neoplatonism, and so I believe this philosophy provides a context for assimilating *The Red Book*. We must understand Neoplatonism, however, as a philosophy in the ancient sense, that is, not merely as a theoretical system or dogma, but as a comprehensive way of life.¹⁰³ In particular Neoplatonism implies an ethical orientation and a system of spiritual practices, including theurgy, which enables us to engage with the divine.

The Red Book immediately presents us with an opposition between the spirit of the depths and the spirit of this time, but Neoplatonism supplies the *coniunctio oppositorum* needed to heal the split. This may seem unlikely, given the common understanding of Platonism as dualistic, but Neoplatonism in particular is fundamentally monistic, for the material world is an emanation of The One through the hypostases, and therefore the material world is infused with divine energy, which is why theurgy works. This is the *Unus Mundus*, which Jung described as “the original, non-differentiated unity of the world or of Being.”¹⁰⁴

The Spirit of the Depths

Let us consider first how Neoplatonism accommodates the spirit of the depths. Jung and *The Red Book* show us the way forward, but we must take *The Red Book* as example not as scripture. As Jung wrote in it:

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. The way is within us, but not in Gods, nor in teachings, nor in laws. Within us is the way, the truth, and the life....

There is only one way and that is your way. You seek the path? I warn you away from my own. It can also be the wrong way for you. May each go his own way. I will be no savior, no lawgiver, no master teacher unto you. You are no longer little children.¹⁰⁵

Some of the insights he gained from his experiment are universal, but we cannot ignore its fundamentally personal nature; the spirits of the depths were addressing Jung and his soul specifically. Therefore we should follow his example; make the journey and engage with the spirits that *we* encounter. Jung also recommended that his patients produce their own Red Books.¹⁰⁶

In other words, we should recognize *The Red Book* as what is sometimes called a “spirit journal” (*liber spirituum*), that is, a record of interactions with the spirit world. The words and images in such a book, since they come from the depths, become numinous symbols, themselves capable of engaging the divine energies. The spirit journal becomes animated, ensouled. It becomes a potent ritual object, a talisman. Therefore, it is appropriate to give it a special embodiment, as Jung did his *Red Book*. “I should advise you to put it all down as beautifully as you can—in some beautifully bound book,” he is reported to have said, “for in that book is your soul.”¹⁰⁷

Jung’s *Red Book* is a concrete example of the importance of theurgical operations for the theurgist and potentially for the world. Most of our spirit journals, however, will have only personal relevance, but that is enough. Indeed, we should avoid the hubris and inflation of assuming that our theurgical experiences apply to others. Let each be the prophet of their own religion.

The Red Book is important as the result of a series of active imaginations (in which indeed the techniques of active imagination were developed) and as an example of the value of active imagination. To understand its significance for our times, we should understand active imagination as a particular theurgical technique. Like other forms of theurgy, active imagination seeks acquaintance and interaction with autonomous, eternal psychical beings: in psychological terms, archetypes and complexes; in Neoplatonic terms, gods and *daimones*. Both theurgy and active imagination use symbols as a means of establishing this contact, for symbols are images born of these archetypal Ideas and can be used to awaken their *energeia* in our psyches. Both use techniques of unguided visualization. Once the symbols have been deployed in a suitable ritual (“symbolic behavior, consciously performed”), the imagination is opened (the *temenos* is entered) as a space in which the ego can interact with whatever is present.

This interaction may be a source of aid and inspiration, as it was for ancient poets, philosophers, and sages, and as it was for Jung. But we must avoid an instrumental or transactional approach, attempting to satisfy the ego’s needs—to command the gods and *daimones*—which makes the fatal, Faustian mistake of assuming the ego is in control.¹⁰⁸ The difference is between theurgy (mutual accommodation of mortal and divine, assimilation of the ego to the gods) and thaumaturgy (attempting to satisfy the ego’s desires).

Jung describes his transformation into the Leontocephalus as a deification and compares it to the deification of Lucian in the Mysteries of Isis.¹⁰⁹ Active imagination, like other forms of theurgy, brings us into contact with the psychical powers that regulate our lives, and as a consequence of that experience, we may live better, which is the goal of ancient philosophy. In this way we come to reside in the psychical realm with the gods and *daimones*, “to become gods so far as possible for mortals” as Plato taught.¹¹⁰ This does not mean we should indulge in an inflated notion of our own perfection. As Plotinus said, “our goal is not to be morally flawless, but to be gods,”¹¹¹ which I understand to mean that the goal is to experience consciously the divine within oneself. We do this by coming to identify with our individual *nous*, which is the image of the Cosmic Nous, where the eternal gods reside.¹¹² As Plato says in the *Timaeus*:¹¹³

But he who has seriously devoted himself to learning and to true thoughts, and has exercised these qualities above all his others, must necessarily and inevitably think thoughts that are immortal and divine, provided that he gets a grasp on truth; and in so far as it is possible for human nature to partake of immortality, he will not in any degree lack this; and inasmuch as he is forever tending his divine part and duly magnifying that *daimôn* who dwells along with him, he must be supremely blessed [*eudaimona*].¹¹⁴

He will be blessed by a propitious indwelling *daimôn*.

A fundamental goal of Neoplatonic spiritual practices is *henôsis*, to become *one* (Grk. *hen*), that is, unified, undivided. Porphyry says that Plotinus experienced union four times while they were together, and that he himself had experienced it once in his 67 years.¹¹⁵ Likewise, the principal developmental goal of analytical psychology is individuation, to become *individuus* (undivided, indivisible), and the psychological process of individuation provides a framework for understanding the goals, means, and experience of *henôsis*.¹¹⁶ Porphyry (c.234–c.305 CE) explained what to do

if you would practice to ascend into yourself, collecting together all the powers which the body has scattered and broken up into a multitude of parts unlike their former unity to which concentration lent strength. You should collect and combine into one the thoughts implanted within you, endeavoring to isolate those that are confused, and to drag to light those that are enveloped in darkness.¹¹⁷

This entails understanding experientially one's relation to the gods and living accordingly. "Individuation is only for the few,"¹¹⁸ according to Jung, and Kingsley explains:

To engage in it one has to be swept up into a battle of the gods, which is why the Jungian process of individuation will never be for wimps.¹¹⁹

Jung's "most difficult experiment," which produced *The Red Book*, was confined to six years (1913–1919); it was apparently an arduous, even traumatic experience, but provided material that he spent the rest of his life assimilating.¹²⁰ Given his experience, one might ask whether ordinary people should practice active imagination or theurgy, or only those exceptional individuals with the talent, discipline, and psychological toughness. (For example, in his *Catafalque* Kingsley points to the exceptional characteristics and experiences common to Jung and other prophets.¹²¹) Indeed, Jung himself said of his experiment, "It must not by any means be supposed that the technique described is suitable for general use or imitation."¹²² Or, on the contrary, should ordinary people practice theurgy with a goal of psychological individuation?

