

Jung's Gnosis in the Context of the Transition of the eons

Luís Paulo Brabo Lopes

Article



Abstract

In this article, we discuss the context of the transition of the Eons as a period characterized by the modification of the constellation of dominants (the archetypes) of the collective psyche, that is, by a metamorphosis of the gods. This situation is accompanied by the death (or loss of effectiveness) of the myth that characterized the previous Eon and by the irruption of the collective unconscious into individual experience, to form the myth of the new Eon. It was not by chance that in late Antiquity, precisely in the transition from the eon of Aries to the eon of Pisces, Gnosticism flourished, and, later, Christianity crystallized. And it is precisely in the transition from the eon of Pisces to the eon of Aquarius, the period in which we find ourselves today, that Jung's gnosis is situated. Since the publication of the Red Book, the central role of active imagination in the Jungian method has become clear, as has the importance of numinous experiences in the unfolding of the process of individuation. A more in-depth discussion is needed here about the importance of this process not only in terms of expanding the individual's consciousness, but also in relation to the role it plays in the birth of the myth of the new aeon.

Keywords: Gnosticism, Gnosis, Red Book, active imagination.

Introduction

The publication of *The Red Book* by C. G. Jung brought the record of his confrontation with the unconscious to the public. As we have seen, Jung's delve took him to profound regions, traversing personal contents and arriving at the collective unconscious (the locus of the birth of the image of God). We can easily say that *The Red Book* is a book that synthesizes Jung's gnosis, that is, the understanding he acquired through the assimilation of the collective unconscious. Through the numinous experiences described in *The Red Book*, Jung found, in the first person, the personification of his soul and the figure of the wise Philemon. Jung not only allowed the unfolding of these archetypal fantasies from a mysterious mythopoetic source (the unconscious)

but also participated in this myth as a protagonist, dialoguing and living transformative experiences with the figures he encountered.

Considering this, we can now have more clarity about what Jung meant when he stated that his psychological concepts were not philosophical, but strictly empirical. This is the type of empiricism that Jung often refers: the immediate numinous experience and its unfolding into a personal myth through active imagination. Thus, Jung first came to know his *anima* through his visions and only later developed the concept of *anima* to integrate his psychology, from gnosis to episteme. If we relate the theoretical developments of Jung's psychology after his crisis of transformation with the experiences and elaborations in *The Red Book*, many of his later theoretical elaborations originated in these inner experiences, or at least were strongly influenced by them.

For example, one of Jung's important insights (which would be elaborated much later in the book *Aion*) concerning the transformation of the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche (the archetypes) in the transitional periods between the eons (i.e., eras) already appears in a painting by Jung at the beginning of *Liber Novus* (*The Red Book*).

It is not a presumption that drives me, but rather the medical conscience that advises me to fulfill my duty to prepare those few who can listen to me for the events that are in store for humanity and that signify the end of an eon (era). As we know from the history of ancient Egypt, these are psychic phenomena of transformation that always occur at the end of a Platonic month and the beginning of the following month. Apparently, they are modifications in the constellation of psychic dominants, of the archetypes, "the gods", that cause or accompany secular transformations of the collective psyche. This transformation has been fed into historical tradition and has left its mark. First, in the transition from the era of Taurus to Aries. Then, the era of Aries to Pisces, whose beginning coincides with the Christian era. Now, we are approaching the great change that can be expected with the entry of the spring equinox in Aquarius. (JUNG, OC, vol. X/4, §589).

Jung understood that during the transition period between eons, a metamorphosis of the gods occurred, or rather, a modification in the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche. Thus, in each eon, there is an archetypal constellation in the background and, therefore, there is a specific myth. Therefore, the end of an eon is accompanied by the loss of effectiveness of the myth (the death of the image of God) and inaugurates a moment of the greater irruption of the collective unconscious into the consciousness of individuals to give birth to the new myth, which will come to characterize the new eon. A modification of the psyche of each individual evidently accompanies such a modification of the dominants of the collective psyche. Thus, a new eon also means a new man.

