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Paul Bishop

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INTELLECTUAL AFFINITIES BETWEEN GOETHE AND JUNG, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *FAUST*

By Paul Bishop

IT WAS SIGMUND FREUD, C. G. Jung's erstwhile mentor, who first explicitly underlined the connections between psychoanalysis and Goethe, the figurehead of that German-speaking culture to which Freud, a Viennese Jew, and Jung, a Swiss Protestant, both belonged.¹ According to Freud, he decided to study medicine after a public lecture towards the end of his secondary school studies, at which he heard Professor Carl Brühl (1820–99) read 'Die Natur'.² Nor was Freud alone among the early psychoanalysts in taking a professional interest in Goethe. For example, at the first meeting of a Freudian Society of Physicians, co-founded by Jung and held at the Burghölzli clinic in Zurich in September 1907, Franz Riklin (1878–1938) gave an analysis of the 'Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele' from *Wilhelm Meister*.³ Then again, at an evening meeting of the secessionary circle around Alfred Adler (1870–1937) on 7 November 1912, H. Oppenheim and Carl Furtmüller discussed *Faust I* and *II* as an example of inferiority in quest of compensation.⁴ In the early issues of *Imago*, several articles appeared on Goethe.⁵ Another disciple-turned-apostate, Otto Rank (1884–1939), saw in Goethe's dying words 'Mehr Licht' a reference to emergence from the womb and hence confirmation of the theory of the birth trauma.⁶ One of Freud's more loyal supporters, Theodor Reik (1888–1969), wrote a book about Goethe's relationship with Friederike Brion.⁷

In terms of a personal sense of intellectual proximity to Goethe, however, Freud was undoubtedly surpassed by his one-time pupil and most famous apostate, Jung, who even propagated a family legend that claimed he was a descendant of Goethe

¹ In this paper, I use the following abbreviations for works by Goethe: DW = *Dichtung und Wahrheit*; E = Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, edited by Fritz Bergemann, Frankfurt am Main, 1981; HA = Goethe's *Werke* [Hamburger Ausgabe]; MuR = *Maximen und Reflexionen*, edited by Max Hecker; and the following abbreviations for works by Jung: B = C. G. Jung, *Briefe*, edited by Aniela Jaffé and Gerhard Adler, 3 vols, Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau, 1972–73; ETG = *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken von C. G. Jung*, edited by Aniela Jaffé, Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau, 1971; GW = C. G. Jung, *Gesammelte Werke*, 20 vols, Zurich and Stuttgart/Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau, 1958–95; WSL = *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, Munich, 1991.

² 'Selbstdarstellung' (1925), in *Gesammelte Werke*, 18 vols, Frankfurt am Main, 1952–87, xiv, 34.

³ See Jung's letter to Freud of 1 October 1907, in Sigmund Freud/C. G. Jung, *Briefwechsel*, edited by William McGuire and Wolfgang Sauerländer, Frankfurt am Main, 1974, p. 100. Riklin's paper is apparently lost.

⁴ See the account given by Lou Andreas-Salomé in her 'Freud Journal' (*In der Schule bei Freud: Tagebuch eines Jahres 1912/1913*, edited by Ernst Pfeiffer, Munich, 1965, p. 15). Andreas-Salomé noted: 'Vieles Anregende wäre in diesem Adlerkreise möglich, hielt er sich außerhalb der Psychoanalyse'. Andreas-Salomé herself was deeply imbued with Goethean thought, as the fourth (and idiosyncratically aesthetic) point in her discussion of infidelity shows: 'Viertens dürfte man noch sagen: Nur der Verzicht auf Faktizität, nur Auferstehung im Scheingewordenen erlaubt zu sagen: »Verweile doch!« und erst recht: »Du bist so schön!« — und damit ist ein Gefühl auch schon über alle vulgäre Treue hinaus: ist ein Segen über allen künftigen Objekten, deren Sterblichkeit kompensierend' (p. 89).

⁵ For example: Imre Hermann, 'Die Regression zum zeichnerischen Ausdruck bei Goethe', *Imago*, x (1924), 424–30; Philipp Sarasin, 'Goethes Mignon: Eine psychoanalytische Studie', *Imago*, xv (1929), 349–99; and Eduard Hirschmann, 'Psychoanalytisches zur Persönlichkeit Goethes', *Imago*, xviii (1933), 42–66; cf. Eduard Hirschmann, 'Goethe als Vatersymbol: An Träumen demonstriert', *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse*, 1 (1913), 569–70.

⁶ See Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth* [1924]: 'Goethe's now famous utterance, "More light", shows clearly the unconscious birth phantasy, the wish to look at the light of the world. Goethe's abnormally difficult birth trauma, of which he himself speaks, explains that which was so puzzling in his life and works' (*The Trauma of Birth*, London, 1929, p. 197, n. 3).

⁷ Theodor Reik, *Warum verließ Goethe Friederike? Eine psychoanalytische Monographie*, Vienna, 1930.

(ETG 41, 238). Indeed, one of Jung's closest associates, Aniela Jaffé (1903–91), recalls that even if he described the rumour as 'ärgerlich', he never related it 'ohne ein gewisses Behagen' (ETG 400).⁸

In this paper, I wish to examine Jung's intellectual rather than biological or genetic debt to Goethe, beginning with the references in his autobiography. In the body of this article, I shall examine the more significant uses of *Faust* in the works of Jung, proceeding in chronological order. On the basis of such an examination, it will be possible to draw some conclusions about the affinity as well as the differences between Jung and Goethe, both as personalities and as thinkers. From my analysis, it emerges that the major tenets of Jungian psychology are part of his complex response to Goethe's writings, and that an awareness of Jung's indebtedness to Goethe for his conception of the aesthetic may well enable Jungian psychology to defend itself against some of its detractors.

I

It is now clear that authorship of *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken* (1961) cannot be attributed directly to Jung.⁹ In many respects, Aniela Jaffé was to Jung what Johann Peter Eckermann was to Goethe. Indeed, Jung's publisher, Kurt Wolff, saw her in precisely the role of another Eckermann, even if this 'Eckerfrau' ended up writing the equivalent of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*!¹⁰ Nevertheless, *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken* retains its significance as the work that, above all else, has been hugely influential in creating the public image of Jung — an image that, only recently, has begun to be revised. Even the title of the book contains a Goethean influence, for, as well as alluding to the title of Bismarck's memoirs,¹¹ there is surely also a buried allusion to the Classical Walpurgisnacht of *Faust II*: 'Sind's Träume? Sind's Erinnerungen?' (line 7275).

In many ways, *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken* is more than just Jung's biographical equivalent to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, for it relies on a similar understanding of the fundamental relation between poetry and truth. In the prologue, Jung himself spoke of his autobiography as an explicit exercise in mythopoeisis: 'So habe ich es heute, in meinem dreiundachtzigsten Lebensjahr, unternommen, den Mythos meines Lebens

⁸ In an unpublished part of the Jung-Jaffé transcripts in the Jung collection, Library of Congress, Jung says that he sensed a further affinity between Goethe's sister, Cornelia; the sister of his own grandfather, Karl Gustav Jung; and his own sister, Gertrud Jung. I am indebted to Sonu Shamdasani for bringing this passage to my attention.

⁹ For recent research on the genesis and import of *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*, see: Naomi R. Goldberg, 'Looking at Jung Looking at Himself: A Psychoanalytic Rereading of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*', in *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Resurrection of the Body*, Boston, 1990, pp. 116–45; Alan C. Elms, 'The Auntification of C. G. Jung', in *Uncovering Lives: The Uneasy Alliance of Biography and Psychology*, New York and Oxford, 1994, pp. 51–70; and Sonu Shamdasani, 'Memories, Dreams, Omissions', *Spring: A Journal of Archetype and Culture*, LVII (1995), 115–37.

¹⁰ According to R. F. C. Hull, Jung's translator, Kurt Wolff told him how 'for several years he had tried to persuade Jung to write [an autobiography], how Jung had always refused, and how finally he (Kurt) hit on the happy idea of an "Eckerfrau" to whom Jung could dictate at random, the Eckerfrau being Aniela Jaffé (Richard Hull, 'A Record of Events Preceding the Publication of Jung's Autobiography, as seen by R. F. C. Hull', 27 July 1960, Bollingen Archive, Library of Congress [quoted in Shamdasani, p. 134]). For Jung's suspicion about what an Eckerfrau might reveal about him, consider his comment in a letter of 17 June 1958 to Kurt Wolff: 'Gott helfe mir — selbst Goethe kam mir wie ein gespreizter Truthahn vor, als ich Eckermanns Gespräche las' (*Briefe*, III, 195).