In the early days of analytical psychology there was a concern that active imagination could unleash latent psychoses, and therefore that it should be practiced only under the guidance of a Jungian analyst.¹²³ "It is potentially dangerous, because it amounts to a self-induced psychotic episode," according to Anthony Stevens.¹²⁴ Similarly, instruction in theurgical techniques have often been confined to groups (e.g., spiritual, magical, or religious orders) in which these practices were learned under the guidance of a spiritual director who could monitor the aspirant's psychological health and spiritual progress; initiatory degrees formalized suitability and readiness to learn more advanced techniques. Nevertheless, there is growing recognition that active imagination is not dangerous for most people, especially if they have an

experienced guide, and we may say the same about theurgy in general.¹²⁵ Many of the pitfalls can be avoided by staying grounded in ordinary life, as Jung recognized:

Particularly at this time, when I was working on the fantasies, I needed a point of support in “this world,” and I may say that my family and my professional work were that to me. It was most essential for me to have a normal life in the real world as a counterpoise to that strange inner world. My family and my profession remained the base to which I could always return, assuring me that I was an actually existing, ordinary person. The unconscious contents could have driven me out of my wits.¹²⁶

“Balance finds the way.”¹²⁷ That is, balance must be preserved between the psychical and sensible worlds or, we might say, between the spirit of the depths and the spirit of this time. The theurgist visits and converses with gods and *daimones*, but is obliged to return and to bring back something that improves this earthly life:

This idea—that I was committing myself to a dangerous enterprise not for myself alone, but also for the sake of my patients—helped me over several critical phases.¹²⁸

Moreover, in active imagination or any kind of theurgy, it is essential to maintain an ethical stance, since the gods and *daimones* that we encounter are not bound by twenty-first century notions of right and wrong, nor of what might be best for the theurgist in conventional terms.¹²⁹ “For god all things are beautiful, good, and just,” says Heraclitus, “but humans have assumed some things unjust, some others just.”¹³⁰ Quite literally the gods are beyond good and evil, which are our responsibility, and so theurgists should have a secure ethical position. This, again, is an advantage of having an analyst or spiritual director, who can provide a sanity check, and is also why theurgical teachings are sometimes restricted to those who have demonstrated ethical readiness, as formalized in the degree systems of some spiritual orders. (This is, incidentally, the reason that theurgy is presented toward the end of my *Wisdom of Hypatia*, as part of the “third degree of wisdom,” which builds on the more mundane psychological tools of the lower degrees.)

Books such as Robert Johnson’s *Inner Work* show that active imagination is not difficult to learn, and basic theurgical techniques are not much more difficult (see the books cited previously¹³¹). Nevertheless we may wonder how many people will devote the time to learn the techniques and have the discipline for regular theurgical practice. Could it become a common practice, an ordinary part of people’s spiritual lives, or will it remain confined to specialists with the time and inclination?

“The path is very difficult,” Jung admits.¹³² Perhaps it is unrealistic to expect theurgy to become a common practice, but if it does not, how will non-theurgists come to know the spirit of the depths? Presumably vicariously, from the theurgical experiences of others and their interpretations, as we do reading *The Red Book* and Jungian psychological literature. But there is a danger that those who don’t practice theurgy will treat its products, such as *The Red Book*, with excessive reverence (or alternately, with disdain). (Observe your own reaction to some other representatives of the genre, such as *The Urantia Book* or *The Book of the Law*.) This is analogous I suppose to science; most people have neither the time nor skill and knowledge for scientific investigation, so they learn from the publicly verified scientific discoveries of others. Yet *The Red Book* warns:

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.¹³³

Liber Secundus is headed by two quotations from *Jeremiah* (23: 16, 25–28); the prophets “speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.” What are we to make of the insights gained through theurgy? Some theurgists call it “unverified personal gnosis” (often abbreviated “UPG”), for it is surely a *gnosis*, a knowing, but it might be particular to the receiver, not universally valid. Is the knowledge divine or daimonic? By “daimonic” I do not mean to suggest that there is anything evil (demonic) about it, only that it comes from one’s personal *daimones*, one’s psychological complexes, not from the archetypal gods common to all people. Even if it ultimately comes from the gods, it is conveyed by the *daimones* (the gods’ messengers), and hence contaminated by personal content.

Sometimes unverified personal gnosis can become verified, for example, when several people independently have the same experiences. Even in these cases, it is possible that the agreement is a result of culturally shared *daimones* (complexes) and of limited applicability. Nevertheless, verification is possible. Jung’s visions on the railroad to Schaffhausen were validated by the outbreak of the First World War, which revealed their collective character.¹³⁴ Amplification, which seeks parallels in other cultures, for example in mythology and folklore, can also help to verify universality. For example, the receipt of the Daoist *Secret of the Golden Flower* from Richard Wilhelm transformed Jung’s interpretation of his inner experiences.¹³⁵ Another instance was his meeting with the Indian whose guru was Shankaracharya, who had been dead for centuries, much like Jung’s guru Philemon.¹³⁶

Certainly, with practice one may become a better prophet (a messenger of the divine). One way is to become very familiar, through theurgy, with one’s personal *daimones*. By knowing them better, one can better filter out their distortions, their individual biases. Knowing your Shadow is, of course, a key instance. As *The Red Book* says,

He who comprehends the darkness in himself, to him the light is near. He who climbs down into his darkness reaches the staircase of the working light, fire-maned Helios.¹³⁷

I think it is also important to accept that we can never eliminate the personal element, and so we should have the humility to realize that our gnosis is personal and should not be imposed on others. No doubt, some will know their *daimones* so well or will have *daimones* so close to the collective archetypes that they will be able to bring forth universal truths. They are rightly called prophets and their pronouncements are revelations. However, the danger of inflation is so great, that it is best to assume that personal content is always present. I think *The Red Book* is a perfect example; it took the work of Jung and his colleagues many decades to separate the universal elements from those particular to Jung at that time in his life.