1. The role of gnosis in the transition of the eons

In the image on the first page of *The Red Book* (Figure 1), Jung illustrates a serpent rising from a flaming cauldron under the sea. The serpent reaches the sky and appears crowned. In the lower region of the image, there is a chthonic/underwater scene, just above it, there is an ancient city and then the daytime sky. The detail that I would like to highlight, however, is found above this terrestrial sky, in which we can see the Moon, next to it, the planet Saturn, and some other small planets, indicating the astrological region of the planetary spheres. Further up we see the region of the fixed stars with their zodiacal constellations. On the left, there is the constellation Cancer, followed by Gemini, Taurus, Aries, Pisces, and Aquarius. Between the representation of Pisces and Aquarius, there is a bright Sun highlighted.



Figure 1. Image of the first page of C. G. Jung's *The Red Book*.

Source: *The Red Book – Liber Novus* (JUNG, 2017)

Anyone familiar with Jung's work and his later writings, especially the book *Aion*, will have no difficulty in realizing that Jung is addressing in this image the question of the transition from the current eon of Pisces to the next eon, linked to the constellation of Aquarius. The constellation of Cancer, in the upper left corner of the image, evidently

refers to the eon of Cancer (8700 BC to 6600 BC)¹ followed by the eon of Gemini (6600 BC to 4400 BC), then Taurus (4400 BC to 2300 BC), Aries (2300 BC to 150 BC), arriving at the current eon of Pisces (150 BC to the present day) and finally indicating the coming eon of Aquarius. The bright Sun highlighted between Pisces and Aquarius constellations shows our current moment of transition between these two eons.

The main figure is a representation of the Sun's precession through the zodiacal circle. Astrological observations have linked the vast history of mankind to the gradual shift of the Sun's equinoctial position relative to the fixed stars, a transposition within the zodiac marked every 2,200 years or so. At the dawn of Christianity, the Sun had entered the astrological house of the two fishes, the constellation Pisces. The solar rising point is about to transition into the zodiacal constellation Aquarius, inaugurating a new era.

In the first four words of *Liber Novus – Der Weg des kommenden*, 'The Way of the Coming One' – Jung has interwoven a graphic history of the past and a prophecy of the future. [...] The preface statement of *Liber Novus* offers, in a complex image, the mythopoetic proclamation of a new eon that is approaching: an epochal turning point in human history (OWENS, 2011, p. 256, own translation)².

For Jung, the enormous spiritual effervescence in late Antiquity that marked the historical moment of the emergence of Gnosticism did not occur by chance since it was precisely the period of transition between the eons of Aries (ending around 150 BC) and Pisces. This historical development would culminate in the emergence of Christianity, an expression of the new archetypal constellation that characterizes the eon of Pisces.

It would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of *Gnosticisms* in the plural since we are not talking about a single, structured school with a cohesive body of doctrine; on the contrary, Gnosticism is characterized by immense plurality. There were many schools and masters, each with their texts and bringing influences from distinct traditions, such as Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, and Persian, to name just the principal ones. We know, however, that the Gnostic groups were

¹ The dates of all eons presented are approximate, as there is no consensus on them.

² In the original: "The key figure is a depiction of the sun's precession through the zodiacal circle. Astrological observations linked the vast human story with the gradually shifting vernal equinoctial position of the sun relative to the fixed stars, a transposition within the zodiac marked every 2,200 years or so. At the dawn of Christianity, the sun had entered the astrological house of the two fish, the constellation of Pisces. Now the solar spring point is on the cusp of transitioning into the zodiacal constellation of Aquarius, inaugurating a new age.

Within the first four words of *Liber Novus – Der Weg des kommenden*, 'The Way of the Coming' – Jung intertwined a graphic tale of the past and a prophecy of the future. [...] The preface declaration of the *New Book* offers, in complex image, the mythopoetic proclamation of a coming new aeon: an epochal turning-point in the human story" (OWENS, 2011, p. 256).

not isolated from each other. Despite the plurality, there was a lively exchange between them because even with the differences there was something in common that united all these groups: Gnosis.

