Carl Gustav Jung: Avant-Garde
Conservative
By Jay Sherry

Reviewed by Carl V. Boyer

Near the end of his book, Jay Sherry comments that many Jungian colleagues, aware that his project deals in part with the difficult topic of Jung’s accusations of anti-Semitism, would stop him to ask, “Well, was he or wasn’t he?” (p. 215). Reading this engaging and engrossing book, one might think Sherry has once and for all answered the question that “he was.” And then he presents evidence, whether an excerpt from a letter or an esoteric published source of Jung’s writing or even contrasting quotations from the Collected Works themselves, that “he wasn’t.” Analytical Psychology has been adversely affected since the 1930’s by charges that Jung was a Nazi sympathizer and collaborator, that he was anti-Semitic, and that he opportunistically used his Swiss/German “Aryan” heritage to further his career during Hitler’s ascent. These charges were in part fueled by the Freudians. On one hand, they were bruised, infuriated, and helpless in the face of so many of their Jewish practitioners being forced to emigrate or be incarcerated in the death camps, and, on the other, they had been losing steam since the late twenties to the popularity of Jung’s writings and Jung’s charisma. Certainly it is not just the Freudians who have found some justification for charges of anti-Semitism in Jung’s published works, particularly the papers “Wotan” and “The State of Psychotherapy Today,” both in CW 10. And the very fact that even now the question, “Was he or wasn’t he?” casts a shadow over Jung and the field of Jungian psychoanalysis.

To some degree, both conscious and unconscious, we are forced as Jungian analysts to deal with it. Sherry is not a Jungian analyst and therefore from the outset cannot easily be accused of having an ideological or theoretical axe to grind.
As a historian of psychoanalysis and the German intellectual tradition, he seeks to lay out the facts to support whatever objective conclusions he can draw on thorny and politicized aspects of Jung’s biography. He is disturbed “that [Richard] Noll’s lurid portrait of Jung [in The Aryan Christ and The Jung Cult] is now the generally accepted one” (p. 1). He sees Jung attempting to balance throughout his life his conservatism, forged in his Basel/Swiss upbringing and education, and his more avant-garde spiritual and aesthetic philosophies. Thus, his subtitle: “Avant-Garde Conservative.”

Each of the seven chapters is arranged chronologically to correspond with periods in Jung’s life and professional development, beginning with his education and early writing at the University of Basel. While Jung eventually chose medicine, he was always interested in spirituality as well, including, from the first, occult spirituality. He managed academic medicine and research very well in his early career and, in this way, attracted the interest of Freud. The tension between the outer physician/clinician and the inner spirituo-philosophic explorer became harder for the young Jung to contain. Indeed, as Sherry says, “Jung could not abide Freud’s doubts about the religious nature of the psyche” (p. 41). It was the spiritual, teleological impulse in the unconscious put forth clearly in CW 5 that laid the groundwork for the break with Freud. Though Sherry does not deal at length with the Freud/Jung split, the break between these two deeply and emotionally attached men seems to have been the origin of so much of the discord and misrepresentation that came after.

Sherry provides throughout the book copious documentation of the dueling tendencies in Jung toward conservatism and more avant-garde spirituality. This tension escalates as the Nazi regime comes to power, by which time Jung was quite active in German intellectual circles as president of the General Medical Society for Psychotherapy, frequent contributor in the German press, and lecturer in scholarly seminar venues such as the Kulturbund. The Nazis were critical of psychoanalysis because Freud was a Jew. Jung, a Gentile and of Swiss/German rather than Austrian heritage with a respected international intellectual reputation, was in a perfect position both to advance his Analytical Psychology at the expense of psychoanalysis and to find an enthusiastic audience for his notions of race and culture, culminating in two of his most difficult papers, “Wotan” and “The State of Psychotherapy Today.”
Sherry discusses these two papers in detail in Chapter 5, “Nazi Germany and Abroad,” which was for me the most compelling chapter in the book and the most painful to read. Jung’s views were frequently quoted in academic and lay articles by Matthias Göring, a prominent psychiatrist, cousin to Nazi politico Hermann Göring, and a florid anti-Semite. Sherry says bluntly, after a discussion of Göring’s papers, “There is no evidence that Jung found any of this objectionable” (p. 142).

Jung was seen, as the guest of Matthias Göring, on the review stand of a Nazi military parade in Berlin with Mussolini and Hitler, sitting “only a few feet from the two dictators” (p. 144). Jung’s attempts to stand apart from the Nazi regime’s onslaught of psychoanalysis and marginalization of the Jews at this time were lukewarm at best and overshadowed by the pro-Aryan racial posing in his writing.