The Spirit of our Time

Neoplatonism can help us negotiate our relation to the spirit of the depths, but this ancient philosophy can also unite it with the spirit of *this* time. In particular, it supports a worldview that is compatible with contemporary science and helps to complete it.¹³⁸ In fact, Neoplatonism has been an important, if subliminal, influence in science for centuries.¹³⁹ Not surprisingly, perhaps,

the Jungian archetypes provide the linchpin connecting the realm of the Platonic Ideas to material reality, and scientists such as Wolfgang Pauli have noted the archetypal character of mathematics in science.¹⁴⁰

Modern physics is essentially Pythagorean in that it understands reality to obey mathematical laws (not merely to be conveniently describable by them). Indeed, physicist John Archibald Wheeler has proposed the idea, summarized in the slogan “it from bit,” that all there is to know about physical reality is exhausted by the mathematical relations among the quantities that we measure.¹⁴¹ There is no reason to postulate some separate “stuff” (a featureless substance) for the mathematics to be about, and so by Ockham’s Razor, we should not assume its existence. The “its” of physical reality (particles, fields, etc.) are no more than the “bits” of certain quantities (charge, spin, etc.) that are mathematically related. To put this in Neoplatonic terms, we may say that the material world is an emanation of certain mathematical principles and relations, which are sufficient to constitute its existence. As the Pythagoreans said, “All is number” (or something like that).¹⁴² Moreover the ontological primacy of mathematics is not limited to physics, and the science of complex systems has discovered the same mathematical laws operating at many levels of reality, from the physical, to the biological, to the neural, to the social, to the ecological. Thus we have a very Platonic view of the universe: to the extent that anything is something, it gets its being from mathematical Forms understood in a Platonic sense.¹⁴³

As understood in mathematics and used in science, mathematical objects are purely formal, but psychologically certain numbers and geometrical forms are numinous and potent archetypes. This was an essential insight of ancient Pythagoreanism and is an important element of spiritual traditions worldwide, as has been investigated by Jung, von Franz, and others.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, from a Neoplatonic perspective mathematical objects have both formal and psychical aspects, that is, as Platonic Forms and as their projections in psyche. Both aspects are necessary for a comprehensive understanding of mathematics.¹⁴⁵

Though empirically based, analytical psychology has progressed primarily through phenomenological investigation, often with a therapeutic aim, which has allowed it to develop independently of sciences based on physical experiment and external observation, such as biology, neuroscience, and ethology. A more comprehensive understanding of reality requires another *coniunctio oppositorum*, one that unifies inner and outer perception, and this has led to the emergence of disciplines such as neurophenomenology.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, we may anticipate a future *philosophia naturalis* that is both empirical and phenomenological, that is comprehensive in its scope, and that embraces the practical aim of living more wisely.¹⁴⁷

How can we unite the perspective of the spirit of the depths—as revealed in *The Red Book*, in subsequent investigations by Jung and others, in Neoplatonic texts, and in one’s own active imagination or theurgy—with the perspective of this time, the scientific worldview, which has transformed our lives in so many ways? I think the key is provided by Anthony Stevens and other analytical psychologists who have explained the archetypes as the psychical aspects of the human instincts (i.e., evolved behavioral adaptations of *Homo sapiens*).¹⁴⁸ These instincts regulate our perception, cognition, motivation, and affect to fulfill biological functions. Symbols then are numinous because they are the innate or learned *releasing stimuli* that activate an instinct, with consequent psychical effects.¹⁴⁹

From the perspective of an evolutionary Jungian psychology, archetypes are psychodynamical Forms that regulate patterns of behavior. They are universal—common to all people—and effectively eternal, because they change over millennia at evolutionary timescales.

They have purposes (functions), and because they are forms of human behavior, they manifest psychically as personalities with their own interests. Phenomenologically, they are our gods.¹⁵⁰ Though beyond good and evil, as the psychical correlates of the evolved behavioral adaptations of *Homo sapiens*, these archetypal gods have facilitated the survival and flourishing of our species; in this sense they are beneficent (though still often in conflict).¹⁵¹

These innate archetypal Forms or Ideas have emerged through materialistic processes following the laws of evolution. Thus there is a *coniunctio* between the phenomenal and the physical, between top-down idealism and bottom-up materialism. The Logos is incarnated.

The God of words is cold and dead and shines from afar like the moon,
mysteriously and inaccessibly: Let the word return to its creator, to man, and thus
the word will be heightened in man.¹⁵²

This evolutionary perspective is also broadly consistent with practical Neoplatonic philosophy and the experiences of Neoplatonic theurgists. An important divergence is that in traditional Neoplatonic philosophy the Ideas (including the gods) are literally eternal (i.e., atemporal, timeless), but considered as the psychodynamical correlates of the instincts, archetypes are only practically eternal (unchanging over many generations, but evolving from one astrological age to another).¹⁵³ For orthodox Platonists, this is a critical difference, and even slowly evolving archetypes cannot be gods, but traditional Platonic idealism has its own problems, and the evolutionary account may be the best *coniunctio* we can achieve for our time.

As I mentioned above, certain numbers and geometrical forms are archetypal, and *qua* mathematical objects, they are literally eternal. Therefore at least these archetypes may be Platonic Ideas in the traditional sense and mathematics may be the last bastion of traditional Platonic Idealism.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, Neoplatonists understand the gods to emanate from the *henads* (units), which emanate directly from The One, and the psychodynamics of the numbers connects their formal aspects to certain archetypal personalities (gods), as the Pythagoreans thought.¹⁵⁵ Therefore there is a place where the very Pythagorean science of this time coincides with the divine world of the depths.

Children of the Gods

When Jung was forced into a crucifixion posture (that is, assumed a god-form), Salome told him, “You are Christ.”¹⁵⁶ Jung described this as his deification and union with the inner Christ.¹⁵⁷

We should not bear Christ as he is unbearable, but we should be Christs, for then our yoke is sweet and our burden easy. This tangible and apparent world is one reality, but fantasy is the other reality. So long as we leave the God outside us apparent and tangible, he is unbearable and hopeless. But if we turn the God into fantasy, he is in us and is easy to bear.¹⁵⁸

Jung also said that his “master” Philemon was “the same who inspired Buddha, Mani, Christ, Mahomet—all those who may be said to have communed with God,”¹⁵⁹ all divine or semidivine figures. Is there any sense in which Jung is the son of God?

Although in Christianity the son of God is unique, ancient Pagans recognized many children of the gods (*theopaidēs*). In fact, it is an archetypal pattern: some god (often Zeus in Greek mythology) impregnates a mortal woman, who gives birth to a semidivine mortal who has a special connection to the god; sometimes they are deified at death (e.g. Asclepius, Heracles,

Orpheus, Dionysos, Harmonia, Helen). Less frequently, a goddess takes a mortal lover and bears a semidivine child (e.g., Achilles, Aeneas).

