What people are saying about Decoding Jung's Metaphysics

What I appreciate most about Bernardo Kastrup's approach is his recognition that the tools of philosophy can help us approach the depth, the gift of analytic psychology and appreciate its contributions. ... Kastrup's decoding of Jung's profound insights adds another layer to our understanding. Rather than see, post-Kant, metaphysics as wistful speculation, one sees that the metaphysis engagement has moved within, where it always was.
James Hollis, Ph.D., Jungian analyst and best-selling author

Bernardo Kastrup's rigorous analysis and penetrating insights are paving the way for an important, and truly massive, shift in our understanding of the relationship between consciousness and what we think of as the physical world. His approach is both subtle and wise. His persistent scholarship in this area makes evident points of metaphysical clarification that even Jung, himself, was hesitant to explicate.
Jeffrey Mishlove, Ph.D., psychologist and host of Thinking Allowed

Contents

Other books by Bernardo Kastrup

Rationalist Spirituality: An exploration of the meaning of life and existence informed by logic and science

Dreamed up Reality: Diving into mind to uncover the astonishing hidden tale of nature

Meaning in Absurdity: What bizarre phenomena can tell us about the nature of reality

Why Materialism Is Baloney: How true skeptics know there is no death and fathom answers to life, the universe, and everything

Brief Peeks Beyond: Critical essays on metaphysics, neuroscience, free will, skepticism and culture

More Than Allegory: On religious myth, truth and belief

The Idea of the World: A multi-disciplinary argument for the mental nature of reality

Decoding Schopenhauer's Metaphysics: The key to understanding how it solves the hard problem of consciousness and the paradoxes of quantum mechanics

List of acronyms

Jung's works are referred to as follows:

A:	Jung, C. G. (1979). *Aion, 2nd Ed.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
AA:	Jung, C. G., Pauli, W. (authors) and Meier, C. A. (editor) (2001). *Atom and Archetype: The Pauli/Jung Letters 1932–1958.* London, UK: Routledge.
ACU:	Jung, C. G. (1991). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious.* London, UK: Routledge.
AJ:	Jung, C. G. (2002). *Answer to Job.* London, UK: Routledge.
D:	Jung, C. G. (2001). *Dreams.* London, UK: Routledge.
FS:	Jung, C. G. (1978). *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
JWL:	Jung, C. G., White, V. (authors), Lammers, A. C. and Cunningham, A. (editors) (2007). *The Jung-White Letters.* London, UK: Routledge.
L:	Jung, C. G. (author), Adler, G. and Jaffe, A. (editors) (1975). *C. G. Jung Letters.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
MDR:	Jung, C. G. (author) and Jaffe, A. (editor) (1995). *Memories, Dreams, Reflections.* London, UK: Fontana Press.
MMSS:	Jung, C. G. (2001). *Modern Man in Search of a Soul.* London, UK: Routledge.
ONP:	Jung, C. G. (2001). *On the Nature of the Psyche.* London, UK: Routledge.
PA:	Jung, C. G. (1980). *Psychology and Alchemy, 2nd Edition.* London, UK: Routledge.
PR:	Jung, C. G. (1977). *Psychology and Religion.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
RB:	Jung, C. G. (author) and Shamdasani, S. (editor) (2009). *The Red Book: Liber Novus*. London, UK: W. W. Norton & Company.
S:	Jung, C. G. (1985). *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*. London, UK: Routledge.
US:	Jung, C. G. (2002). *The Undiscovered Self*. London, UK: Routledge.

Conforming to the divine will I live for mankind, not only for myself, and whoever understands this message contained in and conveyed by my writing will also live for me.
Carl Gustav Jung

Foreword by Jeffrey Mishlove

I have had the privilege of spending satisfying hours with Bernardo Kastrup exploring both his penetrating metaphysical philosophy as well as his deep dives into realms of active imagination and mythos. This was accomplished at a distance of thousands of miles, recorded on video, for the *New Thinking Allowed* YouTube channel. So, although we have never met face-to-face, I believe I am somewhat justified in feeling that I have been inside of Bernardo's mind. I suspect that many viewers, and readers, worldwide, also share this feeling.

Bernardo brings his rigorous background as a computer scientist to his analysis of consciousness and reality. He achieved a measure of renown by publishing articles advocating idealist metaphysics on the *Scientific American* website. Then, after having published seven books for the educated public explicating the fine details of his thinking, he determined to test his ideas in the mill of academia by earning a second doctoral degree—this time in philosophy. I believe that Bernardo's vital drive, his entelechy or purpose, is to engage with the ultimate questions in philosophy and psychology using the finely-honed tools of logic. In so doing, he is also well aware of the limits of such logic—especially when turning inward to examine his own psychic depths. This book, *Decoding Jung's Metaphysics*, is in part, I believe, Bernardo's admirable effort to reconcile logic with that which is beyond all logic.

