

Opening the Mouths of the Dead

The Spiritual Psychology of C.G. Jung and Rudolf Steiner

By

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Abstract

In this thesis I address a dearth in psychological research that takes spirituality seriously, as the natural counterpart to materialistic approaches to the psyche. To do so I look at the role that non-human beings and the dead play in the psychological thought of C.G. Jung and Rudolf Steiner, and how these challenge the oppositional thinking present in modern psychology, particularly in conceptions of consciousness, being, life, and death. I use a close reading of Jung's *Liber Novus: The Red Book* and several of Steiner's works, along with an antithetical methodology that seeks questions rather than answers. What emerges from the work of Jung and Steiner is a reimagining of psychology as spiritual psychology, a way of life that involves questioning the oppositional thinking of ordinary waking consciousness and developing a complementary form of imaginative non-ordinary consciousness.

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“The hope for a psychology without the soul is brought to nothing”: An Introduction¹

The supposition that reality is structured in binary oppositions – life/death, spirit/matter, and so on – is a prejudice consistent throughout much of the Western intellectual tradition (Klages 2012; Scanlan 2001). This prejudice is not, however, confined to scholarly disciplines but has become institutionalized, often invisibly, into nearly every human activity. The analytical psychologist C.G. Jung (1875-1961) and the esotericist Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) pose a little recognized challenge to oppositional thinking through their inclusions of non-ordinary consciousness at the heart of psychology.² They argue that binary oppositions are not ‘the’ structure of reality but a hypothesis and an implausible and deadly one.³ Oppositional thinking is deadly because it clouds unknown aspects of reality and because we are for the most part unaware of employing it and the ways that it mobilizes instinctive, reactionary forces against otherness. In this thesis I trace the challenge of Jung and Steiner in the form of a double

¹ Words of C.G. Jung from *Alchemical Studies* (CW 13, §286).

² Analytical psychology (or sometimes complex psychology) is the name that Jung gave to the school of psychology that he developed. Analytical psychology has, since Jung’s death, largely been supplanted by the name Jungian psychology. This is an unfortunate switch as it tends to reinforce a creationism myth that analytical psychology sprung unprecedentedly from Jung’s mind, and his mind alone. ‘Jungian psychology’ precludes alternative perspectives that could challenge and complement Jung’s thought, and in general stunts analytical psychology from being developed and transformed by anyone, even the dead Jung who reaches out through posthumously published works and who likely turns in his grave anytime ‘Jungian psychology’ is uttered. Sonu Shamdasani, an historian of analytical psychology and editor of Jung’s work, suggests that there is really no such thing as Jungian psychology, since the theories that comprise it are interpreted widely by many different Jungians and by Jung himself, and so to suppose a homogenous discipline like Jungian psychology is more misleading than informative (2012a, 365).

³ Examples of oppositional models that Jung takes issue with, and that will be addressed further in following chapters, include Augustine’s *privatio boni*, Hegel’s dialectic, and Saussure’s semiotics. These models separate reality into mutually exclusive categories, define either term of a binary by the absence of the other, and privilege one over the other. Augustine supposes the binary good/evil. Hegel supposes the binary of male/female and spirit/matter among others in a philosophy based on the sublimation of one side of the binary by the other into a ‘higher’ expression of itself. Saussure supposes the binary signifier/signified, or sign, in an oppositional structure of language. In all three cases, the former term gets privileged over the latter.

question that they share, and that is equally two moods in the sense of a set of prevailing attitudes or orientations that themselves comprise spiritual psychology: 1) how, given that oppositional thinking is often invisible, to become aware of it and its deadliness, and to release it; and 2) how to develop an imaginal consciousness that is non-oppositional, more life-giving and that does not engage in the deadly reduction of reality to what can be known. These orientations are taken up and developed through an acceptance of the life and death wisdom offered by non-human beings and the dead, in the hope that they will begin to correct the deadliness of oppositional thinking and contribute to ways of better living with others, including the other who is oneself.

The deadliness of oppositional thinking that this double question addresses is best seen in the ongoing human destruction of the Earth that has come to be called the Anthropocene, an epoch of geologic time proposed to have begun in 1950 and characterized by alteration of the Earth by human activities rather than forces of nature (Stephens 2013). Or, to put it poetically, in Rainer Maria Rilke's lament: "The earth! Who knows about her losses? Whoever can sing of the heart, whoever can still praise, born into such a place" (1922/1987, 59). In response to Rilke and with help from him, I critically inherit the psychological thought of Jung and Steiner as both spiritual and practical. Critical inheritance understood psychologically seeks to open and keep open the questions inherent, though not always explicit, in a text and at the same time open oneself to a text in ways that facilitate what Sonu Shamdasani calls a desolidification of certitudes (in Hillman & Shamdasani 2013, 210).⁴ I develop inheritance, as far as it concerns the

⁴ While the idea of scholarship as inheritance is perhaps most popular in critical and literary theory, I draw here on Jung and *Liber Novus* to understand inheritance psychologically as inclusive of the psychic makeup of the researcher. This approach is critical in that it sees the personality of the researcher, that is, one's automatic

questions of the history of human thought, as the act of opening the mouths of the dead and listening to the questions that issue forth.⁵ I call the psychological thought of Jung and of Steiner spiritual because they are concerned with the care of soul – the affective, imaginative, unconscious, and often irrational aspects of living – and the consequences of the trend towards psychology without soul. I call it practical because it seeks to offer what Jung in *Liber Novus* calls “wisdom of real life” and what Steiner similarly calls “wisdom for living”, meaning instruction for day to day living inclusive of, and drawing from, non-human beings and the natural world in general (Jung 2009, 306; Steiner 1910/1999, 126).

The inclusion of non-human beings in the project of thinking and living psychology challenges any anthropocentric conception of what being means and demands a continual asking of the question of what it means to be a being without the expectation of an answer. It also means grounding the question of being in the mineral-biological cycles of fertility, of growth and decay, wherein anything called being must occur. “Wisdom of real life” is in contradistinction to what Jung calls “paths of specialization” so thick with information that they exclude all but the specialists who create them (2009, 307-135n).⁶ Spiritual-practical psychology

preferences, prejudices, preconceptions, and so on, as intimately bound up with the material to be inherited. Thus, the work of inheritance must equally be work on oneself in the sense of challenging one’s automaticity.

⁵ The phrase “open the mouths of the dead” is borrowed from James Hillman, who in turn borrows it from Egyptian antiquity in his conversation with Shamdasani, published as *The Lament of the Dead: Psychology After the Red Book* (2013, 66). Critical inheritance is an act of opening the mouths of the dead because it sees the task of reading texts of dead authors as listening to the dead rather than interpreting their words definitively, or in other words it acknowledges that texts are never finished, never closed or done being read, and that all language metaphorizes. This approach is especially needed in regard to Jung, whose thought many see as something known and whose work Shamdasani says “has been nearly completely mangled by ideologists”, who refuse to see the breadth, complexity, and developmental nature of Jung’s thought (Shamdasani & Hillman 2013, 141). This thesis continues many themes raised in their questioning and attempts to carry them further through language that is both conceptual and poetic in an effort to write about psychology in a fluid and open way. A sketch of Jung’s developmental stages will be given shortly.

⁶ In the vein of Jung’s criticism, I will specify psychologies rather than psychology in the singular when offering a critique. This is necessary because psychology has become a discipline so fragmented, with so many different

is thus a contribution to the correction of the one-sided influence that scientific materialism has had and continues to exert on many psychologies, and that Jung and Steiner worked against from the early twentieth century until their deaths. It is simultaneously an attempt to imagine what the analytical psychologist Lionel Corbett calls a “psychological approach to spirituality”, that can equally be called a spiritual approach to psychology, and that is appropriate to a time wherein traditional church sources of spirituality have failed to nurture the development of responsible individuality and instead nurture mass-mindedness and oppositional thinking (2011, 74).⁷

The key primary source of this research is Jung’s *Liber Novus*, a text he worked on in one form or another from 1913 to about 1930 and picked up again in the last years of his life, and that was posthumously published in 2009. I will also look especially to Jung’s *Psychological Types* (CW 6, 1921/1971), *Introduction to Jungian Psychology: Notes of the Seminar on Analytical Psychology Given in 1925* (2012), and the works focussing on the psychology of alchemy, *Alchemical Studies* (CW 13, 1942-57/1967), *Psychology and Alchemy* (CW 12, 1944/1968), and *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (1955-56/1960). *Liber Novus* marks Jung’s turn from reductive methodology, the 1912 *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* being the last such major work, to what he would come to call constructive methodology. The constructive method

schools of thought, of theory and practice, that as with Jungian psychology to speak of psychology in general is more misleading than not.

⁷ The psychiatrist and analytical psychologist George Mecouch, in his 2016 article “Jung’s Lament”, is one who traces the reductive scientific prejudices of modern psychotherapy while suggesting that Jung had something quite different in mind. This is in keeping with Jung’s *The Undiscovered Self*, an important late text written in 1957 included in CW 10 and already cited above, that argues that the solutions to the levelling out of individual differences accomplished by all forms of mass culture, whether political or religious, and by the abstract and oppositional thinking of scientific materialism lies in individual spiritual development, by which he means the cultivation of a reciprocal relationship between an individual and the transpersonal or collective unconscious (CW 10, §493, 501 & 508-09).

proceeds through amplification of symbols rather than merely seeking their cause in a person's history. *Psychological Types* is the first book-length publication under the constructive method, and in *Introduction to Jungian Psychology* Jung contextualizes the development of his thought up to 1925. The later alchemical studies represent the mature expression of Jung's psychological thought and the constructive method.

I use Steiner's texts to both complement and critique Jung, and will focus on *A Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit* (lectures, 1909-1911/1999), *The Connection Between the Living and the Dead* (lectures, 1916/2017), *Jung, Freud, and Psychoanalysis* (lectures, 1917/2001), and *A Path of Self Knowledge: And the Threshold of the Spiritual World* (1912-13/2006a). The first three texts are the only places where Steiner and Jung meet on the page with any substantiality – Jung does not return the favour. Steiner's lecture cycles must always be taken in context of his written epistemological works, especially *A Philosophy of Freedom* (1894/1995) and *An Outline of Esoteric Science* (1909/1972). The lectures often presuppose familiarity with foundational concepts developed in successive editions of these two texts, and to this end I will address them briefly in the first chapter.⁸

Liber Novus in particular requires a lengthy introduction, in part because it is the key text investigated here and more importantly because it is unlike Jung's other writing. In fact, there is very little agreement about what kind of text it is. The title *Liber Novus*, or *New Book*,

⁸ Editorial note: The dating of texts for both Jung and Steiner can become complicated because most have numerous editions under different titles, and often were written (and spoken, in the case of those texts that are transcriptions of lecture series) over multiple years. To keep each text in context, I will always give initial dating followed by the date of the publication I am working from, though sometimes the former will not be the first publication but rather when the text was written, or the lecture given. For Steiner, whose *Collected Works* are still in the process of being compiled, translated, and published, I will not use the CW designation in citations as I do with Jung.

gestures to Jung's own critical inheritance of religious, philosophical, literary, and psychological tradition and represents a new approach to doing psychology and spirituality. As a project of inheritance, it aims to shatter oppositional thinking that stifles life and death and salvage what is conducive to living and dying with greater psychological responsibility. Jung not only directs his acts of inheritance at the traditions that influence him, but at his own thought, or analytical psychology itself. By turning his own hand against himself he attempts to save himself from his own oppositionality and one-sidedness. This turning of the hand appears in physical form in the manuscript of *Liber Novus*. To produce this manuscript Jung used calligraphy, illumination in a medieval style, and accomplished gouache painting – it is equally an artistic accomplishment as it is an intellectual one. Samples from *Liber Novus* appear in figure one and two on the following pages. The 2009 folio-sized publication by W.W. Norton and Company, edited by Sonu Shamdasani and made possible through the Foundation of the Works of C.G. Jung and the Philemon Foundation, measures one foot by one and a half feet and includes both a facsimile of Jung's main manuscript and a typed translated edition. The translation draws on various documents to create a complete as possible text – *Liber Novus* ends abruptly mid-sentence, leaving the entire project very much suspended in ellipses and without a true 'original' or 'master' text. This suits its experimental nature quite well.⁹

⁹ Other than Jung's handwritten manuscript of *Liber Novus* and various typed editions produced at his instruction, the other most important sources for *Liber Novus* are Jung's *Black Books*. These are a set of journals that Jung used to record thoughts, dreams, fantasies, and rough pencil sketches. They contain the material elaborated into *Liber Novus* and much more. The *Black Books* are scheduled to be published in 2020 and represent an important future opportunity for understanding Jung and for the development of spiritual psychology. Though Jung never finished *Liber Novus*, he deliberated over its possible publication in different forms during his lifetime as well as considering a posthumous donation of the manuscript to the University of Basel. While it is not known exactly why he chose not to have it published, Shamdasani speculates several reasons. Jung had the scientific and professional reputation of analytic psychology to uphold and this might have been compromised by the publication of *Liber Novus*. He also appears unsure how *Liber Novus* should be published and how to give it

Figure 1: Selection from Liber Novus, folio v (v) of "Liber Primus"¹⁰



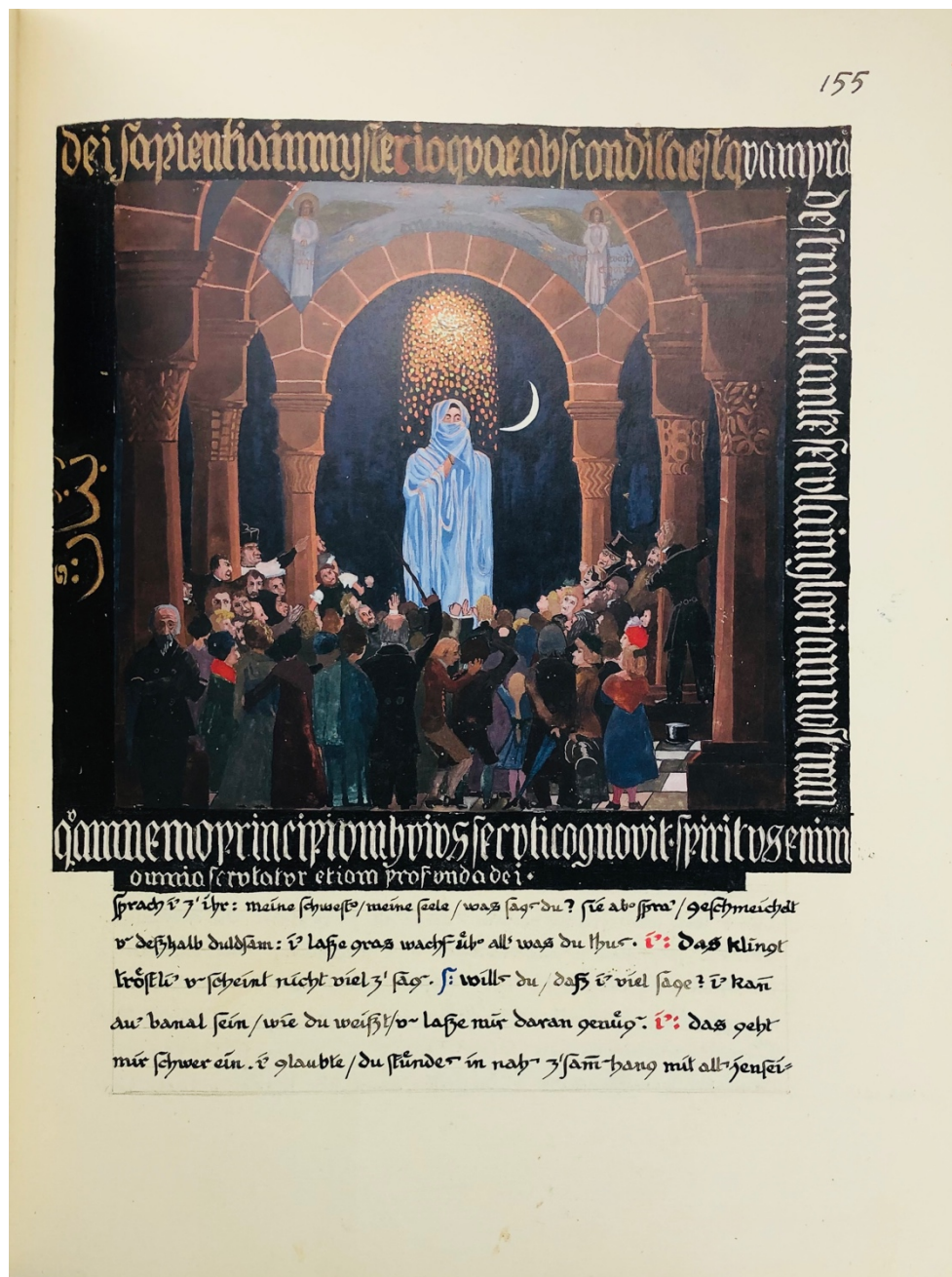
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proper context within his life and other works. All of this provides good evidence that Jung was aware that *Liber Novus* would be studied by others in some form at some time. For a fuller analysis of Jung's considerations of the publication of *Liber Novus*, see Shamdasani (in Jung 2009, 91-95; & in Harris 2010, 169).

In addition to the folio edition of *Liber Novus* there is a separately published Reader's Edition containing only the typed text. It is thus best read as two texts, with the folio open to the facsimile of Jung's manuscript and the Reader's Edition open to the English typed text.

¹⁰ This page shows Jung's use of illumination, calligraphy, and painting. It begins the chapter "Mysterium Encounter", wherein Jung describes a meeting with two fantasy figures, Elijah and Salome. Over the course of *Liber Novus* Salome comes to represent soul, and helps Jung to evolve his understanding of femininity, desire, and love.

Figure 2: Selection from *Liber Novus*, page 155 of “Liber Secundus”¹¹



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¹¹ This page shows a feminine depiction of soul from later in *Liber Novus*. She is standing in a cathedral-type hall in the place of the altar, and the image is bordered by the Arabic word for daughters, citations from I Corinthians 2:7-10, Revelation 22:17, and a medieval hymn (see 2009, 413-283n). Jung describes this image outside of *Liber Novus*, saying that it is a restoring of the feminine to the Christian church (CW 9i, §380). In the text below the image, Jung's soul tells him "I let grass grow over everything that you do", and a conversation ensues about "the becoming of the soul" wherein Jung's soul morphs into a serpent. Taken together, this page from *Liber Novus* and the previous one shows the developmental nature of the text – how ideas and characters change across its pages – and also introduce the theme of the wisdom of non-human beings.

The language of *Liber Novus* is not properly – that is, scientifically, medically, or academically – psychological in that it eschews all jargon. Jung instead writes through a form of dramatic thinking and poetic expression that Shamdasani calls “psycho-dramatics” (Hillman & Shamdasani 2013, 33). Jung says of himself in *Liber Novus* that “My speech is imperfect. Not because I want to shine with words, but out of the impossibility of finding those words, I speak in images. With nothing else can I express the words from the depths” (2009, 123). Outside of *Liber Novus*, Jung characterizes the writing in his *Collected Works* as more literary than scientific, and this indirectly presents the poetic *Liber Novus* as something quite radical.¹² The language of *Liber Novus* gives voice to experiences that stem from a prolonged personal crisis of meaning that Jung frames as a loss of soul in the first pages. Jung responded to this crisis by engaging in introspective fantasy thinking, as distinct from extrospective rational thinking and that he later developed as active imagination. Jung describes this period as his “most difficult experiment” and a “confrontation with the unconscious” (1973, 178; & 2009, 24). Self-experimentation being an acceptable method of psychological research at the time (Shamdasani in Jung 2009, 19).¹³

¹² In a letter to the scholar of religion Dr. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, Jung says “The language I speak must be ambiguous, must have two meanings, in order to do justice to the dual aspect of our psychic nature. I strive quite consciously and deliberately for ambiguity of expression because it is superior to unequivocalness and reflects the nature of life” (1976 v.2, 70). In *Liber Novus* unequivocalness is repeatedly associated with death-dealing and a stifling of life and creativity. In relation to Jung’s ambiguity of expression he notes to an editor of his, Michael Fordham, that the translation of his writing into English for the *Collected Works* “needs somebody of course, who has a wider reading than psychiatry or academical psychology, since my language is often more literary than merely ‘scientific’” (in Shamdasani 2018, 49). This can, I believe, be extended beyond the formal act of translation to say that any reader of Jung needs a wider basis than academic psychology; needs poetry, literature, mythology, religion, and so on to be able to interpret what Jung is doing.

¹³ While *Liber Novus* is certainly a product of introspection and self-experimentation, it is at the same time a work that draws on many other sources, including texts of psychology, literature, philosophy, and religion – even if these are not explicitly referenced by Jung. Shamdasani has done much to debunk the myth of *Liber Novus* being pure individual fantasy, if such a thing exists at all, by tracing the texts that Jung read during his work on *Liber Novus* (see Shamdasani 2012a & 2012b).

The text itself is comprised of two interwoven layers, identified as [1] and [2] in the English translation: the reporting of fantasies and the interpreting of fantasies often in the form of maxims. The highly symbolic paintings represent a third layer that is identified numerically in the translated text where images should appear. The images sometimes connect directly to the text where they are embedded and sometimes reach out to other passages and even beyond the text itself. Throughout these valences Jung's ego is the cohesive narrator, often engaged in conversation with one or more of a diversity of fantasy figures.

Given its complex and genre-defying nature, *Liber Novus* has been interpreted in drastically different ways. The ambiguity that surrounds the text is important because it shows that it asks for a diversity of readings and resists authoritativeness. Shamdasani states that *Liber Novus* is "the central book in [Jung's] oeuvre" and contains the kernels of all of Jung's subsequent work. He adds the caveat that due to the multiple documents it draws on, *Liber Novus* as we have it is only one of many possible versions of itself and certainly not an authoritative one (in Jung 2009, 221; Shamdasani 2012, 366).¹⁴ The psychologist and scholar Wolfgang Giegerich counters Shamdasani with the argument that *Liber Novus* has never really been published. He reads it as an absolute-positive interiorization of its material into Jung's ego and as such is utterly private and inaccessible to anyone else, despite being addressed to an audience (2010, 365-66). With this Giegerich renders *Liber Novus* insignificant to psychology

¹⁴ As a text that draws on multiple and incomplete manuscripts and other sources *Liber Novus* bears the hand of its editor and translators heavily. Perhaps Shamdasani would be wise to direct the same scrutiny to *Liber Novus* as he has to Jung's other works. Shamdasani convincingly points out that *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and the *Collected Works*, often uncritically taken as a first-hand account by Jung of Jung and as his *complete* works, respectively, are in fact significantly molded by personally, politically, and economically driven motives of editors, translators, publishers, and others. While I do not say this to denigrate those who worked on *Liber Novus* as we have it, the serious scholar must acknowledge that such a heavily edited and translated text must be always taken as an interpretation of the author's work.

proper, as he sees it, and suggests that it should only be read to learn about the individual and historical C.G. Jung (379).¹⁵ Giegerich's analysis, and others like it, seems to be based more on the author's own presuppositions of what psychology is or should be rather than a responsible reading of Jung, and perhaps more problematically on a rather dubious claim of access to the essentiality of Jung's thought.¹⁶

Randy Fertel offers yet another approach that is contrary to both Shamdasani's widely accepted position and to Giegerich. Fertel suggests that any claim to an immediacy of experience on the written page – what Shamdasani refers to as the kernels of Jung's later thought and Giegerich claims to access – is a rhetorical effect that should not be valorized as immediate experience as such. Further, this rhetorical effect is not unique, but rather common to the tradition of improvisation that Fertel suggests *Liber Novus* participates in. Improvisation has always stood on the border of any discipline proper, like psychology, and taken part in paradigm shifts, like Jung's radical contributions to psychotherapy and psychological theory (Fertel 2017, 118).