Outside of mythology, there are historical instances. For example, Pythagoras was rumored to be a son of Apollo, whose Delphic oracle informed Pythagoras' (mortal) father Mnesarchus that his wife was pregnant with a son,

a child surpassing in beauty and wisdom those who had ever yet existed, and he would be an enormous help to the human race in its manner of living.¹⁶⁰

So Mnesarchus renamed his wife Pythais and named the unborn child Pythagoras, both after Pythian Apollo.

Pythais of all Samians the most fair,
Zeus-loved Pythagoras to Phoebus bare.¹⁶¹

On the basis of his congress with the gods, Pythagoras gained theological knowledge and reformed religious practices (e.g., allowing initiates to make only bloodless offerings).

For they say that he had of a certainty social intercourse with the gods, and learnt from them the conditions under which they take pleasure in men or are disgusted, and on this intercourse he based his account of nature. For he said that, whereas other men only make conjectures about divinity and make guesses that contradict one another concerning it—in his own case he said that Apollo had come to him acknowledging that he was the god in person; and that Athene and the Muses and other gods, whose forms and names men did not yet know, had also consorted with him though without making acknowledgement.¹⁶²

Indeed, as here, the priestly art is often taught by the gods themselves.

Likewise, "Plato was a divine man, an Apollonian man" (*theios, Apollōniakos*).¹⁶³ When Plato's parents married, according to legend, his mother was already (though not obviously) pregnant by Apollo, who had come to the virgin in a vision. After her husband repeatedly tried to have sex with her, Apollo visited him in a dream and commanded that he leave her alone for ten months until Plato's birth, which was on Apollo's birthday, the seventh day of the month Thargêliôn. (Socrates was born on the sixth of Thargêliôn, which was Artemis' birthday; she was born the day before Apollo so she could assist as midwife; likewise, Socrates was the philosophical midwife to Plato.) Thus divine Plato was born of a virgin, and Athenians often said Apollo begat two sons: Asclepius and Plato, one to cure bodies, the other to cure souls.¹⁶⁴

He did not issue from a mortal bed;
A god his sire; a god-like life he led.¹⁶⁵

Plato's parents took the infant to Mt. Hymettus, intending to sacrifice to Apollo and the Muses. While they did so and the infant slept in a thicket of myrtles, bees came and filled his mouth with honey, an omen of eloquence and divine inspiration.¹⁶⁶

Twenty years later, Socrates had a dream in which a cygnet took flight from an altar in the Academy and landed in his lap. Suddenly becoming a full-fledged swan, it flew up to the heavens, serenading both gods and mortals "so that all who heard it were spell-bound."¹⁶⁷ The next day, as Socrates related his dream, Plato was introduced to him for instruction, and Socrates exclaimed, "This is the swan from the Academy!" The swan of course is Apollo's bird, and the

god's birth on Delos was celebrated by circling, singing swans. Plato called himself "a fellow-slave with the swans," implying that he was in the lineage of Apollo. Socrates' dream foretold that Plato would reach intellectual perfection under his tutelage and that no one would be able to resist his words.¹⁶⁸

Shortly before his death, Plato dreamed that he was a swan leaping from tree to tree, escaping the fowlers' grasp. It was interpreted to mean that everyone would try to grasp Plato's meaning, but none would succeed, for his words supported many interpretations. According to some reports, Plato willed himself to die on his birthday, thus completing exactly 81 years, further proof of his Apollonian origin, for 81 is a perfect number, with beginning, middle, and end, the square of the number of Muses. Therefore the Magi came to Athens to sacrifice to Plato, thinking him more than mortal. The Delphic oracle confirmed that Plato's monument should be honored like images of the gods.¹⁶⁹

Apollonius of Tyana (c.15–c.97 CE) was a Pythagorean sage, whose miracles were said to rival those of Jesus. Just before his birth, his mother had a vision of Proteus in the form of an Egyptian *daimôn*, and she asked about her child. He said she would bear himself, "Proteus, the god of Egypt," who was proverbial for his wisdom and versatility.¹⁷⁰ At the hour of his birth, she was told in a dream to go into the meadow with her attendants and to pluck flowers. Having fallen asleep, she was surrounded by swans, which cried out loud, whereupon she awoke and gave birth. A thunderbolt fell to earth and then rose into the air, which foretold

the great distinction to which the sage was to attain, and hinted in advance how he should transcend all things upon earth and approach the gods, and signified all the things that he would achieve.¹⁷¹

Local people said Apollonius was a son of Zeus.¹⁷² Naturally, he was handsome and a quick learner. The archetypal pattern is apparent.

Simon Magus presented himself variously as the Power of God, Christ, Son, Father, or Holy Spirit, and he presented Helen as an incarnation of divine Thought (*Ennoia*), Universal Mother, or Holy Spirit.¹⁷³ In *The Red Book*, they have been transformed into Philemon and Baucis, as Philemon acknowledges to his master (Christ), who comes as a blue shade.¹⁷⁴

Although it is not the same as being the son of a god, when Proclus was born in Constantinople, we are told that Athena, the protecting deity (*poliouchos*) of the city, assisted his birth, and that "she might be considered the cause of his life."¹⁷⁵ She encouraged him to study philosophy and he had an especially close connection with her. In later life a dream revealed to him that he was in the chain or lineage of Hermes (*Hermaïkês seiras*) and also the reincarnated soul of the Pythagorean Nicomachus.¹⁷⁶

Are these stories merely hagiolatry? What does it mean for a mortal to be the child of a god (*theopais*)? Is it more than a metaphor or a projection? Highly individuated persons can, with some accuracy, be called children of the gods. They have integrated the archetypes into consciousness, and in this sense are living a divine life. Such a life is an expression of the Self, that is, of the God-image within. However, individuation is the end of long and conscious developmental process; I don't think anyone is born individuated.

There is another possibility. If the archetypes are the psychical aspects of the evolved regulatory patterns of human life, then a person might be considered a child of an archetypal god if their psyche were genetically dominated by that archetype. Perhaps all people have, to varying degrees, a dominant deity, and this is the meaning of each person being in the lineage or chain (*seira*) of some god. If a person's psychology is especially closely aligned with their "parent"

god or goddess, they could be an effective prophet of that deity. With some accuracy, we could call them a child of that god. Therefore, from the perspective of evolutionary Jungian psychology, it is reasonable to describe Jesus as a son of God, but also to acknowledge Pythagoras, Plato, and Apollonius of Tyana as sons of gods. Moreover, in this view children of the gods continue to be born, and perhaps Jung can be considered such.