As a parapsychologist, my own interest in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind has been stimulated by empirical data gathered by skilled researchers starting in 1882 when the Society for Psychical Research was first formed in England. Many distinguished scientists and philosophers have been associated with this research endeavor—including such well-known figures as William James, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Nobel laureate Charles Richet, and philosopher Henri Bergson. The

discipline of psychical research initially developed using the methodologies of field research and case studies. A significant focus of these studies was the claim of human survival of bodily death, brought to the forefront of public attention because of a massive global interest in the phenomena associated with nineteenth century spiritualism.

In the twentieth century, as psychical researchers began paying more attention to the advances in experimental science and statistics, both the nomenclature and the thinking began to change. Joseph Banks Rhine, working in the psychology department at Duke University in the 1930s, popularized the term 'extra sensory perception'—more commonly known as ESP. Rhine, and his colleagues, also designated the term *psi* as a generic word covering all of the various manifestations (i.e., telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis) studied by the discipline for which they chose the label 'parapsychology.'

The important questions concerning human post-mortem survival did not go away. However, J. B. Rhine, himself, was disillusioned with séances and the spiritualist mentality. Furthermore, it seemed as if all of the best evidence in support of the survival hypothesis could be explained more parsimoniously as living agent psi.

The *Journal of Parapsychology* was founded in 1937 and has been published continuously since then. In 1957, the Parapsychological Association was founded and, in 1969, that association formally became an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science—by virtue of a vote by the governing council of the AAAS.

Carl Jung, himself, had an abiding interest in parapsychological phenomena. Jung's doctoral dissertation, published in 1903, was titled " *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena* ." He corresponded with J. B. Rhine and, in his classic essay on synchronicity, he repeatedly referred to Rhine's parapsychology experiments and how important they were. In fact, in a private communication to Rhine, on September 3, 1951, Jung confessed that his essay on synchronicity (presented to the Eranos Foundation that year) was "largely based on your ESP

experiment."

For his part, Rhine was hesitant to embrace an acausal model of psi. Research, such as the 'sheep-goat effect' in parapsychology, suggested that psi operated in a manner consistent with known psychological variables, in particular it was influenced by belief systems. Nevertheless, some parapsychologists had more than a passing interest in Jung's hypothesis. In spite of the fact that hundreds of well-conducted empirical experiments had demonstrated the existence of psi, the Rhinean model of extra sensory perception encountered serious difficulties. No biological organ appeared to be associated with extra sensory perception. Nor has anyone discovered a channel of information transmission that could account for the many highly accurate and detailed accounts produced in clairvoyant research. Some parapsychologists, such as John Palmer in his 1979 presidential address to the Parapsychological Association, have seriously proposed that the Jungian model of synchronicity may be a better fit for the data than the Rhinean notion of extra sensory perception.

J. B. Rhine, himself, understood this dilemma. In 1965, when he left his position at Duke University, Rhine founded a new organization in Durham, North Carolina, that he called the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man. (That organization is currently known as the Rhine Research Center.) I understand that he chose this name because he realized that the data he and his colleagues had been collecting for decades could not be adequately explained from within the prevalent materialistic paradigm. The phrase, "Research on the Nature of Man," was meant to imply that empirical studies of parapsychology pointed to something about human nature that was essentially different than the common scientific supposition.

Of course, it is no secret that—in spite of its many contributions to human understanding—parapsychology remains a fringe science. I know this in my bones, having earned a unique, interdisciplinary doctoral diploma (from the University of California, Berkeley, 1980) that actually states my field of study as 'parapsychology.' To my knowledge, no other accredited

university in the world has ever issued such a diploma either before or since. I do not wish to make too much of my lonely distinction. After all, there are about 400 members of the Parapsychological Association today. Many of them have earned doctoral degrees in 'psychology' or 'philosophy' for dissertations on parapsychological topics. Yet almost all of these individuals have shared personal stories regarding prejudicial treatment they have received because of their interest in the paranormal. For example, one such individual—a Nobel laureate physicist— was disinvited from a professional conference in physics due to this interest.

Carl Jung, however, did not share such a prejudice. In an invited address to the Society for Psychical Research in 1919, he uttered the following memorable words: "I shall not commit the fashionable stupidity of regarding everything that I cannot explain as a fraud." Unfortunately, from my perspective, many of those who call themselves Jungians do not share Jung's courageous attitude. I have spoken to prominent Jungians who maintain that synchronicity is quite distinct from parapsychological phenomena.