By this time, Jung had an international reputation; he had given the Terry lectures at Yale and the Tavistock Lectures in London and had accepted multiple honorary degrees. Nonetheless, as tension grew in Europe with the Nazi ascendancy, eyebrows were being raised and outrage expressed at some of Jung’s views. Here began the long journey of "whitewashing" Jung's comments by his followers, or at least toning them down for his critics outside Germany. Sherry translates several questionable or inflammatory passages in Jung’s papers from this time and then contrasts the watered-down versions of these same passages in R. F. C. Hull’s translations in the Collected Works. Some of these are subtle but significant; others are major misrepresentations. Sherry’s juxtaposition of his own more accurate translation from the German of Jung’s writing with Hull’s versions in The Collected Works is one of the major contributions of this book.

In the last chapter, “The Cold War Years,” Sherry elaborates Jung’s “defensive strategy of revision and self-justification” which began with the paper “After the Catastrophe” (CW 10) (p. 189). It seems disappointing, hypocritical, and maybe even a little tragic that Jung tried so hard to backpedal in post-war interviews and writing about his positions during the war. Jung’s followers and the first generation of Jungian analysts had to contend with the controversies about Jung’s wartime politics and charges of anti-Semitism in his writing as institutionalization of Analytical Psychology began with a formal training institute in Zurich and a full-scale translation into
English of his collected works.

In his acknowledgements, Sherry thanks Sonu Shamdasani for his “friendship and scholarly example” (p. xi). It is not surprising that Sherry’s book serves as a companion volume in many ways to Shamdasani’s 2003 opus, _Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology_. In that book, Shamdasani identifies the theoretical contributions Jung made to the field of psychology and traces their roots in the socio-cultural, literary, and academic milieus in which they were formulated. Like Sherry, Shamdasani is a historian of psychoanalysis, not an analyst, and he emphasizes primary textual sources rather than “interprefaction,” which he defines in a later book, _Jung Stripped Bare by His Biographers Even_ (2005), as “a key aspect of psychoanalytic thinking... [whereby] interpretations and constructions are treated as facts” (p. 4).

_Carl Gustav Jung: Avant-Garde Conservative_, in the same fashion and with the same academic rigor as Shamdasani’s books, attempts to cut through much of the myth, innuendo, and posing by the two warring camps, Freudsians and Jungians, each attempting to shore up its master’s legends. Nowhere are the war chants louder and the myths more visceral and damaging than in Jung’s role with Nazi Germany during the buildup to World War II. Attempts at damage control after the War by the first generation of Jungian scholars were idealizing, portraying Jung as misunderstood or taken out of context. As Sherry points out, “…sometimes Jung needs to be rescued as much from his admirers as his detractors” (p. 217).

The era of the mythologizing “I-was-there-and-I-knew-Jung” books, full of “interprefaction,” is over; all those have been written already. Deirdre Bair has given us the illuminating and definitive, _Jung: A Biography_ (2003). The Jung family continues to make more archival material available, as they have done recently with the publication of _The Red Book_; other volumes of Jung’s writings, long held in private family vaults, are in various stages of production. No doubt there is a lot more that has not been seen by scholars or translators. Thus, we may come to know more definitively the answer to “Was he, or wasn’t he?” In the meantime, we have Sherry’s book to shed new and important light on this controversial question.

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I must say that I very often found that the astrological data elucidated certain points which I would otherwise have been unable to understand. From such experiences I formed the opinion that astrology is of particular interest to the psychologist, since it contains a sort of psychological experience which we call projected—this means that we find the psychological facts as it were in the constellations. This originally gave rise to the idea that these factors derive from the stars, whereas they are merely in a relation of synchronicity with them. I admit that this is a very curious fact which throws a peculiar light on the structure of the human mind. (CW 1, pp. 475-476)

In light of positing what he termed the "psychoid" nature of the archetype, Jung enthusiastically anticipated an emerging relationship between analytical psychology and developments in the hard sciences. Beyond the searching contributions of a few notable individuals however—principally Marie Louise Von Franz and Edward C. Whitmont—little development has occurred in this direction. What is in fact most striking about von Franz’s and Whitmont’s respective approaches is the extent to which both thinkers sought to expand upon the implications of Jung’s late work. Robert Aziz (1990) speaks of
this period in emphatic terms: “What Jung had learned about the synchronicity concept in his life and work certainly constituted a paradigmatic leap for analytical psychology—a paradigmatic leap, Jung realized, whose full import would have to be disclosed not by him, but by others following afterward” (1990, p. 218).