¹¹ In 1848, Bismarck's memoirs appeared in two volumes as *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, to which a third volume was added in 1921 entitled *Erinnerung and Gedanke* (originally the title for the whole work).

zu erzählen. Ich kann jedoch nur unmittelbare Feststellungen machen, nur «Geschichten erzählen». Ob sie wahr sind, ist kein Problem. Die Frage ist nur, ist es *mein* Märchen, *meine* Wahrheit?’ (ETG 10). Or, to put it another way, *meine Dichtung, meine Wahrheit*. For Jung, factual accuracy comes to be replaced by existential authenticity:

Im Grunde genommen sind mir nur die Ereignisse meines Lebens erzählenswert, bei denen die unvergängliche Welt in die vergängliche einbrach. Darum spreche ich hauptsächlich von den inneren Erlebnissen. Zu ihnen gehören meine Träume und Imaginationen. Sie bilden zugleich den Urstoff meiner wissenschaftlichen Arbeit. Sie waren wie feurig-flüssiger Basalt, aus welchem sich der zu bearbeitende Stein auskristallisiert. (ETG 11)

The antithesis in this passage between *vergänglich* and *unvergänglich* recalls one of Goethe’s maxims: ‘Sind wir ja eben deshalb da, um das Vergängliche unvergänglich zu machen’ (MuR #155; HA, XII, 512).¹² Furthermore, the image of crystallization is reminiscent of its usage in Goethe’s *Faust*, when Mephistopheles is instructed by Wagner in Part II as follows: ‘Was man an der Natur Geheimnisvolles pries, / Das wagen wir verständig zu probieren, / Und was sie sonst organisieren ließ, / Das lassen wir kristallisieren’ (lines 6857–60). One also thinks of Goethe’s description in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* of the composition of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1784/87) in terms of freezing water suddenly forming ice (DW, III, 13; HA, IX, 585).¹³

The roles played by the problem of religion and the experience of sickness and health constitute key elements in the autobiographies of both men. Goethe received a conventional religious (Protestant) education and, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, he recalled listening to theological discussions as a child in Frankfurt (DW, I, 1; HA, IX, 43). For his part, Jung, as the son of a Protestant pastor, was brought up in that same tradition (ETG 58–60) and, whilst at the Gymnasium in Basle, lunched regularly in the household of his uncle, who was the pastor of St Alban’s church in Basle (ETG 78–79). As the poem ‘Poetische Gedanken über die Höllenfahrt Jesu Christi’ (1765), written when he was sixteen, shows, Goethe’s very early poetry was religious in inspiration. Similarly, at the age of eighteen, Jung wrote his (unpublished) poem ‘Gedanken in einer Frühlingsnacht’ (1893), in which he moves from a description of a storm to theological reflections on ‘Ewig Neues, ewig Altes, / Nie sich gleich, doch stets dasselbe!’ to a conclusion that sounds like a variant on the final line of ‘Der Bräutigam’ (1824): ‘Es ist Leben, / Und das Leben, das ist Gott!’¹⁴

In one of the most famous passages of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe brings the first book to a close with an account of how, as a seven-year-old child, he built an altar to the God of Nature (DW, I, 1; HA, IX, 43–45). This episode has a direct correlation to events recounted in *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*. As a ten and eleven-year-old child, Jung had enjoyed playing with building blocks (ETG 177). Following his break with Freud in 1912, Jung apparently suffered a mental breakdown, commonly (if euphemistically) referred to as his ‘Auseinandersetzung mit dem Unbewußten’. As

¹² I am grateful to my Glasgow colleague, Professor Roger Stephenson, for our discussions on this and other maxims by Goethe in the light of Jung’s theories, as well as on related matters.

¹³ And see MuR #1258; HA, XIII, 369. For further discussion of Goethe’s use of the term ‘crystallization’, see Richard M. Meyer, ‘Studien zu Goethes Wortgebrauch’, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen*, XCIX (1896), 1–42 (pp. 11–12).

¹⁴ C. G. Jung, ‘Gedanken in einer Frühlingsnacht’, *Jung-Archiv*, ETH-Bibliothek Zurich. Goethe’s poem ends: ‘Wie es auch sei das Leben es ist gut’ (HA, I, 386).

Jung wrote, his memories of life as a child — kindling a fire in a stone-wall, sitting on a stone and playing with the notion of identity — came back to him in the form of an intensified memory (ETG 27).¹⁵ During his period of psychic turmoil, Jung tried to re-establish contact with that period of his life (ETG 177). Collecting stones from the shore of Lake Zurich by his house, Jung began constructing cottages, a castle, a church — and an altar. As Jung placed this altar inside the church, he recalled a vision that he had experienced as a young child (ETG 177–78). In that dream, he saw an underground temple containing a giant ritual phallus, which Jung called ‘ein unterirdischer und nicht zu erwähnender Gott’ (ETG 19). In the case of Goethe, his altar was built to ‘der Gott, der mit der Natur in unmittelbarer Verbindung stehe, sie als sein Werk anerkenne und liebe’ (HA, IX, 43). Likewise, through his dream, Jung in turn was initiated into ‘die Geheimnisse der Erde’ (ETG 21). Throughout the rest of his life, Jung used to derive inspiration from painting pictures or sculpting stone (ETG 178). Goethe, too, had an abiding attachment to the visual arts.¹⁶

Throughout his life, Goethe maintained a deep interest in religion.¹⁷ Of his time as a student, he wrote in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: ‘Die Kirchengeschichte war mir fast noch bekannter als die Weltgeschichte’ (DW, III, 11; HA, IX, 472). Goethe also moved for a time in Pietist circles, particularly that of Susanna Katharina von Klettenberg (1723–74). He completed a dissertation on the history of religion (DW, III, 11; HA, IX, 473) and, as a further witness to the persistence of his interest in biblical matters, he wrote about *Zwo wichtige bisher unerörterte biblische Fragen* in 1772–73 (DW, III, 12; HA, IX, 511–12). Evidence of Jung’s long-standing interest in religion may be found in the lectures and essays collected in volume 11 of his *Gesammelte Werke*.

His controversial work of 1952, *Antwort auf Hiob* (1952), which in effect put the deity onto the psychiatrist’s couch, was also a return to the basic motivating factor of the plot of *Faust* — the devil’s wager with Jehovah regarding Job’s loyalty. Given their intensely religious backgrounds, it is hardly surprising that both men were preoccupied — in the case of Jung, it seems, for a time obsessed — with the possibility of committing a sin against the Holy Ghost. Goethe was hesitant not just about the sacrament of penance but also about the Eucharist: ‘Ein [. . .] Unheil drohte mir in der Materie von dem Abendmahl’ (DW, II, 7; HA, IX, 293–94). In his autobiography, Jung records his obsession in 1887 with a terrible forbidden thought, which turned out to be the prospect of God dropping a giant stool on the roof of Basle Cathedral (ETG 42, 45).

Moreover, both Goethe and Jung were men who grappled with sickness and turned it to creative account. Just before he turned nineteen, Goethe suffered a heart complaint, aggravated by excess, from which he took over a year to recover (DW, II, 8; HA, IX, 330). When he did, he identified as the effect of convalescence a complete psychological change in himself: ‘[S]o schien ich auch nunmehr ein anderer Mensch geworden zu sein’ (HA, IX, 330). According to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, he later cured himself of his fear of heights by forcing himself to climb Strasbourg Cathedral

¹⁵ In ‘Über die Energetik der Seele’ (1928/48), Jung expanded on the psychological significance of childhood (GW, VIII, §98).

¹⁶ See W. D. Robson-Scott, *The Younger Goethe and the Visual Arts*, Cambridge, 1981.

¹⁷ For further discussion, see Helen Jane Plenderleith, ‘The Testament of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: An Enquiry into Goethe’s Mode of Secularization’ (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1991).

(DW, II, 9; HA, IX, 374). For his part, Jung underwent a similar experience on two occasions. First, as a twelve-year-old child, he suffered from fainting-fits, until he willed himself out of them: 'Daran habe ich gelernt, was eine Neurose ist' (ETG 38). Second, during the breakdown following his move away from Freud, Jung deliberately subjected himself to those psychic experiences that enabled him to engage with the Unconscious. As he put it in one of the best-known passages of his autobiography: 'Ich saß an meinem Schreibtisch und überdachte noch einmal meine Befürchtungen, dann ließ ich mich fallen' (ETG 182).