The central ideas of Christianity are rooted in Gnostic philosophy, which, following psychological laws, necessarily developed when classical religions became obsolete. This philosophy is based on the perception of symbols of the unconscious process of individuation, which is triggered when the main collective representations that dominate human life break down. In such periods there is necessarily a certain number of individuals intensely possessed by numinous archetypes; these latter are driven to the surface to form the new dominant ones. (JUNG, OC, vol. XII, §41).

Jung argues that the loss of effectiveness of the myth that characterized the Aries eon (the classical religions) meant a crisis of civilizational proportions. This fact would have created the ideal condition for the emergence of Gnosticism and, later, for the structuring of Christianity. This historical moment preceded the decline of the Roman Empire and the consequent transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, which demonstrates the undeniable transitional aspect of this period. Jung understands that the emergence of Gnosticism was not a random historical event, but something based on a specific archetypal dynamic. That is, from time to time, whenever an eon, or Platonic month, comes to an end, there is a transformation in the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche. This implies the loss of effectiveness of the myth that characterized the previous eon (the death of the old image of God) and, as a result, a broad spiritual crisis is triggered. Without an effective image of God or a structuring myth, a transition period begins, characterized by a greater incidence of individual symbols. In other words, the process of individuation is not only favored, but also becomes necessary for the collective unconscious to be assimilated by the consciousness of individuals (i.e. gnosis) and the new myth can be born. In other words, without a living and active myth, capable of serving the population as a whole, the collective unconscious is attracted by the consciousness of individuals who have suffered the disintegration of the dominant ones, and thus a new myth can be formed.

They [the alchemists] continued the work of the Gnostics (who, to a certain extent, were more theologians than heretics) and the Church Fathers in a new era, instinctively recognizing that new wine should not be put into old wineskins. Just as the serpent changes its skin, so the myth needs new clothing in each new eon, so as not to lose its therapeutic power. (JUNG, OC, vol. IX/2, §281).

Thus, when we speak of gnosis, we are talking about religion in *statu nascendi*, that is, the moment when the new religion emerged directly from the unconscious. Currently, thanks to the discovery of important Gnostic texts, with special emphasis on the *Nag Hammadi*

Library (which took place in Egypt in 1945), we can reconstruct the spiritual context of the transition period between the eons of Aries and Pisces. For example, according to Brum et al. (2020), in the context of early Christianity, Jesus was considered an important Gnostic master (i.e., school of the Ophites), as revealed by several Gnostic texts with very different content from the well-known canonical Gospels. These texts are marked by their esoteric content and by the reserved (i.e., apocryphal) teachings of Jesus for his immediate disciples. That is, the school of the Ophites was one of several Gnostic schools that flourished during this period of transition between the eons of Aries and Pisces. Thus, in a historical sense, there is no doubt that Christianity arose from Gnosticism.

As we also know, in the centuries following the death of Jesus, a great process of standardization of Christianity began, with the formation of councils that defined the “official religion”, from which the Bible emerged. This period was characterized by intense persecution of “heresies”, that is, of Gnostic groups, which, due to their plurality, threatened the doctrinal intention of defining an official religion for the empire. The period of transition between the eons, characterized by Gnostic spiritual effervescence, ended, and the new myth, a new image of God (i.e., Christianity), was crystallized, reflecting the new constellation of the dominant forces of the collective psyche that came to characterize the eon of Pisces.

Not without violence and bloodshed, the Gnostic schools were eradicated; their texts were destroyed and officially refuted by the Church Fathers. We can consider that this process was carried out quite effectively since very few Gnostic texts survived this period of persecution. Thus, in Jung’s time, with a few exceptions, the books of the Church Fathers were one of the greatest sources of literature on the Gnostics refuting them and affirming the doctrinal body of official Christianity.