The situation is far worse, however, in academia. Topics such as metaphysical idealism and panpsychism are, commendably, gaining ground within professional philosophy. The study of consciousness itself is becoming ever more respectable within departments of psychology. Nevertheless, there is still an unmistakable tendency for scholars in these areas to act as if 140 years of empirical investigations in psychical research and parapsychology did not even exist!

It is worth mentioning, however, that there is now a notable exception to this blackout of knowledge. In August of 2018, the flagship journal of the American Psychological Association, *TheAmerican Psychologist*, published an article by Etzel Cardeña, a professor of psychology at Lund University, Sweden, titled "The Experimental Evidence for Parapsychological Phenomena: A Review." This article summarized several meta-analyses covering over 1,400 parapsychological experiments and concluded that, at its best, psi research exhibits methodological excellence and promising results.

The Cardeña article accentuates what I have believed throughout my professional career: that the time is long overdue for the empirical data of parapsychology and its implications to be integrated into the mainstream canon of academic and philosophical knowledge. Although Bernardo Kastrup does not address this issue directly in this book, his rigorous analysis and penetrating insights are paving the way for an important, and truly massive, shift in our understanding of the relationship between consciousness and what we think of as the physical world. His approach is both subtle and wise. His persistent scholarship in this area makes evident points of metaphysical clarification that even Jung, himself, was hesitant to explicate.

Jeffrey Mishlove, Ph.D.
Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Chapter 1

Prelude

Call it not vain—that lofty thought
Which peoples heaven with visioned lore,
So that each star of light is fraught
With some fair chronicle of yore:—
Call it not vain, though earthly vision
May not peruse that page Elysian,
But strive to read it in vain;
Mind will the links of form supply,
Of forms that never more may die,—
To mind they are all plain.

Leopold J. Bernays, from the poem *The Constellations*, published in the appendix of his translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (1839)

Born on the margins of Lake Constance, in Kesswil, Switzerland, in the summer of 1875, Carl Gustav Jung was one of the most important figures of early modern psychology. Together with Sigmund Freud, he pioneered the systematic exploration of the depths of the human psyche beyond the threshold of direct introspection, a mysterious realm he and Freud called 'the unconscious.' Both men discerned tremendous significance in aspects of our inner lives that had hitherto been neglected by science, particularly dreams.

However, unlike Freud—who thought of the unconscious as merely a passive repository of forgotten or repressed contents of consciousness—for Jung the unconscious was an *active, creative matrix* with a psychic life, will and language of its own, often at odds with our conscious dispositions. It is this aspect of his thinking that led Jung down avenues of empirical investigation and speculation rich with metaphysical significance. This little

book is about those extraordinary speculations and their philosophical implications.

As we shall soon find out, for Jung life and world are something very different from what our present mainstream metaphysics—materialism—posits. The conclusions of his lifelong studies point to the continuation of psychic life beyond bodily death, a much more intimate and direct relationship between matter and psyche than most would dare imagine today, and a living universe pregnant with symbolic meaning. For him life is, quite literally, a kind of dream, and interpretable as such.

Jung was many things: psychiatrist, psychologist, historian, classicist, mythologist, painter, sculptor and even—as some would argue with good reasons—a mystic (cf. e.g. Kingsley 2018). But he expressly avoided identifying himself as a philosopher, lest such a label detract from the image of empirical scientist that he wanted to project. Nonetheless, much of what Jung had to say about the psyche has unavoidable and rather remarkable philosophical implications, not only concerning the mind-body problem, but also the very nature of reality itself. Moreover, when he was being less guarded—which was often— Jung made overt philosophical statements. For these reasons, as I hope to make clear in this book, Jung ultimately proved to be a philosopher, even a very good one.

In the pages that follow, I shall first attempt to tease out the most important metaphysical *implications* of Jung's ideas on the nature and behavior of the psyche. Second, I shall try to relate Jung's many overt metaphysical contentions to those implications. Third, based on the previous two points, I shall try to reconstruct what I believe to have been Jung's implicit metaphysical system, demonstrating its internal consistency, as well as its epistemic and empirical adequacy. I shall argue that Jung was a metaphysical idealist in the tradition of German Idealism, his system being particularly consistent with that of Arthur Schopenhauer and my own.

The consistency between Jung's metaphysics and my own is no coincidence. Unlike Schopenhauer—whose work I've discovered

only after having developed my system in seven different books—Jung has been a very early influencer of my thought. I first came across his work still in my early teens, during a family holiday in the mountains. Exploring on my own the village where we were staying, I chanced upon a small bookshop. There, displayed very prominently, was an intriguing book titled *I Ching*, edited and translated by Richard Wilhelm, with a foreword by one Carl Gustav Jung. Jung's introduction to the book revealed the internal logic and root of plausibility of what I would otherwise have regarded as just a silly oracle. He had opened some kind of door in my mind. Little did I know, then, how far that door would eventually take me.