There are, however, at least two major reservations to be made about the claim for an essential similarity between *Erinnerungen*, *Träume*, *Gedanken* and *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. First, in his 'Vorwort', Goethe defined 'die Hauptaufgabe der Biographie' in the following terms:

[D]en Menschen in seinen Zeitverhältnissen darzustellen, und zu zeigen, inwiefern ihm das Ganze widerstrebt, inwiefern es ihn begünstigt, wie er sich eine Welt- und Menschenansicht daraus gebildet, und wie er sie, wenn er Künstler, Dichter, Schriftsteller ist, wieder nach außen abgespiegelt. (HA, IX, 9)

In other words, it is the reciprocal relationship between the subject and the world that, for Goethe, constitutes the material of (auto)biography. And, in his writings on natural science, Goethe often talked in terms of both 'inner' and 'outer' realms, whilst emphasizing the importance of both.¹⁸

This notion of *Wechselwirkung* between self and world is, generally speaking, absent from Jung's approach, where it tends to be replaced by an inner dialectic between consciousness and the Unconscious. Hence Jung's comments on such major intellectual influences as Pierre Janet (1859–1947), Théodore Flournoy (1854–1920), and Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939), to say nothing of his participation in the early years of the psychoanalytic movement, are extremely sketchy. Furthermore, the retreat from the the outer to the inner announced in the prologue to *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken* is not at all Goethean:

Die äußeren Umstände können die inneren nicht ersetzen. Darum ist mein Leben arm an äußeren Ereignissen. Ich kann nicht viel davon erzählen; denn es käme mir leer oder wesenlos vor. Ich kann mich nur aus den inneren Geschehnissen verstehen. (ETG 12)

Yet the move from outer to inner is not quite as simple as it may appear. In a later chapter, Jung claimed that inner images also relate to the outer world:

Die inneren Bilder verhindern, daß ich mich in der persönlichen Rückschau verliere. Es gibt viele alte Menschen, die sich in der Erinnerung an äußere Ereignisse verstricken. Sie bleiben darin verhaftet, während die Rückschau, wenn sie reflektiert und in Bilder übersetzt ist, ein «reculer pour mieux sauter» bedeutet. Ich versuche, die Linie zu sehen, die durch mein Leben in die Welt geführt hat und aus der Welt wiederum herausführt. (ETG 323)

Here, the complex chiasmic parallelism of the final sentence is, both rhetorically and conceptually, reminiscent of Goethe. As Goethe wrote in 'Bedeutendes Fördernis durch ein einziges geistreiches Wort' (1823): 'Der Mensch kennt nur sich selbst, insofern er die Welt kennt, die er nur in sich und sich nur in ihr gewahr wird'

¹⁸ See R. H. Stephenson, *Goethe's Conception of Knowledge and Science*, Edinburgh, 1995, pp. 65–66.

(HA, XIII, 38). And because, as Jung argued at length, such images are archetypal — the dynamic structures of a collective (i.e., supra-individual) psyche — the conventional distinction between outer and inner, that Goethe so repeatedly attacks, collapses. Even if, for Jung, the inner world is only psychic, he regarded it as none the less objective for that. In his definition of the life-long psychological process of individuation in ‘Theoretische Überlegungen zum Wesen des Unbewußten’ (1946/1954), Jung emphasized: ‘Individuation schließt die Welt nicht aus, sondern ein’ (GW, VIII, §432).

The second reservation has to do with how writing (auto)biography leads to reflection on its material, in other words, on the task of living itself. Hence, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe made the following observation: ‘Es sind wenig Biographien, welche einen reinen, ruhigen, steten Fortschritt des Individuums darstellen können. Unser Leben ist, wie das Ganze in dem wir enthalten sind, auf eine unbegreifliche Weise aus Freiheit und Notwendigkeit zusammengesetzt’ (DW, III, 11; HA, IX, 478). Moreover, for Goethe, the characteristics of Art can also be applied to human living — hence the almost soteriological significance that accrues to the aesthetic. By contrast, Jung was never clear about the role of the aesthetic, at times insisting — to the long-standing detriment of Analytical Psychology — on an opposition between Life and Art.

Yet however biased and problematic it may be, *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken* remains a useful tool in understanding how Jung saw the relationship between his analytical psychological project and Goethe. And what Jung says in a late letter (25 April 1955) to Karl Theens of Goethe’s reading of the *Chymische Hochzeit* (1616), written by Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654) and attributed to Christian Rosencreutz, is eminently true of Jung’s own reading of Goethe:

So geht es übrigens häufig gerade mit den Büchern oder Eindrücken, welche, die Decke des Bewußtseins durchdringend, in die Tiefe des seelischen Untergrunds hinabsinken und erst viel später in verwandelter Gestalt an die Oberfläche zurückkehren, um Kunde von ihrer langandauernden Nachwirkung zu geben. (B, II, 481–82)

This is particularly applicable to his reading of *Faust*.

II

As Jung told Max Rychner (1897–1965), an editor of the *West-Östlicher Divan*, in a letter of 28 February 1932, he first read *Faust* when he was fifteen years old (B, I, 121). In the chapter in his autobiography on his school years, Jung recalls how his mother — who, according to Jung, had a split personality — encouraged him to read *Faust* (ETG 65).¹⁹ Jung’s mother, if we are to believe his autobiography, certainly lacked the *Frohnatur* that Goethe claimed to have inherited from his mother, although she might

¹⁹ Of his mother, Jung wrote: ‘Meine Eltern schliefen getrennt. Ich schlief im Zimmer des Vaters. Aus der Tür zum Zimmer der Mutter kamen beängstigende Einflüsse. Nachts war die Mutter unheimlich und geheimnisvoll. [. . .] Es bestand ein beträchtlicher Unterschied zwischen den beiden Persönlichkeiten in meiner Mutter. So kam es, daß ich als Kind oft Angstträume von ihr hatte. Tags war sie eine liebende Mutter, aber nachts erschien sie mir unheimlich. Sie war dann wie eine Seherin, die zugleich ein seltsames Tier ist, wie eine Priesterin in einer Bärenhöhle. Archaisch und ruchlos. Ruchlos wie die Wahrheit und die Natur. Dann war sie die Verkörperung dessen, was ich als «natural mind» bezeichnet habe’ (ETG 24, 56).

have been the source for Jung's *Lust zu fabulieren*. In his autobiography, Jung claims that his first reading concentrated on one particular aspect of the drama of *Faust*, namely the problem of Evil:

Endlich ein Mensch, dachte ich, der den Teufel ernst nimmt und sogar einen Blutpakt abschließt mit dem Widersacher, der die Macht hat, Gottes Absicht, eine vollkommene Welt zu schaffen, zu durchkreuzen. — [. . .] Endlich hatte ich die Bestätigung gefunden, daß es doch Menschen gab oder gegeben hatte, welche das Böse und dessen weltumspannende Macht sahen und noch mehr, nämlich die geheimnisvolle Rolle, welche es in der Erlösung der Menschen aus Dunkelheit und Leiden spielt. Insoweit wurde mir Goethe zum Propheten. (ETG 65–66)

Yet Jung was, so he tells us, highly critical of the end of *Faust II*:

[I]ch konnte es [Goethe] nicht verzeihen, daß er Mephisto mit einer bloßen Spielerei, mit einem tour de passe-passe, im Handkehrum erledigte. Das war mir zu theologisch, zu leichtsinnig und unverantwortlich. Ich bedauerte es aufs tiefste, daß auch Goethe der — oh so trügerischen — Verharmlosung des Bösen zum Opfer gefallen war. (ETG 66)

Here, Jung's complaint displays one of the chief characteristics of his reception of Goethe: his neglect of the literary or aesthetic aspect of the text.²⁰ Indeed, Jung tended to see Goethe purely in his own, analytical psychological terms, although there are several respects in which Jung may have been far closer to Goethe than he apparently realized.