Jung discusses this exact moment when, after a long period of Gnostic effervescence, the new myth begins to emerge and, through dogma, begins to have a protective effect on the consciousness of individuals, threatened with possession by archetypal contents due to the disintegration of the dominants. We know, thanks to psychopathology, that the irruption of the contents of the collective unconscious into consciousness is not without danger, and one of the functions of dogma is precisely to protect the consciousness of individuals from this risk. Thus, with the advent of Christian dominance, it is a matter of “believing” to relate to the collective unconscious through the mediating image of dogma and no longer through immediate numinous experience.

To the extent that the archetypal content of the Christian drama was able to express the restless and pressing unconscious of the majority satisfactorily, the

consensus omnium (consent of all) elevated it to the status of a truth binding upon all; this did not occur, however, by an act of judgment, but by a much more effective irrational possession. Jesus thus became the protective image against all the archetypal powers that threatened to take hold of people. The good news announced: "It has already happened and will never happen again if you believe in Jesus, the Son of God!" However, this could and can happen to anyone who suffers from the disintegration of the Christian dominant. (JUNG, OC, vol. XII, §41).

We can observe, in this historical period, the process of the death of the myth that characterized the Aries eon (the classical religions), the emergence of an intermediate period characterized by the irruption of individual symbols and the assimilation of the collective unconscious (i.e., gnosis) and, finally, the crystallization of a new myth (from the original experience) with its doctrinal and dogmatic body, expression of the new archetypal constellation related to the eon of Pisces.

If we return to the image on the first page of *The Red Book* (Figure 1), Jung points out that, in the current period, just as in the period of the ancient Gnostics, we are in a moment of transition between eons. Thus, we are currently also facing, before our eyes, a spiritual crisis on a civilizational scale. Nietzsche's prophetic announcement that God is dead, although it cannot be taken literally, nevertheless contains a great truth. Thus, the image of God linked to the archetypal constellation that characterized the eon of Pisces has increasingly lost its effectiveness. Once again, we are entering a period of transition in which the contents of the collective unconscious seek the consciousness of individuals to form a new myth gradually.

At the beginning of this text, we discussed the upper aspect of the opening image of *The Red Book* (Figure 1), that is, the zodiacal constellations indicating the transition of the eons; I would now like to point to the lower aspect of the same image. In the lower-left corner, the cauldron is within the chthonic/underwater region, in the unconscious from which a serpent rises. Thanks to the fire, the serpent rises to the sky, where it is crowned, rising in splendor and royalty. Thus, we understand that in this period of transition between eras (indicated in the upper part of the image), the collective unconscious approaches the consciousness of certain individuals, and its contents rise from the chthonic darkness. Thus, they are assimilated by consciousness so that the new image of God is formed. The ascending serpent is a well-known symbol linked to gnosis, present in the mystery religions of Antiquity, among the Gnostics, and even in the alchemy of the Middle Ages. So, there is no doubt that this painting by Jung illustrates his gnosis, which occurred in the transition period between the Platonic months indicated at the top of the illustration.

The fact that this image (Figure 1) is the opening illustration of *The Red Book* is quite revealing about the role of the book since it is

not a book about Jungian psychology, but a book that summarizes Jung's gnosis. In other words, we are talking about Jung's religious experiences, which took place mainly between 1913 and 1919, and which continued until the beginning of the 1920s and were more sparsely noted in his diaries until 1932 (i.e., the period in which the records of *The Black Books* ended).

First, there were six sequentially dated diaries, known as the "Black Books," which he began on November night in 1913 and continued through the early 1920s. These diaries can best be described as his primary and contemporaneous record of a journey of discovery into imaginative and visionary reality, what he called "my most difficult experiment." By 1915, as the magnitude of his experience had sunk in, he needed a more formal and elaborate record of the visions. With great artistic skill—using ancient illuminated calligraphic text and impressive artwork—Jung labored for sixteen years to translate the primary record of his Black Book experience into an elegant, folio-sized, leather-bound volume: this is the famous but long-sequestered *The Red Book*. Jung titled it *Liber Novus*, *The New Book*. (OWENS, 2010, p. 2, own translation)³.