Jung's hand in my work can probably be discerned in many more passages than I myself am aware of, for I have internalized his thought so deeply over the years that I don't doubt I sometimes conflate his ideas with mine. Moreover, Jung's image has been a perennial presence in both my intellectual and emotional inner lives. In moments of stress, anxiety or hopelessness, I often visualize myself in conversation with him—he would have called it 'active imagination'—so as to envision what he would have had to say about my situation. This level of intimacy hopefully helps me represent Jung's thought accurately and fairly in this volume. The reader should have no doubt that doing so is of utmost importance to me.

Naturally, it is also conceivable that the same intimacy could hamper my objectivity, leading me—surreptitiously and unintentionally—to pass an idiosyncratic amalgamation of his views *and mine* for his metaphysics. To guard against this risk, I've re-read—for the third or fourth time in my life—all of Jung's relevant works in preparation for writing this volume. I have also reproduced relevant excerpts of Jung's writings to substantiate my case, only making assertions I could trace back to *multiple* passages in their corresponding context. This, I hope, ensures the objectivity and accuracy of my interpretations.

Jung has written over twenty thick volumes of material over his long and productive life. Much of it is limited to clinical

psychology or mythology and has little metaphysical significance. The material that *does* have metaphysical relevance, however, is still quite extensive.

So whenever Jung's views changed—substantially or simply in terms of nuances—over the years, I have prioritized his later writing. In addition, Jung's metaphysical views seem to have congealed only towards the end of his professional life, which renders his earlier writings less relevant. For these two reasons, my argument is based mostly on works he wrote from the 1940s onwards, with two exceptions: the edited transcripts of his *Terry Lectures*, held at Yale University in 1937-1938 (PR), and a collection of essays published in 1933 (MMSS). Both provide tantalizing early insights into Jung's growing confidence regarding his metaphysical views.

It is important to notice that, regardless of the period in which it was written, Jung's discourse on metaphysics and related topics comes nowhere near the level of conceptual clarity, consistency and precision that today's analytic philosophers demand. Jung was an extremely intuitive thinker who favored analogies, similes and metaphors over direct and unambiguous exposition, appearing to frequently contradict himself. This happened because he didn't use linear argument structures, but instead *circumambulated* —a handy Jungian term meaning 'to walk round about'—the topic in question in an effort to convey the full gamut of his intuitions about it. Indeed, he didn't arrive at his views purely through steps of reasoning to begin with, but largely through visionary experience (cf. MDR: 217 & 225, RB). It is thus only natural that he should express these views in an intuitive, analogical manner.

In this context, Jung's many seeming contradictions reflect attempts to explore a theme from several different perspectives and reference points. For instance, if he claims that the psyche is material, just to turn around and say that it is spiritual, he means that *there is a sense* in which the psyche is analogous to what we call 'matter' and *another sense* in which it is analogous to what we call 'spirit,' each sense anchored in its own implicit reference point. It is these radical and sudden flips of perspective—

confusing and aggravating for an analytic disposition as they are—that help Jung delineate and express his views in a way that appeals to more than just reason.

Before closing this brief introduction, a few notes on terminology are required. Throughout this book—unless otherwise stated—I try to stick to the same terms and denotations that Jung himself used, even though his terminology is now largely outdated. I've done so to maintain consistency with his corpus. For instance, Jung defines 'consciousness' as something considerably more specific than what philosophers today refer to as 'phenomenal consciousness' or simply 'consciousness' (this, in fact, has been the source of endless misunderstandings of Jung's work). So, unless I explicitly write 'phenomenal consciousness,' I use the terms 'consciousness' and 'conscious' according to Jung's own restrictive definition.

Some of the other terms I use have both colloquial and technical philosophical meanings, which unfortunately differ. I try to consistently use those terms in their *technical* sense. By the term 'metaphysics,' for instance, I don't mean supernatural entities or paranormal phenomena, but the *essence of being* of things, creatures and phenomena. As such, a metaphysics of nature entails a certain view about what nature *is* in and of itself, as opposed to how it *behaves* (which is the subject of science) or how it *appears* to observation (which is a subject of cognitive psychology and phenomenology).

But fear not: knowing as I do that much of the readership of this volume will be composed of psychologists, therapists and people generally interested in metaphysics—as opposed to professional philosophers alone—I've striven to keep the jargon to a bare minimum. I also either explicitly define technical terms on first usage or use them in a way that makes their intended meaning clear and unambiguous from the context.

This is only one of many stylistic choices I've made to ensure that this little volume is not only readable, but also clear, compelling and enjoyable to a general readership. I hope you find inspiration in it to, someday, delve more deeply into Jung's extraordinary legacy.