From Jung's first reading of *Faust*, however, one aspect would remain central to his various interpretations of it throughout his life. Just as the text had been recommended to him by his demonic mother, so the most important aspect of the drama was Mephisto — and the Mothers:

Das eigentliche Problem sah ich bei Mephisto, dessen Gestalt mir haften blieb und von dem ich unklar eine Beziehung zum Muttermysterium ahnte. Auf alle Fälle blieben mir Mephisto und die große Einweihung am Schluß als ein wunderbares und geheimnisvolles Erlebnis am Rande meiner Bewußtseinswelt. (ETG 65–66)

Throughout the rest of *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*, Jung keeps on returning to *Faust* in general and the Mothers scene in particular. First, relating one of his childhood visions, Jung remarks: 'Es herrschte darum eine stillschweigende Verlegenheit, wie Goethe von den "Müttern" sagt: "Von ihnen sprechen ist Verlegenheit"' (ETG 87; cf. *Faust II*, line 6215). Second, more generally, referring to the fantasies encountered during his mental breakdown in 1912 to 1916, Jung spoke of his time in the 'Zauberberg' (ETG 210; cf. *Faust I*, line 3868). Third, discussing a sequence of visionary experiences following a heart attack in 1944, Jung commented: 'All diese Erlebnisse waren herrlich, und ich war Nacht für Nacht in lauterster Seligkeit getaucht, "umschwebt von Bildern aller Kreatur"' (ETG 298; cf. *Faust II*, line 6289). Finally, in his reminiscences of the sinologist Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930), Jung wrote of his friend's psychology:

²⁰ Throughout his writings on *Faust*, Jung persistently opposes the aesthetic to the 'psychological' or 'human' value of the text, as, for example, in *Paracelsus als geistige Erscheinung* (1942): 'Vielleicht gibt man mir recht, wenn ich sage, daß Goethes *Faust*, Zweiter Teil, ein zweifelhaftes ästhetisches, in ganz anderem Maße hingegen ein menschliches Problem sei: eine Präokkupation, welche den Dichter bis ins höchste Alter begleitete. Es war die alchemistische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Unbewußten, der «labor Sophiae» des Paracelsus' (GW, XIII, §210).

Wenn ich aber versuchte, an die aktuellen Probleme seines inneren Konfliktes zu rühren, spürte ich sofort ein Zögern und ein sich innerlich Verschließen, weil es ihm ans Blut ging [. . .]. Es ist ein "Unbetretenes, nicht zu Betretendes", das man nicht forcieren kann und soll, ein Schicksal, das menschlichen Eingriff nicht erträgt. (ETG 384; cf. line 6224)

Elsewhere in *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*, Jung highlights the psychological significance of the secret. And we might say that in terms of his importance for Jung, Goethe constitutes a kind of 'offenbares Geheimnis', and *Faust* became the text in terms of which he interpreted not just his own psychological development but that of mankind in general.

In short, the sense of personal *Betroffenheit* when Jung read *Faust* in 1893, as well as its wider significance for him, is well summarized in the following remark:

Meine inneren Gegensätze erschienen hier dramatisiert. Goethe hatte gewissermaßen eine Grundzeichnung und ein Schema meiner eigenen Konflikte und Lösungen gegeben. Die Zweiteilung Faust-Mephisto zog sich mir in einem einzigen Menschen zusammen, und der war ich. (ETG 239)

As a glance at the references to Goethe as they are listed in the index volume to the *Gesammelte Werke* (GW xx) shows, it is clear that Jung's main interest is in *Faust*, rather than Goethe's biography. And on closer examination, Jung's immersion in Goethe's works in general and *Faust* in particular proves to be extremely deep, and Goethean thought can be seen to inform his psychology in many respects that have been hitherto unappreciated. Indeed, his references to Goethe are so ubiquitous that it is extremely difficult to treat them systematically.

For example, Jung's paper 'Zur Psychologie des Kindarchetypus' (1940) provides two instances of his complex use of Goethean language. There is, surely, an allusion to the words of the Proktofantasmist of the first *Walpurgisnacht* when Jung writes: 'Der wissenschaftliche Intellekt verfällt [. . .] immer wieder einmal in aufklärerische Allüren und hofft mit dem Spuk endlich aufzuräumen' (GW, IX/i, §267; cf. GW, VIII, §309, §710; GW, XI, §750; cf. *Faust I*, lines 4159–61). And later in the same essay, Jung's words carry a distinct echo of the Goethean (and Schillerian) distinction between 'Gehalt' and 'Stoff' when he writes:

Phantasien sind im ärztlichen Gebiet *reale* Dinge, mit denen der Psychotherapeut ernsthaft zu rechnen hat. Er kann daher jenen primitiven Phantasmata, welche ihren Gehalt eben um seiner Wirklichkeit willen sogar in die äußere Welt projizieren, nicht alle Berechtigung aberkennen. Schließlich ist ja auch der menschliche Körper aus dem Stoffe der Welt gemacht, und an solchem Stoffe werden die Phantasien offenbar; ja, ohne diesen sind sie überhaupt unerfahrbar. (GW, XVII, §290)

III

Jung's use of Goethe in his early works is largely, although not exclusively, peripheral, and for reasons of space I shall not discuss it here. But three texts in particular represent a clear break with Freudian analysis and, at the same time, mark a new step in Jung's

reception of Goethe. *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1911/12),²¹ 'Neue Bahnen der Psychologie' (1912),²² and 'La Structure de l'inconscient' (1916),²³ are central for understanding Jung's thought in the context of his own intellectual development and of the history of psychoanalysis. Jung now saw *Faust* as particularly open to interpretation from the perspective of Analytical Psychology. In 'Neue Bahnen der Psychologie', he wrote: 'Goethe hat uns in *Faust*, 1. Teil, gezeigt, was das Annehmen des Triebes bedeutet, und im 2. Teil, was das Annehmen des Ich und seines unheimlichen Hintergrundes bedeutet' (GW, vii, §43).²⁴ In other words, Part I is the Freudian part, dealing with the theory of the drives; whereas Part II is the Jungian part, dealing with the 'uncanny background' to the ego.

In *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, Jung mentions Goethe's *Faust* on no less than twenty-one occasions. Indeed, one of Jung's commentators, John Kerr, has summed up the central concept of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* with reference to *Faust* as follows: 'The central motif was clearly Faustian: casting aside the constraints of Christianity, Jung meant to make a descent into the depths of the soul, there to find the roots of Man's being in the symbols of the libido which had been handed down from ancient times, and so to find redemption despite his own genial psychoanalytic pact with the devil'.²⁵ Allusions and references to the text are interwoven with Jung's interpretations of Miss Frank Miller's fantasies and with the general theory that he elaborates about the nature of the psyche. Looking back on the text in 1950, Jung himself talked of 'die Labyrinth symbolistischer Parallelen', to which the symptomology of the case was said to form the Ariadne's thread (WSL 10).²⁶ Equally, we can find a Goethean path through the thicket of Jung's text by following its references to *Faust*.

Having embarked on the commentary of a poem by Miss Miller (WSL 57), Jung does not miss the opportunity to bring in not just the biblical *Book of Job* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* but also the 'Prolog im Himmel' of *Faust I* (WSL 69; cf. lines 312–14).²⁷ Shortly afterwards, his analysis of Miller's poem 'The moth to the sun' leads him to compare it with part of Faust's description of the evening when walking with Wagner in the scene 'Vor dem Tor' (WSL 85–86; cf. lines 1070–77, 1084–91). Jung's commentary on these lines begins by reminding us of Faust's words when preparing to drink the poison: 'Ja, kehre nur der holden Erdensonne/Entschlossen deinen Rücken zu!' (lines 708–09). In these lines, Jung finds a religious significance, and he approves

²¹ First published in the *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, III (1911) and IV (1912); published as a separate work in 1912; re-published in revised form in 1925 and 1938; and completely re-worked and published under the new title *Symbole der Wandlung* in 1952 (GW, v). References here are to the recent reprint of the original text of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*.

²² Later revised in 1917 as *Die Psychologie des unbewußten Prozesse*; and in 1943 and 1966 as *Über die Psychologie des Unbewußten*.

²³ Later revised and expanded in 1928 and 1966 as *Die Beziehungen zwischen dem Ich und dem Unbewußten*. 'La Structure de l'inconscient' was first published in *Archives de psychologie*, XVI, no. 2 (December, 1916), 152–79.

²⁴ In this respect, Jung is echoing Goethe's own statements in his conversations with Eckermann of 17 February 1831 ('Der erste Teil ist fast ganz subjektiv; [. . .]. Im zweiten Teile aber ist fast gar nichts Subjektives') and of 21 February 1831 (when he contrasted the 'Walpurgisnacht' of Part I with the 'Klassische Walpurgisnacht' of Part II) (E 424, 430).

²⁵ John Kerr, *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein*, London, 1994, p. 326.

²⁶ Jung's use of the phrase 'Leitfaden' recalls one of the dominant metaphors of eighteenth-century philosophy, found in Herder, Kant, and Goethe.