2. Metanoia, active imagination and individuation

Em várias ocasiões posteriores, Jung mencionou a atitude dogmática de Freud não admitindo qualquer refutação dos pilares centrais da psicanálise, como a questão da centralidade da sexualidade, por exemplo. Assim, com a publicação desse livro em 1912 Jung foi rebaixado da condição de "príncipe herdeiro" da psicanálise para a posição de herege nos círculos psicanalíticos.

Jung was 38 when, in 1913, he had his first visionary experience recorded in his diary (i.e., in *The Black Books*), which would characterize the beginning of a long process of descent and assimilation of the unconscious. The previous year had a crucial importance in his life when he published the monumental work *Symbols of the Transformation of the Libido* (organized in his complete works in volume 5, under the title *Symbols of Transformation*). Jung knew that the publication of this book would cost him dearly, specifically, it would mean his definitive break with Freud. At least since 1909, the relationship between Jung and Freud had already shown important signs of wear

³ In the original: "First, there were six sequentially dated journals, known as the 'black books', which he began this night in November of 1913 and continued through the early 1920s. These journals might be best described as his primary and contemporaneous ledger of a voyage of discovery into imaginative and visionary reality, what he termed 'my most difficult experiment'. By 1915, as the magnitude of his experience penetrated him, he felt the need for a more formal and elaborate recording of the visions. With great artistic craft — employing antique illuminated calligraphic text and stunning artwork —, Jung labored for sixteen years translating the primary record of his experience from the black books into an elegant folio-sized leather-bound volume: this is the famous but long-sequestered *Red Book*. Jung titled it *Liber Novus*, '*The New Book*'" (OWENS, 2010, p. 2).

and tear, with the divergences between them becoming increasingly evident. On several subsequent occasions, Jung mentioned Freud's dogmatic attitude of not admitting any refutation of the central pillars of psychoanalysis, such as the question of the centrality of sexuality, for example. Thus, with the publication of this book in 1912, Jung was demoted from the status of "crown prince" of psychoanalysis to the position of heretic in psychoanalytic circles.

In this critical context of his personal life and also in the transition period between the first and second half of his life, Jung entered a profound crisis that would lead him to follow the fantasies that emerged from his unconscious, in what he would call his "confrontation with the unconscious". The development of active imagination played a central role in this confrontation and through it, Jung accomplished his descent, lived visionary experiences, had encounters, and carried out dialogues with archetypal figures of the collective unconscious.

It is worth mentioning here how we use the term "fantasy" because due to modern prejudice, this word has acquired a connotation of something unreal. Thus, we often see the word "fantasy" used as an antonym of reality. On several occasions, Jung discusses that for modern man, due to the growing tendency towards materialistic rationalism, the soul has become a "nothing more than", that is something with an absolutely inferior dignity to the so-called "real world", or rather, to the experience of the external world. For Jung, however, "fantasy" means reality, because "what it acts, it is true" (JUNG, OC, vol. VII/2, §353). Thus, if someone is assailed by the fantasy that his neighbor is his enemy, he will probably create animosity towards him. In this way, the so-called "real world" is constantly traversed by fantasy; and declaring it unreal only makes the consciousness ignore something that actually traverses it.

However, when we approach fantasy in the context of active imagination, it is important to make a distinction, since we are not dealing here with a fantasy that, because it is projected (mixed with the outside world), despite its undeniable reality, produces a kind of illusion, confusing the external object with the image of the unconscious projected onto it. On the contrary, in the context of active imagination, fantasy reveals the background unconscious processes, which would otherwise appear projected or imposing on consciousness in the form of possessions. This means that when fantasy is experienced in the form of visions, through active imagination, consciousness has the possibility of retracting the projection. Therefore, Jung states that "modern psychotherapy seeks to make them [the contents of the unconscious] conscious by the method of active imagination" (JUNG, OC, vol. XIV/2, §107).