Jung himself gives contradictory appraisals of *Liber Novus*. At times he is adamant that *Liber Novus* is not art, and by extension not poetry or literature, that it is not a teaching, and

¹⁵ Giegerich thus juxtaposes *Liber Novus* with his own sense of psychology as soul-making, as absolute negative interiorization of a phenomenon into itself, divested of any trace of its creator. While Giegerich does acknowledge the public side of *Liber Novus*, he argues that this is overshadowed by its private interiorizing nature. I propose that, instead, the tension between these two sides of *Liber Novus* – public and opening oneself to others; private and interiorizing – is irreducible to one side or the other. The publicness or communal nature of *Liber Novus* is attested to not only by addresses such as “what I must proclaim to you” and “My friends [...]” but by the abundance of communally oriented content (2009, 119 & 132).

¹⁶ See Saban's 2015 article “Another Serious Misunderstanding: Jung, Giegerich and a Premature Requiem” for an in-depth refutation of what Saban calls Giegerich's claim to an “*immanent* critique” of Jung's work – a critique that positions Giegerich in a privileged position of essentiality.

that it is not psychology.¹⁷ Like its title, I suggest that these disavowals should be understood as indicating the kind of newness that *Liber Novus* works at through inheriting history, rather than as definitive statements. To read *Liber Novus* I follow Shamdasani's suggestion that it offers insights to the transformation of the personality and the development of an individual spirituality – what I call practical-spiritual psychology, or simply spiritual psychology from here on. I follow Giegerich's insight that the inherent contradictoriness of *Liber Novus* makes it an “impossible” book. And I follow Fertel's rhetorical analysis of *Liber Novus* as a text that exists on the borders of any discipline ‘proper’. To their analysis I add that to take the unconscious seriously means that there are always forces unknown to the author at work within a text and unknown to the reader at work within a reading. This means that no text is a definitive exposition of an author or their ideas and that all texts remain open to illimitable interpretation. Thus, I read *Liber Novus* as one possible permutation of an impossible book that is both characterized by and the product of an inherent contradictoriness that works to upset oppositionality and monoculture.¹⁸

Several important secondary sources exist for reading Jung and Steiner together. Gerhard Wehr's *Jung and Steiner: Birth of a New Psychology* (2003) provides the only in-depth and contextual comparative study of Jung and Steiner by a scholar who has extensive knowledge of both. The psychologist and humanities scholar Robert Sardello's introductions to

¹⁷ Jung resists the idea that *Liber Novus* might be art in *Black Book 2* (in 2009, 20-21), and in *Liber Novus* itself that it contains teachings (125). That it is not psychology, at least properly, is attested by the absence of psychological terminology and critique of a one-sided belief in “science”, a word that in *Liber Novus* represents all rational, materialistic, and causal explanation (119).

¹⁸ I use the agricultural term monoculture intentionally, because it better expresses the levelling of all human activities pursued by oppositional thinking whether through psychological, socio-political, or other systems, than any alternate term like normativeness or homogeneity; and because it connects to the deadly effects that such oppositionality and levelling have on non-human beings and the Earth.

Wehr (2003) and Steiner (1999 & 2001) offer insightful critiques and interpretations of Jung and Steiner. Shamdasani provides important guidance for reading Jung in his introductory remarks and extensive footnotes to *Liber Novus* that include ample citation from unpublished texts, as well as in several writings ancillary to his thirteen-year project of bringing *Liber Novus* to publication (2012a; 2012b; 2018; & Shamdasani & Hillman 2013).

A review of the small field of spiritual psychology outside the texts given above shows that spiritual psychology as it is developed in the mainstream is something quite different from what is being ventured here. A literature search of “spiritual psychology” turns up reductive and materialistic definitions as a “technology”, a blend of spirituality and science to help make people “feel better” and be more “content”, a tool for “increasing” consciousness, and so on (Bucher 2014; Dwight 2011; & Rowan 2005). In the short article “An Introduction to Spiritual Psychology”, Michael Miovic resists these mainstream understandings and calls for more psychological research that takes spirituality seriously, rather than as individual fancy or even pathology (2004). This call has not been answered very heartily. Spiritual psychology as it appears in Jung and Steiner, however, reaches out from the past and answers Miovic, diverging on each of the counts listed above. It is an art, in the sense of a way of living, that often involves at times feeling worse and discontented, and experiencing a decrease in ordinary waking consciousness to allow the unconscious to emerge on and in its own ambiguous terms.

The need for ambiguity of language when dealing with the unconscious or any non-ordinary consciousness, exemplified by the dramatic and imaginal expression of *Liber Novus*, suggests that poetics rather than technics is the language appropriate to spiritual psychology because it facilitates a responsible relationship to what is unknown. In other words, poetics do

not reduce or abstract reality to mere intellectual and materialistic concepts and pass off any uncomfortable unknown remainder as unreal. Instead, it finds ways to gesture to the unknown aspects of reality while letting them remain so, and at the same time reveals that even what is thought to be known contains unknown elements. While Jung practiced poetic expression in *Liber Novus*, Steiner did so in his mystery plays and meditative verse. Both practiced numerous art forms as well: calligraphy, painting, and sculpture for Jung and dance, sculpture, and architectural design for Steiner.¹⁹ That Jung and Steiner do art rather than merely talk about it strengthens an interpretation of their psychology as a practical one. However, while both thinkers esteemed poetic and artistic language as appropriate to all things related to soul and spiritual life and the unconscious, they kept the practice of poetics and art largely separate from doing psychology ‘proper’. I will bridge this separation repeatedly here, both through the places where *Liber Novus* reaches into Jung’s *Collected Works* and through triangulations between the psychological thought of Jung and Steiner and the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke.

The abundance of thematic connections that appear between Rilke’s *Duino Elegies* and *Sonnets to Orpheus* and the work of Jung and Steiner is fascinating.²⁰ I use these poems, that

¹⁹Jung’s paintings and sculptures have caught the attention of recent scholarship that seeks to establish Jung as an important figure in early modern art. Steiner’s mystery plays and the therapeutic form of dance called eurythmy are still performed today, and seventeen buildings he designed still stand, most famously the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. Steiner’s aesthetic ideas have inspired many other artists and resulted in such exhibitions as the 2010 *Rudolf Steiner and Contemporary Art* at the Kunstmuseen Wolfsburg & Stuttgart, Germany.

²⁰ The *Duino Elegies* were begun in 1912, a year prior to Jung beginning work on the material that became *Liber Novus* and finished in 1922 after a silence from Rilke that spanned the First World War. *Sonnets to Orpheus* was written at the same time and place as the completion of the *Duino Elegies* and came to Rilke in a stream of inspiration that he says he did not alter a word of. Rilke’s inspired reception of the beginning of the *Elegies* – the first lines came to him from a voice over the wind and sea – and the whole of the *Sonnets* connect these poems to the second question of spiritual psychology, the existence of some kind of imaginative non-ordinary consciousness. In reading the poems in the way indicated I am following David Young who suggests that the *Elegies* are about “what it really means to be a human being” and that the *Sonnets* are about “how you can love the world, and survive in it, given that condition” (Young in Rilke 1987, xii & ix). However, I modify Young’s analysis to emphasize

raise the questions of what it means to be a being and how to love and live with the Earth and with death, to shatter the reifying explanations that Jung and Steiner sometimes apply to what Rilke calls the unsayable aspects of reality.²¹ In addition to thematic crossover the use of Rilke's work here is grounded in biographical connections. He attended a lecture of Steiner's on art and aesthetics in 1918 and had friends who were members of the Anthroposophical Society, the institution that Steiner founded to encourage the development of spiritual research and to distance himself from the Theosophical Society that he was initially involved with. In relation to psychotherapy, Rilke was close to people who were involved in Freudian psychoanalysis, notably Lou Andreas-Salomé – though scholars then and now have shown that he is much closer to Jung's thought. Rilke, however, was critical of psychotherapy and in particular decried the reductive and soul-stifling language and methods that it employs. This supports the use of his poetry to problematize and open up the psychological thought of Jung and Steiner.²²

Poetics and its shattering of oppositionality informs the antithetical and atheoretical nature of the methodology that I use here, that is itself spiritual psychology. In other words, the study of spiritual psychology must not be separated from the doing of it, including the ongoing

the emphasis in the *Elegies* and *Sonnets* on questions rather than answers, on the inclusion of non-human beings and the Earth, and on the problematization of 'the world'.

²¹ To shatter (German *zerschlagen*, also translated from *zu stören*, see for example Rilke 1922/1987, 81 & 89) is a word Rilke uses in different senses, and that will appear throughout this thesis to speak of how spiritual psychology disrupts oppositional thinking and reveals its rigidity and fragility. Visually, one can picture the shattering of the slash that represents the barrier erected in any binary opposition to separate two terms, life/death for example.

²² For this biographical information on Rilke and Steiner, and Rilke's relationship to Jung's thought, see Gísli Magnússon (2010, 13, 145-46 & 147). Besides Magnússon's analysis, connections between Jung's psychology and Rilke's poetry also appear in two letters of Jung's. In one he acknowledges that "I was always aware, since getting to know Rilke, of how much psychology there was hidden in him. In fact, he came up against the same field of experience that has engrossed me for decades, though I approach it from a very different angle" (1948/1976 v.1, 483). The other letter is a response to an Ellen Gregori, who had sent Jung an essay "Rilke's Psychological Knowledge in Light of Jungian Theory" (1957/1976 v.2, 381-82). Unfortunately, Gregori's paper was never published.

effort of critical inheritance and recognition of the involvement of one's psychological make-up in all research and writing, including that which is outside of ordinary waking consciousness. The methodology is antithetical because it proceeds through questions rather than answers, and is atheoretical because, being concerned with otherness and difference, it is concerned with particularities rather than the generality and levelling out that theorization attempts.²³ Spiritual psychology is thus best understood with William Geoghegan as a way of life in the sense of a devotion to living one's questions (Geoghegan & Stoehr 2002, vii). Proceeding through questions leads to the insight that to take Jung's answers, his theories of the unconscious, seriously means that as generalizations they defeat themselves because the unconscious remains unknown and mysterious and expresses itself differently in each individual. This in turn reveals openings, the spatial equivalent of a question, in Jung's thinking of the unconscious that allow glimpses of the forces that drove his theorizing and that can continue to bear fruit, but that are only visible through some kind of imaginal practice. The same occurs with Steiner's answers, his theories of non-ordinary consciousness. They defeat themselves as generalizations because to take them seriously hinges on rigorous meditative practice that will, along with forms of non-ordinary consciousness themselves, be experienced differently by each individual. To be faithful to the practical side of spiritual psychology as methodology, I have, in conjunction with writing this thesis, practiced various of Steiner's

²³ Regarding atheoretical methodology, Jung says that psychotherapy, as a discipline concerned primarily with the collective psyche expressing itself through different individuals, must more or less conform to the heterogeneity of the individual. In so far as psychotherapy accomplishes this, it reveals itself to be atheoretical, or at least always in excess of any general principles, the individual being irreducible to a statistical datum (*CW* 10, §523, see also 1973, 170). The excess-ivity that the relationship between collectivity and individuality creates is a recurring theme throughout this thesis and helps to push against the illusory bounds of any psychology under the banner of scientific materialism and its often-oppositional thinking.

meditations and undergone therapy with an analytical psychologist that included the practice of Jung's active imagination.

Spiritual psychology as a way of life leads to the question of biography. The relation of a person's life to their work is a complex matter that needs to be problematized because the genre of biography as what Shamdasani calls "great men" history tends to de-historicization and universalization, or to isolate a figure from their predecessors and contemporaries and present one account of their life as truth. "Great men" history becomes even more harmful when it stands in for the effort of understanding a figure's work (Shamdasani 2018, 4 & 7).²⁴ Jung is acutely aware of this issue and mistrusts both biography and autobiography, answering requests for both by saying that they are bound to be illusion posing as truth (1953/1976 v.2, 106, a letter to Henri Flournoy, son of psychologist Théodore Flournoy). Since, however, biography exists, Jung argues for the inclusion of the shadow and the unconscious in any attempt to write a life because they show that "an actual body" is present.²⁵ Actual bodies that cast shadows and indicate the mysterious presence of the unconscious, rather than the fabrication of disembodied "great men", defeat any writing that poses as definitive biography precisely because the unconscious is, well...unconscious, and so never entirely bio-graphable. This does not mean that a figure's life does not bear on their work and their work on life, but rather that it is the acknowledgement that the body, shadow, and unconscious haunt all writing

²⁴ Shamdasani criticizes all existing biographies of Jung thusly, including *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* that he argues is really a book of its editors, Jung's private secretary Aniela Jaffé (see Shamdasani 2018, 22-38). Happily, the original full protocols that *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* are based on are in the process of publication, though no date is available. In any case, the few times that the text is used here should be read with all of this in mind.

²⁵ Cited from a 1956 letter held at Beineke Library, Yale University (in Shamdasani 2018, 27). Jung considers the shadow to be the objective personality. It is objective because it contains unacceptable and unsavoury aspects that are excluded from the subjectively cultivated personality that one presents.

that makes biography useful. It is with this in mind that I will use what biographical information I do include to help contextualize and interpret the work of Jung and Steiner.

What, then, in the lives of Jung and Steiner is helpful in understanding their work? The most striking thing according to Wehr is that both Jung and Steiner respond to the events of life with a desire to understand material and spiritual phenomenon as interdependent and indeterminable. Further, Jung and Steiner do not only extend this outlook to the phenomena of experience but direct it at the experiencer in a self-analysis or critique of how one experiences. The questioning methodology used here is thus very close to Jung and Steiner. As far as particular life events are concerned, Wehr extends his insight into two related groupings: first are those events to do with spiritual reality, specifically the dead, and second are those to do with material reality, specifically nature (Wehr 2003, 53-54; 59; 66 & 69).

Both Jung and Steiner relay experiences at four years of age regarding non-material or spiritual realities. Jung dreamed of a chthonic figure that made a deep impression and that he later associated with the underworld and the common sight of funerary rights during his childhood. His father was a pastor and they lived near the Rhine Falls where drownings were a familiar occurrence. Steiner saw an apparition of the spirit of a faraway relative, whose death was not known to the Steiners at the time but who later was confirmed to have committed suicide at the time that she appeared in ghostly form to the young Steiner. Neither Jung nor Steiner found receptive audiences in their families and family religion for the questions that these experiences elicited. Jung grew up in a secure though not wealthy Protestant family, and Steiner in an unstable working-class Catholic family – his father did not attend church and

though Steiner did serve as an altar boy he found meaning only through participation in ritual and not the doctrine (see Wehr 2003, 52-58).

Alongside experiences of a spiritual reality, Wehr speaks of an awareness in both Jung and Steiner of nature as “very much alive and filled with wonders” (2003, 62-63). For Jung this awareness appears with the element of water he would always live beside and in his fascination with stones and stonework as well as wood sculpture. Steiner’s formative relationship to nature can be seen in the childhood influence of his rural environment and interaction with what he would later call elementals or nature spirits, his early education with a peasant herb-gatherer, in his wood sculpture, and in his later development of Biodynamic agriculture that is now practiced on farms around the globe (Wehr 2003, 53, 62 & 69). Thus, far from springing forth solely from the mind and the therapy office, the psychologies of Jung and Steiner draw heavily on the wisdom of nature, on the mineral, plant, and animal realms. Nature is a ‘source’ of Jung’s and Steiner’s that has been largely ignored and that I examine throughout this thesis. I suggest that treating minerals, plants, and animals as valid sources for psychological thinking and living is perhaps the most radical contribution of both figures. It is also their most timely, a century or so later in the Anthropocene, a time when the relationship between human beings and all other beings is marked by the kinds of cruelty, destruction, and ignorance that makes possible unchecked mining and deforestation, factory farming, extinction of species caused by habitat destruction, and so on. The connection between these ecologically irresponsible behaviours and psychology is clear when the former are acknowledged as driven by human psychic factors such as greed, insecurity, and so on – an insight that sets Jung and Steiner apart from many other psychologies that do not feel the need to involve all of life in psychology.

Jung, Steiner, and Rilke turned to the wisdom of minerals, plants, and animals at a time when the ability of human beings to live well with others and with difference in general was being called into question by the First World War and its immeasurable dead. As with ecological destruction, Jung and Steiner both find psychic factors at the roots of the War, including a poverty of soul and subsequent capacity for evil that enable nearly unimaginable horrors wrought by humans on other humans. The question that Jung, Steiner, and Rilke derive from the War, and that I continue here, is how might human beings live in more life-giving ways that include the Earth and the dead in the face of such destructiveness?

Before closing this brief discussion of biography, I would be remiss if I did not reveal the involvement of my own psychological make-up in this research, as far as this is possible given the problematization of biography just presented. Similarly to Jung and Steiner, the current research does not arise out of a merely intellectual choice of topic and the practical need to fulfill academic duties. It is more accurate to say that I am called by life and by death to respond to the questions that Jung and Steiner raise.

The heed that Jung and Steiner give to non-human beings reflects my personal relationship to nature, developed from a secluded rural childhood. Growing up surrounded by forest, hill, field, and river, it has always been apparent to me that minerals, plants, and animals have their own kind of being, their own kind of consciousness, their own purposiveness and language. I learned that they are to be respected and listened to on their own mysterious terms, and some kind of invisible reality stands in and behind them as much as it does with human beings. As an adult it is clear to me that these non-human beings are able to call being human into question, not by striking the kind of anxiety that leads humans to fend off and

subjugate non-humans through oppositional thinking, but in a curious and collaborative manner. At the same time as being inspired by Steiner and Jung I am disturbed when either one speaks in the language of absolutes despite their analysis of the impossibility and harm of universalizing knowledge, and by their occasional use of a human/non-human binary to define consciousness despite their mutual heed of non-human wisdom – problems that will be addressed below.

The following chapters work to inherit the work of Jung and Steiner and ask what kind of psychological thinking and living arises when the challenges to oppositional thinking inherent in their presentations of non-ordinary consciousness are taken seriously. The first chapter explores the differences and similarities of how oppositional thinking is conceived by Jung and Steiner, why it can be so deadly, how to become aware of it and open to imagination. The second chapter traces how imaginative non-ordinary consciousness appears in the work of Jung and Steiner, what it looks like, and what is necessary to develop it. These first two chapters established the conceptual and contextual foundation for the third and fourth chapters that then translate this conceptual framework into a more poetic language appropriate to the wisdom of life and death, respectively, and ask the unanswerable question of what it means to be a being. Specifically, the third chapter examines what spiritual psychology as life-psychology might look like, especially drawing from Jung's *Liber Novus* and its portrayal of the life wisdom of minerals, plants, and animals to challenge anthropocentric conceptions of life and being. The fourth and final chapter situates spiritual psychology as equally death-psychology through the theme of lamentation that appears in Jung and Rilke and different senses of death and the dead

from all three writers, and proposes that life and death must be brought together for spiritual psychology to work.

Chapter One: *Resisting Unequivocalness*

Few things are in fact as accessible to reason or to language as people will generally try to make us believe. Most phenomena are *unsayable*, and have their being in a dimension which no word has ever entered [...].

Letters to a Young Poet, Rilke 1903/2000, 173.

Where is your measure, false measurer? The sum of life decides in laughter and in worship, not your judgment.

The spirit of the depths in *Liber Novus*, 2009, 122.²⁶

Though the living are wrong to believe
in the too-sharp distinctions which they themselves have
created.

Duino Elegies, Rilke 1922/1982, 7.

These poetic fragments warn against any thinking of life and death that pretends to unequivocalness, or absolutism. Unequivocalness fails inheritance understood as opening the mouths of the dead because it attempts to put an end to questioning and renders traditions, thinkers, and texts as read once and for all. Unequivocalness fails all the more noticeably with Jung and Steiner because both prefer varied characterizations over single definitions and consistently contradict themselves not only from text to text, but even from chapter to chapter. Rather than seeing this as problematic and a weakness of their work, I propose that their contradictory and self-defeating moves are consciously and unconsciously a way of doing what both never tire of saying: do not fall into the trap of thinking you've got something, conclusively. Further, this persistent contradictoriness shows that difference and paradox are a

²⁶ *Liber Novus* alternates between Jung's voice and the voices of fantasy figures, and it is important to maintain these distinctions in any analysis. The spirit of the depths is a figure who represents the unconscious, ambiguity, self-analysis or introspection, dependence on others, non-possessiveness, a relationship to non-human beings, and so forth. Jung says of the spirit of the depths that it "evokes everything that [human beings] cannot", demands that one learn to live with one's "incapacity", and helps to "break down the walls that confine [one's] view" and open to the "endless uncertainty" of existence (2009, 155 & 229).

fundamental aspect of spiritual psychology. If anything is certain it is that one-sidedness of any kind leads, in the words of the spirit of the depths from *Liber Novus*, away from understanding as “a bridge and possibility of returning to the path” and instead to “unambiguous” and “arbitrary” explanations that are the speciality of scholars (Jung 2009, 122).²⁷ Jung, Steiner, and Rilke all share a healthy suspicion that unambiguity is murderous, meaning against life, and that its deadly motives are in fact easy to understand, whether these be to stave off fear of the unknown, fear of mortality, vault humanity to the top of an illusory hierarchy to ward off these insecurities and others, or something else.

Some kind of explanation is, however, unavoidable here. To begin to develop the double question that comprises spiritual psychology – first how to become aware of one’s oppositional thinking and second how to develop non-ordinary imaginative consciousness – I will sketch a number of basic concepts from Jung and Steiner that are necessary for everything that follows before going into more detail. These concepts can be divided into two groups, the first to do primarily with opposition and the second with imagination. In the first group are *abstract thinking, ego, and ordinary waking consciousness*; and in the second, *non-ordinary consciousness, soul, and spirituality*. Between these groups stands the concept of *polarity*, and finally, encircling everything the concept of the *psyche*.

²⁷ With the metaphor of a bridge Jung begins a recurring reference in *Liber Novus* to Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. One of many examples is when Zarathustra expresses love for human beings because, in his words, “they are a bridge and not a purpose: what is lovable about human beings is that they are a *crossing over* and a *going under*” (1883-85/2006, 7). In one sense, I take Zarathustra’s words to support the kind of living of questions rather than answers, or purpose in Zarathustra’s words, that is being attempted here. The language of bridges, of crossings, and of going under – the latter in the sense of bearing the burden that is one’s self – occurs throughout *Liber Novus*, and I will use it consistently here to talk about what spiritual psychology looks like.