Theurgy, Quo Vadis?

Jung titled *The Red Book* “Liber Novus”; certainly it was new for him and for his time, but neither the first of its kind nor the last. Though it might seem to be the arcane result of an esoteric process, it need not be so. From the perspective of a postmodern reinterpretation of Neoplatonism, it is a typical result of a valuable spiritual practice, known as theurgy in Neoplatonism and by other names in other traditions. It is the technique that brings us into contact with the gods and *daimones*, which helps us to live our lives wisely, even divinely; “to become gods so far as possible for mortals.” Not everyone will have the time, motivation, or discipline to practice theurgy, but it is not too difficult and many can learn it (as many are now learning mindfulness meditation).

Theurgy might seem like a peculiar practice for twenty-first century Westerners living in a culture dominated by science and technology, but it need not be so if we understand the practices and experiences phenomenologically, as the psychical aspects and experiences of processes best addressed from the interior and with an attitude that acknowledges their reality. This will, I think, enrich our scientific worldview immeasurably and help us to live richer, deeper lives. Then, like Baucis and Philemon, we may welcome the gods into our lives and humbly entertain them.

Endnotes

- 1 A theologist (*theologos*) is explained as one who gives an account (*logos*) about the gods (*theoi*), whereas a theurgist (*theourgos*) is one who works on, performs, or even makes (*ergazomai*) divine things (*theia*). See Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* (Nouvelle édition per Michel Tardieu, Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978), Excursus IV.1. The best account of the history, motivation, and methods of theurgy is still Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).
- 2 Shaw, op. cit., 5.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr., 1951), ch. V. See also App. II for his (rather prejudiced) discussion of theurgy.
- 5 Peter Kingsley, *A Story Waiting to Pierce You: Mongolia, Tibet, and the Destiny of the Western World* (Point Reyes: Golden Sufi, 2010).
- 6 Jeremy Naydler, *Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts: The Mystical Tradition of Ancient Egypt* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2005), 190–2.
- 7 The Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri are translated in Hans Dieter Betz et al., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Henceforth, *PGM*.
- 8 Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 302–3.
- 9 James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 198.
- 10 Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries: Translated with Introduction and Notes*, Writings of the Greco-Roman World, No. 4, tr. E. C. Clarke, J. M. Dillon, and J. P. Hershbell (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).
- 11 C. G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, rev. ed., recorded & ed., A. Jaffé, tr. R. & C. Winston (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 183. Henceforth, *MDR*.
- 12 Neither Anebô nor Abammôn (spelled variously Ἀβάμμων, Ἀβάμων, Ἀβάμων) are otherwise known, and there are various conjectures what the name “Abammôn” might mean (if anything). See discussions in Crystal Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 158–9; in Iamblichus, op. cit., xxxiii–vii; in Shaw, op. cit., 21–2, n. 1.
- 13 See for example John D. Martin III, *Theurgy in the Medieval Islamic World: Conceptions of Cosmology in al-Buni’s Doctrine of the Divine Names* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 2011).
- 14 Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life: A Critical Edition and Translation with Introduction and Notes*, ed. & tr., Carol V. Kaske & John R. Clark (Temple: Med. & Renn. Texts & Studies, 1998). See also *Marsilio Ficino: The Book of Life*, tr. C. Boer (Woodstock: Spring, 1994).
- 15 James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 202. See also Hillman, “Plotino, Ficino, and Vico as Precursors of Archetypal Psychology” in *Loose Ends: Primary Papers in Archetypal Psychology* (Zurich: Spring, 1975), 146–69.
- 16 See, for example, Peter French, *John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus* (New York: Dorset, 1989).

- 17 Robert A. Johnson, *Inner Work: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 102.
- 18 Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy Written by Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim*, tr. J. Freake, ed. & ann., D. Tyson (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1993).
- 19 Abraham Von Worms, *The Book of Abramelin: A New Translation*, ed. G. Dehn, tr. S. Guth (Lake Worth: Ibis Pr., 2006).
- 20 R. A. Gilbert, *The Golden Dawn: Twilight of the Magicians* (Wellingborough: Aquarian, 1983).
- 21 Mary Watkins, *Waking Dreams*, 3rd ed. (Woodstock: Spring, 1984).
- 22 Patrick Dunn, *The Practical Art of Divine Magic: Contemporary & Ancient Techniques of Theurgy* (Woodbury: Llewellyn, 2013).
- 23 Brandy Williams, *For the Love of the Gods: The History and Modern Practice of Theurgy, Our Pagan Inheritance* (Woodbury: Llewellyn, 2016).
- 24 Jeffrey S. Kupperman, *Living Theurgy: A Course in Iamblichus' Philosophy, Theology, and Theurgy* (London: Avalonia, 2013).
- 25 Tony Mierzwicki, *Graeco-Egyptian Magick: Everyday Empowerment* (Stafford: Immanion, 2006).
- 26 Jean-Louis de Biasi, *Rediscover the Magick of the Gods and Goddesses: Revealing the Mysteries of Theurgy* (Woodbury: Llewellyn, 2014).
- 27 Bruce J. MacLennan, *The Wisdom of Hypatia: Ancient Spiritual Practices for a More Meaningful Life* (Woodbury: Llewellyn, 2013).
- 28 See for example Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 2006), chs. 4, 7. See also Sarah M. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America* (New York, Columbia Univ. Pr., 2004), ch. 2.
- 29 Douglas Ezzy, "The Ontology of Good and Evil: Spirit Possession in Contemporary Witchcraft and Paganism," in Andrew Dawson (ed.), *Summoning the Spirits: Possession and Invocation in Contemporary Religion* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2011), 179–97.
- 30 Donald H. Frew, "Harran: Last Refuge of Classical Paganism," *The Pomegranate*, issue 9, Lammas, 1999.
- 31 See, for example, Aleister Crowley with Mary Desti and Leila Waddell, *Magick: Liber ABA, Book Four, Parts I–IV*, ed. Hymenaeus Beta (York Beach: Weiser, 1994), 232, 604–5.
- 32 The Dalai Lama, *How to Practice: The Way to a Meaningful Life*, tr. J. Hopkins (New York: Pocket Books, 2002), ch. 11.
- 33 Shawn Carlson, Jess Marion, with John Overdurf, *Deep Trance Identification: Unconscious Modeling and Mastery for Hypnosis Practitioners, Coaches, and Everyday People* (New York: Changing Mind Publishing, 2014).
- 34 For example, Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980).
- 35 Robert E. Ryan, *Shamanism and the Psychology of C. G. Jung* (London: Vega, 2002).
- 36 Pike, op. cit., ch. 3. Watkins, op. cit., ch. 3.
- 37 John Ballou Newbrough, *Oahspe: A Kosmon Bible in the Words of Jehovih and his Angel Embassadors* (London: Oahspe Publ. Assoc., 1882). Urantia Foundation, *The Urantia Book* (Chicago: Urantia Found., 1955). Aleister Crowley, *The Book of the Law (Liber AL vel Legis)* (York Beach: Weiser, 1976/1909). Helen Schucman (ed.), *A Course in Miracles*