In essence, active imagination consists of emptying consciousness of its contents, allowing fantasies that arise from the unconscious to

cross the threshold of consciousness and come to the surface, and the ego actively engages with these fantasies. In his 1938 seminar on *Yoga and Meditation*, Jung discusses active imagination:

I have discovered that if one keeps one's attention on these traces [of dreams or fantasies] and concentrates on them, a curious phenomenon of movement takes place, just as when one looks at a dark spot for a long time, and it then begins to animate. Suddenly one can discern the shapes of one's inner background. (JUNG, 2020, p. 75, own translation)⁴.

This would be the first stage of active imagination, which we can call "letting it happen", consisting of visualizing an image, which can be a fragment of a dream or passive fantasy, for example, and maintaining the focus of attention on it without letting it sink back into the unconscious. Thus, the image, as if fertilized by attention, begins to come to life. That is, it becomes a fantasy that is the living, imagistic expression of the unconscious processes constellated below the threshold of consciousness. "This is a meditation, that is, an impregnation of the background, which becomes animated, fructified by our attention. Through this means, contents still in development emerge clearly". (JUNG, 2020, p. 78-79, own translation)⁵.

Then, we come to the second stage of active imagination, that is, the active engagement of the ego with the fantasy that has emerged from the unconscious. At this stage, the ego must enter into the fantasy, engage, and dialogue with the images and personifications of the unconscious. Jung emphasizes the fundamental importance of the active engagement of consciousness with the fantasy that emerges from the unconscious in his text *The Technique of Differentiation between the Ego and the Figures of the Unconscious*:

The continuous awareness of fantasies (without they would remain unconscious), with active participation in the events that unfold on the fantastic plane, has several consequences, as I could observe in many cases. Firstly, there is an expansion of consciousness, because numerous unconscious contents are brought into consciousness. Secondly, there is a gradual lessening of the dominant influence of the unconscious; thirdly, there is a transformation of the personality. (JUNG, OC, vol. VII/2, §358).

For several years, during the critical period of his life, Jung was deeply involved with the fantasies that emerged from his unconscious,

⁴ In the original: "I found that if one directs attention to these traces and concentrates upon them, a curious phenomenon of movement gets going, just as when one stares at a dark spot for a long time which then begins to become animated. We are then suddenly able to discern the forms of one's own internal background" (JUNG, 2020, p. 75).

⁵ In the original: "This is a meditation, i.e., an impregnation of the background, which becomes animated, fructified by our attention. By this means, objects of still-developing circumstances emerge clearly" (JUNG, 2020, p. 78-79).

in a long and transformative process, symbolic and experiential, arising from the encounter between consciousness and the unconscious. This experience characterized the original experience that Jung elaborated theoretically through the concept of the “individuation process”. The individuation process is not restricted solely to the inner experiences of assimilation of the unconscious but also extends to the ethical developments that this assimilation implies.

Anyone who takes the trouble to reflect on this subject will arrive at an approximate idea of how the transformation of personality takes place. Through active participation, the patient immerses in the unconscious⁶ processes and, by surrendering to them, manages to master them. This is how he connects the conscious and the unconscious. The result is ascension through the flame, transmutation through alchemical heat, the genesis of the “subtle spirit”. This is the transcendent function, which arises from the union of opposites. (JUNG, OC, vol. VII/2, §358).

We call this process of assimilating the collective unconscious from individual religious experience gnosis. Jung’s gnosis was of central importance to the development of his theory, and we could say that a large part of Jung’s theoretical effort in the second half of his life was the hermeneutic task of translating his gnosis into episteme. In other words, translating his original experiences into general psychological theory.

In the end, the only events in my life worth telling are those in which the eternal world broke into this transitory world. That is why I speak mainly of inner experiences, including my dreams and visions. These constitute the primary material for my scientific work. They were the burning lava from which the stone that needed to be worked crystallized. (JUNG, 1989, p. 4, translation)⁷.