Abstract thinking – sometimes simply abstraction – is the term that Jung and Steiner both use to represent thinking that separates intellectual concept from percept of phenomena. Abstract thinking is corollary to oppositional thinking because the former is characterized by the binary of intellect/percept and so presupposes an opposition between what is being thought about and the thought itself.²⁸ Through the activity of differentiation, that individuals exist distinct from collectives or that there is an ‘I’ and an ‘other’, abstract thinking is the midwife of the *ego*, roughly the personality in both its known and potentially known facets.²⁹ The simplest way that Jung speaks about *ordinary waking consciousness* or, more generally, consciousness (*das Bewußtsein*), is as “the relation between the ego and psychic contents” (CW 9i, §490, written 1939).³⁰ In other words, ego is the self-referential subject of ordinary waking consciousness, that part of human beings that says or thinks “I am conscious” (§506). The terms so far are necessary to understanding the first question of spiritual psychology because they constitute a large part of the apparatus that oppositional thinking operates through, though they are not necessarily oppositional themselves.

²⁸ The alliance of abstraction and opposition is not always explicit in Jung and Steiner but always there. Jung and Steiner likely speak of abstract thinking or abstraction more explicitly than the specifically oppositional nature of such thinking because of the scientific materialism that they work against. Scientific materialism is characterized by abstracting and reducing all phenomena to material causes. For example, the opinion that all psychic phenomena can be attributed to chemical reactions in the brain. Despite a focus on materiality, abstract thinking as merely intellectual actually removes itself from a physical as well as emotional connection to the phenomena being thought. It is distinct from cognition which is something more like understanding through all perceptive faculties.

²⁹ The potentially known facets of the ego refer to those that, though often outside of one’s awareness, are nonetheless not entirely unconscious. For example, undesirable personality traits like greed, superiority, and so on, that we notice and perhaps condemn in others but rarely in ourselves.

³⁰ Though Jung more often uses the simpler blanket term consciousness to refer to ordinary waking consciousness, I prefer the latter because the former gives the unfortunate and misleading impression that non-ordinary consciousness is consciousness in general and everything else, including the unconscious, is separate from and in opposition to it. I also choose to avoid the other solution of specifying ‘the conscious’ as is done with the unconscious because one would then have to contend with yet another reifying definite article, the attachment of which to ‘the’ unconscious will be challenged later on.

The concept of *polarity* is indispensable to both Steiner's and Jung's understandings of the different aspects of consciousness. Polarity for Jung is the function of innumerable self-regulating pairs of opposites – hot and cold, life and death, and so on (CW 13, §7). It is thus a balanced system, like electrical energy, unless the pairs of opposites come to expression through a one-sided human being who attributes more value to one side than the other and thereby creates an opposition, replacing the 'and' with a '/'. Polarity is involved in ordinary waking consciousness particularly through the differentiation of 'I' and 'other'. At the same time, it introduces non-ordinary consciousness because such consciousness retains the self-awareness occasioned by the differentiation of concept and percept whilst seeking to move through oppositionality in a reconnection of the thinker to a lived imaginal experience of the subject matter.

Non-ordinary consciousness attempts to give form and voice to non-material reality that can begin to be understood doubly: on one hand as that which escapes ordinary waking consciousness and on the other as the creative forces of the psyche unknowable by abstract thinking but symbolically representable. These two facets correspond respectively to 1) the personal subconscious for Jung and the subconscious for Steiner, that stand between ordinary and non-ordinary consciousness, and 2) the collective unconscious for Jung and supraconscious for Steiner, that represent non-ordinary consciousness.³¹ Imagination and the non-ordinary forms of consciousness that it expresses itself through are related to *soul*, understood by Jung

³¹ I use the designation 'personal subconscious' for Jung rather than the more common 'personal unconscious' for clarity's sake. Though Jung uses 'personal subconscious' more rarely it helps to distinguish between it and the collective unconscious without always having to add the adjective collective. Thus whenever 'the unconscious' is used here it will refer to the collective, transpersonal unconscious.

and by Steiner as a dynamic capacity that mediates material and non-material or spiritual realities. As a capacity soul is not a thing, is neither individual nor collective only, and is neither specific to nor able to be mastered by human beings. *Spirituality* then refers to the activities that allow embodied beings to relate to these aspects of reality. The view that soul and spirituality only exist through embodied beings, human and otherwise, constitutes one of the strongest challenges to oppositional thinking made by Jung and Steiner as well as Rilke. Jung puts this critique clearly in his *Alchemical Studies* with words that set the tone for this first chapter:

'Soul,' that bodiless abstraction of our rational consciousness, and 'spirit,' that two-dimensional metaphor of dry-as-dust philosophical dialectic, appear in alchemical [symbolic] projection in almost physical, plastic form, like tangible breath-bodies, and refuse to function as component parts of our rational consciousness.

CW 13, §286

Non-ordinary consciousness, soul, and spirituality are all necessary to understanding the second question of spiritual psychology because they represent ways of being human that are potentially more life-giving and inclusive than the oppositionality of abstract thinking.

Psyche represents the energetic field wherein all other terms hang together and every process that can be called consciousness takes place. In German psyche is so closely related to soul that it is often represented by the same word, *das Seele* (see Jung 1931, 200n & 209). I summarize Jung's conception of the psyche as an unbounded field of potential formative forces autonomous from human control. While it is perhaps more closely connected to non-material reality because it cannot be weighed, measured, or calculated in any way, the psyche exists in intimate relationship with material reality. Jung even says that matter is the most apt symbol for "a true matrix of psychic experience", and that the unconscious part of the psyche especially

“[...] is refractory like matter, mysterious and elusive, and obeys laws that are so non-human or suprahuman that they seem to us like a *crimen laesae majestatis humanae* [the crime of injury of human sovereignty]”. This crime that the psyche, often supposed to be unquestionably human, perpetrates on human beings by laughing off our pretensions to mastery reveals that even our physical bodies, a part of us we might take to be most intimately ours, are in fact governed by what Jung calls the “infinitely greater than we” non-human or suprahuman cosmos (CW 13, §286). The psyche’s crime helps with the double question of spiritual psychology because it 1) shatters the dangerous illusion of the superiority of ordinary waking consciousness as the pinnacle of evolution, and 2) reveals that not only do other kinds of consciousness exist, but that far from being mere fancy their influence reaches further than is commonly acknowledged, even to our physical bodies, and perhaps they even have more to do with ‘real’ life than the ordinary waking sort.

With these sparse furnishings there are at least a few places, necessarily provisional, at which to steady oneself to proceed deeper into the double question of spiritual psychology and inheritance as opening the mouths of the dead. The terms presented so far will be fleshed out, in the spirit of Jung’s words above, as tangible breath-bodies that shatter mere rationality.

The Oppositionality of Abstract Thinking

To continue to outline the first question I will first give a richer description of abstract thinking before placing it in context of Jung’s discussion of subjectivity and objectivity, two concepts that are often understood oppositionally and that arise whenever one speaks of the relationship between thinking and experience. I then turn to Steiner’s method of facilitating a

critical awareness of abstract thinking. The consequences of abstract thinking will be discussed further and brought home through Jung's more poetic expression before returning to Steiner for the beneficial aspects of abstract thinking when it is not left one-sided. This weaving between Jung and Steiner helps to keep matters open when either Jung or Steiner – or I as researcher – become too closed within their own ideas and begins to show the warp and weft of what spiritual psychology as a living of questions could be.

To risk putting it abstractly, in addition to enforcing an intellect/percept binary, one-sidedly abstract thinking posits concepts or groupings of ideas around a particular object of thought as absolute and unambiguous in meaning and thus renders the object as fully known.³² It can be understood as thinking that is solely rational and that seeks to reductively explain phenomena separate from the experience of them through clear-cut causality and 1:1 relationship.³³ Rilke illustrates this kind of thinking, saying “Where once an enduring house was, now a cerebral structure crosses our path, completely belonging to the realm of concepts, as though it still stood in the brain” (*Elegies*, 1922/1982, 43). As if mental representation completely captured every detail and nuance of a particular house, that could not be experienced in any other way, and indeed need not now that it has been supplanted by a

³² From hereon I will use the term abstract thinking without the modifiers one-sided or merely intellectual and often without explicit reference to oppositionality, which by now should be recognized as implicit in abstract thinking. If something else is meant, as in discussions of the helpful side of abstract thinking, this will be made clear.

³³ Jung defines a reductive approach etymologically as “leading back” and thus, in his words, as “a method of psychological interpretation which regards the unconscious not as a *symbol* but *semiotically*, as a *sign* or *symptom* of an underlying process” (CW 6, §788). Here Jung is clearly challenging the oppositionality of Saussurean semiotics, mentioned above. In contrast, Jung calls his preferred method constructive or synthetic, which he says involves the “elaboration” of what are taken as symbolic expressions – rather than signs or symptoms – of the unconscious, including dreams, fantasies, and more. The constructive method eschews the pathological focus common to reductive approaches in favour of a developmental focus, meaning it sees the symbolic expressions of the psyche as anticipatory of phases of psychological development (§701).

cerebral architecture. Another example outside of Rilke is the taxonomic classification of plants and animals that achieves the same thing as the cerebral sublimation of a house but with entire non-human realms of being. Rilke protests the projection of conceptual frameworks onto other beings with words that resonate with Jung's understanding of reductivity, saying of humans that "Only *our* eyes are turned backward, and surround plant, animal, child like traps, as they emerge into their freedom" (49).³⁴

The trap of abstract thinking only gets sprung, however, if the conceptual constellation that displaces or stands in for an experience is held as an end in itself – a purpose rather than a bridge. If instead it simply enables the retention and communication of the experience-as-thought and is allowed at any time to be re-displaced by the always-different re-experience of that phenomena, it appears very helpful indeed. It is simply useful to begin with the harmful face of abstract thinking because becoming aware of and challenging its automaticity is the first step of a spiritual approach to psychology as it appears in the work of both Jung and Steiner.

Automaticity is another way of saying that abstract thinking largely occurs without one's awareness, or unconsciously, and not in a rational vacuum but under the influence of irrational factors.³⁵ That this is so can be confirmed by the very simple exercise of attempting to consciously account for every step of thinking that has led to what one would call a rational

³⁴ Just how little non-human beings like plants and animals are contained by the reductive categories that get assigned to them by abstract thinking will be shown in Chapter Three.

³⁵ The adverb 'unconsciously' introduces a problem with the understandings of the unconscious in general. When it is said that something occurs unconsciously this does not necessarily mean that it is an act of the unconscious in Jung's sense given above. Rather, it can simply mean that something occurs outside of one's field of attention and still potentially within what is considered ordinary waking consciousness. It can also refer to the activity of the personal subconscious, the seat of much of one's presuppositions, prejudices, and preferences, and its influence on ordinary waking consciousness. These multiple shades of meaning indicate the closeness of reading required when dealing with the psychological thought of Jung and of Steiner.

conclusion. It cannot be done, your account will always come up short, and you may reach the beneficial conclusion that you are for the most part in the dark regarding why you hold this or that view. Jung and Steiner never tire of encouraging simple exercises like this one that illuminate, in contradistinction to the common association of thinking with light, the extent to which the psyche as the 'place' of thinking is shrouded in darkness to human beings, as we shall continue to see.

The significance of the automaticity of abstract thinking for spiritual psychology is that the oppositionality that it both operates through and creates occurs for the most part without a thinker's awareness. In other words, abstract thinking operates through preconceived mental images or thoughts – abstractions – that one holds about the world, and that in fact dictate what one takes to be 'the world', and which are often taken to be objective facts.³⁶ The first question of spiritual psychology is thus made difficult because oppositional thinking, being largely automatic, resists awareness.

Jung resists the common splitting in two of subject[ive] and object[ive] – itself a result of abstraction – and the opinion of abstract thinking as solely objective. He says in the 1921 *Psychological Types* that so-called objective abstract thinking is often "a product of the subjective psychological constellation of the researcher" (CW 6, §9).³⁷ Jung does not exempt

³⁶ The recognition that 'the world' is at least in part dependent on the being perceiving that world means that there is really no 'the world' in the singular, only worlds.

³⁷ Steiner for his part picks the subjectivity of abstract thinking up from Goethe, notably his 1792 essay "Experience as Mediator Between Subject and Object" (2016, 940-46). This is worth mentioning here because of the strong resonance between Goethe's essay and Jung's statement. Goethe situates the subjectivity of the researcher as producing an ethical problem that can be rendered in psychological language as the unconscious projection of one's prejudices (including desires, likes and dislikes) and presuppositions onto what is being studied. For Goethe, as for Jung and Steiner, such thinking results quite simply in bad science and can only lead the researcher and their audience into error.

himself from this scenario. In the *Introduction to Jungian Psychology: Notes of the Seminar on Analytical Psychology Given in 1925* (hereon referred to as the *1925 Seminar*) Jung admits being retrospectively aware that his 1912 *Psychology of the Unconscious* is not an objective analysis of a certain Ms. Miller whose fantasies form the surficial content of the text, but rather a projection of himself and his unconscious processes onto the material (1925/2010, 28). Here and in a following conversation from the *1925 Seminar* regarding modern art, Jung understands subjective as that which is concerned with a relationship between an individual subject and an object. This is distinct from what Jung considers an uncritical and simplistic understanding of subjective as any process taking place, in his words, “within the mind of a subject”. He suggests that the experiences conveyed by the artists through the artworks being discussed may be expressions of collective or transpersonal phenomena, and though certainly occurring ‘within’ the psyche of the artist he says these “are just as truly objects as things outside the psyche” and therefore not “necessarily in opposition to objective” (1925/2010, 57).³⁸ In other words, subjective constellations whether of a painter or a scholar may be indeterminably related to the collective inheritance of humanity – and thus not subjective-as-personal at all. Though Jung does not state it himself, his idea of a collective unconscious that is indeterminable leads to the insight that there will always be an excess of subjectivity to what can be known, and that much of this may in fact have more objectivity to it than is commonly thought.

³⁸ This discussion on modern art is important here not only because of how it problematizes common conceptions of subjective and objective, but because it occurs in the context of Jung’s first public account of certain fantasy experiences that comprise the material of *Liber Novus*, though without mention of *Liber Novus* itself. As Jung was heavily occupied with the transcription of *Liber Novus* into the calligraphic volume and the paintings in the time of the *1925 Seminar*, it is not a stretch to speculate that he – consciously or unconsciously – has his own work in mind when challenging the notion that modern art is purely subjective and in opposition to objective. The *1925 Seminar* thus may be read as a veiled attempt to justify his ‘subjective’ experiences as represented in *Liber Novus* as something in fact ‘objective’ because they are of a transpersonal nature.

Jung's discussion shows that without going very far at all, the categories of subjective and objective become inextricably confused and intertwined, and any claim of abstract thinking as objective full stop appears quite fragile. The only thing, perhaps, that is clear is that what Rilke above calls our "too-sharp distinctions" are the hallmark of abstract thinking that, as Jung says of the distinction between reason and unreason in *Liber Novus*, is "arbitrary and depends upon the level of comprehension" (2009, 404). That is, distinction depends upon the constellation of experiences, thoughts, emotions, socio-cultural and other contexts, and so on that form an individual's perspective – though not all of these are personal, conscious, nor even interior. Jung's discussion of subjectivity thus involves us in first question of spiritual psychology, that can now be framed as what it might take to become curious about one's so-called subjective constellation and distinctions and begin to tease both apart.

Jung's porous play between subjective and objective, personal and transpersonal, inner and outer not only reveals the illusory nature of abstract thinking when taken alone but the presupposition of human beings as the only beings capable of subjectivity. One can just as easily speak of an object of thought – or artmaking in the *1925 Seminar* – as a subject of thought – or artmaking – and whether these are inner or outer, subjective or objective, the thought of an individual or of the collective unconscious, of a subject or an object, is very difficult to say. Jung's word play is not benign, for most people except perhaps our poet would balk at hearing of what we normally take to be objects, plants for example, cogitating on some subject. In other words, problematizing subject[ivity] and object[ivity] reveals the human tendency to reserve experience and thought for themselves alone as the only beings with subjecthood, a presupposition upheld by most psychologies. Non-human beings are thus

excised from thinking and from psychology, and this exclusion is used to reinforce the illusion of human mastery and justify the resultant and very real maltreatment of non-human beings.

Rilke clearly represents this way that humans twist the question of being, of who or what has what kind of being, one-sidedly in their favour, saying that everyone has been touched by “a barely measurable time between two moments-, when you were granted a sense of being. But we can so easily forget what our laughing neighbour neither confirms nor envies. We want to display it, to make it visible [...]” (*Elegies*, 1922/1982, 43). Psychologies can easily submit to unequivocalness, to use the language of *Liber Novus* and that Rilke expresses – the attempt to display and make visible in abstract and unambiguous terms the mystery of what it means to be a human being, or what any being means for that matter. What sets spiritual psychology apart is that it welcomes precisely this ambiguity and suggests that it perhaps has more to do with being human than does unequivocalness.

Liber Novus marks Jung’s recognition of the limitations and pitfalls of abstract thinking and its unequivocalness, and the horrors it can perpetrate – horrors that Jung’s “I” tells him are all too comfortably “less real” if one merely has knowledge of them, meaning that one can remain ignorant of one’s complicity (2009, 320). A difficulty arises in the *Collected Works* when Jung at times presents himself and his ideas abstractly, and even at times as objective and unequivocal knowledge. Wherever Jung “fall[s] prey to the web of words”, as he says in *Liber Novus*, he then must count himself among those who his soul accuses as murderous explainers of life, as well as among those whom Rilke says wrongly believe in their too-sharp distinctions and make a display of being.

The consequence of Jung's abstraction in the *Collected Works* is that while all thinking and writing must employ abstraction to some degree, he for the most part does not take the step of helping the reader to a reconnection of his abstractions to an individual lived or immediate experience, *Urerfahrung*, the prefix *ur-* implying experiences that are a *source* or *basis*.³⁹ Instead, his method for providing an experiential basis for his theories is to regularly remind his audience that they arise not out of his mind alone but from repeated observation of case studies and clinical examples. These are certainly experiences had by someone but are presented second hand at best and furnish only the empirical evidence for Jung's theories rather than a method by which one could observe the phenomena he discusses in oneself. However, true to Jung's contradictoriness, self-observation and analysis are in fact necessary to both the practice of analytical psychology and to psychological research in general. Jung insists on the necessity of self-observation if a psychotherapist is to not be a complete charlatan (CW 11, §521), and employs it himself, notably in *Liber Novus* and the *1925 Seminar*.

Jung's use of case studies presents an interesting study itself when he anonymously gives his own experiences as examples, notably fantasies from *Liber Novus*.⁴⁰ Why would Jung,

³⁹ See for example Sardello 2003, 17 & 2001, 11 for this criticism. Regarding immediate experience Fertel suggests, contrary to established interpretations (i.e. Hillman and Shamdasani 2013), that any claim to an immediacy of experience on the written page is a rhetorical effect that should not be valorized as immediate experience as such (2017, 118). It is in agreement with Fertel that I insist on the necessity of abstraction and that a writer can only gesture to immediate experience – if writing is to affect an immediate experience of whatever subject matter there must be an effort on the part of readers as co-improvisers, and this experience will occur differently in each reading. Given Fertel's argument the meaning of *ur-* as source or basis can be thought of as a rhetorical effect and not some kind of metaphysical absolute origin. The problem of calling analytical psychology "Jungian psychology", introduced in note two above, can be taken further and shown to obscure the intellectual roots of analytical psychology in favour of the discipline having its source in Jung, a man who "discovered" the collective unconscious (as it is often popularly put). This occurs despite the fact that Jung himself laid no such claim and in fact offered much evidence to the contrary (CW 13, §286, for example).

⁴⁰ A striking example of this is Jung's inclusion in *Commentary to the Secret of the Golden Flower* of three paintings from *Liber Novus* given anonymously as examples of Western mandalas (CW 13, figures A3, A6, & A10).

a self-proclaimed empiricist, smuggle representations of his own *Urerfahrung* into analytical psychology? Of course, many reasons could be speculated, perhaps the most likely being that he wanted to protect the fledgling analytical psychology by presenting its experiential foundations as ‘objectively’ as possible rather than through what would be perceived as his personal ‘subjective’ experience. What Jung is certainly aware of is the malleability of the terms objective and subjective and the tendency of most people to nonetheless take them as unambiguous categories. Like a trickster of mythology – in *Liber Novus* Jung is told “Hermes is your daimon” – he is willing to manipulate them in order to bring something – analytical psychology – into the world in an attempt to occasion some kind of transformation of consciousness (2009, 475, 25n).

A close and wide reading of Jung shows that he does not remain ensnared in “the web of words” but is for the most part critical of abstract thinking and pretensions to so-called objective or absolute knowledge. I trace his challenge in three ways that each indicate his commitment to what I am calling the first problem of spiritual psychology: 1) his ceaseless self-doubt and -contradiction, 2) his struggle with abstract thinking in *Liber Novus*, especially its psychological function of covering up human insecurity and the recognition that all absolutism is against living, and 3) his insistence everywhere on an empirical basis.⁴¹

The first two are often seen as shortcomings of thought and writing, especially academic, though they are helpful and even necessary if one is to live questions rather than

⁴¹ Jung’s challenge to abstract thinking in *Liber Novus* occurs largely through his struggle with a figure called the spirit of the times. This figure represents the conscious rational mind, pretensions to absolute knowledge, self-interest, accumulation of wealth and power, human industry, and so forth. In Jung’s own more poetic words, the spirit of the times is like a “dark land where people live who rub their eyes each morning and yet only see the same thing and never anything else” (2009, 298). It appears in contradistinction to the spirit of the depths.

suppose answers, as is being attempted here. I take doubt and contradiction in the authors in question as confessions that they do not have *the* answers, and sometimes not even the appropriate questions. In *Liber Novus* Jung realizes that the psychological function of abstraction and the pretension to absolute knowledge is to protect against the precarity of human beings in a largely unknowable world. Jung describes the effort to challenge this defensive and instinctive function in *Liber Novus* with words that reflect the first question of spiritual psychology: “I excise myself from the cunning interpretive loops that I gave to what lies beyond me [my presuppositions, prejudices, and so on]. And my knife cuts even deeper and separates me from the meanings that I conferred upon myself [my ego in the sense of personality]” (2009, 377, Jung). Finally, Jung’s insistence on an empirical basis arose both in response to his subject matter, the psyche and specifically its unconscious constituent that can only responsibly be studied through experience, and in an attempt to convince the scientific materialists of his time that the psyche was something more than a by-product of chemical reactions in the brain.⁴²

To continue with the question of what subject[ive] and object[ive] could mean, let us turn to Steiner who, unlike Jung, is directly interested in the epistemological problems that abstract thinking poses. Steiner presents many of his works as meditative exercises meant to lead the reader precisely to an experience of what any particular of his ideas represent. It is not the ideas as they appear clothed in language that are important to Steiner but the development

⁴² Shamdasani suggests that in contrast to Jung’s more theoretical *Collected Works*, with *Liber Novus* he enters an evocative language meant to elicit an experience in the reader rather than merely an idea (2012, 373). This is not, however, as simple as it might sound – for in order to understand *Liber Novus* enough to have a relevant experience one needs a wide knowledge of Jung’s other work and much else besides, including the literature and philosophy that influence *Liber Novus*.

of non-ordinary consciousness that the effort to comprehend his ideas facilitates. Along this meditative path, Steiner is adamant that each individual will come to different experiences of the same ideas, express them with different language-images, and nonetheless all have the potential to develop capacities that bridge the non-material and the material, the non-human and the human (see Steiner 1912-13/2006a, 4, 15, 21-22). However, this is getting too far ahead, and for immediate purposes here Steiner's work provides the possibility of a way through the entanglement of subject[ive] and object[ive] to an experience of one's automatic abstract thinking that is the concern of our first question.