Failure in some quarters to make this leap has resulted in what Wolfgang Giegerich (2007) has termed the Anthropological Fallacy: "The human being is here the container or vessel of the soul and accordingly also the horizon of psychology. A psychology based on this fantasy clearly operates with the division between man and world, subject and object, inner and outer" (p. 2). Where this fallacy dominates, projection is reduced to the fundamental status of a "nothing-but" and continues to be understood as a mechanism by means of which something from inside is mistakenly perceived outside. Under these circumstances astrology is readily dismissed as a field without substantial reality.

Transpersonal psychology, owing to the influence of Eastern spirituality and a marked concern for exploring non-ordinary states of consciousness, has consistently sought to question the Cartesian dualism that lies at the heart of this fallacy. Richard Tarnas, one of the major figures in the transpersonal movement, has done much to support Jungian ideas through his work with archetypal astrology. If Jung's infamous astrological experiment was unsuccessful because of its attempt to "prove" astrology by statistical means, archetypal astrology has sought to correct this misstep by bringing a less strictly quantitative approach to the problem. In Cosmos and Psyche (2006), Tarnas surveys the history of the West to draw correlations with the major astrological transits. In charting the recurrence of archetypally informed historical patterns, he also speaks of the need for a new way of situating ourselves in the world that could begin to explain these correspondences. Such a worldview would, of course, be in keeping with Jung's work on synchronicity. Beyond exploring what such a position might look like, Tarnas also raises the question of how this change might become a widespread phenomenon: “... to succeed in becoming a broad-based cultural vision, or even to achieve its own implicit program of psychological and intellectual integration, this new outlook has been lacking one essential element, the sine qua non of any
genuinely comprehensive, internally consistent world view: a coherent cosmology” (p. 27).

Keiron Le Grice's *The Archetypal Cosmos* builds on Tarnas' work and is a direct response to this call. The form that this response takes is in essence a wide-ranging exposition of the major strands of thinking germane to a new mode of consciousness. In support of the astrological perspective, the author presents a comprehensive survey of the new sciences, systems theory, and consciousness studies. By drawing connections between such figures as Ervin Laszlo, Rupert Sheldrake, Sri Aurobindo, Jean Gebser, Teilhard de Chardin, Gregory Bateson, and David Bohm, Le Grice outlines the basis for an emergent worldview in whose context the expanded role of astrology becomes appreciable. In so doing, he has at the same time produced a unique work, in that it reflects an interdisciplinary synthesis of ideas that provide paradigmatic support for Jungian psychology. Le Grice, who is the current editor of *Archai*, the journal of archetypal cosmology, believes astrology has a special role to play in bridging the conceptual gap between psyche and matter. He suggests that the astrological system should be understood not as a conventional mythology, but rather as being in a sense the apparatus by means of which mythology is generated:

Astrology is not itself a myth.... Rather, astrology is a mythological framework that, potentially, is able to accommodate within its scope all the different variations of myth, all the themes and motifs expressed in the world's mythology. Astrology might be thought of, therefore, as a meta-mythology: meta meaning higher, above or over, and meta also meaning behind—because the archetypal principles and powers are the energies behind myth, and that gave rise to the myth. (p. 61)

From this we can readily perceive how the archetypal configuration reflected in a birth chart can be interpreted as a map of the individual's personal myth. This myth is a unique reflection and embodiment of a particular moment in the ongoing cultural cycle, the orbiting of the planets reflecting the evolving nature of the Earth's mythological climate. In this way, "myths here recover a cosmological connection in that the archetypal themes they express are found to be related to the structural order of the cosmos" (p. 281).

If Le Grice's debut is the strikingly ranging work of an emerging thinker, Gerry Goddard's *Transpersonal Theory*...
and the Astrological Mandala is the genuinely groundbreaking achievement of a lifetime's study and reflection. Influenced in his astrological thinking principally by Dane Rudhyar, Goddard adopts a bipolar approach to the astrological round as he outlines a developmental model of consciousness founded in Jungian dialectics. Drawing especially from the pioneering work of Stanislav Grof, Ken Wilber, and Michael Washburn, the author presents a synthesis that convincingly claims to retain the best of existing transpersonal models while resolving some of their most fundamental conflicts. The bold intent is to offer an evolutionary approach that recognizes distinct and universally valid developmental stages without falling into the marginalizing tendencies typically associated with an undertaking of this nature. Using the astrological mandala as a framework, the author develops a holographically enfolded model that still manages to retain much of the more linear logic evident in the holarchic method of perennialism. By working with the subtle dynamisms of astrology, Goddard succeeds in outlining the basis for a systematic approach to consciousness which remains creatively vital.