²⁷ These references are part of Jung's technique of amplification, which he described in terms of analysis and synthesis (GW, vii, §122). Jung claimed that this technique was derived from the alchemical procedure of *amplificatio* (GW, xii, §403), but it also has much in common with an age-old ancient rhetorical technique (see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*, 2 vols, Munich, 1960, I, 220–26). In his autobiography, Jung emphasized the necessity of the method of *amplificatio* (ETG 313).

of Faust's distrustful stance: '[D]ie Verehrung der Naturschönheit führt den mittelalterlichen Christen auf heidnische Gedanken, die in derselben antagonistischen Bereitschaft neben seiner bewußten Religion liegen, wie einst der Mithraismus dem Christentume bedrohliche Konkurrenz machte' (WSL 87). Broadening his focus, however, Jung sees Faust's dilemma, both psychologically and culturally speaking, as typical:

Die Sehnsucht Fausts wurde sein Verderben. Die *Sehnsucht nach dem Jenseitigen* hatte ihn konsequenterweise zum Lebensüberdruß geführt, und er stand am Rande des Selbstmordes. Die *Sehnsucht nach der Schönheit des Diesseits* führte ihn von neuem ins Verderben, in Zweifel und Schmerz, bis zum tragischen Tode Margaretens. Sein Fehler war, daß er nach beiden Seiten hemmungslos dem Drange der Libido folgte, als ein Mensch von großer Leidenschaft. (WSL 87)

In this respect, Faust's dilemma is the one, single, universal dilemma of Analytical Psychology. How can one maintain a balance between the drive inwards, towards the subject, away from the world, towards the 'other side' (or, in other words, introversion) and the drive outwards, towards the object, away from the self, towards the beauty of the here-and-now (or, in other words, extraversion)? To maintain a reciprocal relationship between the self and the world is, as Goethe knew, no easy matter: according to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, the early struggle to maintain it led to the psychological state in which he wrote *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (DW, III, 12; HA, IX, 540–41). In his revised version of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* in 1952, Jung was to pose the same problem in the following, almost Nietzschean, terms:

Wer die Erde liebt und deren Pracht und das "dunkle Reich" darob vergißt oder gar damit ersetzt (was die Regel bildet), der hat den "Geist" zum Feinde, und wer die Erde flieht, um in die "ewigen Arme" zu fallen, dem ist das Leben feind. (GW, v, §615)

According to Jung, the cultural and psychological significance of Goethe's *Faust* lies in its recapitulation of a problem as fundamental to the modern world as that of Oedipus was for the Hellenic world, whilst not being identical with it (an implicit criticism of Freud) (WSL 89). That problem is, put quite simply, this: 'Was soll der Ausweg sein, zwischen der Scylla der Weltverneinung und der Charybdis der Weltbejahung?' (WSL 89). Just as the problem is posed with reference to *Faust*, so the answer turns out to be formulated in Faustian terms.

In the Introduction to Part Two of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, Jung points out that the solution often lies through something apparently sexual ('das phallische Symbole der Libido' [WSL 126]).²⁸ The key that Mephistopheles gives Faust in the Mothers scene is, in this respect, also typical: 'Das ist "urtümliche" Libidosymbolik, welche zeigt, wie unmittelbar die Beziehung zwischen phallischer Libido und Licht

²⁸ As emerged in the discussion following this paper, Jung views sexuality itself as a metaphor for creativity. Cf. Schiller's distich 'An den Dichter' and Goethe's poem 'Kenner und Künstler'.

ist' (WSL 220).²⁹ Mephistopheles provides Faust with the phallic key that enables him to gain access to the realm of the Mothers, which is beyond Time and Space.³⁰ At the end of Chapter Four in Part Two, over almost two pages Jung quotes extensively from the 'Finstere Galerie' scene in Act I of *Faust II*. Jung introduces these passages, which are presented with almost no commentary, by means of the following brief explanation:

Der Mythos vom Helden aber ist, wie uns scheinen will, der Mythos unseres eigenen leidenden Unbewußten, das jene ungestillte und selten stillbare Sehnsucht nach allen tiefsten Quellen seines eignen Seins, nach dem Leibe der Mutter und in ihm nach der Gemeinschaft mit dem unendlichen Leben in den unzähligen Formen des Daseins hat. Ich muß hier das Wort dem Meister lassen, der die tiefsten Wurzeln faustischer Sehnsucht geahnt hat. (WSL 206)

Then the passages follow (lines 6212–16, 6218–27, 6239–48, 6259, 6263–64, 6275–80, 6283–93).

In his record of his conversation with Goethe of 10 January 1830, Eckermann recalls how '[Goethe] hüllte sich in Geheimnisse, indem er mich mit großen Augen anblickte und mir die Worte wiederholte: Die Mütter! Mütter! — 's klingt so wunderbar' (E 359). It does not require an excess of effort to imagine Jung doing much the same thing in his own lectures and seminars. Studying the manuscript of the Mothers scene, Eckermann came to the conclusion that the Mothers represented 'das schaffende und erhaltende Prinzip' (p. 360) and, on the evidence available, this seems close to how Jung understood the scene. Or, as Jung had put it as early as 23 June 1911 in a letter to Freud in which he quoted *Faust*:

Die unbewußte Phantasie ist eine unglaubliche Hexenküche:

“Gestaltung, Umgestaltung,
Des ewigen Sinnes ewige Unterhaltung,
Umschwebt von Bildern aller Kreatur
Sie sehn dich nicht, denn Schemen sehn sie nur.”

Hier ist die Gebärmutter des Geistes, wie der Herr Urgroßvater richtig erkannt hat.³¹

On the basis of these passages from *Faust*, Jung develops his model of the Unconscious, going on to argue that such desire for the Mother, and its apparently (but only apparently) incestuous implications, forms the basis of all heroic legends (WSL 222–23). As Jung is at pains to emphasize, however, the Mother is not the biological

²⁹ Humorously, Freud alluded to this episode in *Faust* in his letter of 2 June 1932 to Stefan Zweig, in which he criticized Joseph Breuer's failure to draw the psychoanalytic conclusion during his treatment of 'Anna O.' (= Bertha Pappenheim): 'Was bei Breuers Patientin wirklich vorfiel, war ich imstande, später lange nach unserem Bruch zu erraten, als mir plötzlich eine Mitteilung von Breuer einfiel, die er mir einmal vor der Zeit unserer gemeinsamen Arbeit in anderem Zusammenhang gemacht und nie mehr wiederholt hatte. Am Abend des Tages nachdem alle ihre Symptome bewältigt waren, wurde er wieder zu ihr gerufen, fand sie verworren, sich in Unterleibskrämpfen windend. Auf die Frage, was mit ihr sei, gab sie zur Antwort: Jetzt kommt das Kind, das ich von Dr. B. habe. In diesem Moment hatte er den Schlüssel in der Hand, der den Weg zu den Müttern geöffnet hätte, aber er ließ ihn fallen' (*Briefe 1873–1939*, pp. 427–28).

³⁰ In her contribution to the discussion of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society on 8 November 1911, following papers by Wilhelm Stekel and Josef Reinhold, Sabina Spielrein reportedly made the following point: 'Das Unbewußte entkleidet das Ereignis des Gegenwärtigen und verwandelt es in eines, der nicht an irgendeine bestimmte Zeit geknüpft ist (vgl. die Mütter, bei denen alle Grenzen und Zeiten miteinander verschmolzen sind.)' (*Protokolle der Wiener Psychoanalytischen Vereinigung*, edited by Herman Nunberg and Ernst Federn, 4 vols, Frankfurt am Main, 1976–81, III, 291).

³¹ Freud/Jung, *Briefwechsel*, pp. 475–76.

mother, but an archetypal one or, as he puts it, ‘das “große, urtümliche Bild” der Mutter, die uns erstmals einzige Welt bedeutete und nachmals zum Symbol von aller Welt wurde’ (WSL 248). Jung explicitly compares this notion of the Mother with the Mothers in *Faust*: ‘Von den Müttern sagt ja Goethe: Sie sind “umschwebt von Bildern aller Kreatur”’ (WSL 248; cf. *Faust II*, line 6289).