In *A Philosophy of Freedom*, the book that lays out his epistemological basis, Steiner gives a clue to how to proceed deeper into the problem of the opposites subject/object (1894/1995). He begins with a detailed discussion of the unreal or erroneous nature of abstract thinking when taken as universal, a belief that is usually accompanied by a denial of the reality of what one cannot physically observe, intolerance of ambiguity, the tendency to take hypothetical knowledge as truth, and the belief that thinking can be and should be purely objective. Steiner suggests that a way through these illusions is the meditative exercise of observing one's own thinking activity. This means thinking not about thoughts but about thinking, or temporarily forgoing the nominal and focussing instead on the verbal. It is the way that Steiner attempts to do what he says, to lead the reader from the thoughts on the page to an experience of the thinking activity that generates thoughts. Steiner insists that this questioning of not only one's thoughts by one's thinking process is the necessary first step to any kind of psychology, for despite associations of thinking with light, clarity, and the pinnacle of human consciousness, he proposes that thinking, not as a collection of thoughts but *as an*

activity, is a dark area within the conscious part of the psyche (in Lauer 2001, 282). This is another way of saying that the thinking process occurs for the most part automatically. Steiner contributes the insight that what automatic thinking obscures is the ability to approach things and others as potentially ever-new, capable of change, and unknown.⁴³ Instead, we simply and without awareness apply ready-made concepts to what presents itself to our experience, and so invariably end up in some way intolerant of ambiguity and difference.

To proceed with a description of the exercise, Steiner says that when thinking is made the object of thinking, a move that some might take to be abstraction of the highest order, the practitioner actually has the possibility of becoming acutely aware of what it means to be a subject in the very revealing of one's automaticity. In other words, by making otherwise taken for granted thinking-subject-hood the object of reflection, one experiences its reversal and negation – to be a subject is not what I thought or have been taught. What is it then? In this exercise of Steiner's, nothing more can be said other than that subject-hood has something to do with thinking taken as an activity in its becoming and not as pre-existent or guaranteed. What is first gained by this exercise is the awareness that, for the most part, what we take to be thinking is really something less active, less critical, and more akin to association - what I am calling the one-sidedness of merely intellectual or abstract 'thinking' – a word that can now be placed between scare quotes.⁴⁴ At the same time, the exercise provides an initial experience of

⁴³ Thinking as an activity can be understood in the sense of childlikeness, a state of consciousness that is free of presuppositions and that enables one to approach whatever presents itself as if it were being met for the very first time. The theme of childlikeness will surface again, as both Jung and Steiner use it to speak about what the corrective and complement to abstract thinking could be.

⁴⁴ It must be noted that this exercise must be practiced regularly and for a lengthy period of time, until the practitioner begins to get a real feeling for the activity of thinking. Without this experience, it is difficult if not impossible to comprehend what Steiner means by thinking as an activity, and especially later on when he speaks of other kinds of thinking than the abstract variety. Steiner speaks often of the importance, for this exercise and

the fact – for Steiner, and I will argue below for Jung as well – that human beings do not create their thoughts alone, but rather through participation with non-human worlds, consciously or unconsciously (Steiner 1917/1996, 115-17).

An awareness of the automaticity of abstract thinking is in fact how Steiner characterizes self-knowledge. That is to say that self-*knowledge* is not knowledge as it is normally understood but is rather the act of admitting that a large part of one's self is *unknown* or unconscious, and that whatever the concept of 'the self' stands for remains largely mysterious and undefinable (1912/2006a, 28). Steiner is very close to Jung here, both in the latter's *Liber Novus* where the spirit of the depths champions introspection as, in part, the task of befriending one's incapacity, mentioned above in note twenty-six, and in Jung's 1957 *The Undiscovered Self* where he says that for the most part self-knowledge gets confused with knowledge of one's ego-personality and remains ignorant of the unconscious (CW 10, §491). With this Steiner and Jung both approach self-knowledge in a radically different way from any psychology that poses it as an acquisition of information, an increase in ordinary waking consciousness, or something similar.

It is no surprise that Steiner anticipates his exercise as well as self-knowledge as he understands it being dismissed or resisted by people who would prefer to consume distractions rather than undergo the uncomfortable experience of questioning what is taken to be reality, including one's own identity. Rilke observes the same inertia in the aftermath and industrial

other meditative exercises he gives, of not going about them from the safety of one's presuppositions – and thus either blind faith or rigid skepticism – but instead approaching them with an attitude of critical curiosity. Only in this way will the activity of thinking be experienced, not as a mere concept but as an embodied feeling for the forces at work.

upswing following the First World War: “Hearing is difficult in this new tumult, but the machine-part expects us to praise it” (*Sonnets*, 1922, 37). This machine-part can be understood as a negative feedback loop of the automatic processes and products of human ‘thinking’, the unquestioning industrialization and commercialization, and now digitization of all human activities and relationships. Examples range from the human maltreatment of plants and animals through monoculture farming and automated feedlots to the human maltreatment of other humans through smart phone connected self-rocking cribs that deprive infants of needed touch. And, perhaps the deadliest because it is so hidden, digital advertising that instead of extracting minerals mines the ‘data’ of human personalities in order to mold those personalities towards ever-increasing and unconscious consumption. These examples indicate the everydayness or practicality of spiritual psychology – that it involves us in questioning the machine-like habits of daily living. Though these examples would have been foreign to Steiner, he observes that the abstract thinking characteristic of the natural sciences is disastrous when applied to social questions – eugenics being one of the more ethically questionable failings (1917/1996, 105). What is frightening is that what Rilke calls the machine-part is increasingly hidden-in-plain-sight and for that reason vicious, and once released:

It never stays back where for once we could just
leave it behind, oiling itself in the shut factory.
It is life—it thinks it does everything best,
with the same calm resolve to regulate, make and destroy.

But existence can still enchant us; in a hundred
places, we find its wells and springs. A play of pure forces
that no one can touch without wanting to kneel in wonder.

Sonnets, 1922, 75.

[Dis]enchantment, the Path to Imagination⁴⁵

Rilke offers enchantment as a way to derail machine-like ‘progress’ and find an attitude of worship towards existence. Yet to follow Jung and Steiner one must first become *disenchanted* from the thrall of automatic and habitual ways of living before re-enchantment can occur. In other words, human beings are actually enchanted by the kind of materialistic and commercialistic living often characterized by disenchantment. Like Steiner’s exercise above, much of Jung’s *Liber Novus* is dedicated to this hidden meaning of disenchantment, to the disruption of one’s attachment to the machine-like spirit of the times (see for example 2009, 117-23; 279 & 377).

In *Liber Novus* Jung brings us face-to-face with the reasons we give preference to abstract thinking – what I call its psychological function above. Jung presents abstract thinking in a fantastically inverted form as superstitious word magic that we use to ward off ambiguity and secure a known – though unknowingly illusory – position in ‘the world’. He challenges people, in his words, to “finally understand your purpose in explaining away, namely to seek protection [from the ambiguous, the chaotic, and the dead]”, and to admit that “what you call knowledge is an attempt to impose something comprehensible on life” – an attempt to remove enchantment from life (2009, 347 & 48). The explaining away and imposition of order that are pursued through abstract thinking are thus a shield from the enchanting diversity of life,

⁴⁵ This title is a reference to Saban’s article “The Dis/enchantment of C.G. Jung”, wherein he reads Jung as peculiarly modern because he is at once enchanted and disenchanted – a researcher of the occult and a scientist (2015). My following interpretation expands Saban’s analysis to suggest that a psychological method of [dis]enchantment is inherent in the very way in which works, rather than being simply apparent from the duplicity of his interests. I use square brackets in place of Saban’s slash to avoid any confusion with the way I use the slash to denote opposition between two terms.

inclusive of ambiguity, chaos, and the dead, that would cause anyone to *want* “to kneel in wonder”, as Rilke puts it. And so, the desire to kneel, to give up the illusion of human sovereignty and instead find meaning – or that which is in excess of meaning, as Jung will suggest in *Liber Novus* – in forces that exceed and enchant human consciousness, is stifled.

As dire as our three authors’ assessments of the state of humanity around them are, and one can only say that the situation of humanity has only become more ecologically, societally, and in every other sense precarious, they resist any violent swing from the pole of abstraction to something else. Can abstract thinking have another more wholistic function than being a disenchanting balm for human insecurities and for the risk that enchantment poses by requiring one to live with ambiguity and not-knowing? Jung and Steiner both think so. To put it quite generally, through the function of differentiation abstract thinking enables self-awareness in the form human beings experience it. Rilke for his part says that human beings “separate by our very presence” (1922/1982, 171). Differentiation is the basic move of self-awareness mentioned above on page twenty-five, that some being we call “I” exists somehow and to some degree separate from other beings.

Abstract thinking is thus a developmental necessity that is not inherently disenchanted and disenchanting in the sense of being against ambiguity and what is unknown, but only so when it becomes taken for granted and applied indiscriminately to all phenomena. Despite the pervasiveness and convenient invisibility of abstraction in human living, Jung and Steiner suggest that the existence of realms ungraspable by it not be negated simply because of this

ungrasp-ability.⁴⁶ For Steiner the experience of the limitations of abstract thinking whether occasioned by his exercise, by non-ordinary experiences, or in some other way can result in one of two moves. In one, these limits are erected into walls and towers that contain human knowing and, sometimes, attempt to carry the intellect to unhuman heights. In the other, the “cuts and blows” that the intellect suffers in struggling to explain phenomena to which it is unsuited can lead to the realization the intellect is not the only way humans can go about knowing, or understanding, and that as humans we do not pursue other forms of consciousness alone but with the help of non-human beings (Steiner 1996, 115). Steiner explicitly makes the second move, while Jung is more ambiguous, always making one then the other. Despite Jung’s vacillation, I follow Mecouch, the analytical psychologist who appeared briefly in the Introduction, in suggesting that Jung’s widest achievement is not the kind of typology that has become Jungian psychology but his making a case for the everyday relevancy and importance of non-ordinary states of consciousness, especially in the form of fantasy or imagination that can be characterized by enchantment (2016). Taking up the second move constitutes the second question of spiritual psychology.

⁴⁶ Jung uses the language of grasping – *greifen* – to speak of the spirit of the times, and especially the reductive imposition of order on life (see 2009, 125, for example).

Chapter Two: *At the Threshold of Imagination*

If grasping is descriptive of abstract thinking, in that with it one seeks to capture and bind something, to tame it through a restriction of ambiguous movement, what could an ungrasping thinking be? For some possible ways into this question, I will begin with Steiner's description of imaginative cognition and then move to Jung who is more obscure on this topic but whose casting of shadows is nonetheless illuminating.

What does Steiner mean by *imaginative* cognition? He does not mean a visualization with no basis in reality, as he anticipates in the accusations of his critics. Rather, in his words from *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, imagination is to be understood "as something coming into existence through a supersensible state of consciousness of the soul" (1909/1972, 271). Steiner's answer only raises more questions and even alarm bells. What exactly does he mean by imagination being supersensible – *übersinnlichen*, alternately translatable as extrasensory – and does it denigrate the physical body? In the small book of meditations *At the Threshold of the Spiritual World* Steiner gives a clue that is curiously absent in his longer works. He says that the non-material, psychic, or spiritual world is supersensible "*in relation to the physical world*" (1912-13/2006a, 78, italics added). This "in relation to" is critical, because it indicates that non-material reality is not supersensible in itself but only relatively so, when physical sense-perception is taken to be the only kind of sensing possible. Supersensible perception or consciousness is thus on a continuum and interdependent with the physical body and senses. This is not entirely different from Jung's characterization of the psyche as something energetic, invisible, and non-localizable in the physical world or body and yet nonetheless interdependent to physicality.

Steiner's understanding of imaginative cognition as a psychic "something" being birthed in the soul is in fact another meditation, or more accurately an ongoing meditative mood. It requires letting go of one's prejudices, preferences, preconceptions and so on, the awareness of which is the intention of the previous meditation on abstract thinking, in order to make room for imagination to appear on its own terms. Letting go is the first way that imaginative cognition is ungrasping. However, Steiner for the most part assumes the ability in his readers to let go of one's personality. Wehr suggests that this may be due to the fact that Steiner worked closely and often for extended periods with groups of people, wherein psychological work occurred in person. Yet one must wonder about Steiner's relative silence on this seemingly critical matter. Happily, work on oneself is Jung's primary occupation, and this is recognized by both Sardello and Wehr as one of the clearest reasons for a complementary relationship between Steiner and Jung (Sardello in Wehr 2003, 20-21 & Wehr 2003, 126).

Let us look closer at Steiner's meditation. He says that in the space cleared by letting go of what one takes to be 'the world' and oneself in it, imaginative cognition is developed through meditation on symbols. That is, on visualizations that do not have a direct or exact correlation with sense-perceptible physical reality but are rather "emblematic" of some process. Steiner suggests the symbolic visualization of the formative forces at work within a plant, from the sprouting seed to the sap flowing through the growing plant to its flowering and production of new seeds in death (263-64).⁴⁷ While a plant is part of sense-perceptible reality, this process of birth, growth, death, and rebirth is usually closed to our sense-perception, and

⁴⁷ Goethe's influence on Steiner is unmistakable here, most clearly the former's *Metamorphoses of Plants* wherein he describes an experience of the *Urpflanze*, the formative forces at work in plant life and death.

even biologists do not know how exactly plants came about and how they contain their entire process of growth within a seed. The use of plants as the visualization for this exercise is another indication that imaginative cognition should not be understood as separate from or opposed to physical-material reality. Once one has meditated on some symbol without the aid of sense-perceptions or one's stock of already-known thoughts, the critical final step of the exercise is to intentionally "extinguish" the symbolic visualization. In the emptiness created one might receive an intimation of the activity of non-material reality behind the visualization (273-74). This extinguishment is another way that imaginative cognition is ungrasping. The intimation that it enables is a symbolic vision, quite different from and irreducible to physical seeing and that Steiner represents variously as a seeing consciousness – *Das schauende Bewußtsein* – and a knowing seeing – *erkennendes Schauen* – that opens to a supersensible reality permeating all aspects of sense-perceptible reality (1917/1996, 120 & 105).

Steiner gives the analogy of sleep to help the reader understand what he means. Imaginative cognition is akin to sleep in that one's conscious *ego-personality* is relinquished, but different in that one retains the conscious *awareness* occasioned by abstract thinking (Steiner 1912-13/2006a, 272). This awakened sleep carries the experience that when sense-perceptions and abstract thinking are momentarily set aside, as they are in sleep, consciousness is not extinguished, but rather there is some other consciousness different from and "alongside" ordinary waking consciousness. Awareness of some kind of non-ordinary consciousness is precisely what the second question of spiritual psychology as I trace it through Jung and Steiner is concerned with.

Similar to the meditation on thinking, the development of imaginative cognition is not about the accrual of thoughts or mental images, that is, not about an increase in intellectual knowledge, such as psychotherapy of all kinds can often lead to, but rather the exercise of an always unfinished capacity (Steiner 1909/1972, 298; Kuhlewind 1987, 29). In this sense, it is something much more liminal than the finished products that a knowledge suggests – as in the image of a threshold that Steiner often employs. A threshold is both a space of transition as in an opening in a wall, and a space for threshing chaff – our prejudices and presuppositions – from wheat kernels that are supportive of life. As a threshold process imaginative cognition works to create openings in human one-sidedness through which the activity – the forces that Rilke says cause us to desire kneeling – behind what we normally take for granted can be glimpsed. These are forces that Steiner connects to Jung’s concept of the unconscious in his lectures on psychotherapy that will be taken up shortly (2001, 82). Rilke calls these forces an “unreckoned sum” and tells us to “count yourself in, rejoicing, and then demolish the count” – just like Steiner’s instructions regarding imaginative cognition to both extinguish one’s particular symbolic visualisations and relinquish one’s ego-personality (*Sonnets*, 1922, 81).

Meaning, Absurdity, Excess

As programmatic and imitable as Steiner attempts to be in his writing on non-ordinary consciousness, Jung is obscure. In fact, many overlook the presence of some kind of non-ordinary consciousness in Jung’s work and over-emphasize the Kantian limits of some of the *Collected Works*, even though *Liber Novus* is by no means the only place he steps outside these

limits.⁴⁸ Of course, the unconscious itself is a form of non-ordinary consciousness, only it is too often understood as opposed to ordinary waking consciousness uncritically understood as consciousness in general. Christine Maillard, a scholar of German culture and a translator of the French edition of *Liber Novus*, is one who does take a form of non-ordinary consciousness seriously in Jung. She finds it in the interaction of the three German words *Sinn* – translated as sense and sometimes as meaning –, *Widersinn* – nonsense and sometimes absurdity –, and *Übersinn* – supreme meaning – that occur near the beginning of *Liber Novus*.⁴⁹

Maillard argues that *Widersinn* is more accurately understood as “that which is against-sense” and *Übersinn* as “hyper-sense” (2014, 86). Here she is following Giegerich, who translates *Widersinn* as “counter-meaning” to convey a “violation of meaning, absurdity”, and *Übersinn*, a clear reference to Nietzsche’s concept of *übermensch* in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, as “overmeaning” to convey that it is not properly a meaning at all but is “in excess” of meaning (2010, 283-84).⁵⁰ In relation to this excess-ivity, Maillard says that *Übersinn* is “a new cognitive

⁴⁸ I am excluding references to the therapeutic method of active imagination that Jung developed because most writers seem to keep this method as part of the practice of psychotherapy separate from the work of theorizing psychotherapy. In other words, it is seen only as a therapeutic tool rather than as a method for thinking psychology that is complementary to what Jung calls directed thinking – the thinking of ordinary waking consciousness. For Jung stepping outside of the Kantian limitations he once upheld see the *1925 Seminar* (2012, 50).

⁴⁹ While Jung’s word *Übersinn* and Steiner’s use of the adjective *übersinnlichen* to speak about imaginative cognition are not the same, they present an interesting connection between the two thinkers, and indicate how close they come to one another in their search for a complement to abstract thinking, as we shall continue to see.

⁵⁰ In the article by Giegerich that Maillard references, Giegerich finds that the translation “supreme meaning” renders *Übersinn* an “harmless” and even “wonderful” concept that is quite far from what is conveyed in the German. I add that even without the German, a critical English reader should be alerted to the inappropriateness of the term “supreme meaning” given the surrounding context in which it appears. Further, Giegerich points out that the German *Unsinn*, which is properly nonsense, gets collapsed in the English into whatever is standing for *Widersinn*, and the important distinction between the more passive nonsense (*Unsinn*) and the more active counter-meaning (*Widersinn*) is lost. As if these words weren’t already misleading enough, the German *Sinn* (alone or as *-sinn*) gets translated sometimes as sense and sometimes as meaning, and while the difference may be subtle this inconsistency does not help to make matters any clearer (Giegerich 2010, 383-84). Finally, Giegerich problematizes the English translation in general, saying that it is often “unreliable” and “flattening” (408). This must be taken seriously, and as I do not have the experience or authority to challenge the English translation as

attitude, through which what is usually overlooked emerges”, and that stands under the spirit of the depths in complement to the abstract attitude of the spirit of the times (2010, 86).⁵¹ Maillard correctly observes of *Liber Novus* that “what is usually overlooked” emerges in symbolic form, and like Steiner’s imaginative cognition this is a thoroughly symbolic attitude. For Jung, symbol is something unexpected, astonishing, and “perhaps seemingly irrational”, but nonetheless somehow “salient to the conscious mind” (Jung 2009, 311).⁵² Thus, I characterize non-ordinary consciousness as it appears in *Liber Novus* through the term *Übersinn* as an imaginative and mutable process of meeting the ambiguous and symbolic...somethings...that are always there but only present themselves to a receptive vision. A further look at the language of *Liber Novus*, briefly here and in more detail in the following chapters, will lend more richness to the important but brief analysis of *Übersinn* and related terms that Maillard provides.

That *Übersinn* is in excess of meaning can be further illustrated by a lesson concerning magic – a practice that is presented very similarly to *Übersinn* – that Jung is taught in *Liber Novus* by Philemon, a figure who represents wisdom and from whom Jung learned of the autonomy of the psyche from human control (see 1973, 183).⁵³ Philemon says that “the

thoroughly as Giegerich does his warnings are helpful. One can and should, however, acknowledge that in a way Shamdasani defends himself with the recognition that translation is never final, and so by extension that his own choice of words is only one among many possibilities (Shamdasani 2012b, 155).

⁵¹ Here Maillard uses the word attitude similarly to how I am using it to describe spiritual psychology as a double question or set of moods that orient more inclusive ways of living.

⁵² See also CW 6, §814 for a more theoretical analysis of symbol and its distinction from sign.

⁵³ Jung’s statement that he learned the autonomy of the psyche, an idea central to most of his life’s work, from Philemon – a fantasy figure from the unconscious – is a first indication that Jung is in agreement with Steiner’s suggestion that human beings do not create their thoughts alone, but with the help of non-human and non-material beings (see page 37-38 above). It also shows that Jung used non-ordinary imaginative consciousness to develop the theory of analytical psychology, rather than keeping it as a mere tool for the therapy room as I suggest in note forty-eight is usually done.

practice of magic [as a way of living] consists in making what is not understood understandable in an incomprehensible manner” (2009, 404). Magic, like *Übersinn*, resists any kind of singularity by a melting together of understanding – meaning – and incomprehensibility – that which is against meaning. It, along with Maillard’s and Giegerich’s clarifications, helps to show that *Übersinn* is not posited in *Liber Novus* as an absolute nor an elevation of either pole – *Sinn* or *Widersinn* – to a higher plane, and certainly not as something static, though the translation as “supreme meaning” certainly gives this misleading impression.

Far from being something absolute, Jung speaks of *Übersinn* as ambiguity and manifoldness, somewhat in distinction to an earlier characterization of *Sinn* as a human production that carries airs of unequivocalness (2009, 262 & 152). The ambiguity and manifoldness that arises from the melting together of *Sinn* and *Widersinn* can be understood in Jung’s words that “meaning [*Sinn*] is a moment and a transition from absurdity [*Widersinn*] to absurdity, and absurdity only a moment and a transition from meaning to meaning” (2009, 163). *Übersinn* is neither meaning nor absurdity, nor is it the moment and transition between them. Rather, it is something that arises from this dynamic interplay, something in excess of it.