- (New York: Viking, 1976). Neale Donald Walsch, *Conversations with God, Book 1: An Uncommon Dialogue* (New York: Putnam's, 1995) and subsequent books.
- 38 Jung, *MDR*, 199.
- 39 Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 1.
- 40 Lewy, op. cit., 224 and n. 195, 225 n. 97, 253 and n. 96. The ultimate source is Michael Psellus' *De aurea catena*.
- 41 Addey, op. cit., 10.
- 42 A more detailed discussion of Neoplatonic theurgy in the context of evolutionary Jungian psychology is in Bruce MacLennan, "Individual Soul and World Soul: The Process of Individuation in Neoplatonism and Jung," in T. Arzt and A. Holm (eds.), *Wegmarken der Individuation: Studienreihe zur Analytischen Psychologie Band 1* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006), 83–116.
- 43 A short, elegant introduction is Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus, or the Simplicity of Vision*, tr. M. Chase, intr. A. I. Davidson (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1993).
- 44 In the ancient Greek of Homer, a *daimôn* (pl., *daimones*) had the broad sense of a divine being, including a god or goddess. As early as Hesiod, *daimôn* had a narrower sense as an intermediate being, incorporeal like the gods, ministering to them, and serving as an intermediary between gods and mortals. Angels and heroes were considered to be kinds of *daimones*. Needless to say, *daimones* are not evil per se, and so I use the Greek word rather than English "demon."
- 45 See pseudo-Iamblichus, *The Theology of Arithmetic: On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers*, tr. R. Waterfield (Grand Rapids: Phanes/Kairos, 1988), 35–40.
- 46 C. G. Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani, tr. John Peck, Mark Kyburz, and Sonu Shamdasani (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 346.
- 47 Ibid, 347. Philemon goes on to list some of the pairs of opposites that the Pleroma comprises; it is comparable to the Pythagorean table of opposites.
- 48 Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. H. Read, M. Fordham, & G. Adler (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953–78; New York: Pantheon, 1953–60, and Bollingen Foundation, 1961–67; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967–78), vol. 14, ¶660. Henceforth cited as *CW*.
- 49 For example, David Miller, *The New Polytheism* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1982); James Hillman, *The Essential James Hillman: A Blue Fire*, intr. & ed. T. Moore (London: Routledge, 1990), ch. 2.
- 50 Jung, *The Red Book*, 351.
- 51 Plotinus, *The Enneads*, ed. L. P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2018), 6.7[38].20.22–4. This discussion is based on Kevin Corrigan, "Essence and Existence in the Enneads," in L. P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1996), ch. 5.
- 52 Plotinus, *Enneads*, 6.7[38].23.22–4.
- 53 Jung, *The Red Book*, 349.
- 54 Ibid., 349–50.
- 55 Ibid., 351.
- 56 Ibid., 252.

- 57 C. G. Jung, *Introduction to Jungian Psychology: Notes of the Seminar on Analytical Psychology Given in 1925*, rev. ed., ed. S. Shamdasani & W. McGuire (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr., 2012), 104.
- 58 André Laks and Glen W. Most, *Early Greek Philosophy III: Early Ionian Thinkers, Part 2*, Loeb Classical Library 526 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 2016), [9] Her. D51 [= DK 22B60].
- 59 Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶5.
- 60 Jung, *CW* 8, ¶154.
- 61 C. G. Jung, *Collected Papers in Analytical Psychology*, 2nd ed., ed. C. E. Long (Covent Gardens: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1920), 432.
- 62 Jung, *CW* 8, ¶253.
- 63 Bruce J. MacLennan, “Evolutionary Neurotheology and the Varieties of Religious Experience,” in Rhawn Joseph (ed.), *NeuroTheology: Brain, Science, Spirituality, Religious Experience*, 2nd ed. (San Jose: University Press, California, 2003), 317–34.
- 64 Jung, *CW* 11, ¶401; *CW* 12, ¶44.
- 65 Majercik, *op. cit.*, 138.
- 66 Proclus, *The Theology of Plato*, tr. T. Taylor (Somerset: Prometheus Trust, 1995), II.8, p. 161, my transl.
- 67 Plotinus, *Enneads*, 5.1.12. Greek text in A. H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1984), 5.1.12.6–8, 11–15.
- 68 Shaw, *op. cit.*
- 69 Proclus, “On the Hieratic Art According to the Greeks,” translated in Brian Copenhaver, “Hermes Trismegistus, Proclus, and the Question of a Philosophy of Magic in the Renaissance,” in Ingrid Merkel & Allen G. Debus (eds.), *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in Early Modern Europe* (Washington: Folger Books, 1988), 79–111. This short essay by Proclus (85 lines in Greek) is perhaps the most concise description of theurgy; it is probably an excerpt from his (lost) commentary on the *Chaldean Oracles* (Lewy, *op. cit.*, 477). Copenhaver’s chapter includes the Greek, Ficino’s Latin translation, and his own English translation.
- 70 Proclus, “Hieratic Art.”
- 71 Iamblichus, *op. cit.*, II, 11 (96.13–97.2, 4–7).
- 72 Proclus, “Hieratic Art.”
- 73 Plutarch, “The Obsolescence of Oracles,” in *Moralia*, Vol. V, tr. F. C. Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library 306 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1936), 417B, 417E, 418E.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 421E, transl. modified.
- 75 Barbara Hannah, *Encounters with the Soul: Active Imagination* (Boston: Sigo Pr., 1981), 244.
- 76 Majercik, *op. cit.*, 25–31.
- 77 Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy*, 284–8.
- 78 C. A. Meier, *Healing Dream and Ritual: Ancient Incubation and Modern Psychotherapy* (Einsiedeln: Damon, 2009).
- 79 E.g., PGM IV.3172–3208, VII.359–69, 664–85, 703–26, 740–55, 795–845, XII.144–52 in Betz, *op. cit.*
- 80 Synesius, *On Dreams*, trans. A. Fitzgerald, at <https://www.livius.org/sources/content/synesius/synesius-dreams/> (accessed 2019-07-14).
- 81 Naydler, *loc. cit.*