Final considerations

Considering what we discussed so far, we can conclude that Jung’s “descent” into the depths of the collective unconscious, and especially the contact he established with both the figure of the anima and that of Philemon (the wise old man), was related, on the one hand, to Jung’s process of metanoia and, on the other, was inserted in the broader context of the transition between the Platonic months, that is, between the eons of Pisces and Aquarius. In the second case, we

⁶ Allusion to active imagination.

⁷ In the original: “In the end the only events in my life worth telling are those when the imperishable world irrupted into this transitory one. That is why I speak chiefly of inner experiences, amongst which I include my dreams and visions. These form the prima materia of my scientific work. They were the fiery magma out of which the stone that had to be worked was crystallized” (JUNG, 1989, p. 4).

are dealing with a broader archetypal process, which goes far beyond Jung's personal life. In the same way that gnosis in late Antiquity played a central role in the renewal of myth and, thus, in the transformation of the collective psyche (at least throughout the Western world) in the transition from the eon of Aries to the eon of Pisces. At present, which is also a time of transition between the Platonic months, gnosis has the same role: on the one hand, the transformation of the personality (or rather, individuation) and, on the other, the preparation of the new myth that will characterize the new eon. Thus, Jung's gnosis is the same context and has the same role that Gnosticism had in the past. This fact is illustrated by a dream of Jung's:

I was in a distant English-speaking country. I had to return to my country as quickly as possible by a fast ship. I arrived home quickly. At home, I found that in the middle of the summer, a tremendous cold had broken out from the surrounding world, which had frozen every living thing. There was a tree there, full of leaves but no fruit; the leaves had been transformed by the action of the frost into sweet grape berries, full of medicinal juice. I picked the grapes and gave them as a gift to a large crowd that was waiting. (JUNG, 2019, p. 114).

We can consider that the healing fruit brought by Jung to his time was analytical psychology. The importance of his method should be highlighted, especially in active imagination, since it is a method that allows modern man to recover his soul, forgotten and despised in the face of a growing tendency towards rationalism and contempt for fantasy, as if it were something unreal, without any value or even something harmful. Thus, the great treasure brought by Jung to the present time was not only his psychological theory but mainly the method that allows modern man to live gnosis. Shamdasani even calls analytical psychology a religion in *statu nascendi*, since its deepest therapeutic method consists of healing through numinous experience, that is, by diving into the source from which religions are born (the collective unconscious).

In 1918, Jung stated that the de-Christianization of the prevailing worldview led to an extraordinary activation of the unconscious. This led to the French school of psychopathology and hypnotism, which formed the main sources of analytical psychology. Thus, the de-Christianization of the worldview formed the historical condition of possibility for the emergence of analytical psychology. This de-Christianization led to a flourishing of individual symbol-making and a sharp increase in the frequency of neuroses. The most pressing task was to come to terms with this activity. (SHAMDASANI, 1999, p. 543, own translation)⁸.

⁸ In the original: "In 1918, Jung claimed that the Dechristianization of the prevailing world view led to an extraordinary activation of the unconscious. It was this, in turn, which led to the French school of psychopathology and hypnotism, which formed the main sources of analytical psychology (JUNG, 1918, p. 21). Thus the Dechristianization of the world view formed the historical condition of possibility for the emergence of analytical psychology. This Dechristianization led to an efflorescence of individual symbol creation, and a marked increase in the frequency of neuroses. The most pressing task was that of coming to terms with this activity" (SHAMDASANI, 1999, p. 543).

The de-Christianization of the worldview mentioned above is equivalent to what we are discussing here as the loss of effectiveness of myth, which accompanies the transformation of the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche in the final period of the eon of Pisces (the moment in which we are currently living). Thus, we can understand that the greater irruption of the collective unconscious into the individual experience that accompanies this period of transition meant at the end of the eon of Pisces, the emergence of analytical psychology. Jung's "descent" and his gnosis fit into this context, and his psychology emerges as a fruit of this historical moment of transition between the eons.