The circular language of transition recalls the metaphor of a bridge. A bridge can be crossed both ways, and though one may pause while crossing to ponder the view, neither terminus is a destination in itself but opens onto illimitable paths. Like Steiner’s imaginative cognition, the bridge metaphor indicates that it is not the content of *Übersinn* that is important but the activity that it entails, and thus rather than being a knowledge it is more appropriately a capacity. It is a capacity, however, that Jung says, “is real and casts a shadow” – a shadow that reveals, as in Jung’s discussion of biography explored in the Introduction, that *Übersinn* stands

in close relationship to both material reality and the unconscious. It is also a capacity that Jung describes as the marriage of “image and force” and that is perhaps akin to Rilke’s unreckoned – and unreckonable – sum (Jung 2009, 120). ‘Force’ in German is ‘*Kraft*’, a word that can also be ‘vitality’ and that connects *Übersinn* to Jung’s idea of the psyche as a mysterious animating and creative or image-making energetic field.⁵⁴

In the face of the spirit of the times and human one-sidedness, both forces that work against the ambiguity of *Übersinn*, Jung says that “nothing is easier than to play at ambiguity and nothing is more difficult than living ambiguity” (2009, 170). And yet if ambiguity can not only be tolerated but admitted into living, including such unsavoury things as loving one’s own “sick, daily paltriness” as well as one’s capacity for evil, *Übersinn* just may emerge, symbolically and however fleetingly, in Jung’s words, “as wide as the space of the starry Heaven and as narrow as the cell of a living body” (120). Here Jung both honours Kant, who in *Critique of Practical Reason* lists the starry heavens and the inner moral law as the two things capable of filling the mind with awe, and resists him and the solely celestial trajectory of much of Western philosophy by again allying *Übersinn* with a physical body (Kant 1788/1997, 5:162). Further, this is not only a human body, but much more inclusively a living body that in *Liber Novus* includes minerals, plants, and animals.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Jung here and with the conception of libido as life force, and Steiner with the conception of an energetic ‘body’ as life force, can both be seen as following in the tradition of vitalism that holds that life cannot be explained by mere chemical and mechanical processes. On Jung and vitalism see the analytic psychologist Ann Addison’s “Jung, Vitalism, and ‘the Psychoid’: An Historical Reconstruction” (2009).

⁵⁵ Jung’s acknowledgement of minerals and plants as living bodies occurs throughout *Liber Novus* (see for example 2009, 254, 260 & 276). The role that plants play in *Liber Novus*, that will be explored in detail in the next chapter, connects Jung’s *Übersinn* all the more to Steiner’s imaginative cognition and his use of plants as a meditative aid.

To conclude, provisionally until *Übersinn* returns below, with a question put by Jung's soul: as difficult as it is to speak about something like *Übersinn* "should it not exist because you know nothing of it?" (2009, 157). This question summarizes the mood that both Jung and Steiner encourage when confronted with phenomena that challenge the strictures of abstract thinking, and that informs the second question of spiritual psychology.

*Is Some Body [Un]conscious?*⁵⁶

Abstract thinking, ego, and ordinary waking consciousness, all of which relate to the first question of spiritual psychology, and Steiner's imaginative cognition and Jung's *Übersinn*, which relate to the second question, have now been fleshed out. In a sense, these terms represent the how of spiritual psychology. It is now necessary to examine more closely the field that these capacities operate within, or the what of spiritual psychology. To do this I will examine the similarities and differences in Jung's and Steiner's understandings of soul and non-material reality, and their structuring of the psyche with a focus on the unconscious and supraconsciousness – the parts of the psyche that, for Jung and Steiner respectively, are most closely related to forms of non-ordinary consciousness like *Übersinn* and imaginative consciousness. My intention is to show that, counter to reifying interpretations of especially Jung's structures of consciousness, reading the unconscious alongside Jung's presentations of

⁵⁶ This title is a reference to the philosopher David Farrell Krell, who, though not explicitly present in this thesis, has been a great inspiration to my thinking and writing. In particular, I am indebted to his discussion of lifedeath, or the interdependence of life and death, and to his beautiful and critical style. He gave me the courage to allow poetry into academic writing, and though I had read Rilke before I knew of Krell it is no coincidence that the poet turns up, if only briefly, in *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (1992), the work of Krell's that my title gestures to.

Übersinn, soul, and madness in *Liber Novus* reveals these structures to be much more ambiguous and porous than definitive and closed – and that these former qualities are necessary if psychology is to remain open to spirituality in non-reductive ways.

To begin with Jung and *Liber Novus*, the spirit of the depths criticizes the common understanding of soul as a “thing” dependant on human beings and entirely graspable. Instead, the spirit of the depths instructs Jung that soul is “a living and self-existing being” (2009, 129). That soul is self-existing, meaning autonomous from an individual’s consciousness and thus possessed of an efficacy independent of one’s will, desires or points of view, is a characteristic that Jung retains consistently throughout his other writing. Rather than soul existing to do the bidding of human beings or fill some pre-apportioned role, it is much more accurate to say that for Jung it is soul that rules human beings – usually without our conscious awareness or participation. In addition to what he learns from the spirit of the depths, Jung portrays soul as a mediator between the individual and the unconscious, both throughout *Liber Novus* and at length in two lectures given in 1942 and published as “The Spirit Mercurius” (in *CW* 13, §239-303).⁵⁷ As a mediator, soul is not only or even mainly individual. It is most accurate to speak of an interconnected multiplicity of soul, its manifestation to an individual being simply a momentary guise, as Jung alludes to in *Liber Novus*.⁵⁸ With the characteristic of autonomy the soul is revealed as part of the transpersonal psyche, and with the characteristic of mediation as

⁵⁷ These lectures are part of *Alchemical Studies* (*CW* 13), one of three of Jung’s *Collected Works* that deal specifically with alchemical tradition. Jung says of his involvement with alchemy that it provided him with an historical basis for the concept of the unconscious (*CW* 13, §286). Alchemy also presented him with material that was analogous to the experiences and insights that he was working on in *Liber Novus*. This parallel, he says in the afterword to *Liber Novus*, drew him away from *Liber Novus* for now he could study and advance his insights through the psychological interpretation of alchemy (2009, 555).

⁵⁸ Shamdasani allies Jung’s notion of soul as unity in multiplicity with Meister Eckhart (in Jung 2009, 389, 252n).

a force that can help individual beings relate to the transpersonal psyche that forms of non-ordinary consciousness like imaginative cognition and *Übersinn* are a part of.

Like Jung, Steiner presents soul as a mediating body but characterizes it by the interplay of judging and the acausal forces of desire (Steiner 1910/1999, 80-82). Judging (*das Urteilen*) can be understood as the formation of provisional assessments along an ongoing process of soul. Sardello says it is more akin to reflecting, mirroring, mulling over, and pondering – though much of this activity is not conscious – than what is commonly understood from the English word. These provisional assessments are the mental pictures or thoughts of ordinary waking consciousness, that judging forms from the simultaneous raw living or experiencing, the *Urerfahrung*, of life. Judging is thus in part the engine of abstract thinking, at least if the provision-ality of the assessments that judging produces is forgotten and they are taken as reality itself. Then judging quickly becomes like Rilke’s machine-part that meters out life and expects us to praise it. Steiner finds that desire is something mysterious, of an unknowable origin, that we are continually experiencing in our soul throughout ordinary waking consciousness – even if we are not aware of it (1910/1999, 81-83).⁵⁹ Steiner concentrates the forces of desire into the two general categories of love and hate. He warns against taking these as the expression of personal likes and dislikes and suggests they rather be understood as the dynamic tension of polarity in general constantly at play. The soul as polar can be understood by the synonyms Steiner gives for love and hate: sympathy and antipathy or attraction and aversion – movements towards or away (1910/1999, 94-95).

⁵⁹ Interestingly, Jung also attributes desire to soul, saying in *Liber Novus* that “desire is the image and expression of [one’s] soul” (2009, 129).

The tides of judging and desire, and the polarity of the latter, in the soul lead Steiner to characterize soul not as a being like the spirit of the depths does in *Liber Novus* but as, in his words, a “scene of an encounter of forces moving in the most varied directions” (1910/1999, 148). Where Steiner is similar to Jung is in understanding soul as an autonomous mediatory function, and again this means that human beings exist in and through acausal energetic forces with or without their conscious participation. Seeing soul as a field of forces means that not only is soul heterogeneous but porous as well, open to the rest of existence.

Together, Jung’s and Steiner’s conceptions of soul not only bring the hope of a psychology without soul to nothing, to echo Jung’s words from the Introduction here, but shatter definitions of soul as a thing belonging to individuals, as something to do with emotional life only, and as a metaphysically reified entity. Soul, as autonomous, mediatory, and energetic, is more appropriately understood as the field that provides opportunity for the bridging of opposition, of material/non-material, life/death, and so on. This is not, however, guaranteed, but rather requires one to struggle with soul – to let go of the illusion that soul, and everything that one represents by that word, is one’s own, and to face the tension of sympathy and antipathy without collapsing them into personal likes and dislikes.

To better understand soul as energetic, we must ask what Jung and Steiner mean by non-material reality, what they sometimes call spiritual reality. For both thinkers, while non-material reality cannot be apprehended by ordinary consciousness it can be shown to exist in two ways: firstly through its capacity to push into the material world, creating events we refer to as mysterious, uncanny, inexplicable, and so forth; and secondly through perception of it by the development of meditative non-ordinary modes of consciousness, like imaginative

cognition and *Übersinn*. What non-material reality exactly is, neither Jung nor Steiner say. They only indicate that it has occupied human beings for as long as we can know and that it is the natural counterpart to a material reality that is in fact just as mysterious – both discuss at length the illogicality of supposing that material reality stands alone and as something known.⁶⁰ One must be content that Jung and Steiner suggest empirical avenues that can lead to individual experience of whatever non-material reality may be, which nonetheless remains one of Rilke's unsayable phenomena.

While the first indication of non-material reality is readily apparent to anyone willing to look, the second presupposes the question of how human beings have the potential to develop forms of non-ordinary consciousness that can perceive it – whether this is called imaginative cognition or *Übersinn*. The path into this question is through Jung's and Steiner's different yet similar structures of the psyche that both ordinary waking and non-ordinary consciousness are a part of. The permutations of consciousness that arise in these structures are, as ever, bewildering in their ambiguity and seem to belong to the same family of unsayable phenomena that keep cropping up. It is perhaps due to this unsay-ability that Jung and Steiner both insist that non-ordinary forms of consciousness cannot be understood except experientially and self-critically. Or, one could say, self-extinguishingly, to echo Steiner's instructions to the meditation on imaginative cognition and given the imperative of letting go of the prejudices, preferences, and presuppositions of one's personality. The need for a diverse, flexible, and above all non-oppositional perspective is clear in the same 1952 letter of Jung's cited above, where at

⁶⁰ Jung's in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933) and Steiner in *An Outline of Esoteric Science* (1972). In these works, non-material reality and spiritual reality are used synonymously. I use the former term because it better communicates the characteristic of unknowingness and perhaps elicits less presupposition and prejudice.

seventy-six years of age he says of the psyche – wherein anything called consciousness takes place:

I absolutely don't know what it is in itself and know only very vaguely what it is *not*. Also, I know only to a limited degree what is individual about the psyche and what is universal. It seems to me a sort of all-encompassing system of relationships, in which 'material' and 'spiritual' are primarily designations for potentialities that transcend consciousness

1976 v.2, 69-70.

Within the psyche 'material', a word so often associated with ordinary waking consciousness and its grasping of a 'world' that we human beings pretend to have determined so many facts about, is as much a potentiality as 'spiritual', is not something known. If the psyche is largely unknown, how do Jung and Steiner structure consciousness? For despite the provision-ality of any judgment of what the psyche and consciousness within it might be, it is difficult to imagine a psychology without some kind of representation of these.

Jung and Steiner both find that ordinary waking consciousness arises quite mysteriously from out of the unconscious throughout childhood development (Steiner 1911/1992, lecture one; Jung CW 10, §528 & CW 12, §249). This means that consciousness as we know it is inseparable from physical bodies and from acts of differentiation of reality into opposites, again the most basic being the self-other distinction that emerges gradually during childhood. There is thus always some *body* conscious, although this body is not always conscious or only conscious, for example when sleeping or when under the unceasing influence of the unconscious.⁶¹ Jung puts the developmental relationship between ordinary waking consciousness and the unconscious succinctly, saying that "consciousness grows out of an

⁶¹ Steiner adds the observation that the development of even the physical body is guided by forces far wiser than those of ordinary waking consciousness (1992, lecture one).

unconscious psyche which is older than it, and which goes on functioning together with it or even in spite of it [...] the unconscious as a whole is far from being a mere remnant of consciousness" (CW 9i, §502). Here the unconscious is portrayed as mother to ordinary waking conscious, a developmental relationship that places the latter in a position of dependence and poses quite a reversal from any psychology that would posit the former as something like a storehouse of repressed contents.

There are numerous other passages in Jung's *Collected Works* that speak to the unconscious as a force of motherhood – that is, as an active creative force in both the sense that it continually gives birth to all other forms of consciousness and that through this birthing and on its own terms is constantly seeking expression. The inversion of the patriarchal tradition of masculine as active force and feminine as passive receiver is put even more radically in *Liber Novus*, where femininity is associated with spirituality and the image of God (Jung 2009, 528) – a complement to Jung challenging the misogynistic conflation of [masculine] spirit with [masculine] intellect as an error harmful to the life of soul (CW 13, §7).

In *Psychology and Alchemy* Jung says that the unconscious is "a realm where nature and her secrets can be neither improved upon nor perverted, where we can listen but may not meddle" (CW 12, §51). This speaks to the autonomy and creativity of the unconscious not only as the mother of ordinary waking consciousness, but in fact of everything. Any psychology that meddles with this, that reifies the unconscious, takes a reductive approach, or in any other way seeks to dampen its creative force and explain it away, not only violates the unconscious but misses out on what makes a psychology worthy of the name. To this end Jung finds that with the alchemical tradition "the illusion that the unconscious has only just been

discovered vanishes: in a somewhat peculiar [alchemical] form, admittedly, it has been known for close on two thousand years” (CW 13, §286).

Jung continues in *Psychology and Alchemy* to say that the unconscious is indefinable, that its existence is “a mere postulate” and that its contents, if it has contents at all, cannot be predicated. He explains the problem of how, given these characteristics, one can experience the unconscious at all by saying that it “can only be experienced in its parts and then only in so far as these are contents of consciousness; but *qua* totality it necessarily transcends consciousness” (CW 12, §247). That is, the unconscious can only be experienced indirectly, through its representation in symbolic images. Later in the text Jung adds that “the unconscious, being unknown, is bound to coincide with itself everywhere: lacking all recognizable qualities, no unconscious content can be distinguished from any other” (§431). If we look forward a few years to 1939 we read that “we call the unconscious ‘nothing’, and yet it is a reality *in potentia*” (CW 9i, §497). From this it can be drawn that the unconscious only appears as nothing from the perspective of ordinary waking consciousness. Interestingly, this is very similar to what Steiner says of non-material or spiritual reality, that it appears as an “[...] empty, deserted abyss” to the scientific materialist (1912/2006a, 77). The unconscious, then, only appears as non-existent or dismissible, as unimportant fantasy, or mere psychological theory to those unwilling to take seriously a symbolic consciousness that is other than and irreducible to what we have been calling ordinary waking consciousness and its abstract thinking.

With everything that has been said about the unconscious in Jung so far, we are left with the paradox that the unconscious is both unknowable and knowable, unsayable and

sayable. Any psychology can only bear this if it acknowledges that these moments of unknowing and unsaying, knowing and saying, do not preclude one another but rather indicate that different registers of knowing are at play, and that any cataphatic or apophatic statement about the unconscious is always relative and symbolic. Such an attitude is necessary lest Jung's warnings are ignored and, in his words, we "labour under the illusion that we have now discovered the real nature of the unconscious processes" (CW 7, §272, a 1945 revision of an earlier essay).

Steiner, however, takes issue with Jung's conception of the unconscious, saying that "It is not actually correct; when one speaks of unconsciousness, one should say *supraconsciousness* [*das Überbewußtes*] or *subconsciousness* [*das Unterbewußtes*], for it [the unconscious] is only unconscious to ordinary consciousness" (Steiner 1918/91, 94, translation mine).⁶² Steiner seems to be picking up on Jung's problematic use of the general term *consciousness* for ordinary waking consciousness and *the unconscious* for non-ordinary consciousness, that I raise in note thirty-five above. For Steiner, supraconsciousness can be generally characterized as the capacity, open to all human beings but only present through development and practice, of perceiving non-material psychic-spiritual processes. Imaginative cognition, for example. Thus, despite his distaste for Jung's terminology Steiner's supraconsciousness has quite a lot in common with Jung's use of the unconscious. Georg Kühlewind, whose work straddles linguistics, epistemology and Jung's and Steiner's psychology, indirectly supports this position in saying that habits as subconscious – inclusive of habitual

⁶² This important statement of Steiner's is mistranslated in the only English version available (Steiner 1927). The other place that it appears in English is in Wehr's own translation in *Jung and Steiner* (2003, 139), but only as a fragment that makes it less clear.

thinking and behaviour discussed in terms of abstraction here – and capacities as supraconscious – inclusive of imaginative cognition and, I suggest, *Übersinn* – are both “unconscious areas” alongside ordinary waking consciousness (1988, 30).

Steiner’s overarching criticism of Jung, whom he lauds as “one of the better psychoanalysts”, is that he adheres to inadequate ways of knowing inherited from natural science and wrongly applies them to processes and phenomena of the unconscious – or for Steiner supraconsciousness – that in fact call for the development of other ways of knowing (1917/2001, 51-53).⁶³ Steiner’s criticism is not blind – he at least read Jung’s *Die Psychologie der Unbewußten Prozesse: Ein Überblick Über die Moderne Theorie und Methode der Analytischen Psychologie* (1917).⁶⁴ However, Steiner’s criticism does appear to be based on an inadequate understanding of Jung’s work, albeit perhaps understandably so given the timeline. With *Liber Novus* and especially the role that *Übersinn* plays in it, as well as Jung’s later work on alchemy, all texts that Steiner did not have access to, the latter’s criticism is rendered for the most part erroneous.

Jung has his own rejoinder to the proposal of a sub- and supra- conscious, though he does not return the favour of addressing Steiner specifically. Jung says that “there are people

⁶³ Steiner voices similar criticism elsewhere (1910/1999, 152; & 1916/2017, 167-69). In the 1916 lecture that is part of *The Connection Between the Living and the Dead*, Steiner gives the critique, not present in his 1917 lectures, that psychoanalysis seeks “closeted eroticism” and analytical psychology “base” instinct where what should be sought is the influence of the dead (169). Of course, with *Liber Novus* and the decisive importance of the dead therein this criticism loses strength. It is interesting to note that *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* (The Seven Sermons to the Dead), which was incorporated into *Liber Novus*, was privately published by Jung in 1916 under the surname Basilides of Alexandria and circulated to a small circle. While it is unlikely that Steiner knew of its existence, the fact that Jung came out with this poetic work that outlines the relationship between the living and dead and condemns ignorance of it in the same year as Steiner’s lecture is illuminating. It shows that they were intellectually, or perhaps better imaginatively, much closer than either would have liked to admit.

⁶⁴ Jung heavily revised this text over numerous German editions. The most recent English translation was made from the 1943 German edition as part of *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (CW 7).

who can never understand the unconscious as anything but a *sub*-conscious, and who therefore feel impelled to put a superconsciousness alongside or possibly above it” (CW 12, §397).⁶⁵ Here Jung refutes spatial misunderstandings of his structure of the psyche. He always represents the unconscious as encircling consciousness and not below it, as Steiner seems to think (see for example Jung 2012, 138, diagram 9). It seems that the problem of supraconsciousness for Jung is that by a kind of dialectical elevation it places ordinary consciousness on a higher level that borders on hubris and denies the fundamental role of polarity in the becoming of consciousness (CW 12, §175 & §397). Jung prefers “the unconscious” over “the subconscious” because the former represents the notion of polarity not yet degenerated into opposition, such as sub/supra, two distinctions that already exist in the unconscious in antinomy rather than opposition.

Happily, we do not only have Jung’s theorizations of the unconscious but now his poetic treatment of it in *Liber Novus* as well. In the context of *Liber Novus*, I suggest that the ability to listen to the unconscious mentioned above is better put as the desire of the unconscious to be heard, perhaps more like waves upon the seashore that appear, break, and return to their source regardless of anyone who happens to be on dry land. To approach this kind of listening – and despite the aural metaphor this does not mean through physical ears alone – we can attempt to follow Jung in *Liber Novus* and let the “web of words” that both ensnare and make possible human existence as we know it prey on us until we fall through to the sea, that

⁶⁵ Here *Über*- is translated as super- instead of supra-. I prefer to use supra- in keeping with most Steiner translators because it helps to avoid the value-hierarchy that super- more easily elicits.

ubiquitous symbol of the unconscious that Jung calls “the mother of all that lives (CW 9i, §298):⁶⁶

So if I fall prey to the web of words, I fall prey to the greatest and the smallest [of humanity’s creations]. I am at the mercy of the sea, of the inchoate waves that are forever changing place. Their essence is movement and movement is their order. Whoever strives against waves is exposed to the arbitrary. The work of humanity is steady but it swims upon chaos. The striving of humanity seems like lunacy to whoever comes from the sea. But humans consider the sea-born mad. Whoever comes from the sea is sick. They can hardly bear the gaze of humans. For to the sea-born they all seem to be drunk and foolish from sleep-inducing poisons.

2009, 352 (translation modified for gender inclusivity)

By falling prey to the webs woven in the name of the spirit of the times, Jung falls from his position of supposed authority as a doctor and scientist to the realm often inhabited by the patients he treats, the spirit of the depths and madness.⁶⁷ I believe that the critical presentation of madness that Jung and other figures give in *Liber Novus* is of great import to understanding Jung’s structuring of the psyche, and especially the place of ordinary waking consciousness and the unconscious, though this connection has not been given attention in any scholarship.

Liber Novus shows that like any understanding of the unconscious itself, madness is relative. On one hand, there is the usual clinical or conventional sense of madness. On the other, to one who comes from the sea it is those preoccupied with the spirit of the times who appear drunk and poisoned, that is, mad. The latter inversion of madness is similar to the

⁶⁶ For a sample of some of Jung’s many descriptions of the sea as a symbol of the collective unconscious see CW 9i, §698 including figure 43; CW 12, §57, §436 & §491 including figure 222; as well as CW 13, §183 & §194. Figure 43 in CW 9i is a picture of an eye born upon the sea by two serpents and was made by a “non-neurotic” woman who sought spiritual development through the practice of active imagination, and so is particularly relevant to spiritual psychology as it is being presented here because it shows that Jung saw clients for this purpose. Figure 222 in CW 12 is an alchemical illustration of the sea as made up of a woman’s milk and is included here because it shows one historical example of the sea symbolizing the unconscious as the mother of all life.