- 82 Don Farber, *Tibetan Buddhist Life* (New York: DK Publishing, 2003), 168–9.
- 83 Lewy, op. cit., 253 and n. 96.
- 84 Proclus, “Hieratic Art,” translation modified.
- 85 Lucas Siorvanes, *Proclus: Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Pr., 1996), 192–3.
- 86 Majercik, op. cit., 36–45.
- 87 On this, see James Hillman, *The Dream and the Underworld* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979).
- 88 Carl Kerényi, *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*, tr. R. Manheim (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1967).
- 89 Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness: Golden Sufi, 1999).
- 90 Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy*, esp. chs. 17–19.
- 91 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, Vol. I*, Loeb Classical Library 184 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1980), bk. I, ch. 10.
- 92 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, Vol. II*, Loeb Classical Library 185 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1980), bk. VIII, chs. 3, 41. Diogenes’ source presents the story as a trick, but it was likely an imaginative ritual.
- 93 Meier, op. cit., ch. VII.
- 94 On ancient necromancy, see Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1985), 166–9.
- 95 Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1985), 199.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 202.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 203.
- 98 Shaw, op. cit., 132–3.
- 99 Jung, *MDR*, 177.
- 100 Jung, *CW 7*, ¶261.
- 101 Jung, *MDR*, 189.
- 102 Plotinus, *Enneads*, 2.9[33], called “Against the Gnostics.” For a detailed analysis, see Zeke Mazur, *Introduction and Commentary to Plotinus’ Treatise 33 (II.9) Against the Gnostics and Related Studies* (Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2019) and citations therein.
- 103 See, for example, Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, tr. M. Chase, intr. & ed. A. I. Davidson (New York: Blackwell, 1995); Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* tr. M. Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- 104 Jung, *CW 14*, ¶659.
- 105 Jung, *The Red Book*, 231.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 216.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 216.
- 108 Watson, op. cit., 109.
- 109 Jung, *Intro. Jungian Psych.*, 106. The event is in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*.
- 110 On the *homoiôsis theô* (assimilation to god), see for example, *Theaetetus*, 176AB, *Republic*, 500CD, *Timaeus*, 90BC.
- 111 Plotinus, *Enneads*, 1.2[19].6.
- 112 John M. Armstrong, “After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming Like God,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004), pp. 171–83.

- 113 David Sedley, “Becoming Godlike” in Christopher Bobonich (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Ancient Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2017), 319–37.
- 114 Plato, *Timaeus*, 90BC, tr. R. G. Bury with modifications.
- 115 Porphyry, “Life of Plotinus,” in Plotinus, *Enneads*, ed. L. P. Gerson, §23.
- 116 Bruce MacLennan, “Psychological Effects of Henôsis,” in J. Finamore and T. Nejeschleba (eds.), *Platonism and its Legacy: Selected Papers from the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies* (Westbury: Prometheus Trust Pr., in press), 405–25, compares *henôsis* to the process of individuation, as described by Jolande Jacobi.
- 117 Porphyry, *Porphyry’s Letter to His Wife Marcella*, tr. A. Zimmern, intr. D. R. Fidler (Grand Rapids: Phanes, 1986), 10.
- 118 Quoted in Peter Kingsley, *Catafalque: Carl Jung and the End of Humanity* (London: Catafalque Pr., 2018), vol. 2, 523.
- 119 Kingsley, *Catafalque*, vol. 1, 89.
- 120 Jung’s reference to *Black Book 1* as “my most difficult experiment”: see *The Red Book*, 200n67.
- 121 Kingsley, *Catafalque*.
- 122 Jung, *Intro. Jungian Psych.*, 55.
- 123 Jung, *CW* 8, 68.
- 124 Anthony Stevens, *Private Myths: Dreams and Dreaming* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1995), 241.
- 125 Johnson, *op. cit.*, 137–8.
- 126 Jung, *MDR*, 189.
- 127 Jung, *The Red Book*, 294, n. 24.
- 128 Jung, *MDR*, 179.
- 129 Johnson, *op. cit.*, 189–95.
- 130 André Laks and Glen W. Most, *Early Greek Philosophy III: Early Ionian Thinkers, Part 2*, Loeb Classical Library 526 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 2016), [9] Her. D73 [= DK 22B102].
- 131 See notes 22–27.
- 132 Miguel Serrano, *C. G. Jung and Hermann Hesse: A Record of Two Friendships*, tr. F. MacShane (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 61.
- 133 Jung, *The Red Book*, 231.
- 134 *Ibid.*, 231; Jung, *MDR*, 176.
- 135 Jung, *MDR*, 197.
- 136 *Ibid.*, 184.
- 137 Jung, *The Red Book*, 272.
- 138 Bruce MacLennan, “Neurophenomenology and Neoplatonism,” *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, 13 (2019), 1–17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/18725473-12341422>.
- 139 Bruce MacLennan, “Neoplatonism in Science: Past and Future,” in R. Berchman and J. Finamore (eds.), *Metaphysical Patterns in Platonism: Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern* (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2007), 241–59; reprinted (Westbury: Prometheus Trust, 2014), 199–214.
- 140 Wolfgang Pauli, “The Influence of Archetypal Ideas on the Scientific Theories of Kepler,” in C. G. Jung and W. Pauli, *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* (New York: Pantheon, 1955), 147–240.