This is why, when modern psychotherapy rediscovers the activated archetypes of the collective unconscious, the phenomenon often observed in moments of great religious transformations is repeated; as we have already said, this also occurs in the individual for whom the dominant representations no longer mean anything. Faust's *descensus ad inferos* (the descent into hell) is an example of this phenomenon that consciously or unconsciously represents an *opus alchymicum* (alchemical work). (JUNG, OC, vol. XII, §42).

It is important to emphasize that, insofar as analytical psychology provides modern man with the means to experience the "original experience," it contributes significantly to the unfolding of the broader process of elaboration of the coming image of God. For the new image of God, a living expression of the transformation undergone by the dominants of the collective psyche that will serve the man of the eon of Aquarius must gradually emerge over the next centuries from the collective unconscious (the source of myth). As we have had the opportunity to observe in the past, this process of the birth of the new myth depends on the assimilation of the collective unconscious by a certain number of individuals (who have undergone the disintegration of the dominants) during the period of transition between the eons. Thus, we understand that not only does the individual, throughout his life, go through continuous periods of death and rebirth but also the same archetypal process of renewal occurs on a scale of civilizational breadth, with the death and rebirth of the image of God. This means at the same time the death of an old mode of consciousness and the birth of a new mode of consciousness; the death of the man of the past and the birth of the man of the future. We are currently in this period of transition in which the metamorphosis of the gods takes place.

References

- BRUM, A.; DULLIUS, A.; MEAD, G. R. S. **A gnosis de João: o apócrifo, o hino e a cruz de luz do essênio-gnóstico Yohanan**. Brasília: Garbha-Lux, 2020.
- JUNG, C. G. **Memories, dreams, reflections**. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

- JUNG, C. G. **O eu e o inconsciente**. OC, vol. VII/2. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2011a.
- JUNG, C. G. **Um mito moderno sobre coisas vistas no céu**. OC, vol. X/4. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2011b.
- JUNG, C. G. **Mysterium coniunctionis**: pesquisas sobre a separação e a composição dos opostos psíquicos na alquimia - Rex e Regina, Adão e Eva, A Conjunção. OC, vol. XIV/2. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2011c.
- JUNG, C. G. **Aion**: estudo sobre o simbolismo do Si-mesmo. OC, vol. IX/2. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2012a.
- JUNG, C. G. **Psicologia e Alquimia**. OC, vol. XII. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2012b.
- JUNG, C. G. **O Livro Vermelho - Liber Novus**. 1. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2017.
- JUNG, C. G. **O Livro Vermelho**. Edição sem ilustrações: Liber Novus. 5ª reimp. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2019.
- JUNG, C. G. **Psychology of Yoga and meditation**. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1515/9780691213774>.
- OWENS, L. The Hermeneutics of Vision: C. G. Jung and *Liber Novus*. **The Gnostic: a Journal of Gnosticism Western Esotericism and Spirituality**, Dublin, n. 3, p. 23-46, 2010.
- OWENS, L. Jung and Aion: time, vision, and a wayfaring man. **Psychological Perspectives**, Los Angeles, v. 54, n. 3, p. 253-289, 2011. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1080/00332925.2011.597248>.
- SHAMDASANI, S. Is analytical psychology a religion? *In statu nascendi*. **The Journal of Analytical Psychology**, London, v. 44, n. 4, p. 539-545, 1999. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1111/1465-5922.00119>. PMID:10651550.

Luís Paulo Brabo Lopes is a psychologist, a specialist in Jungian Psychology, and holds a master's degree in Psychology (UFRRJ). He has taught postgraduate courses in Analytical Psychology in Rio de Janeiro. He has worked as a psychologist in several SUS services, such as mental health outpatient clinics, psychiatric hospitals, and the Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS). He currently coordinates the Laboratory for Personality Expansion and Jungian Studies (Lampeju) and is a Jungian analyst, professor of Jungian Psychology, and clinical supervisor.

luispaulo.lopes@hotmail.com