⁶⁷ In the chapters “*Nox secunda*” and “*Nox tertia*” in *Liber Novus*, from which the above citation is taken, Jung is taken by force to an insane asylum, pronounced mad, and incarcerated there for several nights as a patient (2009, 333-361).

duplicity posed by [dis]enchantment above – one must go mad to be able to see that it is the so-called sane who are truly mad. Or in other words, by being born from the sea one in fact wakes up to the peculiar madness of oppositional, abstract, and materialistic thinking and living, and thus becomes saner. Further, the paradoxical movement-as-inchoate-order of the sea that Jung speaks of shows that listening to the unconscious in *Liber Novus* is not listening by association as Jung does in the *Collected Works* but something more like acquiescent suffering of the ambiguous order of chaos, of eternal change. A kind of listening that appears to be madness to anyone living one-sidedly under the spirit of the times.⁶⁸

Jung's treatment of madness reveals like nowhere else the autonomy of the unconscious, the precarity and disease of ordinary waking consciousness, and the relativity or relationality that exists between them.⁶⁹ It leads to a conception of consciousness that suggests we are all mad in one or both of the senses just presented, and thus the most psycho-*logical* thing to do is to admit madness into our living. This works against the ways that many psychologies use definitions of madness, and the ways that psychology 'itself' is invoked, to rationalize, marginalize, and explain away all sorts of human behaviour and mask the fact that

⁶⁸ The presence of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in *Liber Novus* is felt again here, notably from two places in the prologue to *Zarathustra*. First, when Zarathustra likens the *übermensch* to the sea, and second, when Zarathustra says "one must still have chaos in oneself in order to give birth to a dancing star. [...] Beware! The time of the most contemptible human is coming, the one who can no longer have contempt for [oneself]" (1883-85/2006, 7 & 9). The capacity to despise oneself in *Zarathustra* relates to the first question of spiritual psychology, particularly to becoming familiar with one's complicity to and capacity for evil, or what Jung calls accepting one's lowest in *Liber Novus* and that will be discussed in the final chapter here.

⁶⁹ To speak of ordinary waking consciousness as diseased borrows from Kühlewind, who argues in *From Normal to Healthy: Paths to the Liberation of Consciousness* (1988) that modern – or post-modern – humanity has accepted a diseased consciousness as normal and thus the very diseases at work become invisible. These diseases include narcissism, intolerance, materialism, spiritualism, consumerism, and so on. Disease can also be understood as disease, which Kühlewind traces to the common and pathological drive to reassure oneself – unconsciously – that one exists through egotistic means like success, wealth, power, and so on. This in turn arises because human beings have for the most part come to ignore, denigrate, and generally resist intentional self-reflexive and -critical practices or, if not, often pursue – or better, consume – them superficially.

extreme cases of mental illness are actually on a continuum that is part of a social fabric systemically intolerant of ambiguity and difference.⁷⁰

Now at least some understanding has been furnished of the basic concepts needed to understand what a spiritual psychology could be. From abstraction and its consequences as an oppositional kind of thinking, to imagination as its corrective and complement. From soul and non-material reality as the invisible and just-as mysterious Janus face of material reality, to the unconscious as the sea, the “mother of all life”. It is now time to ask who, or better what, is it that performs these capacities, or in the case of soul and the unconscious, is performed by them? What is a human being? Or, to put it slightly more approachably, how do we who call ourselves human beings define what this means, and do our methods for doing so hold water, or does the meaning of being human escape us and flow back to the sea? If the latter is the case, and this seems more likely even if only because of the countless different attempts to answer this question throughout human history, what consequences for psychology does the ambiguity of being human have? Further, what kinds of relationships to non-human beings do our methods for defining our being place us in, and what role do these beings play in the psychological thought of Jung and Steiner? For this we will take a much closer look at certain parts of *Liber Novus* where Jung addresses these questions in a poetic mode, along with the guidance of Rilke’s lyrical treatment of being.

⁷⁰ One example of how madness is used to explain away uncomfortable and horrific phenomena and absolve ‘normal’ ‘sane’ people of their societal complicity is the unprecedented rise in public shootings in America, many of which get explained away in the media by an often-posthumous diagnosis of the murderer as mentally ill. I am not downplaying the factor of mental illness, but rather highlighting that for shootings to occur there must be many social factors at play and not only an individual’s mental state, a state that is not as isolated within the individual as many may like to believe. This example is much to the same effect as how Jung saw people morally wash their hands of the First World War and blame it on the enemy (see 2009, 199 n220).

Chapter Three: *Life-Psychology, or the Imagination of Plants*

new warm receding wave on the sea of the heart . . .
alas, but that is what we *are*.

Duino Elegies, Rilke 1922/1982, 157.

In this chapter I trace the shattering of an oppositional thinking of being and the growth of imagination that the ‘wisdom of real life’ held by the sea and non-human beings in general enacts and ask what a life-psychology that admits this wisdom might look like. The ‘wisdom of real life’ is not life as it is commonly taken in anthropo- and logo- centric terms, meaning life categorized by a rational measure of human consciousness, but the life of the sea that Jung says is “[...] the life of the whole and the death of each individual” (2009, 239).⁷¹ Thus, life-psychology must foster an understanding of the interdependence of life and death – that one can neither be honestly nor responsibly conceived without the other – a theme that is repeated throughout *Liber Novus* and that is best expressed by Krell’s term lifedeath, introduced in note fifty-six.⁷² This double nature of the sea – life and death, whole and individual – corresponds to

⁷¹ I believe that Jung’s radical admittance of the ‘wisdom of real life’ held by non-human beings into psychology is one way that *Liber Novus* is a *liber novus*, a new book. It is radical and new because this had not been done by any other modern psychologist at the time, though Rilke was busy doing just this in poetry. By this I do not intend to discount Jung’s perhaps more obvious positioning of *Liber Novus* as a new book in the sense of a new spiritual book in juxtaposition to the Christian Bible. Yet Jung’s reference to the Bible should not be taken as a claim to prophethood or the founding of a new religion, as some argue. Corbett takes issue with such an interpretation with the suggestion, mentioned in the Introduction above, that with *Liber Novus* Jung is rather proposing a “psychological approach to spirituality”, what I am here calling spiritual psychology (2011, 74). I add to Corbett’s analysis that in *Liber Novus* Jung allows the wisdom of non-human beings to challenge and transform his very understanding of what psychology and spirituality are – even though he had difficulty reconciling this with his published works.

⁷² Despite the current chapter being titled “Life-Psychology” and the next “Death-Psychology”, life and death as well as birth that each require weave through both chapters just as they weave through one another. Birth begets life through a kind of death on the part of a mother and father, and life moves towards a death of physical bodies and is also propelled by the many psychic deaths and rebirths that occur in life. Jung says in *Liber Novus* “I saw how we live towards death, how the swaying golden wheat sinks together under the scythe of the reaper, like a smooth wave on the sea-beach” – and how against life it is to fear death, because “the fear of death drives [people] to singleness” while life is ambiguity and diversity (2009, 239).

the two questions of spiritual psychology: 1) In the “death of each individual” the sea sweeps one up in its currents, shatters the illusion of the supremacy of the conscious mind, and reveals a fundamental incapacity of abstract thinking in the face of an existence that humans know very little about; 2) In the “life of the whole” the sea seems to by its own force attempt to balance this incapacity by drawing out imaginative responses and what Jung calls knowledge of the heart that at times reads like a permutation of *Übersinn*, and reshaping what it might mean to be a being.⁷³ Finally, the ‘wisdom of real life’ and the discussion of being that it facilitates will be brought together under the theme of childlikeness as a nuance of both questions or moods of spiritual psychology.

To enter the sea in *Liber Novus* one does not go through ‘the unconscious’ but the spirit of the depths. And in the sea, one does not find repressed contents or even archetypes but plant-like animals and animal-like plants, warmth and cold and tepidity, light and dark and shades in between. Here is everything necessary for all life, including birth and death, of psychical and physical bodies, from out of the mother sea and in return to her. Again Jung comes strikingly close to Rilke, who in his “Third Elegy” combines plant and animal in an image of something like the unconscious: “[...] the spreading roots and tendrils of inner event, twisting in primitive patterns, in choking growths, in the shapes of killer animals” (1922/1978, 71). What

⁷³ Many examples could be given of the sea calling to and drawing out the imagination of human beings. I will only give two that are particularly relevant here. First, Rilke, who began the *Duino Elegies* with words that came to him from the wind and sea as he stood on a cliff that dropped into the waves at Duino castle in 1912 (1978, 9). Second, myself – after discovering that my father had nearly committed suicide and was homeless and an addict, I found myself at the Pacific ocean where, before any psychotherapy, the incessant waves broke down for a moment the walls I had erected of anger, betrayal, and self-righteousness, and allowed me to see and love my father as he was. This has served me as an experience of psychology as a way of life: the confrontation of one’s abstract thinking – what I thought was right and wrong – and of imagination – in a symbolic experience of my father-as-not-my-father, as, to borrow the language of *Liber Novus*, one who has come from the sea.

could these things have to do with psychology? What happens to the question of being if being has more to do with the sea, soil, plants, and animals than with a supposed structure of consciousness?

In *Liber Novus* Jung says that “being is not an unconditional persistence, but an endlessly slow growth. You think you are standing still like swamp water, but slowly you flow into the sea”. Being – *Dasein* – should thus always be conceived along with “becoming” – *werdend* – that is presented in *Liber Novus* as a developmental process that never arrives. Jung says that “What one is as one who becomes, no one knows” (2009, 238).⁷⁴ If being is not unconditionally persistent, it cannot have any determinable preconditions that would secure its presence. Jung in *Liber Novus* thus contradicts Jung in 1957 when he makes the anthropocentric statement that – assumedly human – consciousness is the precondition of being (CW 10, §528). If one wanted to persist and ascribe a precondition it seems more appropriate to *Liber Novus* to name *unconsciousness*, since the “endlessly slow growth” of being seems to happen without or even despite human “decisions”, “efforts”, and “progress” – characteristics of ordinary waking consciousness – that Jung says pale “in every conceivable effort” to the movement of the sea (Jung 2009, 238). What is this being that cannot be known and never arrives, that appears to Jung as “[...] wavy, swaying, twisting plantlike animals and bestial plants [...]” (239)?

⁷⁴ Jung continues on the same page to warn of the trap that, in his words, the more “we imagine that we know what we are as developing beings [...] the less we want to know what we are as beings. Because of that we do not love the condition of our being brought low, although or rather precisely because only there do we attain clear knowledge of ourselves”. These words are echoed in both Jung’s and Steiner’s understandings of self-knowledge as knowledge of one’s incapacity and ignorance, “the condition of our being brought low”, discussed on page thirty-eight above. Clearly for Jung, being and becoming have more to do with questioning than answering, and in fact it is answers – what “we imagine that we know” – that distract us from the process of being-becoming. The same is true for Steiner, who says the question of what it means to be a human being is the most basic and ultimately unanswerable question, and thus one that must always be asked (Steiner 1912-12/2006a, 6).

As *Dasein*, being carries a nuance not present in English – *Da-sein* is there-being, always being or existing somewhere, and in this sense being is always relational. *Dasein* appears throughout Rilke's poetry, and in his *Second Elegy* he addresses lovers with the question of what it could mean to exist as a *Dasein* that breathes itself away "like steam from a hot dish", but the response is that even love is transient (1922/1978, 47). One ongoing answer in Rilke's poetry then, that is more like a continual questioning, is that human being only exists alongside its absence. Yet Rilke says that we have all, however fleetingly, been "granted a sense of being" else we would not even be able to question it (189).

It does not, then, seem like being is presented in *Liber Novus* as the "positive-factually existing isolated individual" who absolutely and positively interiorizes phenomena in narcissistic acts of world-making that Giegerich argues for (2010, 390). This is a misleading interpretation because being-as-relational cannot be truly isolated, and more specifically because in *Liber Novus* being and world-making are attributed not only to human animals but to non-human animals, plants, and even minerals. These non-human beings take part in becoming – even materialistic science acknowledges the developmental nature of animals, plants, and minerals, though without allowing this to challenge what it means to be a being – so much so that *human* beings could not exist without them or in isolation from them. Or, as Rilke says, "Always we move among flowers, vine-leaves, fruit" (*Sonnets* 1922/1987, 29). And in *Liber Novus* we read: "Dear scarab, my father, I honor you, blessed be your work" – surely the scarab's work of moving material around and transforming landscapes is world-making? And again, "O mother stone, I love you, I lie snuggled up against your warm body" – not cold but warm and life-giving, for no life is possible without minerals, a fact more factual than any construction of the human

being (Jung 2009, 254). And the following lines: “What you thought was dead and inanimate betrays a secret life and silent, inexorable intent” (260); of nature’s paradoxicality as “frightened, laughable, powerful, childish, weak, deceiving and deceived, utterly inconstant and superficial, and yet reaching deep down, down to the kernel of the world”; and finally “I talk with trees and the forest wildlife, and the stones show me the way” (276).

All of these scenes from *Liber Novus* challenge an anthropocentric view of reality and the supposition that what we take as objects have absolutely no thought life, no consciousness, not even one that might exist differently than what humans experience – a problem that was introduced in the discussion of subject[ivity] and object[ivity] in the first chapter. The German language reveals this human prejudice in a way that is again hidden in English. German has a word for the reality of things, *Dinglichkeit*, with things taken to be the material realm in general, and another for reality used more generally and whenever human beings are more involved, *Wirklichkeit*. In the *1925 Seminar* Jung calls *Wirklichkeit* “the reality of working, of validity in life” (2011, 64). By acknowledging in *Liber Novus* the work of minerals, plants, and animals and the invalidity of life without them Jung, effectively albeit perhaps unknowingly and through the back door, admits things and non-human beings into *Wirklichkeit*. And so the hope for a psychology not only without soul, but without non-human beings is brought to nothing.

Jung’s acknowledgment of the being of stones, plants, and animals as mysterious and offering wisdom for living – wisdom that Jung says above is so difficult to write, even murderous, perhaps because of this non-human quality – is indeed murder for much of what has been erected as psychology. While on one hand *Liber Novus* informs all of Jung’s subsequent work and contains its themes in germinal form, a suggestion made by Shamdasani

and that any reader can confirm quite easily, the wisdom of non-human beings in *Liber Novus* reveals that on the other hand it holds the death and the shattering of his more properly psychological work. This applies to both Jung's early work conducted under a reductive method prior to his commencement of *Liber Novus*, and to his later works where he has left reduction in favour of a constructive method but where unambiguity and reduction still appear, his 1957 idea of consciousness as the precondition of being standing as one important example. What is "inexpressible" to a poet like Rilke, is that even in the face of this seed that is at once inspiration and poison to the rest of a life's work, human beings, in this case Jung, do "not refuse to go on living" (*Elegies*, 1922/1982, 173). Since we must go on living and writing, we should continue to ask: how might any psychology, including conceptions of consciousness, be transformed if we stay with this shattering? What happens if we admit the wisdom of non-human beings in a way that makes us humans question our own being, and at the same time if we retract all of our projections onto other beings in an attempt to listen and look with an imaginative ear and vision?

Liber Novus suggests one possible experience that may arise with these questions, and that continues to resist speciesist conceptions of reality, reveal the irreducible interdependence of all being, life, and death, and indicate what life-psychology could look like:

And you are always helpless and a prey. But if you watch closely, you will see what you have never seen before, namely that things [*Dinge*, which would usually be severed from life and assigned to *Dinglichkeit*] live your life, and that they live off you: the rivers bear your life to the valley, one stone falls upon another with your force, plants and animals also grow through you and are the cause of your death. A leaf dancing in the wind dances with you; the irrational animal guesses your thought and represents you. The whole earth sucks its life from you and everything reflects you again.

Jung 2009, 260.

Jung's play on Aristotle's definition of human beings as rational animals disrupts notions of what irrationality and animality mean, and especially the prejudice that is 'the animal', for irrationality and animality must be full of wisdom if an irrational animal has the capacity to intuit human thoughts and mirror being to a human who is potentially ignorant of both. In the *1925 Seminar*, Jung says that far from being characterized by savagery – a trait that I would say is better reserved for human animals, now and in the shadow of the First World War that Jung was working under – animals are better behaved citizens than most human beings (2011, 124).⁷⁵ What he means is clear if one looks back to *Liber Novus* and reads that animals, and thus the animal side of humans if they would only admit it, are much more "reasonable" and "law-abiding" than any one-sidedly *human* beings (2009, 391; 408-09). Through the projection that is 'the animal', human beings thus excise animals and animality from what it means to be a being – an oppositional thinking of animality and humanity that Jung turns on its head. The consequence of this to any psychology is that, again, to be worthy of the name it must remember along with Jung that we too are animals, and all-too human animals – meaning capable of nearly unimaginable savagery – rather than predominantly rational or reasonably irrational ones.⁷⁶

Any psychology that would notice the unreality and pretension of its presupposed categories of being, whether these are conscious or unconscious, cannot simply replace these with new ones. The only thing that is clear is that to be a human being is utterly dependent on

⁷⁵ Jung also critiques 'the animal' in a 1930 seminar (see 2009, 342 180n).

⁷⁶ Though Jung does not do so in the *1925 Seminar*, the prejudiced and projected view of animality as 'the animal' can and must be seen in how human beings conceive of minerals or 'the stone' and 'the plant'. This is in keeping with *Liber Novus* where there is not only an attempt to release the fetters that are 'the animal', but to allow whatever non-human being is behind 'the stone' and 'the plant' be what it mysteriously is.

other human and non-human beings that make up the mineral, vegetal, and animal realms. With this we are moving quite slowly, endlessly slowly, and have only circled back to the same question we began with, but now with an addendum: what is a human being *that it only exists in relationship to other beings, human and non-human, so different from itself*? To continue the spiralling, we can look at Jung's presentation of knowledge of the heart as a path that both helps human beings welcome irrationality into their living and be open to the differences of others.

Knowledge of the heart in *Liber Novus* is of course a reference to the rich tradition, Christian and otherwise, that suggests that there are at least two kinds of knowledge, that of the head and that of the heart.⁷⁷ In other words, the heart *thinks*, only not intellectually but affectively and with more immediacy than the head. Recall here the discussion of *Urerfahrung* and immediate or lived experience above, and to this we can add that the heart is perhaps more immediate because, according to the work of both Jung and Steiner it does not allow for abstraction. To put it more practically, like the unconscious in general emotions are autonomous from conscious control – just imagine trying to force an emotion into existence,

⁷⁷ With this the question of the Christianity of *Liber Novus* is raised, which will be touched on in the following pages but remain for the most part a footnote. To begin this marginal exploration, the impossibility of *Liber Novus* now appears as it being an impossibly Christian book because it affirms the spirituality of Christian (and other) religion but insists that to really follow Christ is to forgo being a Christian. In a fascinating series of chapters in *Liber Novus*, Jung takes out Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* from a library and undergoes an alchemical "incubating sleep" in the librarian's kitchen wherein he learns that to imitate Christ is to imitate no one, as Christ did, and thus to be a real Christian is to forgo Christianity and follow one's own path to an individual image and understanding of God. This insight is repeated in Jung's 1932 lecture to pastoral care workers cited above, though without reference to *Liber Novus* (CW 11, §522). Interestingly, these chapters of *Liber Novus* contain some of Jung's explorations of madness that were discussed above, which because they happen here in the context of grappling with his Christian inheritance can be seen in light of the tradition of divine madness – a fruitful line of inquiry that cannot be pursued further here (2009, 328-374).

and what life would be like if one could control which emotion gets experienced when. In fact, it is rather emotion that often takes control of ordinary waking consciousness.

What does *Liber Novus* have to say about knowledge of the heart? Perhaps this is a doomed question, for one of the first things that arises is that knowledge of the heart is not to be found in any book nor even in any spoken word, but rather Jung says that it “[...] grows out of you like the green seed from the dark earth” (2009, 133). We are now out of the sea and back on land, even if only the shore since we have not yet left Rilke’s “sea of the heart”. Jung does, however, give some indication of how to *live* knowledge of the heart. He says that it is knowledge of “[...] how your heart is [...] consider that your heart is both good and evil”, and that it arises through “You living your life fully”, especially those parts of life that we lazily leave “for others to live or to think” (2009, 133 & 134). Clearly for Jung knowledge of the heart must include the uncomfortable, difficult, and evil facets of existence as much as the pleasurable, easeful, and good. Yet since Jung must not pretend to offer knowledge of the heart on the page if he is to follow his own warnings, he can only provide symbols that gesture to ultimately unsayable phenomena. The only thing to do, then, is to follow the growth of the green seed.

Jung learns from the wisdom of plants in *Liber Novus* what every gardener knows, that in order to grow some plants need ample sunshine while others need shade, and I add that some prefer to grow on those border regions where the shadows become dappled (2009, 120).⁷⁸ Light and shade can be symbolically understood the principle of polarity in general, each

⁷⁸ Steiner perhaps not incorrectly faults Jung for simply noticing what any layperson can notice and proffering it as a new psychological theory – his theory of types that describes how some tend to introversion and others to extraversion, some to feeling and others to thinking – or some to dark and others to light (1912-21/2001, 41-42). More unfortunate than its obviousness is that Jung’s theory of psychological types, despite his qualifications of it as a mere conceptual helpmate, has been one of his most rigidly and abstractly interpreted theories. Its

representing countless possible sides of any polar couplet. In the busyness of the workaday world where daylight is metered out by the machine-part and driven to greater and greater efficiencies and scales of production, little value is given to differing needs of light and shade and humans appear prejudiced in favour of the latter. To discern one's actual needs of light and shadow, and be open to the differing needs of others, requires knowing how one's heart is, as Jung puts it, so that one can become aware of preference or prejudice for what it is rather than simply living from it unquestioningly. However, plants need more than sunshine or shade to grow. The green seed requires fertility, and for the source of this food Jung, Steiner, and Rilke all suggest something that is far from being considered by most psychologies: the dead. Jung says the earth "dungs its fields" with the dead (2009, 319); Steiner that like a plant a human body "dissolves into the elements" after death (1912-13/2006a, 10); and Rilke:

[...] *the earth-nourishing dead*. Do we know
what part they play in all this? Consider
just how long it has been their nature
to riddle the loam with loose bone-marrow.

This question, then: do they enjoy it?
Is fruit heaved up to us, clenched with the effort
of clumsy slaves, and we their masters?

Are *they* the masters, asleep among roots,
and grudging us from their surpluses
this crossbred thing of speechless strength and kisses?

Sonnets, 1922/1987, 29, emphasis added.

Do they enjoy it? What a question! A question that continues the shattering, slowly,
through the gentle but unbelievable strength of plant roots that mine bone-marrow and can

commodification as the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator is exemplary of the mechanistic, reductive, and materialistic tendencies in psychology that I take issue with here.

crack any human architecture, including whatever any psychology supposes a human being to be. This question, then: could we enjoy it, during life? Could we contemplate the enjoyment of being nourishment for others, and not only for humans but plants, animals, and the earth herself? Could we give not only our flesh but the life of our hearts, what Jung just called “living your life fully” to be decomposed and dispersed through the mineral realm in service of what is not “your” life? Could we for a moment pause and see that without this cycle of birth, life, and death that grudges us all of the nourishment that ends up on our tables, no such thing as the human being would exist – and so the stones, plants, and animals are properly our masters, not us theirs? Can we love this idea? Can we live with an attitude that death-in-life is a giving over of oneself as a small contribution to the fertility of the earth, and can psychology help us to do so? It is perhaps difficult with all of our sequestering of death into tidy funeral packages – but the mineral cycles that move and transform the earth’s nutrients care not for our coffins or our inability to conceive of such great stretches of time.