- 141 John Archibald Wheeler, “Recent Thinking about the Nature of the Physical World: It from Bit,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 655 (1992), 349–64. doi: 10.1111/j.1749-6632.1992.tb17083.x
- 142 Aristotle’s statements about Pythagorean doctrine are inconsistent. At *Met.* 986a17 he says they “consider number to be a first principle” and “the material of things,” and at 987b25 that “numbers are the causes of Being in everything else.” Or Pythagoreans said that the principles of mathematics are the principles of everything (985b25) and that “things exist by imitation of numbers” (987b11). Or that “numbers are the ultimate things in the whole physical universe” and “the elements of numbers [are] the elements of everything” (986a1–4). See the discussion in Leonid Ja. Zhmud’. “‘All Is Number’? ‘Basic Doctrine’ of Pythagoreanism Reconsidered,” *Phronesis* 34, no. 3 (1989): 270–92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4182338>. Translations are from Aristotle, *The Metaphysics, Books I–IX*, tr. H. Tredennick, Loeb Classical Library 271 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 1980).
- 143 Mark Balaguer, *Platonism and Anti-Platonism in Mathematics* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1998), ch. 8 argues that there are only two defensible philosophies of mathematics and that there is no fact of the matter to decide between them. They are *full-blooded Platonism*, which is approximately the view that all self-consistent mathematical objects exist in a Platonic sense, and *fictionalism*, which in practice is not much different.
- 144 See for example Marie-Louise von Franz, *Number and Time: Reflections Leading Toward a Unification of Depth Psychology and Physics*, tr. Andrea Dykes (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Pr., 1974); A. Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (New York: Oxford University Pr., 1993).
- 145 Bruce MacLennan, “The Psychodynamics of the Numbers,” in J. Finamore and E. Perl (eds.), *Platonic Interpretations: Selected Papers from the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the International Society for Neoplatonic Studies* (tentative title) (Westbury: Prometheus Trust Pr., in press)
- 146 C. D. Laughlin, Jr., J. McManus, and E. G. d’Aquili, *Brain, Symbol and Experience: Toward a Neurophenomenology of Consciousness* (Boston: New Science Library, 1990); B. J. MacLennan, “The investigation of consciousness through phenomenology and neuroscience,” in J. King and K. H. Pribram (eds.), *Scale in Conscious Experience: Is the Brain Too Important to be Left to Specialists to Study?* (Mahwah: Lawrence-Erlbaum, 1995), 25–43; F. Varela, “Neurophenomenology: A methodological remedy for the hard problem,” *J. Conscious. Stud.* 3 (1996), 330–49.
- 147 I have sketched my idea of what this might be in Bruce J. MacLennan, “Living Science: Science as an Activity of Living Beings,” *Prog. Biophys. Mol. Biol.* 119 (2015), 410–19; Bruce J. MacLennan, “*Philosophia Naturalis Rediviva*: Natural Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century,” in special issue, “Contemporary Natural Philosophy and Philosophies,” *Philosophies* 3(4) (2018), 38; <https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies3040038>; reprinted in Gordana Dodig-Crnkovic and Marcin J. Schroeder (eds.), *Contemporary Natural Philosophy and Philosophies— Part 1*, Basel: MDPI, 2019, 5–19.
- 148 Anthony Stevens, *Archetype Revisited: An Updated Natural History of the Self* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 2003). See also Meredith Sabini, “The Bones in the Cave: Phylogenetic Foundations of Analytical Psychology,” *J. Jungian Theory Pract.* 2 (2000), 17–33.
- 149 Stevens, *Archetype Revisited*, ch. 4.

- 150 Bruce J. MacLennan, “Evolutionary Jungian Psychology,” *Psychological Perspectives* 49 (1) (2006), 9–28.
- 151 MacLennan, “Evolutionary Neurotheology” and “Evolution, Jung, Theurgy.”
- 152 Jung, *The Red Book*, 270.
- 153 Noticeable evolution of the archetypes occurs on a timescale comparable with the astrological ages (100 generations, 2200 years): MacLennan, “Evolution, Jung, Theurgy” and “Evolutionary Jungian Psychology.”
- 154 Balaguer, op. cit.
- 155 MacLennan, “Psychodynamics of the Numbers.”
- 156 Jung, *The Red Book*, 252.
- 157 Jung, *Introduction to Jungian Psychology: Notes of the Seminar on Analytical Psychology Given in 1925*, rev. ed., ed. S. Shamdasani & W. McGuire (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Pr., 2012), 106.
- 158 Jung, *The Red Book*, 283.
- 159 From Cary Baynes letter of Jan. 26, 1924 in Jung, op.cit., 213.
- 160 Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Way of Life*, tr. J. Dillon & J. Hershbell (Atlanta: Scholars Pr., 1991), 35.
- 161 Adapted from translation of Thomas Stanley, *The History of Philosophy*, 4th ed. (London: Millar, 1743), Part IX, ch. 1, p. 394.
- 162 Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (London: William Heinemann, 1912), I.i.
- 163 L. G. Westerink, *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, 2nd ed., Platonic Texts and Translations, Vol. V (Westbury: Prometheus, 2011), ch. I, pp. 2–3.
- 164 There are many differences among the biographies of Plato; for an overview, see George Boas, “Fact and Legend in the Biography of Plato,” *The Philosophical Review* 57 (1948), 439–457. Details here are drawn from biographies by Diogenes Laertius (III.1), Hesychius, and Olympiodorus; translations can be found in George Burges (transl.), *The Works of Plato*, Vol. VI (London: Bohn, 1865), 179, 229, 232. Other material is from Westerink, op. cit., ch. I, Plutarch, *Symposiacs* VIII (Quest. 1), and Stanley, op. cit., V, 1, p. 161.
- 165 Stanley, loc. cit. (spelling and capitalization modernized).
- 166 Olympiodorus (in Burges, op. cit., 233) and Stanley, op. cit., V, 2, p. 163.
- 167 Westerink, loc. cit.
- 168 Diogenes Laertius III, 5 and Olympiodorus (both in Burges, op. cit., 177–8, 233, 236), Apuleius, *Doctrines of Plato* I, 1 (Burges, op. cit., 324), Westerink, loc. cit., and Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo*.
- 169 Boas, op. cit., 239; Westerink, loc. cit.; Stanley, op. cit., V, 12, p. 180.
- 170 Philostratus, op. cit., I.iv.
- 171 Ibid., I.v.
- 172 Ibid., I.vi.
- 173 G. R. S. Mead, *Simon Magus: An Essay on the Founder of Simonianism Based on the Ancient Sources with a Re-evaluation of his Philosophy and Teachings* (Chicago: Ares, 1985), 8–9, 11, 15, 19–30. The ultimate sources are Irenaeus (*Contra Haereses*), Tertulian (*De Anima*), Hippolytus (*Philosophumena*), Origen (*Contra Celsum*), Philastrius (*De Haeresibus*), Epiphanius (*Contra Haereses*), Hieronymous (*In Matthaicum*), and Theodoretus (*Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium*). Of course, none of these are friendly witnesses to the life of Simon or to his ideas and practices.
- 174 Jung, *The Red Book*, 359 and n. 153.

- ¹⁷⁵ Marinos of Neapolis, *The Extant Works or the Life of Proklos and the Commentary on the Dedomena of Euclid*, intr. & tr. A. N. Oikonomides (Chicago: Ares, 1977), 38–9. In their translations, both Oikonomides and K. S. Guthrie identify the goddess with Athena/Minerva, as in I. F. Boissonade, *Marini Vita Procli Graece et Latine* (Lipsiae: Weigel, 1814), 79–80, 83.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 80–1.