By contrast, for Freud, the Unconscious contains only repressed feelings, infantile fixations, and primitive, archaic urges, whereas Jung claims that the Unconscious is a repository of libidinal (i.e., psychic) energy, structured by the archetypes and put at Man’s disposal through the mechanism of regression. And if, for Freud, regression was essentially something negative and infantile, then for Jung, it was yet a means of psychic development and renewal:

Darum, wenn irgendein großes Werk zu tun ist, vor dem der schwache Mensch, an seiner Kraft verzweifelnd, zurückweicht, dann strömt seine Libido zu jenem Quellpunkt zurück — und das ist jener gefährliche Augenblick, in dem die Entscheidung fällt zwischen Vernichtung und neuem Leben. (WSL 285)

These ideas become clearer if we compare them with Schillerian formulations of the aesthetics worked out in collaboration with Goethe. According to Schiller, it is the task of Art to open up ‘living springs’ or ‘Quellen [. . .], die sich bei aller politischen Verderbnis rein und lauter erhalten’ (*Ästhetische Erziehung*, Letter IX.1). Such springs of vitality could be unleashed, Schiller believed, by Art: ‘Dieses Werkzeug ist die schöne Kunst, diese Quellen öffnen sich in ihren unsterblichen Mustern’ (Letter IX.2). For, Schiller claims, the aesthetic, by giving form to outer life, opens up the inner life: ‘[I]n der Form, die sie dem äußern Leben gibt, [eröffnet ästhetische Kultur] schon das innere’ (Letter XXIII.8).³²

So the central message of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* could easily and accurately be summarized by the injunction from Goethe’s ‘Selige Sehnsucht’: ‘Stirb und werde!’ (HA, II, 19). Moreover, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* contains hints of another possible reading that takes us beyond the stated, and melancholic, conclusion of the final pages of the book (that ‘[d]ie einzige, die uns wirklich versteht, ist die Mutter’ [WSL 409]). In his chapter on the unconscious origin of the hero, Jung remarks, echoing Faust’s words that ‘[d]em Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm’: ‘Leer ist diese Welt nur dem, der es nicht versteht, seine Libido auf die Dinge zu lenken und sie für ihn lebendig und schön zu machen’ (WSL 176; cf. *Faust II*, line 11446). Indeed, seen in (these insinuated) terms of aesthetics, the message of the entire book is the importance of imagination (or, as Jung terms it, phantasy). The role of phantasy or imagination in Man’s psychic economy was to remain a central concern of Jung’s psychological theories, where it was developed in later works with specific reference to Goethe.

IV

Faust played an important part, albeit in a more disguised and, as I shall suggest, personal manner, in the third of Jung’s foundational texts, ‘La Structure de

³² For further discussion, see Paul Bishop, ‘Über die Rolle des Ästhetischen in der Tiefenpsychologie: Zur Schillerrezeption in der analytischen Psychologie C. G. Jungs’, *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, xlii (1998), 358–400.

l'inconscient'. In that work, Jung invoked *Faust* in connection with the strategy — which he associates with Alfred Adler, who sees the Unconscious in terms of the power drive, and then Freud, who sees it in terms of infantile sexuality — of cleaving to the persona and abandoning the Unconscious. Quoting Faust's words of resignation before the resolution of the wager in the Midnight Scene of Part II, Act 5 (which recalls the opening Night Scene of Part I), Jung wrote: 'Si l'on veut continuer à vivre raisonnablement, il faut reconstituer aussi bien qu'on le peut ce segment de la psyché collective qu'on nomme la persona, et abandonner tranquillement l'analyse, en oubliant si possible qu'on possède un inconscient' (p. 166; GW, VII, §475; cf. *Faust II*, lines 11441–52). Yet, Jung continued, such a strategy was bound to fail. For the flow of the libido, as the source of all psychic elements, cannot be arrested: 'Ce serait donc une méprise de croire qu'on puisse par une théorie ou une méthode pour ainsi dire magique arracher définitivement la Libido à l'inconscient et, dans une certaine mesure, se débarrasser ainsi de lui' (p. 167; GW, VII, §476). At this point, Jung quoted Faust's earlier lines from the same scene when, of all the four grey women, the most terrifying, 'Sorge', enters the palace (lines 11410–27). At first sight, it looks as if these quotations are merely decorative; however, there is evidence to suggest that they hint at Jung's own experiences of an 'Auseinandersetzung mit dem Unbewußten' in 1916.

In *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*, Jung gives an account of the background to the *Septem Sermones ad mortuos*, a text he circulated privately but, in public, virtually suppressed. To begin with, Jung described the Sermons as 'ein Fragment aus weitläufigen Zusammenhängen' (B, I, 55–56), but later he tried to reject them as 'eine von mir vor beinahe vierzig Jahren begangene Jugendsünde' (GW, XVIII/ii, §1501). In the *Septem Sermones*, Jung strikes a Gnostic pose, which may well, in one respect, have been indebted to Goethe. In the Second and Third Sermons, the Dead speak of a figure called Abraxas. But Jung could well have come across Abraxas in the *West-Östlicher Divan*, where he is mentioned twice.³³ Behind the Gnostic vocabulary and decidedly antiquated style of the text, some of Jung's key notions about the Unconscious receive elliptical articulation. In Goethe's drama, Faust, in the midst of his search successively for Gretchen, Helena, and then the Eternal Feminine, is told by Mephistopheles about the realm of the Mothers. Behind the richly various objects of the phenomenal world, Mephisto tells Faust, he will find Nothing (lines 6239–48). Faust understands what Mephistopheles is telling him: 'Du sendest mich ins Leere, / Damit ich dort so Kunst als Kraft vermehre' (lines 6251–52). Indeed, he tells Mephisto: 'In deinem Nichts hoff ich das All zu finden' (line 6256). As we have seen, Jung argues for a startlingly different view of the Unconscious from the Freudian conception. For Jung, the absence of consciousness in the Nothing of the Unconscious turns out to be full of archetypal plenitude. Similarly, in the *Septem Sermones ad mortuos*, the Pleroma (Jung's Gnostic term for the Collective Unconscious) is described as both everything and nothing: 'Das Nichts ist dasselbe wie die Fülle. In der unendlichkeit ist voll so gut wie leer. Das Nichts ist leer und voll. [. . .] Das Nichts oder die Fülle nennen wir das PLEROMA' (ETG 389). Jung's comments about the Pleroma are analogous to Schiller's remarks about the aesthetic state in the *Ästhetische Briefe* (1795). There,

³³ I am grateful to Professor Ritchie Robertson for pointing out this possible source to me on an earlier occasion.

Schiller described Man in the aesthetic state as 'Null' (Letter XXI.4), a state of infinite potential.

Over and above the intellectual and intertextual debt to Goethe, however, the genesis of the text (as it is recorded in *Erinnerungen, Träume, Gedanken*) finds a striking analogy in the episode from the final act of *Faust II* mentioned above. According to his autobiography, in 1916 Jung began to feel 'einen Drang zur Gestaltung' (ETG 193). He recalls the occult phenomena which preceded the visionary state in which the text was completed:

Es begann damit, daß eine Unruhe in mir war, aber ich wußte nicht, was sie bedeutete, oder was «man» von mir wollte. Es war eine seltsam geladene Atmosphäre um mich herum, und ich hatte das Gefühl, als sei die Luft erfüllt von gespenstischen Entitäten. Dann fing es an, im Hause zu spuken [. . .]. Die Luft war dick, sage ich Ihnen! Da wußte ich: Jetzt muß etwas geschehen. Das ganze Haus war angefüllt wie von einer Volksmenge, dicht voll von Geistern. Sie standen bis unter die Tür, und man hatte das Gefühl, kaum atmen zu können. Natürlich brannte in mir die Frage: "Um Gottes willen, was ist denn das?" Da riefen sie laut im Chor: "Wir kommen zurück von Jerusalem, wo wir nicht fanden, was wir suchten". Diese Worte entsprechen den ersten Zeilen der "Septem Sermones ad Mortuos". (ETG 194)

Bearing in mind this background, Jung's quotation from *Faust* at such a significant point in 'La Structure de l'inconscient' seems anything but arbitrary. Just before 'Sorge' enters, Faust cries: 'Nun ist die Luft von solchem Spuk so voll, | Daß niemand weiß, wie er ihn meiden soll' (lines 11410–11). Far from being a merely casual reference to Goethe, the quotation functions as a key intertext. Via a central work of his cultural heritage, Jung's own personal experiences and the genesis of one of his texts are linked with his doctrine of the psyche, as that had been explicated with reference to *Faust*.³⁴

V

In his autobiography, Jung highlighted an important respect in which, from his retrospective viewpoint, Goethe had become of immense significance to him. This was their common interest in alchemy. In his letter to Karl Kerényi (1897–1973) of 18 January 1941, Jung had already suggested that the influence of esoteric sources on Goethe's work had been, at least in part, an unconscious one: 'Ich glaube nämlich, daß es Goethe selber nicht bewußt war, welche tiefsten Anregungen er durch die Alchemie empfangen hat' (B, 1, 365). Nevertheless, as far as Jung was concerned, Goethe's interest in alchemy marked what he regarded as a major affinity between them: 'In meiner Beschäftigung mit der Alchemie sehe ich meine innere Beziehung zu Goethe' (ETG 209). So when, in his introduction to Suzuki's introductory work on Zen Buddhism, Jung asked: 'Wer weiß von den tiefsten Beweggründen zum

³⁴ According to Richard Noll, another text, purportedly written by Jung in 1916, also makes reference to Goethe. At the end of his 'Founding Address' to the Psychological Club in Zurich, the speaker cited Analytical Psychology as fulfilling a mission first adumbrated by Goethe in *Die Geheimnisse* (*The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement*, Princeton, NJ, 1994, pp. 250–54). When Jung mentioned the text in 1921, his only comment on it was a short footnote in *Psychologische Typen* (GW, VI, §312, n. 26). And in 1928, Jung quoted the lines about 'Überwindung' from the poem (GW, VII, §380).

