

Making Sense of C. G. Jung's Red Book and Black Books: Masonic Rites and Trauma

Authors : Lynn Brunet

Abstract : In 2019 the author published a book-length study examining Jung's Red Book. This study consisted of a close reading of each of the chapters in Liber Novus, focussing on the fantasies themselves and Jung's accompanying paintings. It found that the plots, settings, characters and symbolism in each of these fantasies are not entirely original but remarkably similar to those found in some of the higher degrees of Continental Freemasonry. Jung was the grandson of his namesake, C.G. Jung (1794-1864), who was a Freemason and one-time Grand Master of the Swiss Masonic Lodge. The study found that the majority of Jung's fantasies are very similar to those of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, practiced in Switzerland during the time of Jung's childhood. It argues that the fantasies appear to be memories of a series of terrifying initiatory ordeals conducted using spurious versions of the Masonic rites. Spurious Freemasonry is a term that Masons use for the 'irregular' or illegitimate use of the rituals and are not sanctioned by the Order. Since the 1980s there have been multiple reports of ritual trauma amongst a wide variety of organizations, cults and religious groups that psychologists, counsellors, social workers, and forensic scientists have confirmed. The abusive use of Masonic rites features frequently in these reports. This initial study allows a reading of The Red Book that makes sense of the obscure references, bizarre scenarios and intense emotional trauma described by Jung throughout Liber Novus. It suggests that Jung appears to have undergone a cruel initiatory process as a child. The author is currently examining the extra material found in Jung's Black Books and the results are confirming the original discoveries and demonstrating a number of aspects not covered in the first publication. These include the complex layering of ancient gods and belief systems in answer to Jung's question, 'In which underworld am I?' It demonstrates that the majority of these ancient systems and their gods are discussed in a handbook for the Scottish Rite, Morals and Dogma by Albert Pike, but that the way they are presented by Philemon and his soul is intended to confuse him rather than clarify their purpose. This new study also examines Jung's soul's question 'I am not a human being. What am I then?' While further themes that emerge from the Black Books include his struggle with vanity and whether he should continue creating his 'holy book'; and a comparison between Jung's 'mystery plays' and examples from the Theatre of the Absurd. Overall, it demonstrates that Jung's experience, while inexplicable in his own time, is now known to be the secret and abusive practice of initiation of the young found in a range of cults and religious groups in many first world countries. This paper will present a brief outline of the original study and then examine the themes that have emerged from the extra material found in the Black Books.

Keywords : C. G. Jung, the red book, the black books, masonic themes, trauma and dissociation, initiation rites, secret societies

Conference Title : ICAPJA 2023 : International Conference on Analytical Psychology and Jungian Archetypes

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : August 17-18, 2023