To return to Jung, this question: could knowledge of the heart be something that by following the sprouting, growth, flowering, death, and return to seed-hood of plants gives up Rilke’s fleetingly ripe “thing of speechless strength and kisses”, a thing that sounds very like the excess-ivity of *Übersinn*, the marriage of image and life-force? *Liber Novus* suggests this, that the melting together of sense and nonsense can best be learned from minerals, plants, and animals in several ways. First, unlike human beings, plants do not forget the life-giving earth that all beings return to and really never leave. Second, plants do not swing between taking too much and poverty but grow and live in more balanced ways (Jung 2009, 201). Third, we hear that the separation of human thinking from nature is an illusion, perhaps wrought by a

nonetheless very real loss of connection on the part of humanity, and that rather, in Jung's words, "thoughts are natural events that you do not possess, and whose meaning you only imperfectly recognize" (2009, 192).

The first lesson, that echoes Rilke's sonnet above, shows that while the play of polarity that characterizes knowledge of the heart and *Übersinn* is undeniably suggestive of dialectical movement, it challenges the logic of sublimation that attempts to force down the feminine-as-animal while elevating the masculine-as-spiritual into the absolute – that is present in, for example, the Hegelian dialectic that Jung problematizes.⁷⁹ Jung's conception of polarity resists sublimation and opposition with the help of non-human beings who do not disdain the inexorable forces of nature and their return to the Earth. If there is still a dialectic movement at play in *Übersinn* it does not only spiral upwards but downwards to the nourishing Earth. Death as a return to the Earth topples the illusion of human mastery over nature and the concept of an absolute idea, the culmination of Hegelian dialectics that Jung says in *Liber Novus* is in opposition to life and to living with others, and says in *Psychological Types* is Hegel's hypostatization of idea that is then supposed as the sole owner of real being (2009, 166; *CW* 6, §735).

The second lesson indicates another persistent observation in *Liber Novus* regarding the wisdom of plants that Jung finds relatively lacking in the development, or better progress

⁷⁹ Recall here that in *Liber Novus* the representation, normative at least in Christian tradition, of the feminine-masculine polarity as earthly/sensual-heavenly/spiritual is at times inverted, with femininity being associated with spirituality and masculinity with sexuality, the two of course being interdependent (Jung 2009, 528). One way that I read a challenge to sublimational dialectics in Jung is through his presentation of the irreducibility and interrelation-ality of polar reality. This means that neither side of any polar couplet gets cast away in the emergence of some third force, as Hegel does with father/mother into son, mother being left behind and daughter left entirely out of the equation (Jung 1925/2011, 85-86).

because of the one-sidedness that word implies, of human beings. Plants send out shoots, first one way and then the other, and though each direction is different the plant does not overreach itself and achieves balanced growth (2009, 338). Again, Rilke notices the same, saying of an orange “Who can forget how, drowning in itself, it still resists the tendency to be too sweet” (*Sonnets* 1922/1987, 31). Jung says that animals too provide wisdom for balanced living, for instance in how they do not take too much, do not hoard abundance to the detriment of their animal others (Jung 2009, 341). We humans seem to be the only animals who have developed the habit of greed and acquisition. Acquisitiveness and material excess are thus presented in *Liber Novus* as one of the great follies of humanity, and one that is uniquely human though it harms all beings that make up the earth.

For the third lesson, it must be recognized that if in *Liber Novus* thoughts are presented as natural events, this is not to say that non-human beings experience the same kind of consciousness as human beings. As Rilke says of an animal, if it “had our kind of consciousness—, it would wrench us around and drag us along its path [...]”, thereby correcting our one-sided ways of thinking and living (*Elegies* 1922/1982, 195). Rather, Jung’s characterization of thoughts as natural events serves to remind human beings that ordinary waking consciousness is not separate from the Earth and other beings thereon. As natural events, thoughts, and the ever-mysterious rules of consciousness’ growth that Jung mentions on page sixty-one above, remain for the most part unknown and beyond the grasp of any particular psychological theory. Rilke says much the same, that despite any meddling of humans who cultivate plants for their nourishment, “[...] down where the seed is changing to summer, beyond [their] reach, the earth pours out” (*Sonnets* 1922/1987, 25). In all three lessons plants and animals offer the wisdom of

balanced growth and nourishment that human beings would do well to incorporate into psychology if it is to help us live in more life-giving ways that are open to difference – to both sides of any polarity. What more does the balanced life of plants and animals mean for spiritual psychology? The poet can again help us:

Never, not for a single day, do we have
before us that pure space into which flowers
endlessly open. Always there is World
and never Nowhere without the No: that pure
unseparated element which one breathes
without desire and endlessly *knows*. A child
may wander there for hours, through the timeless
stillness, may get lost in it and be
shaken back. Or someone dies and *is* it.
For, nearing death, one doesn't see death; but stares
beyond, perhaps with an animal's vast gaze.

Elegies, Rilke 1922/1982, 193.

In this amazing verse is contained what has just been discussed regarding Jung's observations of the wisdom of plants and animals: their persistent challenge to the supremacy of ordinary waking consciousness and its creation of 'the world', the interdependence of all life with death and the nourishment of the Earth, and the shattering of being as human alone. At the same time, Rilke's verse introduces what is yet to be discussed here. First, Jung's conception of childlikeness as the necessary psychological work of confronting one's prejudices and automaticity. Second, in the final chapter, the imperative to learn lamentation in order to open the mouths of the death.

Childlikeness as a quality necessary for doing psychology as a way of life appears in both Jung's *Collected Works* and in *Liber Novus*. In *Psychological Types*, childlikeness is said to be synonymous with "presuppositionlessness" and represents a state of radical openness to both sides of any polarity (CW 6, §442). From Rilke's elegy above "we" adult human beings learn that

endless opening is something that plants, animals, and children do but not often us. And in his *Sonnets*, we learn that even minerals, taken as synonymous to material reality in general, bear the gift of childlikeness more than “we”: “All things want to float. And we go around like burdens, settling ourselves on everything, ravished by weight; what deadly teachers we are, when things in fact have the gift of forever being children” (*Sonnets*, 1922/1987, 83).

Childlikeness still involves the releasement of dead thoughts mentioned in note forty-three, and now is something that human beings can better learn from the realm of minerals that we commonly mistake for inert matter, but that really has a “secret life” in Jung’s words above. In fact, it is thoughts, those ready-made contents stored up in memory and rallied together whenever there is something to be explained away, that are the properly inert matter – everything else including minerals moves.

If we look again to Rilke, “we” see that this childlikeness can also be learned from the dead, both in the final lines of the elegy above and a following one: “If no one else, the dying must notice how unreal, how full of pretense, is all that we accomplish here, where nothing is allowed to be itself” (*Elegies* 1922/1982, 171). It is the hope of the first question of spiritual psychology that human beings need not wait for physical death to release their pretense, their abstractions taken as reality, and learn to allow all things to be themselves in an imaginative openness to unknowable difference. Unfortunately, “we” more often bury the possibility of childlikeness to the extent that we seek closedness and pretend that the relative positions we occupy at any given time are unambiguous and absolute.

Psychologically, living unambiguously means identification, with a job or role, an idea, a preferred way of making sense of things, an attitude, a set of values, or some combination of all

of these and other things that make up our personality. In resistance to such identification it is important to remember Jung's words on how easy it is to play at ambiguity but how difficult it is to live it. The difficulty of living with ambiguity can now be understood within the context of polarity, in the sense of a relativization of one's personality. In other words, the acknowledgement that any couplet of a polarity is interdependent, irreducible, and fluid means that regardless of any illusion of unambiguity every idea, value, and so on is always at least double and is relative and can change at any time and disrupt who one takes oneself to be.

The polar relativization of one's personality appears in *Liber Novus* when Jung says "I saw which *vices* the *virtues* of this time changed into, how your *mildness* became *hard*, your *goodness* became *brutality*, your *love* became *hate*, and your *understanding* became *madness*" (2009, 265).⁸⁰ It appears in Steiner who says regarding self-knowledge as the recognition of how little one knows that one sees "how much you loved what you now perceive as ugly" (1912-13/2006a, 28). Again, these expressions of the relative nature of personality involve us in the double question of spiritual psychology. They 1) help to clear away the pretensions to unambiguity that stifle childlikeness, and 2) help to develop an openness to otherness and difference through which some kind of non-ordinary consciousness might appear.

"We", again, resist childlikeness precisely because it requires this relativization of the personality and so forces a confrontation with the unsavoury sides of one's living that Jung and Steiner raise. In *Liber Novus* Jung's "I", meaning something like the ego-personality, says that to be a child is humiliating – a protest likely to be echoed by most adult human beings who might

⁸⁰ Italics added to highlight polar couplets. Jung's words "this time" reference the spirit of the times and everything associated with it. The context of the First World War is again active here.

say, with derision, don't be such a child (2009, 452). Jung overcomes this resistance through a scathing castigation of his "I's" self-supposed superiority and forces his "I" to a training in childlikeness that involves having to "unlearn all distinctions save that concerning direction" in order to free oneself from an oppositional or preferential thinking of polarity (360). This is quite different from any psychotherapy that treats childhood experiences as pathological, a tendency that Rilke, who uses childlikeness to represent creativity and imagination, perhaps has in mind when criticizing psychotherapy for its "clean up" of the psyche that expels forces of creativity along with "devils" (in Magnússon 2010, 165).⁸¹ It seems that the directionality retained in childlikeness and that is required for non-ordinary forms of consciousness, whether this is called imaginative cognition, *Übersinn*, or something else, is that of the balanced growth and the "vast gaze" of non-human beings and the dead that appear in the writing of Jung and Rilke, respectively.

Yet few if any psychologies seem to consider becoming plant-like and animal-like in order to break up the crystallizations of human thinking and living that cause harm and to open to more inclusive ways. Even so-called Jungian psychology seems to resist this, or at least the Jungian literature has remained silent, ten years after the publication of *Liber Novus*. Perhaps resistance to the life wisdom of non-human beings, who stand to teach anyone willing to listen how to glance through what Rilke calls "the World" to the "Nowhere without the No", a where that is perhaps a place of there-being – *Dasein* – and becoming, is due to another fact that Rilke brings attention to, that of the impossibility of ownership:

⁸¹ Though Rilke is speaking of Freudian psychoanalysis, Magnússon suggests that the view of the unconscious as inherently creative is one of the strongest places where Rilke can be seen to be in alignment with Jung's thinking (2010, 166).

Are trees, then,
angel-visited, strangely raised by slow and hidden
gardeners, that bear for us though we don't own them?

Haven't we ever been able, we shadows, we phantoms,
by our ripe-too-soon and withering behavior,
to shatter the calm of unruffled summer?

Sonnets to Orpheus, 1922/1987, 89.

“We” are so used to the idea of ownership, especially in the sense of private property, that psychologically our possessions become extensions of our ego, and injury to one is injury to the other.⁸² Perhaps it is because, like Jung says of the unconscious, non-human beings injure the illusion of human sovereignty – the ultimate expression of ownership – that “we” would rather not listen to them. To continue the exploration of this “withering behaviour” of resistance, we will turn in more depth to the question of death that has already been present in this chapter on life-psychology.

⁸² If more than psychological proof of this is needed, one needs simply to look at the structure of property law – that at least in the North American common legal system characterizes property as the relationship of ownership that a [normal rational] human has over things – to be convinced.

Chapter Four: *Death-Psychology, or Accepting the Lament of the Dead*

Jung, Steiner, and Rilke all find that one cannot truly live without a relationship to the dead, or in other words that all life and all death is really lifedeath – what Jung calls community with the dead and the living (2009, 492 & 493).⁸³ I develop this idea here by showing how Jung and Steiner both conceive of the dead and death differently from the common understanding of death as the absence of life and as opposed to it, and the common tendency to categorize which beings have life and death and which have not. These are approaches of ownership and oppositional thinking that the previous chapter already reveals as unreasonable because death and life both exceed our grasp and, more accurately, grasp us. Rather, the different ways that our thinkers characterize the dead all reveal that much of what is taken as life is really death, and death, life.⁸⁴ Their presentations of the dead waken – a word that each uses to pull the living from their ignorance of death – us to the idea that lifedeath, in addition to being inclusive of ‘the wisdom of real life’ held by non-human beings, is cultivated by the efforts of the living to open the mouths of the dead, that recall is one way to think of inheritance. Death-psychology teaches human beings to open the mouths of the dead and listen through the act of lamentation, or interchangeably lament and lamenting. Lamentation is at once a continuation of the first question of spiritual psychology because it involves confronting what in one’s living is against lifedeath and a continuation of the second question because lamentation is above all

⁸³ Throughout this discussion of death as lifedeath, the context of the First World War and its immeasurable dead that made an indelible mark on the texts in question here must again be remembered.

⁸⁴ To draw much of what has been discussed here into an example, life lived through merely abstract thinking, materialistic acquisition, and so on is really death, and the death and decay of bodies, thoughts, emotions, and so on into creative nourishment is really life.

an imaginative act. Finally, the different conceptions of the dead help to reimagine time, past, present, and future, in a non-oppositional way that continues to trace the double question of spiritual psychology.

It is necessary for any psychology to work actively and imaginatively to admit the dead because like the unconscious, the existence of the dead does not depend on human awareness of it. Steiner echoes Jung's soul from *Liber Novus*, saying that "our not seeing does not prevent the dead from being affective continually [...] A world surrounds us in which the etheric [energetic or vital] bodies of the dead live" (1916/2017, 12). Unfortunately, our not seeing is not harmless and seems to be increasing, with life being impoverished by an ignorance and even refusal of death.⁸⁵ There are many places in *Liber Novus*, in Steiner's *The Connection Between the Living and the Dead*, and Rilke's *Elegies* and *Sonnets* where one can trace the authors fight against the deprecation of death. Jung's maxim "take pains to waken the dead" – another way to phrase 'open the mouths of the dead' – is a good place to start (2009, 169).⁸⁶

With Jung the dead appear in at least two distinct forms throughout *Liber Novus*. First, in Jung's words, we must waken the dead as "the images of the shapes you took in the past, which your ongoing life has left behind". This formulation corresponds to the first question of becoming aware and letting go of one's preconceptions of oneself and 'the world'. Second, again in Jung's words, we must waken the dead as the "the thronging dead of human history,

⁸⁵ Steiner, in 1916, warns that relationship to the dead is frustrated by impersonal forms of modern communication that encourage speed, lessen face-to-face interaction, and make communication more transactional (72). With the development of digital forms of communication these effects are only accelerated.

⁸⁶ To again make visible my involvement in these questions I must mention two of the most influential dead in my life: my two great grandfathers, both of whom struggled with mental illness and whose stories I uncovered with effort as an adult from relatives who would rather forget the dead. Both have guided this thesis and given me practice in opening the mouths of the dead.

the ghostly procession of the past” (2009, 340). The dead of human history relates to the second question of developing non-ordinary consciousness, now specifically to be able to open the mouths of the dead and listen. A third and more obvious meaning of the dead as individuals that one knows personally is only peripherally present in Jung’s writing, found between the lines and overshadowed by the other two senses.

Shamdasani suggests that the significance of the dead of human history in *Liber Novus* is to move psychology from its preoccupation with the personal past – what has happened to a person and perhaps their ancestors – towards involvement in unanswered questions left by the dead that he calls “history as such” and “the weight of human history” (2013, 38). History as the questions of the dead is a very different understanding of history’s as-suchness than as allegedly factual events that can supposedly be recorded unequivocally. I take up Shamdasani and Hillman’s conversation here and add to it that the understanding of the dead in Jung as active members of a community with the living means that history is ambiguous rather than definitive and is as much involved in the future as the past.

In Steiner’s writing the dead whom one knows personally come into greater focus, particularly through his common practice of giving funeral addresses and through his writing on how to relate to what he above called the living bodies of the dead. While Steiner does speak of something like the dead of human history, he only indirectly speaks of something like the dead in Jung’s first sense (1916/2017, xxi & 77). Christopher Bamford, editor of Steiner’s ongoing *Collected Works*, says in language very similar to Jung’s that the development of Steiner’s research matured from a focus on personal relationships with the dead to the imperative that human beings “awaken to the mutuality and reciprocity” that exists between the living and the

dead collectively (in Steiner 1916/2017, xvi). Through these three senses of the dead it is already clear that for Jung and Steiner life and death are Janus-faced, are lifedeath, inseparable but by an intellectual illusion, and thus that it can only be detrimental to life to ignore or repress death.

Rilke shares the position of lifedeath, speaking in a letter of “the determination constantly maturing in me to keep life open towards death”, and in another that “*Affirmation of life AND death appears as one in the ‘Elegies’*”.⁸⁷ From Rilke’s work it is the *Elegies* in particular that will concern us here. As elegies they are Rilke’s lament of the barriers erected between life and death and attempt to open the reader’s ear to the dead. He does this with an arresting urgency and inexorable force, from the “First Elegy”, “What do they want of me?” – to the “Tenth Elegy”, “Yet if these endlessly dead awakened a simile for us [...]” – (1922/1978, 37 & 193). Lamenting, an activity necessary if the dead are, as with the discussion of the unconscious in the previous chapter, to be listened to but not meddled with, will help to further open up the three senses of the dead.

Lamenting is one response to the question of what the dead want from the living, though it appears differently in the work of our three thinkers, with different significances for spiritual psychology as a way of life and death, what can now be called a way of lifedeath. Jung leaves no room to escape the imperative of lamenting in *Liber Novus* when he says, “Not one

⁸⁷ These letters are from 1923 and 1925, respectively, and are quoted from David Young’s introduction to the *Elegies* (1978, 12-13). I am moving here from the Stephen Mitchell translation that has been used so far to Young’s because the latter’s language more strongly conveys the opening of life to death that is the theme of this chapter. As Young’s use of variable foot and triadic line would be difficult and interruptive to reproduce in the middle of a paragraph I have taken to liberty of adding back punctuation from the German in places where more clarity is required from the flattening that occurs in reducing the triadic line to a single one. However, the very quality of interruption or abruptness is in part what led Young to choose this style, which I agree is quite apt and which I will attempt to honour by continuing to draw attention to Rilke’s shattering (Young in Rilke 1972, 20).

title of Christian law is abrogated, but instead we are adding a new one: accepting the lament of the dead” (2009, 345 187n). Here, it is the dead who lament their refusal by the living. In the aptly titled *Lament of the Dead: Psychology after the Red Book*, Shamdasani and Hillman notice that Jung calls for an acceptance of *all* dead, not only Christians, and that this opens individual spiritual experience, Christian or not, to difference and otherness (2013, 118-20).⁸⁸ Mecouch offers the same conclusion in the aptly titled “Jung’s Lament”, but arrives there by suggesting that to take the autonomy of the psyche seriously means that all psychotherapy is a meeting with otherness (2016). In these senses, otherness includes the otherness of one’s own psyche as something for the most part unknown, the differences embodied by the psyches of others, and the dead who perhaps most embody otherness to the living.

In *Liber Novus* Jung says that through accepting the lament of the dead “[...] I have also taken over something of the dead into my day” (2009, 433). Jung brings the dead and the otherness they embody into daily life – not just into night life and dreams that they enter on their own terms without the interference of ordinary waking consciousness, but into day to day living. What could this mean, to live daily with the dead? Jung’s conception of accepting the lament of the dead suggests that to do psychology, what I am calling spiritual psychology, is itself an act of lamenting on the part of the living. Accepting the lament of the dead in this

⁸⁸ To continue the marginal exploration of the Christianity of *Liber Novus*, Shamdasani suggests that it is a Christian text in that it is thoroughly demonic and heretical, and so exists within the liminal and transformative tradition of Christian heresy (Shamdasani & Hillman 2013, 117). I would add that *Liber Novus* is a Christian text insofar as it *must* be so because Jung’s family was Christian, and there are many places where Jung insists that each individual grapple with their inherited religion or spirituality. However, this does not stop him from cultivating a tireless interest in the world’s diverse religions and spiritualities, and from these making their way into *Liber Novus* alongside Christian elements and often as a way of critiquing Christianity. Shamdasani even suggests that the breadth of Jung’s research constitutes what he calls a “cross-cultural psychology of the process of higher [non-egoic] development” (2012b, from author’s description). Interestingly, this heretical and critical space accords with Fertel’s analysis of *Liber Novus* as part of the subversive and transformative tradition of improvisation.

sense means to engage in lamentation oneself as psychological inheritance, as opening the mouths of the dead. This is inheritance of the historical lines of thought, life, and death that bear on one's individual 'world' in an effort to weed out what is against lifedeath and nurture what contributes to living and dying together.

The capacity for radical inclusivity that lifedeath and inheritance represent relies, according to Jung, on the development of individuality.⁸⁹ What he means is that a person can only be truly inclusive – meaning the acceptance of otherness and difference on their own terms – if some degree of psychological work has been undertaken to develop individuality, what Jung calls the individuation process. This process can in part be understood as a separation from inherited and subconscious belief systems, preferences, prejudices, and so on, or what I call both the first question of spiritual psychology and psychological inheritance.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Recall here the discussion of Jung's idea of unprejudiced objectivity – that includes accepting all of one's own living – as a requisite to empathy. Also, the stance that collective responsibility can only occur alongside individual responsibility is one of Jung's ways of grappling with the First World War and the rejection of responsibility and projection of it onto others that he witnessed in its aftermath, as appears in *Liber Novus* (see for example 2009, 199 220n & 203).

⁹⁰ Individuation can be further, though still very simply, understood as the ongoing development or becoming whole of an individual person through relationship and differentiation between the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche and one's environment – the never-attained 'goal' being the Self. Saban gives an insightful and accurate characterization of the concept of the Self (the capital S distinguishing this concept from usages of self-, which refer to something like the ego or personality) that keeps the context of polarity within which it is enmeshed, saying that it is "an anomalous experience of aporia situated in the tension between all the opposites" (2012, 28). As an experience of aporia the Self is as much about doubt and logical contradiction as it is about transcendence that Jung also links it to. Jung's description of the Self as transcendent is specific. He says that the Self is a transcendent concept, part empirical and part postulate, because in his words "it presupposes the existence of unconscious factors on empirical grounds and thus characterizes an entity that can be described only in part but, for the other part, remains at present unknowable and illimitable" (CW 6, §789). Individuation is thus another impossible possibility, another movement that exists only within polarity and so must include lack as much as wholeness. As such its orientation is to difference rather than what is normative, though it is not opposed to collective norms as individualism is because, as Jung points out, to oppose collectivity each particular path of individuation would need to be raised into a norm itself, which individuation cannot be because it exists only as difference (CW 6, §758-761). Interestingly, Shamdassani considers Jung's studies of alchemy, cited at length in the previous chapter, to be an allegory of the allegory of individuation. That is, Jung uses alchemy symbolically to describe the symbolic process of individuation as it appeared to him in the content that is now published in *Liber Novus* (2012a, 367). It is safe to say that Jung the scientist's hopeful qualifier that the Self is "at present" unknowable remains intact, as no psychology is any nearer to corraling it or the individuation process into

Jung's inclusivity is radical because it seeks to accept the lament of the dead in ways that challenge and even shatter who one takes oneself to be. Lamenting, then, like so much else of spiritual psychology is double. On one hand the lament of the dead excluded from life must be accepted, and yet this is only possible if on the other hand one laments one's own loss of connection to soul, to echo the beginning of *Liber Novus* and with soul understood with all the nuances presented in the second chapter.