Goddard believes, with Le Grice, that astrological thought has a unique role to play in the evolution of a new paradigm:

I eventually found in astrology...a symbology both resonant to the archetypal conception of Jung and amenable to both humanistic and transpersonal interpretations. . . . I have come to believe that not only does the Kosmos have its physical and phenomenological topography, it also has its archetypal topography[,] the mapping of which is the function of astrology. In this work I wish to demonstrate that...the deep logic of the astrological infrastructure reveals the largest development of both individual and collective from primal fusion to autonomous self to transpersonal realization grounded in the evolution of the cosmos and biosphere (p. xxxvii)

While the theoretical emphasis of the text lies more with transpersonal psychology than with astrology, the work has profound implications for the growth of both fields. It also does much to support astrology's claims for attention within the community of depth psychology: the exactitude with which Goddard has been able to map the work of developmentalists onto the logic of the astrological round is compelling. Unfortunately, the breathtaking sophistication of his synthesis may seem
somewhat inaccessible, since proper appreciation of it inevitably depends on having some background in both astrology and transpersonal studies; while the text is not completely unapproachable without such a grounding, under these circumstances the arguments being made are of course liable to be received more as hearsay. An unprepared reader is also likely to get lost in the sheer weight of the material: the text is more than 600 pages long, dense with ideas, and relies throughout upon a specialist vocabulary. Regrettably, the book has been published only posthumously. Goddard’s life partner, the poet Roberta DeDoming, narrates in the foreword how the author had, on a whim, uploaded the entire manuscript to the Internet, doing so on the basis of what he felt to be a particularly significant set of transits to his natal chart. The following day Goddard died unexpectedly. That the author hasn’t been present to support his work through publication is a considerable loss. While a number of major figures in the transpersonal world (Tarnas and Grof among them) have lavished praise on Goddard’s accomplishment, the book has yet to achieve wider attention.

It can only be hoped that Transpersonal Theory and the Astrological Mandala will go on to acquire the lasting recognition that it warrants.

References


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Sandplay Therapy in Vulnerable Communities: A Jungian Approach

By Eva Pattis Zoja

Reviewed by Ilona Melker

In her book, Sandplay Therapy in Vulnerable Communities, Eva Pattis Zoja, a Jungian analyst and sandplay therapist in Italy, reports on psychotherapeutic work she calls “Expressive Sandwork” performed in the slums of South Africa, Colombia, and the earthquake-shaken parts of China. Expressive Sandwork, she explains, evolved out of Jungian sandplay therapy and is modified to care for people in acute crisis situations in the aftermath of natural disasters or war. It is also used for people living in chronic-crisis-level social adversity, such as slums or refugee camps. The Expressive Sandwork project Pattis Zoja describes was carried out primarily with children and young adults in a limited number of sessions. In essence it is work with trauma, and because sandplay communicates non-verbally, it can be used in any culture with minimal reliance on language.

This kind of crisis intervention is known to some of us in the New York area from the work of Rosalind Winter, a recently deceased Jungian analyst, sandplay therapist, and former member of the C. G. Jung Institute of New York. In the wake of 9/11, Winter intuitively responded to the disaster by bringing expressive sandwork, which she called a “symbolically expressive process,” to the students of the high school she worked with in Montclair, New Jersey. Later, by training and supervising school guidance counselors, she was able to extend this form of therapeutic intervention to other school children. These counselors worked in New York City public schools in districts that were particularly affected by the traumatic events of 9/11. For this lay group of therapists the training was similar to that of Pattis Zoja’s; sandplay therapy was adopted “to give opportunity to respond in a healing manner to trauma … to use the power of symbols to hold, contain and transform an unbearable situation” (Winter, in Grolnick, 2006, p. 210). Such interventions are usually short-term and made in groups.