“Hauptgeschäft”, wie Goethe den *Faust* nannte [. . .]?” (GW, XI, §905), the question was, to put it mildly, rhetorical.

Whereas, in conversation with Eckermann on 6 May 1827, Goethe denied that there was any central idea in *Faust* (E 590), he had earlier, in a conversation with Luden in 1806, declared that “[e]in höheres Interesse hat doch der Faust”.³⁵ For Jung, the central organizing idea of Goethe’s massive drama was the alchemical process of transformation. In ‘Traumsymbole des Individuationsprozesses’ (1935), Jung articulated the basic premise of his reading of *Faust*, calling it ‘ein alchemistisches Drama von Anfang bis Ende, wenschon der Gebildete heutzutage dies auch nur dämmerhaft ahnt’ (GW, XII, §85). In that work, Jung concentrated on the so-called Cabiri scene in the ‘Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers’ section of the Classical Walpurgisnacht. The Cabiri were a popular subject of mythological investigation in Goethe’s time, and were discussed by at least two authors whom Jung had also read. First, Schelling regarded the Cabiri as a sequence of divinities of ascending importance, culminating in Zeus. He offered this interpretation in *Über die Gottheiten der Samothrace* (1815), to which Goethe referred twice in connection with the ‘Klassische Walpurgisnacht’ in his conversation with Eckermann (E 424, 430). Jung also owned a copy of this work. Second, Friedrich Creuzer (1771–1858) emphasized the numerological symbolism of the Cabiri in his *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker* (1811), and this is reflected by Goethe in the dialogue between the Nereids, Tritons, Sirens, and the Cabiri (lines 8186–201). For his part, Jung read Creuzer’s work in 1909 during his move away from Freudian psychoanalysis. Indeed Creuzer was an important influence on many of Jung’s modernist contemporaries.³⁶

Even the most enthusiastic supporters of Jung would find it hard to deny the impression of arbitrariness in his reading of *Faust*. In his ‘Epilog’ to *Psychologie und Alchemie*, where he pursued his alchemical interpretation, he implicitly acknowledged a lack of coherence to this reading but, characteristically, implied this was rather a failure of the text under analysis! Nevertheless, Jung’s approach can again be seen to be helpful in emphasizing both the diachronic and synchronic aspects of Goethe’s text. Seen historically, Jung argued, the alchemical tradition had reached in *Faust* ‘eine letzte Höhe und damit den historischen Wendepunkt’ (GW, XII, §558). In his ‘Epilog’, Jung concentrated on the aftermath of the Mothers scene: Faust’s conjuration of the figures of Paris and Helena, to which he had earlier referred in 1921 as a symbol of immense psychological significance (GW, VI, §188).

Faust’s intervention to wrest Helena from Paris fails and, by breaking the alchemical precept that the adept must not interfere with what happens in the retort, he explodes the vision and brings Act I to an end in darkness and tumult. Traditionally, the alchemical *coniunctio* is followed by the birth of the ‘divine child’ or *puer aeternus*, a symbolic representation of the *lapis philosophorum*. However, Jung observed that all the rejuvenation figures in *Faust II* meet an unhappy and violent end, and he went on to argue that the moment of redemption itself is postponed until after death and projected

³⁵ See *Goethes Gespräche: Eine Sammlung zeitgenössischer Berichte aus seinem Umgang auf Grund der Ausgabe und des Nachlasses von Flodoard Freiherrn von Biedermann*, edited by Wolfgang Herwig, 4 vols, Zurich and Stuttgart, 1965–72, II, 98–99.

³⁶ For further discussion, see Leon Surette, *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, and the Occult*, Montreal, 1993.

into the future. Shrewdly, Jung commented that 'Faustens Tod ist eine zeitgeschichtlich bedingte Notwendigkeit, aber keine genügende Antwort' (GW, XII, §559). Jung claimed not only that Faust's 'superhuman' behaviour with regard to Philemon and Baucis exemplified the condition of inflation, but that his death in Part II, which postpones the *coniunctio* and subsequent rebirth and transformation until the afterlife, had left the psychic problem of consciousness and the Unconscious unsolved (GW, XII, §559). Jung also added: 'Hier blieb ein Problem hängen, das, wie bekannt, Nietzsche im "Zarathustra" wieder aufnahm: nämlich die Wandlung zum Übermenschen' (GW, XII, §559). Yet Nietzsche's solution of the Superman was perceived by Jung to be equally unsatisfactory. In fact, from his letter to Herbert E. Bowman of 18 June 1958, one gets the distinct impression that Jung regarded Goethe's *Faust* and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* as mere prolegomena, albeit important ones, to the world-historical breakthrough that was Analytical Psychology:

Goethe's *Faust* almost reached the goal of classical alchemy, but unfortunately the ultimate *coniunctio* did not come off, so that Faust and Mephistopheles could not attain their oneness. The second attempt, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, remained a meteor that never reached the earth, as the *coniunctio oppositorum* had not and could not have taken place. In the course of my psychiatric and psychological studies I could not help stumbling upon this very obvious fact and I therefore began to speak of the Self again.³⁷

According to Jung, both Faust and Nietzsche each committed a major error. In the case of Faust, that error had been to identify with the transformed and transforming *prima materia* in the Paris and Helena scene (GW, XII, §560). Faust, Jung argued, had, like many a medieval alchemist, failed to recognize and give due respect to those contents of the Unconscious that are not included in the Ego-personality — the gods, or (in Jungian vocabulary) the archetypes (GW, XII, §563). According to Jung, the consequences of this fundamental error involved the whole of European society — including himself.

In the conclusion to 'Die Erlösungsvorstellungen in der Alchemie' (1936), Jung devoted an important passage to one of the final scenes in *Faust II*: the murder of Philemon and Baucis. Here, Jung interpreted the episode as showing the consequences of the Faustian drive to be the Superman, his 'blind[er] Übermenschendrang' (GW, XII, §561). Although the figures of Philemon and Baucis, deriving ultimately from the mythic corpus, find their major literary representation in Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, Book VIII, lines 628–720), Goethe claimed, in his conversation with Eckermann of 6 June 1831, to have distanced himself from his classical source (E 470). In his interpretation, however, Jung went back precisely to that classical source. In return for the hospitality which they alone offered the gods (Zeus and Hermes), Ovid's original Philemon and Baucis were rewarded for their generosity by being transformed into trees and hence united together for all eternity. As it appears in Jung's discussion, the point of the story is the recognition of the gods (i.e., the autonomous power of the archetypes). He pointed out that even the alchemists located the elements to be transformed outside themselves and that subsequently, during the Enlightenment, the contents of the psyche were identified exclusively with consciousness. As a result, Jung concluded,

³⁷ C. G. Jung, *Letters*, edited by Gerhard Adler and Aniela Jaffé, translated by R. F. C. Hull, 2 vols, London, 1973–75, II, 453.

the gods who had once been projected outside were introjected into the personal psyche, with the risk that unconscious elements could inflate and invade the Ego in the form of 'schemenhafte Phantasiebilder' (GW, XII, §562). Thus, according to Jung, the consequences of this inflation are the revenge of the gods on an inhospitable humanity; and the message is that we neglect the gods (or the archetypes) at our peril (GW, XII, §562). (In Goethe's text, Baucis specifically refers to Faust's 'godlessness': 'Gottlos ist er' (line 11131). Where, in Ovid's original, Philemon and Baucis receive an appropriate reward for respecting the gods, in Goethe's dramatic poem, their fate symbolizes the consequences of Faust's rejection of the divine.)