Rilke continues the exploration of lamentation and offers an idea of what kind of hearing is necessary once the mouths of the dead are opened, and what one might hear. In the final "Tenth Elegy" Rilke leads the reader away from the numbing distraction of carnivalesque life to the land of Lament, a place inhabited by lamentation personified, the forgotten race of Laments, and where everything is real. Here Rilke says a new kind of hearing is possible, a hearing that comes with death and that can perceive such things as "an indescribable outline as if on the doubly opened page of a book" (1922/1978, 189). The hearing one may gain in Lament is again, like the listening to the unconscious that Jung spoke of above, an imaginative one that is mysteriously double. It asks us to imagine a doubly opened page, the same page opened twice – an impossibility, or a hearing of ambiguity between the lines? Luckily, one needs not wait for the death that comes to all beings but can, through no small effort, receive this kind of hearing by keeping death in every sense intimate with life, lifedeath.⁹¹ If one attains this kind of listening, what can be heard in Lament to help bridge this abyss? There dwell the dead, "veils of

knowable limits. All of this supports the interpretation here of Jung as a non-oppositional and non-absolutizing thinker, even if it is tempting or easy to read certain of his concepts – like the Self, individuation, and polarity – as fixed and linearly teleological.

⁹¹In an interesting connection, Hillman and Shamdasani say that listening is the first step in responding to the lament of the dead and repairing the abyssal splitting of life and death that humans have wrought (2013, 175).

Patience”, “pearls of Pain”, “the petrified slag of Anger”, “fields of sadness in bloom (what the living know only as tender foliage)”, “herds of grief”, and amidst all these a “spring, the source of Joy” (1922/1978, 183-85 & 191).

The psychological lesson that Rilke renders so beautifully and mysteriously is not unlike Jung’s conception of the individuation process and how it helps one to live better with others. If one could only find the life-nurturing energy in these dark emotions and meet joy without attachment, then the similes that Rilke says the dead awaken for the living could perhaps be seen and heard: “they might point to the catkins hanging from the empty hazeltrees, or else they might mean the rain that falls on the dark earth in spring”. Rilke suggests that the possible boon that human beings might finally begin to receive from these messengers is to realize that we do not raise joy of our own accord, but “would feel the emotion that almost startles us when a happy thing *falls*” (193). Yet to receive joy and wisdom for living from the dead, through catkins, the rain, or some other gesture and meaning, requires that one give up all of the narcotization on offer at the carnival that borders the land of Lament: “booths to please all curiosities [...and...] ‘Deathless’, that bitter beer, that tastes sweet to its drinkers, as long as they keep chewing fresh distractions” (179).

Lamentation appears in all its forms in this “Tenth Elegy”. Rilke laments the mindless and heartless destructiveness of human one-sidedness and narcissistic acedia. He encourages us to see our complicity in this and put down “that bitter beer” that helps us pretend that death is not a part of life. In doing this he contributes to the first question of spiritual psychology of becoming aware and challenging automaticity and inheriting everything that has made us who we think we are. Rilke then takes up the second question, the development of an imaginative

kind of consciousness that can help us live better with others, by showing that the new hearing that is possible in lamentation is a welcoming of death as an earthy – the mineral pearls, slag, rain, and dark earth, the vegetal catkins and hazeltrees, and the animal herds – and unsayable “spring, the source of joy” into life. Lamentation is, perhaps, the most appropriate form of praise for a species that are rapidly destroying their home – recall Rilke’s question “whoever can still praise, born into such a place” – and not only for themselves but for all other beings who have not already been driven to extinction. Luckily, lamentation only seems unsayable to merely abstract thinking, for in reading Rilke symbol and gesture seem to be responsibly ambiguous languages for lamentation.

The work of inheritance as opening the mouths of the dead appears in Rilke’s “First Elegy” when he informs us that “being dead is hard work and full of retrieval before one can gradually feel a trace of eternity” (1922/1982, 155).⁹² It also appears in *Liber Novus* when Jung accompanies Philemon, one of his fantasy figures introduced in note fifty-three, who teaches the dead what they neglected to understand in life, or what above Jung called the parts of life that we leave “for others to live or to think” and that especially includes one’s animality (2009, 508-535). Together and in different ways Rilke and Jung introduce the notion that inheritance continues in death, that in being read and thought about by the living the dead too must take up this hard work of sorting through what has made them.

The hard work of inheritance appears again in *Liber Novus* in the phrase “but it will take a long time until you see what is destined for death and what is destined for life, since the

⁹² I have returned here to Mitchell’s translation because his rendering of *Nachholn* as retrieval better conveys the sense of inheritance.

lowest in you is still unseparated and one, and in a deep sleep” (2009, 356). In other words, the lowest, the formulation in *Liber Novus* that gestures to one’s evil, hatred, prejudice, acquisitiveness, hubris, self-interest, and so on, must be allowed to die. Jung says that this death can only occur once the lowest has been given life, which again means admitting death into our day to day living. This is in fact impeccable psychological wisdom, for giving life force to our lowest is a counter movement or alleviation to our repression of it as unacceptable and subsequent projection of it onto others. Thus, what the living must do, in the words of Shamdasani, is learn to better “live amongst the shades” (227).

Liber Novus provides a very general framework for how to live with the dead once their lament has been heard. One of the first things that *Liber Novus* says concerning the dead as the weight of human history is that living with the dead does not mean a mastery over them, and that in so far as an attitude of mastery is maintained “we deal roughly with the past” (2009, 346). Again, the past must not be thought of as static or part of a merely linear conception of time, since the dead are always active – past, future, present – always already there. Jung says that the dead are in “the rafters of our houses”, and that they dwell with us and “produce effects” is sufficient evidence of their existence (346).⁹³ What *Liber Novus* shows is that mere intellectual acceptance of the dead is not enough to overcome the equally one-sided intellectual separation erected between life and death. Rather, acceptance of the dead must be

⁹³ Perhaps this dwelling of the dead in our homes has something to do with Rilke’s observation, given above, that though human beings are for the most part ignorant of their precarity, animals know that we are not at home in our created world. How could one feel at home if that home is populated by invisible guests – who Steiner above called the living bodies of the dead – whom one would rather ignore, but who nonetheless “produce effects”? It would be much more accurate to Rilke and Jung to say that the home is an *uncanny* place, in the sense of the etymology of the German *unheimliche* as familiarity and unfamiliarity at once, just as with Jung’s understanding of symbol, and is thus a bearer of ambiguity and uncertainty, like so much else in this thesis.

an act of love and reverence in which Jung says we must “seize, embrace, copulate” with the dead (368).

Rilke speaks in startlingly similar language in his “Third Elegy”, saying “You stirred up prehistory in your lover. What passions welled up from those long dead beings? What women hated you, what kind of men lost in darkness did you waken within his youthful veins? Dead children strained to touch you...” (1922/1978, 77). The necrophilic and uncanny language in *Liber Novus* and in Rilke’s elegy is meant to shock. It is one way to waken the living to the different meanings of the dead and encourage lamenting and inheritance. With words like love, reverence, embrace, copulate it connects back to the idea of *Übersinn* as an unknowing knowledge of the heart, that through its affective and imaginal intelligence can help the living learn to live with the dead, open their mouths and accept their lament. Perhaps it is even the dead who are the necessary help for the living to be able to bear the tension of polarity through which *Übersinn* fleetingly exists. Living with the dead, however, is still living with one’s own death, with lifedeath, a task that Jung seems to say in a flood of staccato sentences is again a rather impossible possibility:

Life wants to live and to die, to begin and to end. [...] Life and death must strike a balance in your existence. [...] But if balance has been attained, then that which preserves it is incorrect, and that which disturbs it is correct. Balance is at once life and death [...]

2009, 266.

Being at once...and, lifedeath enables an understanding of balance and polarity that shatters oppositional thinking and its either/or mentality. Balance must always spill over itself. Life and death must always be in excess of one another. Let us resume the staccato:

If I accept death, then my tree greens, since dying increases life. [...] How much our life needs death! [...] Joy at the smallest things comes to you only when you have accepted

death. [...] Therefore I behold death, since it teaches me how to live. [...] Death ripens [...]. To be, and to enjoy your being, you need death, and limitation enables you to fulfill your being

2009, 266-67.

The greening and dying of plant life, that appeared in another connection to *Übersinn* in the last chapter, reappears here in that plants do not prefer life or death but know that the two need one another. Perhaps it is again plants who can best help human beings to learn from death how to live. Plants, who in their abundant living – try to comprehend how much plant life greens each growing season – and their willing dying – try to fathom how much plant matter returns each autumn to the soil – make existence possible for all. In *Liber Novus* Jung submits both to the death-wisdom of plants and to his complicity in the human idiocy that would murder and wage war, and in loving and admitting death into life tells of his transformation into a “being of the forest, a leaf green daimon, a forest goblin and prankster, who lived alone in the forest and was itself a greening tree being” (2009, 272). Jung’s transformation circles back to the idea present in all three of our thinkers that as interdependent parts of Mother Earth human beings participate, consciously or not, in mineral-biological cycles of fertility, of growth and decay that make being possible at all. This fact that human beings must receive nourishment from the Earth in order to be, to exist, to do psychology, is too often left out of speculations of what it means to be a human being.

The fact of human co-participation in the Earth’s cycles persists even when Jung or Steiner fall prey to that strange and pervasive philosophic compulsion to characterize human beings in distinction to some supposed lack of non-human beings. That a human is such because it has life, death, consciousness, or some other supposed precondition of being, in distinction to an animal that has not, for example. It is disturbing that despite the shattering of

oppositional thinking that Jung and Steiner work towards, both still use the opposition of human/non-human to characterize human being from time to time. One can only speculate the reasons for this. Perhaps it is due to a part of their thinking that remains entrenched in the very scientific materialism that they struggle to emerge from. Or to an unwillingness to fully accept the help of minerals, plants, and animals, without whom the shattering of oppositional thinking, an illusion wrought by human beings, is not possible. The only thing that is certain is the tension that exists in the work of both Jung and Steiner between this slipping back into oppositional thinking and the abundant places where they show that an oppositional approach to understanding what it means to be a human being, besides being ethically questionable, is unreasonable. It is unreasonable because we cannot know conclusively what another being is, what another being has or has not, how another being lives and dies, and whether other beings enjoy their being – we hardly know this of our own species.

To continue with Jung's words on the relationship between limitation and being from the previous page, the one thing we can know with some confidence about being is that it is circumscribed by mortality, by lifedeath, in a way that enables beings to be beings. Beings are ripened throughout life into beingness by death in a manner that allows for psychic maturation, in the vein of Jung's individuation process that we can now call learning from death to live and find "joy at the smallest things", and that hopefully mitigates what Rilke just a bit ago called our "ripe-too-soon and withering behaviour". Just like the spring of joy appearing in Rilke's land of Lament – in the land of the dead rather than where most human beings would seek it, in the carnival of the living where that beer called "Deathless" is consumed freely – Jung learns that along with being, joy is intimately linked to mortality.

In *Liber Novus* joy appears as something akin to life-force, an experience of which is only possible if this life-force is made visible and precious by death. Death makes joy visible by a temporary disposal of everything human beings take themselves to be and that obstructs the otherness that joy is – the first question of spiritual psychology. Joy as life-force in *Liber Novus*, perhaps synonymous to what Jung calls libido in his *Collected Works*, is characterized by otherness because it is never only human, but rather like psyche is autonomous, is something much greater and much more like what Jung calls the “inhuman forces that are busily creating what is to come” and that he says “can never be prepared” (2009, 383 & 491). Joy takes us off guard and awes us, in part because it brings us to the brink and then, as Rilke says of its cousin beauty, “it so coolly disdains to destroy us” (1922/1978, 25). Joy, then, also appears very much like a kind of non-ordinary consciousness that is the concern of the second question of spiritual psychology. In keeping with the un-answerability of these questions, living with death and the joy one might experience thereby is not posited as an end in *Liber Novus*, but as “the way and the crossing”, and this again recalls *Übersinn* through the metaphor of a bridge (Jung 2009, 368).

The persistent language of pathways and crossings in *Liber Novus* contributes to freeing analytical psychology from the walls of the physician’s office and asks for it to be taken up in life and in living with the dead. As difficult as Jung says it is to accustom oneself to living with the dead, it is necessary if one is to live in openness to the differences of others because, in his words, living with death and the dead “[...] is precisely how you will discover the worth of your living companions” (2009, 347). The surrounding context of *Liber Novus* indicates that this is not a worth assigned by one human to another, but rather the unconditional and uncountable

worth of beings who live and die – whether these be minerals, plants, animals, or humans. To assist in this difficult task of becoming accustomed to lifedeath, Jung points again to non-human beings, to what he calls the “secret teacher of nature, teaching plants and animals the most astonishing and supremely clever skills and tricks, which we hardly know how to fathom” – and at the same time “the great sage [...] who prophesies the future clairvoyantly out of ungraspable fullness” (369). Jung is saying that if human beings are to learn how to better live with death, we must give heed both to nature and the history of human thought – the material of inheritance.

The appearance of clairvoyance – a faculty for perceiving things beyond normal sensory bounds and as such a part of imaginative non-ordinary consciousness – in *Liber Novus* provides another bridge, this time to Steiner and his work with the dead. At the same time, Steiner’s lectures that comprise *The Connection Between the Living and the Dead* – published in 1916, the same year that Jung came out with *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* – show that the dead are a bridge and an opening to an imaginative non-ordinary consciousness that is represented by the word clairvoyance (see 1916/2017, xi).⁹⁴ In the introduction to this lecture cycle, Bamford suggests that when the lectures are taken in the context of Steiner’s epistemological works they show that thinking must be enlivened if we are to relate to the dead (xxii). Unknowingly, Bamford reveals the closeness of Jung and Steiner to one another. Enlivening one’s thinking, meaning to let die one’s presuppositions and so on in order to relate livingly to the dead, expresses something very similar to what Jung means in giving life to one’s lowest so

⁹⁴ Steiner uses the term clairvoyance in many places as another way of speaking about imaginative cognition. Clairvoyance is thus a complement to abstract-materialist scientific thinking – even a logical transformation and continuance of it once it has hit the walls mentioned above.

that it may die. Bamford says of Steiner's lectures that to continue to exclude the dead from life is, in his words, at worst "a kind of betrayal of love and relationship" and at best "a missed opportunity open to all" (xi). What, then, does Steiner have to say about how to cultivate a relationship with the dead?

Steiner suggests that unless our concepts are fluid we can never dwell in the space between life and death that is occupied by both (1916/2017, 13). Conceptual fluidity can help to further understand what a few pages ago was called listening as the capacity required to relate to the dead. Listening is fluid in so far as it does not attempt to pin down what is heard to some constellation of readymade concepts but rather allows things to be heard as if for the first time, as in the state of childlikeness. Only in this way can one dwell in the between that Steiner speaks of.⁹⁵ Rilke suggests that listening from a space of betweenness is best learned, once again, from the dead themselves. He places before us beautiful images of death, those things and beings who he says have "learned what silence means", an antique sarcophagi, old graves, and "mouths that are open once more" – the mouths of the dead we are seeking to open here –, and asks "Have *we* learned that? Or have we yet to learn? Both. Hesitating between is what gives our faces character" (1922/1987, 21).

Hesitating between what is known and what is unknown, between material reality and non-material reality, in the space too often occupied by an oppositional /, is precisely what characterizes Steiner's approach to living with the dead most strongly. He suggests two

⁹⁵ Jung, for his part, learns something quite similar to Steiner's conceptual fluidity in *Liber Novus* from "the realm of the Mothers" – a locale present in Goethe's *Faust* that Jung discusses outside of *Liber Novus* as an allegory of the unconscious (CW 10, §714). Here discovers that concepts of truth and error are in fact fluid, and that neither truth nor error exist unmixed but are in an intimate and indissoluble relationship (2009, 365).

languages that the dead use to communicate with the living and that are characterized by betweenness (1916/2017, 13). The first is comprised of symbolic images that the dead elicit within the living, in the mind's eye so to speak. These are images that arise unknowingly and yet are somehow familiar, somehow have some resonance with the known, images that are uncanny and again similar to Jung's conception of symbol. The second language, one that is perhaps more difficult to accept, to carry on the language of lamentation, is comprised of gestures of the dead that draw the attention of the living to phenomena in material reality, things that often go unnoticed – a forest, the wind and waves on a sea cliff, or a certain shade of a colour – just like Maillard says above in connection to *Übersinn*.⁹⁶ This second language is very like the unconscious intruding into ordinary waking consciousness, only here it is specifically the dead who are “heard” or “seen”. The gestures of the dead can be recognized as more than mere association because of how they shatter the boundary between material and non-material, visible and invisible – in the seeing and hearing the ocular and aural themselves seem to change and become metaphors for something experienceable yet inexplicable by the intellect alone, as Steiner never tires of repeating. To be able to hear these languages of the dead, Steiner says that we must set aside “the personal preferences we have about human nature”, and I will add non-human nature, in order to receive others, dead or alive, human or non-human, as they are (1916/2017, 77). He shows that it is not only antipathy that closes us to otherness but that there are roots of self-interest behind many reactions of sympathy as well

⁹⁶ To again reveal my ‘personal equation’, this thesis was altered from its original outline to include writing on life and death at the request of a dead friend who arrested my attention and responded to my question “what do you want of me?” by saying “write of the dead”.

that must be unearthed – an idea already mentioned from *Liber Novus* (Steiner 1916/2017, 151-52).

The first language of the dead gives a different shade of meaning to Jung's conception of the dead as the weight of human history. Steiner says that the dead work actively to create human history from out of the future towards the past (1916/2017, 39; see also 1917/1999, 136). One way to understand what Steiner means is that through death human beings give back their "thought life" – which was never 'theirs' in the first place because for Steiner and for Jung human beings do not create their thoughts alone – and anything that can be called a past in the personal sense to the cosmos (1916/2017, 145). The returned thought life then reaches the living in the form of imaginations, the first language of the dead (147). Steiner speaks of the returned thought life of the dead as "inspired influences not perceptible to conventional consciousness that assert themselves in our habits and our most intimate nature" (156). Thus, the dead are past-beings in this sense of the active creation of history, and at the same time future-beings in that this creation occurs from out of the future understood as unknowable and illimitable possibility.

In *Psychology of Body, Soul, and Spirit* Steiner characterizes the past and the future as a dual sense of possibility that flows together in the soul, and he assigns each one to the capacities of judging and desire that were discussed in the first chapter, respectively. Through judging the past functions in what was called above a reliving of life while one lives it. Judging can now be understood as a reliving of the 'present' that is thus never quite there, never arrived at, always passed. Since this reliving consists in Steiner's words of an "upsurge of the personal and even collective past", the dead are in fact constantly taking part in our reliving – in

the very way that we construct our particular 'present' 'world' (1917/1999, xv). The future functions through desire as an energizing of affective forces, what Steiner calls love and hate or sympathy and antipathy. Abstract thinking occurs when we take any particular meeting of the currents of past-judging and future-desire to be the experience or thing experienced itself.

Steiner gives a mirror as a symbol of how the past and future remain unknowable in their very possibilities, despite this ongoing construction of the 'present' from out of them. The future is like a mirror without any coating behind it, that we see right through without realizing it is there. If we manage to gloss it with a coating, says Steiner, it simply casts a reflection of one particular version of the past back to us like any good mirror does (1917/1999, 142). Rilke seems to hit upon the same thing when he says in his *Sonnets* "Mirrors: no one has ever known how to describe what you are in your inmost realm. As if filled with nothing but sieve-holes, you fathomless in-between spaces of time" (1922/1982, 139). Through a conception of time as betweenness, and Rilke's and Steiner's use of betweenness to characterize relating to the dead, the two questions or moods of spiritual psychology attempt to enable one to live in not-knowing so that the possibilities streaming from the past and the future, from the dead, can be listened to. Seeing that human beings think, behave, and have a past and a future only in cooperation with the dead and non-human beings could not be further from the conception in many psychologies of the past as determinable and pathological and the future as the goal of an ever-present self-determining psychological state.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Sardello describes the pervasiveness of these pathological conceptions of the past and future in the introduction to Steiner's text in question (1917/1999, xix). Ignorance and pathologizing of the dead by psychotherapy is condemned more poetically in *Liber Novus* where Jung is told by one of the dead: "Was there a time when there were no dead? Vain deception! Only recently have [people] begun to forget the dead and to think that they have now begun the real life, sending them into a frenzy" (2009, 494).

Opening the mouths of the dead, accepting their lament, and lamenting oneself involves human beings in the practicality of spiritual psychology. Since relationship with the dead, including the dead as the weight of human history, is a social relationship, a communality, it must help people be open to differences rather than reacting to others from the preconceived thoughts and sympathy or antipathy of ordinary waking consciousness. To help with this, with living the double question of spiritual psychology, the dead are always here, in our homes even, if we will only listen. Their uncanny dwelling can assist both in shattering the barriers that our abstract and oppositional thinking erects against what is mysterious, unknown, and ambiguous, and in the development of an imaginative non-ordinary consciousness that enables us to open to lifedeath.

Birth-Psychology: A Conclusion

The question of birth, that process necessary for any life and death to be possible, appears again here at the end to indicate the provision-ality of any conclusion. What is spiritual psychology? Has anything been born here out of all the talk of living and dying? Not a new psychology, but the possibility of a series of ongoing meditative questions or moods that, if followed towards illimitable and never-arrived-at destinations, could make any psychology spiritual or any spirituality psychological. These orientations are an awareness and releasement of the automaticity of abstract thinking and a practice that aims to develop a non-ordinary consciousness characterized by imagination, Steiner's imaginative cognition and Jung's *Übersinn*. Both of these challenge how human beings have categorized being, life, and death, and even that such categorization is possible.

These nascent psychological moods comprise a contribution of Jung and Steiner that is little recognized, if at all, in the history of psychology. Interpreting their work as spiritual and practical psychology that provides wisdom for navigating lifedeath is also much nearer the heart of their thought and the forces that inspired them, including the dead, than anything like conventional psychotherapy. Reading Jung and Steiner as offering these guiding moods that can and should orient any psychological research helps to balance the one-sidedness that is the power and drive behind all human thinking and living that poses life and death as an opposition and so is in fact against both, against living well with others and with death more broadly understood.

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