

READING JUNG

James R. Elkins

August | 2013

Where does one begin to read in the work of C.G. Jung? A good question, and I fear I have no good answer. You may find your way to Jung by hearing someone talk about his work or mentioning that they have become interested in Jung. In this day and time, a Google search on “C.G. Jung” brings you to the “C.G. Jung Page” website, and the second link takes you to a Wikipedia entry. Print out the entry for C.G. Jung in Wikipedia—22 pages—and you have an introduction to Jung.

For some readers, the point of entry into Jung’s work is by way of his book, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963)(recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffé). Jung, who was quite prolific as a writer, did not publish what we would call an autobiography. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* comes as close to an autobiography as anything Jung would publish.

My own introduction to Jung came after I got interested in Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis. I was a first year law student, and my criminal law teacher, John Batt, was talking to the class about what he called the “criminal mind” and in his usual teaching style of a pedagogical variation of free association happened to mention Freud. He asked the class of some fifty of us if any one knew anything about Freud. I certainly did not, and if memory serves me correctly, no one else in the class did either. In those days, I usually walked across campus to the Kennedy Book Store after criminal law class and spent an hour or so browsing the bins of used books. Batt had mentioned not only Freud in class, but would sometimes drop the name of other books, and I routinely bought whatever got mentioned in class. I acquired a copy of Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* (which Freud published in 1899) and I was quite taken by the idea, not so much of dreams, but of dreams being what is sometimes called “the royal road to the unconscious.”¹ Today there are many different kinds of psychological counseling and different methods of therapy; my interest in psychology has always been an interest in the unconscious, our lack of knowledge about it, and how in this *not knowing* we make our lives work the way they do.

My reading of Freud led to more wide-ranging reading about Freud’s method—psychoanalysis—and the circle of psychoanalysts who surrounded Freud and wrote about their versions of psychoanalytic theory and practice. It was in reading about Freud’s first disciples and followers that

¹ The American Psychoanalytic Association website presents the following statement about Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*: “The Wall Street Journal, in its listing of the five best “Books on Milestones in Medicine,” cited *The Interpretation of Dreams*, by Sigmund Freud. Written in a conversational style, the book is comprehensible even if the reader is not familiar with the details of Freud’s contributions. Freud was highly regarded as a gifted writer and was recognized for such when he was awarded the Goethe Prize, Germany’s highest literary award, in 1930.”

I discovered C.G. Jung. I saw Jung first mentioned as one of Freud's colleagues, and I eventually, in 1968, late in my first year of law school, acquired a copy of Jung's *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964)² and began to read and underline passages in Jung's contribution to the volume, "Approaching the Unconscious."³

For readers, who might want a more direct outline of Jung's analytical psychology (in contrast to Freud's psychoanalytic theory and the practice of psychoanalysis), I can recommend Jung's lectures at the Tavistock Clinic in London in 1935 for an audience of physicians. The lectures appear in C.G. Jung, *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice: The Tavistock Lectures* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).⁴

Still other first time readers of Jung's work have been drawn to Jung's little book, *The Undiscovered Self* (New York: Signet, 2006), although this is by no means the best introduction to his work. Still another frequently used introduction is Jung's *Modern Man in Search of His Soul* (New York: Harcourt Harvest, 1955). One Amazon.com reader notes that *Modern Man in Search of His Soul* is an "anthology of Jung's essays" described as "a rich and filling smorgasbord of [Jung's] thoughts, ideas, theories, and opinions about the psyche around the time he was 50."

There is nothing to prohibit a reader from reading *about* Jung, while reading Jung himself. I want to mention two books that deserve attention if you are doing this kind of reading: One complaint in reading Jung is that his writings are somewhat abstract. For a more grounded approach to Jung's ideas and how they are used in a therapeutic setting, I have always been partial to June Singer's *Boundaries of the Soul: The Practice of Jung's Psychology* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972). For still another Jungian analyst's introduction to Jung's theories from a more theoretical perspective, you may find Murray Stein's *Jung's Map of the Soul: An Introduction* (Chicago, Illinois: Open Court, 1998). Stein notes that "[t]he aim of this book is to describe Jung's findings as he presented them in his published writings." "In this book, I accept Jung in his self-designated role of explorer and mapmaker, and I let this image guide me in presenting this introduction to his theory of the human psyche. The psyche is the territory, the unknown realm he was exploring; his theory is the map he created to communicate his understanding of the psyche. So it is Jung's map of the

² *Man and His Symbols* is, more accurately, a book of collected essays, the first by Jung, and further essays by Joseph L. Henderson, M.-L. Von Franz, Aniela Jaffé, and Jolande Jacobi.

³ My old copy of the book also indicates a few underlined passages in the Joseph L. Henderson essay on "Ancient Myths and Modern Man," but all the other underlining is in the Jung essay.

⁴ One reader of the lectures, commenting on Amazon.com notes that, the lectures are "ideal for those new to Jung's work. The lectures are Jung at his simplest and clearest. Other writings by Jung are written in a style that is long and winding, circling the topic again and again. The new reader can easily get lost. There is no such problem here."

soul that I will attempt to describe in this book” [*Id.* at 2, 3]

There are any number of other guides to Jung’s work, and one of particular interest is Robert H. Hopcke’s *A Guided Tour of the Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (Boston: Shambhala, 1989). Hopcke provide accessible explanations of key Jungian terms, and cites to sources in Jung’s *Collected Works* where Jung talks about the terms.

For still other guides that I have not personally perused, see: Peter A. O’Conner, *Understanding Jung, Understanding Yourself* (Paulist Press, 1986); Eugene Pascal, *Jung to Live By* (Grand Central Publishing, 1992); Robin Robertson, *The Beginner’s Guide to Jungian Psychology* (Nicolas-Hays, Inc., 1992); Anthony Stevens, *Jung: A Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2001).