Chapter 2

Psyche

> *There are three heavens ... These follow in sequence and are interdependent ... The deeper levels of the human mind and disposition are in a similar pattern as well. We have a central, intermediate, and outmost nature. This is because when humanity was created the whole divine design was gathered into it, to the point that as to structure, the human being is the divine design and is therefore a heaven in miniature. For the same reason we are in touch with heaven as to our inner natures ... The outside and the inside in the heavens (or in each particular heaven) are like our own volitional side and its cognitive aspect. ... The volitional is like a flame and the cognitive like the light that it sheds. ... We may therefore conclude that the state of our inner natures is what constitutes heaven and that heaven is within each of us, not outside us.*
> Emanuel Swedenborg, in *Heaven and Hell* (1758)

The foundational concept underlying all of Jung's work—and all of psychology, for that matter—is that of *psyche*. The term is derived from the Greek ψῡχή—soul—and refers to the human *mind* in the most general and comprehensive sense. Indeed, whereas the word 'mind' is often used—even by Jung himself— in the restrictive sense of intellect or rational thought, 'psyche' has a broader denotation, encompassing not only thought but also intuition, imagination, feeling, emotion, etc.

The precise meaning Jung attributes to the term 'psyche' is of utmost importance for interpreting his metaphysics. The reason is that, for Jung and all depth psychologists, the psyche encompasses not only *conscious* processes, but also *unconscious* ones. The psychic status of the latter must then be explicated and justified, for whereas nobody questions the psychic nature of conscious processes, it is not immediately clear what characterizes an *un*conscious process as psychic. One could argue, for instance, that unconscious processes are merely *physiological* and, as such, of the

same material—as opposed to psychic—nature as liver and kidney function.

Jung starts his discussion about the nature of the psyche by first acknowledging that some processes on the boundary between the merely organic and the properly psychic—such as instincts—correlate with physiology. This gives him a lever to begin defining what it means for a process to be psychic:

> the psychic is an emancipation of function from its instinctual form ... The psychic condition or quality begins where the function loses its outer and inner determinism and ... begins to show itself accessible to a will motivated from other sources. (ONP: 108)

Psychic processes, therefore, are those amenable—at least to some extent—to *deliberate volition*, as opposed to being entirely determined by instinctual urges grounded in physiology. For instance, whereas a lower animal might compulsively eat all it can because of its physiology-mediated instinctual urge to do so, humans can deliberately choose to eat less than they actually feel like because of some longer-term motivation, such as reducing weight. This deliberate choice—made not only independently from, but even in direct opposition to, instincts—reflects a proper psychic process.

Jung then extends this notion towards the polar opposite of instinct:

> with increasing freedom from sheer instinct the [psyche] will ultimately reach a point at which the intrinsic energy of the function ceases altogether to be oriented by instinct in the original sense, and attains a so-called "spiritual" form. (ONP: 109)

This "spiritual form" is

> a functional complex which originally, on the primitive level, was felt as an invisible, breath-like "presence." ... spirit makes [man] creative, always spurring him on, ... *takes possession of him, ... binds his freedom* (ACU: 210-213, emphasis added)

People who sublimate their instinctual urges in a life of self-

abnegation, oriented towards altruistic purposes, embody such spiritual form. When this happens, Jung argues that deliberate volition relinquishes control to impersonal forces that transcend egotistic interests. This is why spirit (the drive to serve something bigger than oneself) is the opposite of instinct (the drive to act towards of one's own survival).

Qualitatively, what characterizes the dynamisms of spirit is that, contrary to instinct, they

> often contain a *superior analysis or insight or knowledge* which consciousness has not been able to produce. We have a suitable word for such occurrences—intuition. (PR: 49, emphasis added)

Because "primitive mentality finds it quite natural to personify the invisible presence" (ACU: 210) of spirit, Jung sometimes alludes to these spiritual dispositions as *daemons* —autonomous complexes or agencies with a resolve of their own, which we do not identify with —capable of subjugating psychic life to their own agenda and superior insight (cf. e.g. MDR: 380). He highlights the autonomous nature of these complexes in passages such as this:

> It is just as if the complex were an *autonomous being* capable of interfering with the intentions of the ego [i.e. the part of the psyche we identify with and deliberately control]. Complexes indeed behave like secondary or partial personalities *in possession of a mental life of their own*. (PR: 14, emphasis added)

When these autonomous complexes "grow out of the unconscious mind and invade consciousness with their weird and unassailable convictions and impulses" (PR: 14), one becomes 'possessed by a daemon,' so to speak, [1] turning into "a helpless victim" (PR: 14). The altruistic lives of saints, for instance, exemplify the subjugation of our personal volition to the impersonal, superior, spiritual agenda of daemons.