In 'Faust und die Alchemie', the notes for a lecture delivered by Jung to the Psychologischer Club, Zurich, on 8 October 1949 (GW, XVIII/ii, §1692-99);³⁸ and again in the magisterial work of his last years, the two-volume *Mysterium coniunctionis* (1955-56) (GW, XIV), Jung repeated and enhanced his alchemical reading of *Faust*. However, Jung's discussion of Goethe and alchemy stands in an important relationship to his use of the figure of Faust in his archetypal analysis of the politics of Fascism in 'Nach der Katastrophe' (1945), a work which he began by admitting to a sense of complicity in the Second World War: '[W]ir sind im allgemeinen viel tiefer in das deutsche Geschehen hineingezogen, als wir es wahrhaben wollen [. . .]. Ich hatte nicht gewußt, bis zu welchem Grade es mich angeht' (GW, X, §402). According to Jung, the rise of Fascism and the Second World War revealed much about the German psyche, but nothing more than one could have discovered from reading *Faust*. In particular, Jung thought, the treatment of Philemon and Baucis demonstrated Faust's moral depravity (GW, X, §423). Indeed, Jung went so far as to attribute a prophetic quality to this part of Goethe's work: 'Goethe legte als Prophet seinem Volke den *Faust* mit dem Teufelpakt und dem Mord an Philemon und Baucis vor' (GW, X, §434).

There is an extremely personal dimension to Jung's discussion in *Psychologie und Alchemie* and 'Nach der Katastrophe' of Faust's treatment of Philemon and Baucis in particular. In a letter to Dr Paul Schmitt of 5 January 1942, Jung related how, suddenly, he had understood the importance for him of Philemon and Baucis: 'Es ist mir einmal mit Schrecken und urplötzlich klargeworden, daß ich *Faust als Erbschaft übernommen* habe, und zwar als Anwalt und Rächer von Philemon und Baucis, welche, unähnlich Faustens Übermenschentum, die Gastgeber der Götter sind zu einer Zeit der Ruchlosigkeit und Gottvergessenheit' (B, I, 385). And in the same letter, Jung insisted, as he had done in *Psychologie und Alchemie*, that the drama of *Faust* posed a question whose solution would have important political consequences:

Sie haben [. . .] recht, eine gewissermaßen "goethesche" Welt in mir zu wittern. Eine solche lebt in der Tat in mir, insofern es mir nämlich unumgänglich erscheint, auf den Faust zu antworten: man muß doch das furchtbare deutsche Problem, das Europa verheert, weitertragen und ein Stück der faustischen Jenseitsereignisse, z.B. die benigne Tätigkeit des pater profundus, in unser Diesseits herüberziehen. (B, I, 385)

³⁸ See 'Faust und die Alchemie: Vortrag von C. G. Jung im Psychologischen Club, Zürich, vom 8. Oktober 1949', in Irene Gerber-Münch, *Goethes Faust: Eine tiefenpsychologische Studie über den Mythos des modernen Menschen*, Künznacht, 1997, pp. 13-37.

In his autobiography, Jung touches upon the deaths of Philemon and Baucis on two occasions. To begin with, as I have pointed out, in the chapter on his student years Jung expresses his dissatisfaction with the final scene of *Faust* (a complaint made also in *Psychologie und Alchemie*). This remark is accompanied by a reference to the deaths of Philemon and Baucis, which are seen as particularly problematic: 'Trotz meiner Bewunderung kritisierte ich die endgültige Lösung des Faust. Die spielerische Unterschätzung Mephistos kränkte mich persönlich, ebenso Faustens ruchlose Überheblichkeit und vor allem der Mord an Philemon und Baucis' (ETG 92). The second occasion when Jung mentions this concern is in the chapter called 'Der Turm' (which deals with the construction of the Tower in Bollingen), where he connects the story with the First World War and his sense of involvement with it:

Ich konnte ja damals, als ich mit "Faust" bekannt wurde, nicht ahnen, wie sehr Goethes seltsamer Heldenmythus kollektiv war und deutsches Schicksal prophetisch vorausnahm. Deshalb fühlte ich mich persönlich betroffen, und wenn Faust infolge seiner Hybris und Inflation den Mord an Philemon und Baucis veranlaßte, fühlte ich mich schuldig, etwa wie wenn ich in der Vergangenheit am Mord der beiden Alten teilgehabt hätte. Diese sonderbare Idee erschreckte mich, und ich sah es als meine Verantwortung an, diese Schuld zu sühnen, oder ihre Wiederholung zu verhindern. (ETG 238)

As Jung wrote in a letter to Hermann Graf Keyserling of 2 January 1928, he once built 'ein kleines Haus weit draußen in der Nähe der Berge und setzte, in Stein gemeißelt, eine kleine Inschrift in die Mauer: Philemonis sacrum, Fausti poenitentia' (B, I, 72). The 'small house near the mountains' is Jung's Tower at Bollingen, the construction of which had begun in 1923.³⁹ The inscription 'Philemonis Sacrum — Fausti Poenitentia' (The Shrine of Philemon — the Repentance of Faust) was first placed above the gate of the Tower, and when the gate was walled up the inscription was then placed over the entrance to the second tower.⁴⁰ So Jung's personal sense of engagement with *Faust* spilt over into his sense of involvement and complicity with the forces behind National Socialism. In effect, in his autobiography Jung shifts back to the First World War those sentiments that, elsewhere, he associates with the Second.

More generally, it can be seen how, by the time of his later psychological writings, *Faust* had taken on a four-fold significance for Jung. First, it represented an archetypal constellation in the collective mind of Western Man. Second, it served to typify a particular feature, as Jung saw it, of the collective German psyche. Third, it played a formative role in helping Jung formulate his objections to Freudian psychoanalysis and devise the basic tenets of Analytical Psychology. Finally, it acquired an important symbolic role in Jung's view of the development of his personal life and intellectual career. Moreover, despite the shifts and changing emphases in Jung's reception of Goethe, there remain both a central set of concerns developed from Goethe as well as an affinity in their view of Man's capacity for self-transformation. For that such a transformation often occurs in the middle of one's life was a view held by both men. In a lecture of 1930, subsequently published as 'Die Lebenswende', Jung developed

³⁹ The commemorative stones and monuments set up by Jung in the grounds of the tower at Bollingen (see the pictures in David Rosen, *The Tao of Jung*, New York, 1996) recall the 'altar of good fortune' Goethe had erected in the garden of his *Gartenhaus* in April 1777.

⁴⁰ For a recent discussion of Jung's tower, see Theodore Ziolkowski, *The View from the Tower: Origins of an Antimodernist Image*, Princeton, NJ, 1999.

his famous notion of the 'mid-life crisis' (GW, VIII, §749–95). Four years later, in the paper entitled 'Seele und Tod', Jung summarized his psychology of 'Stirb und werde' as follows: 'Von der Lebensmitte an bleibt nur der lebendig, der mit dem Leben sterben will' (GW, VIII, §800). Strikingly, in a conversation with Eckermann of 11 March 1828, Goethe had spoken of 'eine Wendung [. . .], [die] im mittleren Leben eines Menschen häufig [. . .] eintritt' and proclaimed — citing Napoleon, Mozart, Raphael, and Byron as examples — that: '*Der Mensch muß wieder ruiniert werden!*' (E 633).⁴¹

In conclusion, there is much evidence to suggest that Goethean thought in general, and *Faust* in particular, played a decisive and formative role in shaping Jungian thought as it developed in the first two decades of the century and beyond. As a result, we can legitimately look for an affirmation of the analytical psychological goal of leading what, in one of his lectures, Jung called 'the symbolic life' (GW, XVIII/ii, §608–96), in the intellectual tradition he inherited from Goethe, who told Eckermann on 2 May 1824: 'Ich habe all mein Wirken und Leisten immer nur symbolisch angesehen' (E 107). And Jung's quest for (as he titled one of his last works) 'the undiscovered self' (1958; cf. GW, X, §488–588) has its counterpart in Goethe's admission in his conversation with Friedrich Theodor Müller on 28 March 1830: 'Ich habe Natur und Kunst eigentlich immer egoistisch studirt, nämlich um mich zu unterrichten' (WA, V, VII, 282).

⁴¹ In forthcoming articles, the following points of affinity between Goethe and Jung are explored in greater detail: the archetype as a form of aesthetic perception (*Goethe Yearbook*), the notion of the self (*Forum for Modern Language Studies*), and the idea of rebirth (*Journal of European Studies*).