Although Expressive Sandwork is often practiced in groups, the ratio of child to therapist is always one to one. The therapists are often volunteers who are minimally trained to work with Expressive Sandwork in order to reach a maximum number of children. Because the therapists in Expressive Sandwork do not make any analytic interpretations,
what they offer is their presence. “All they can do,” Pattis Zoja explains, “is to employ empathy for their fellow human beings in the best and most purposeful way possible. This can be trained, but in part it is a gift” (p. 43). She maintains that “if a person’s psychological health is sound enough to loan, as it were, his personality to the patient, then a satisfactory outcome of the therapy can be expected” (p. 35). This may be a problematic statement, because she provides no clues as to how the psychological health of volunteer facilitator (or anyone for that matter) is to be assessed. However, Pattis Zoja is aware that a desire to help and bring healing can be a double-edged sword. (See A. Guggenbühl-Craig’s exploration of this topic in his seminal work *Power in the Helping Professions.* Nevertheless she calls our attention to an important aspect of our work as depth psychologists, the ethical responsibility for effecting change and the possibility of changing others by our work. This was partly the vision of the early pioneers of the psychoanalytic movement, who saw an opportunity for transformation through psychoanalysis and providing free access to therapy in vulnerable communities. In Chapter 1 Pattis Zoja quotes Freud’s manifesto at an international conference (Budapest, 1918), discussing how this should be enacted: “Then institutions and outpatient clinics will be started, women who have nearly succumbed under the burden of their privations, children for whom there is no choice but running wild or neurosis, may be made capable, by analysis, of resistance and efficient work. Such treatments will be free” (p. 5).

One must consider that Jung’s assertion (1964) is perhaps more accurate, when he says that the spiritual transformation of mankind, the kind of transformation that could prevent events such as the Second World War, is a “slow tread of the centuries and cannot be hurried or held up by any rational process or reflection, let alone brought to fruition in one generation” (*CW 10*, para. 583).

The slowness of the process of transformation on the collective level does not excuse us from the responsibility we have to others. As we do our own inner work in each generation, we must also extend ourselves for the benefit of others. Of course this may take many forms, but this responsibility was clearly articulated by Erich Neumann in *Depth Psychology and the New Ethic*, a book conceived during and in response to the Second World War.

Sandplay, or Expressive Sandwork, may be a well-suited medium to approach areas of human suffering because it has direct access to the unconscious, bypassing the intellect. It is playing, a
This is what Pattis Zoja attempts and reports to us as she brings Expressive Sandwork to culturally and socially diverse parts of the world. She believes that the possibility of “expression within a free and protected space already is change” (p. 144). Such a *temenos* can be easily created across cultures. Although its face and expression may vary as a culture or an individual is playing, play is an archetypal activity. Pattis Zoja also seems sensitive to the play material that is offered up to correspond to cultural variations. One must read her case material in order to decide whether Expressive Sandwork can be applied effectively in places where it is most desperately needed. I found her presentation of that material from South Africa and China very strong and well written. I urge anyone with an interest in cross-cultural application of Jungian psychology to read those cases. They illustrate what we know from nature and psychology; namely, that everything in a child’s body and psyche is directed towards growth and development. No child becomes stuck at a certain age level or falls back in development unless he or she has encountered the most serious and difficult obstacles that make psychological progress impossible. If such obstacles can be removed through a change of structures in the child’s environment, the psyche will immediately mobilize all its self-regulating powers.
and quickly catch up on everything that it needs in order to progress (pp. 150-151). Jung affirmed this idea beyond the development of the child when he contended that there is a natural gradient in the psyche towards wholeness (completeness). Interaction with others or the environment may or may not facilitate its expression, but working towards removing impediments in its path is always an effort of life towards healing and individuation. To this effort Eva Pattis Zoja dedicates her book. In its last chapter she gives direct and practical instructions for those who might want to follow in her footsteps and offer Expressive Sandwork to vulnerable communities in need.

It may not be necessary to travel outside of one's country: slums, violence, and both natural and man-made disasters are all nearby. The question to ask ourselves is to what extent we believe that psychotherapy and analysis can facilitate social action and, as such, a possible course of individuation. Eva Pattis Zoja affirms that a Jungian approach to psyche can be combined with social action, especially when one works with trauma in vulnerable communities.

References


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Stacks of books. You don’t just buy a book, you buy an entire library for the same price! Always have something to read. Friends, editors, and experts can help you find new and interesting books. Read whenever, wherever. Your phone is always with you, so your books are too even when you’re offline. 7 days for free. Bookmate an app that makes you want to read. Books. Sarah Darlington. But First, Coffee.