The picture we are then left with is of a psyche sandwiched between instinct on the lower end and spirit on the higher. On the lower end, deliberate personal volition cedes control to the automatism of compulsive drives, whereas on the higher end it is subjugated to the impersonal agenda of daemons. This equates the

psyche proper with processes under the control of deliberate personal volition (cf. ONP: 110).

The problem is that defining the psyche in this manner doesn't solve the issue it was meant to address to begin with: insofar as we can't imagine an *unconscious* but still *deliberate* choice, we also cannot conceive of a psychic process that lacks consciousness. So the psyche remains identical with consciousness—as Jung explicitly acknowledges (cf. ONP: 111)—and the psychic status of unconscious processes remains unaccounted for.

To solve this impasse, Jung resorts—at least when he is paying attention and striving for some level of conceptual consistency—to the qualifier 'proper': "What I would call the psyche *proper* extends to all functions which can be brought under the influence of a will" (ONP: 110, emphasis added). This way, insofar as our will influences e.g. our thoughts and imagination, these thoughts and imagination fall within the psychic sphere *proper*. The unqualified term 'psyche,' on the other hand, is used less restrictively by Jung: both the spheres of instinct and spirit can be considered 'psychic' in a looser, more general sense.

Which, of course, immediately raises the following questions: In what sense are instinct and spirit still *psychic*, given that they transcend deliberate personal volition? What does the qualifier 'psychic' refer to in such cases? I shall shortly address these questions but, for now, please bear with me a little longer.

Because the psyche proper is characterized by deliberate choice, it must entail a choosing *subject* capable of deliberation. In Jung's words, when it comes to

> considered "choice" and "decision" which are peculiar to the will ... one cannot very well get round the need for a controlling subject (ONP: 98)

Therefore, the psyche proper is the *subjective* psyche, whereas the instinctual and spiritual domains are encompassed in what Jung interchangeably calls the ' *objective* psyche' or the *'unconscious.'* The qualifier 'objective' is meant to highlight that processes in that

part of the psyche (a) escape the control of our deliberate volition and (b) are common to multiple individuals, like shared instincts (cf. e.g. PR: 3-4); they are seemingly autonomous, animated by their own impetus, unfolding on their own accord whether we like it or not, and seem to be separate from us. [2] The term 'unconscious,' in turn, is meant to highlight that at least some of the defining properties Jung attributes to conscious contents—such as being accessible through introspection, as I shall soon discuss—are *not* present in the so-called unconscious.

Although the objective processes in the unconscious escape our introspective awareness and volitional control, we can still experience their *effects* on the subjective psyche, such as dreams, mystical visions, spiritual callings, sexual libido, etc. We cannot control these visions, callings and impulses, but we surely *experience* them from the position of *witness* or—on a more negative note— *victim* (cf. e.g. PR: 4 & 14). The objective, autonomous activity of the unconscious *impinges* on our subjective field of awareness, leaving a recognizable *imprint* on it. This is analogous to how physical processes in the outside world impinge and leave recognizable imprints on our sense organs. [3]

As we've seen above, for Jung the psyche *proper* is identical with consciousness (cf. ONP: 111). So we need to understand what exactly he means by 'consciousness,' if we are to grasp the nature of the psyche.

In modern philosophy of mind, the term 'consciousness' is usually understood in terms of what Ned Block (1995) called 'phenomenal consciousness.' Phenomenally conscious states are *experiential* in nature—i.e. states in which there is something it feels like to be. For instance, there is something it feels like to have a bellyache, to see the redness of an apple, to fall in love, to smell coffee, etc. Therefore, all these states are phenomenally conscious. As such, phenomenal consciousness— or, more simply, 'phenomenality'—entails *qualities of experience*, which may be perceptual (such as color, flavor, aroma, etc.) or endogenous (such as fear, love, desire, disappointment, etc.).

However, Jung defines 'consciousness' in a much more specific

and restrictive manner. For him, consciousness is a relatively small *subset* of phenomenality, defined on the basis of three key properties. The first we have already encountered when discussing the psyche proper: only mental states under the control of *deliberate personal volition* are conscious. But then Jung adds:

> because of its empirical freedom of choice, the will needs a *supraordinate authority*, something like a *consciousness of itself* ... Volition presupposes a choosing subject who *envisages different possibilities*. (ONP: 110, emphasis added)

This is an allusion to what modern psychology calls 'meta-consciousness' (Schooler 2002) or 'self-reflection.' The "supraordinate authority" is a meta-cognitive experiential process that inspects, interprets and evaluates other, lower-level experiences corresponding to the "different possibilities" in question. In order to make a "considered choice" of one of these possibilities, the meta-cognitive process must *re-represent* the respective lower-level contents of experience. Jonathan Schooler explains:

> Periodically *attention* is directed towards explicitly assessing the contents of experience. The resulting *meta-consciousness* involves an explicit *re-representation* of [phenomenal] consciousness in which one interprets, describes, or otherwise characterizes the state of one's mind. (Schooler 2002: 339-340, emphasis added)

By re-representing its own experiential contents—each re-representation constituting a *reflection* of an experiential content at a higher-level of cognition—the "supraordinate authority" achieves a kind of "consciousness of itself," as claimed by Jung. [4]

Jung seems to have searched for better ways to make this point throughout his career. Earlier writings show his struggle to convey his intuition clearly. For instance, in the passage quoted below he appeals to 'intensity,' 'concentration' and *attention* (just as Schooler does in the quote above) to allude rather cumbersomely to self-reflection:

> While consciousness is intensive and concentrated, it is transient and

> is directed upon ... the *immediate field of attention;* ... matters stand very differently with the unconscious. It is not concentrated and intensive, but shades into obscurity; (MMSS: 190, emphasis added)

Be that as it may, the point is that consciousness entails a re-representation of psychic contents within the field of the subject's attention.

Here is a simple example to illustrate all this: suppose that someone asks you whether you feel pain in your belly. The question prompts you to introspect and evaluate your subjective field of bodily sensations by scanning it with your attention. In order for you to report that you do feel the pain, *two* conditions must be satisfied: first, you need to be *experiencing* the pain; second, you need to know *that* you are experiencing pain. This second condition—the knowledge *of* an experience—is the *re-representation* : a meta-cognitive *reflection* of a lower-level experiential content. Failing either condition, you cannot report the pain; not even to yourself.

Notice that the second condition is neither entailed nor implied by the first. Instead, it requires an *extra* experiential process in addition to the original experience. If you have the pain but don't become self-reflectively aware of it—by e.g. simply not paying attention to it—you won't know *that* you have it. For all practical purposes, everything will unfold as if you didn't have the pain.

Another example: although you always experience your breathing—the air flowing in and out of your nostrils, the movements of your diaphragm, the inflation and deflation of your lungs—only occasionally (such as right now, because I am bringing your attention to it) do you re-represent this experience and know *that* you have it. This ordinary and ubiquitous situation shows how easy it is for us to have experiences that we aren't self-reflectively aware of. And although it is simple for us to refocus our attention and re-represent the experience of breathing upon being prompted, other types of experience aren't re-representable even upon prompting (cf. e.g. Tsuchiya *et al.* 2015).

Therefore, re-representation or reflection is the mechanism by means of which consciousness amplifies or increases the

'intensity,' 'concentration' or clarity—better yet, *lucidity* —of some psychic contents. In Jung's words, "It is in the nature of the conscious mind to concentrate on relatively few contents and to *raise them to the highest pitch of clarity* " (ACU: 162, emphasis added). Not only is this what sets humans apart from the rest of nature, it is also what confers, in some important sense, *reality* to nature itself, for "without *conscious reflection* [the world] would not be" (MDR: 371, emphasis added).

In a clinical context, psychologists in Jung's time could not differentiate between the absence of an experience and the absence of the mere *re-representation* of the experience. In both cases, patients would not report the experience (not even to themselves). Only since recently—thanks to advances in neuroimaging and the development of so-called "no report paradigms" (Tsuchiya *et al.* 2015, Vandenbroucke *et al.* 2014)— can neuroscientists tell the difference. Therefore, it is perfectly understandable that Jung considers meta-cognition a necessary attribute of consciousness. After all, all he had to go with were the introspective reports of his patients.

Finally, Jung adds a *third* defining property of consciousness. While discussing the progressive development of awareness in children, he says:

> when the child recognizes someone or something—when he "knows" a person or a thing—then we feel that the child has *consciousness*. ... But what is recognition or knowledge in this sense? We speak of "knowing" something when we succeed in *linking a new perception to an already established context* ... "Knowing" is based, therefore, upon a conscious *connection between psychic contents*. (MMSS: 100, emphasis added)

Ignoring the circular manner in which Jung seems to define consciousness in this passage, the key point is this: there cannot be consciousness without "firmly-knit" (ONP: 118) *webs of cognitive associations*. A child recognizes e.g. their mother because there are multiple cognitive associations linking 'mother' with other experiential contents, such as 'being cared for' (mother is a caretaker), 'home where I live' (which is where mother also lives),

'father' (man who is married to mother), 'car' (mother drives child to school), 'garden' (mother likes to spend time there), 'safety' (mother makes child feel safe), etc. For Jung, without these firmly-knit webs of associations there isn't really consciousness, for the latter entails the ability to place an experience in a broader cognitive context.

In summary, according to Jung consciousness is a subset of what we today call 'phenomenal consciousness.' In addition to being experiential in nature, conscious contents must:

(a) fall under the control of deliberate personal volition;
(b) be meta-cognitively re-represented or reflected, so as to be introspectively accessible and reportable; and
(c) be linked within a firmly-knit web of cognitive associations.

Henceforth, I shall consistently use the term 'consciousness' and the qualifier 'conscious' in the restrictive sense defined by Jung, and 'phenomenality' or 'experience'—along with the respective qualifiers 'phenomenal' and 'experiential'—when I mean the broader notion of phenomenal consciousness defined by Block (1995).

And now we are finally able to return to the questions raised earlier: In what sense are unconscious psychic contents still, well, *psychic?* What does the qualifier 'psychic' mean in the absence of consciousness?

As discussed earlier, the activity of the unconscious *directly impinges* on the psyche *proper*, in the sense that we can introspectively access its *effects* without mediation by the sense organs. So the unconscious and the psyche proper must, to some degree, overlap or 'touch' each other, which suggests that they are merely different regions of the same psychic ground. In Jung's words, the unconscious "has according to its effects a psychical nature" (JWL: 83)—i.e. it must have the same essence as that which it directly affects.

Moreover, there is also *traffic of contents* between consciousness

and the unconscious. Conscious contents may fall into the unconscious upon being repressed or forgotten, while some unconscious contents may rise to consciousness in the form of erupting memories, insights, feelings and spontaneous behaviors. Assuming that the respective contents don't magically change their essential nature upon moving across the boundary, this traffic allows us to introspectively assert the psychic nature of (former or future) *un* conscious contents.

It is such empirically verified, unmediated interactions between consciousness and the unconscious—in the form of traffic and impingement—that motivate Jung to consider the latter an integral part of the psyche. Consciousness and the unconscious must both be *psychic* ; they must have the same metaphysical ground or categorical basis, the difference between them being merely the relative strength of particular properties—namely, self-reflection, volitional control and cognitive association—of the respective contents.

Now, we've seen earlier that consciousness is a subset of the psyche's phenomenality. If so, it follows that the unconscious must also be essentially *phenomenal*, thus consisting of whatever phenomenality is *left* in the psyche *after* we've accounted for consciousness. In other words, unconscious contents must be *experiences* with a relative lack of volitional control, re-representation and cognitive association. Commerce of contents between the unconscious and consciousness is possible because these properties can strengthen or weaken over time for any given experiential content—i.e. cognitive associations can form and dissolve over time, contents can enter and leave the field of attention. Unconscious contents can directly impinge on consciousness because even qualitatively different experiences in the same psyche can impinge on one another: think of the last time your thoughts affected your emotions, or the other way around.

The essence of both consciousness and the unconscious is thus experiential, experience being the unifying factor that brings them together as integral parts of the psyche. There is no categorical transition between the two domains. In Jung's implicit

metaphysical system, experience is what defines the nature of the psyche as a whole. Therefore, to say that something is psychic means to assert its intrinsically experiential nature, whether it's also conscious or not. The unconscious is psychic because it is experiential.

Such conclusion is both suggested and implied in Jung's work in a manner that renders it inevitable. There is just no other coherent way to construe the meaning Jung attributes to the qualifier 'psychic.' He consistently uses the term as an appeal to experience, mentation, such as when he claims that "the unconscious is psychical i.e. *a sort of mind* " (JWL: 83, emphasis added). At one point he even explicitly asserts the experiential nature—but lack of re-representation and introspective accessibility, respectively—of the unconscious by saying that it consists of " *experiences* that are either *unknown* or *barelyaccessible* " (PA: 3, emphasis added; see also p. 6).

Let us briefly recapitulate the discussion thus far. The psyche is defined by *phenomenality* : all its contents have an experiential essence or nature. Some of these contents are *conscious* in that they are controlled by deliberate volition, accessible through self-reflective introspection and linked in a web of cognitive associations. The remaining contents are *unconscious*. These unconscious contents are *objective* in the sense of being autonomous from the point of view of consciousness. The activity of consciousness and the unconscious can impinge on each other. When the unconscious impinges on consciousness, we experience the resulting effects in the form of dreams, visions and compulsive feelings. Some experiential contents can also move between consciousness and the unconscious, betraying the common metaphysical nature of these two psychic segments.

Jung goes out of his way to emphasize that the distinction between consciousness and the unconscious is a *relative* one. Taking the degree of self-reflection of a psychic content as a guide, he explains that consciousness

> embraces ... a whole *scale of intensities* of consciousness. Between "I do