

## JUNG AND EXISTENTIALISM

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**ABSTRACT.** In the following paper I will argue that there are interesting connections between the founder of analytical psychology, Carl Gustav Jung, and the school of existentialism. Analytical psychology and existentialism share almost the same Zeitgeist (becoming influential between the 1930's and 1960's) and are both interested in the concept of individuality. I would like to follow the liaison between Jung and existentialism regarding authenticity and death. First of all, the concept of authenticity deserves extensive treatment. Heidegger's *das Man* and Sartre's *mauvaise foi* have an interesting companion in Jung's notion of the *persona*, the psychological concept of "the mask". Second of all, existentialist authenticity can be compared to the Jungian integration of the shadow. Moreover, the concept of death (Heidegger's *Sein-zum-Tode*) can be compared with Jung's understanding of death from *The Red Book*.

**Keywords:** individuation, persona, authenticity, integration of the shadow, existential death

### The Inauthenticity of the Persona<sup>1</sup>

According to Jung, the persona is "the mask of the actor"<sup>2</sup>. The persona refers to both „the mask of the actor and the actor,” signifying “the part that someone plays, due to his features, aspect and abilities”<sup>3</sup>. According to the Jungian psychologist Jolande Jacobi, persona could derive from Persu, the Etruscan masked God of the Inferno<sup>4</sup>. One could schematically reconstruct

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<sup>1</sup> The first section of my article is based on my previous research concerning *The Persona and the Shadow in Analytic Psychology and Existentialist Philosophy*, published in *Philobiblon*, 21 (1), 2016, pp. 84-94.

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 9/1 §43, edited by Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2014, (henceforth CW).

<sup>3</sup> Lutz Müller, Anette Müller (Hg.), *Wörterbuch des Analytischen Psychologie*, Düsseldorf, Zürich, Patmos Verlag, 2003, p. 315.

<sup>4</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *Die Seelenmaske. Einblicke in die Psychologie des Alltags*, Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau, Walter-Verlag, 1971, pp. 44-5.

persona as: “individual” + “world”, or “individual” + “other.” “The persona ... is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be”<sup>5</sup> or “the individual’s system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with, the world”<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, “the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is”<sup>7</sup>.

The persona mediates between the unconscious impressions and the stimuli from the external world<sup>8</sup>. However, the stimuli from the external world are more powerful than our inner incentives. This is why we don’t need a persona when we are alone<sup>9</sup> or we even lose it, if we are completely isolated from the world<sup>10</sup>. The persona was defined as a *social* archetype to explain the weight of the “world” and the “other” from its constitution. Long before Jung, Schopenhauer observed that the persona is „paid in cash”<sup>11</sup> or, in other words, that we put on a mask in order to protect our interests (or that we are rewarded for identifying with the professional persona). One can almost say that life is a pure desire for profit, disguised under the mask of nobleness, friendship our selflessness.

Our civilized world ... is only a great masquerade; here we meet knights, parsons, soldiers, doctors, barristers, priests, philosophers, and the rest. But they are not what they represent themselves to be; they are mere masks beneath which as a rule money-makers are hidden. One man dons the mask of the law which he has borrowed for the purpose from his barrister, merely in order to be able to come to blows with another. Again, for the same purpose, a second chooses the mask of public welfare and patriotism; a third that of religion or religious reform .... It is very important for us to learn early in youth that we are living in a masquerade, otherwise we shall be unable to grasp and get at many things but shall stand before them quite puzzled...<sup>12</sup>

The Jungian conception of the persona is also anticipated by Friedrich Nietzsche. In *The Gay Science*, the German philosopher warns against the danger of identification with the professional persona, which is most of the times arbitrary and contingent, and not the result of an authentic existential choice:

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<sup>5</sup> CW 7 §246.

<sup>6</sup> CW 9/I §221.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> June Singer, *Boundaries of the Soul. The Practice of Jung’s Psychology*, New York, Anchor Books, 1994, pp. 159-164.

<sup>9</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *op. cit.* p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Hannah, *The Inner Journey. Lectures and Essays on Jungian Psychology*, Toronto, Inner City Books, 2000, p. 75.

<sup>11</sup> CW 9/1 §221.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Vol. 2, translated by E. F. J. Payne, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 210-1.

Even today ... the need to make a living still forces nearly all European men to adopt a particular role – their so-called profession ... Almost all Europeans, at an advanced age, confuse themselves with their role ... Upon deeper consideration, the role has actually *become* character; and artifice, nature ... Every time man starts to discover the extent to which he is playing a role and the extent to which he *can* be an actor, he *becomes* an actor.<sup>13</sup>

Our nowadays situation is not much different: we confuse ourselves with our roles because the identification with them is rewarded just as breaking character is swiftly penalized. Nietzsche is not concerned with the socio-anthropological developments of the falsity of the persona (something that Jean Paul Sartre will look into), being preoccupied with the psychological dimension of the person who lies to himself or herself. “Are you for real? Or only an actor? A representative? Or the represented? – In the end, you really are only an imitation of an actor...”<sup>14</sup> writes the philosopher in *The Twilight of the Idols*. Nietzsche seems to infer that the one who puts on the mask will sooner or later arrive to a sort of inner contradiction. In other words, once persona takes over your face, the Ego will also suffer. Nietzsche refers to “a labyrinth of masks behind masks which makes it difficult to discover the true person behind them”<sup>15</sup>.

Jung uses these insights from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche building his conception of identification with the persona: “Identification with one’s office or one’s title is very attractive indeed, which is precisely why so many men are nothing more than the decorum accorded to them by society. In vain would one look for a personality behind the husk. Underneath all the padding one would find a very pitiable little creature.”<sup>16</sup> “The mask of the soul” can grow “into our flesh”<sup>17</sup>, and it is difficult to distinguish between the Ego and it. “Only, the danger is that they become identical with their personas – the professor with his text-book, the tenor with his voice. Then the damage is done ... The garment of Deianeira has grown fast to his skin.”<sup>18</sup> Individuality “degenerates,” being stifled by a rigid persona.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, edited by Bernard Williams, translated by Josefine Nauckhoff, poems translated by Adrian del Caro, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 215-6.

<sup>14</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 161.

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Dixon, *Nietzsche and Jung. Sailing a Deeper Night*, New York, Peter Lang, 1999, p. 211.

<sup>16</sup> CW 7 §230.

<sup>17</sup> Barbara Hannah, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

<sup>18</sup> CW 9/I §221.

<sup>19</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *Die Psychologie von C. G. Jung. Eine Einführung in das Gesamtwerk*, Mannheim, Patmos Verlag, 2012, p. 40.

Jung shows – in a Nietzschean vein – that society pressures us into identifying with our professional persona: “Society expects ... every individual to play the part assigned to him as perfectly as possible...Society demands this as a kind of surety; each must stand at his post, here a cobbler, there a poet ... Society is persuaded that only the cobbler who is not a poet can supply workmanlike shoes.”<sup>20</sup> Jung’s argument from *The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious* resonates with Sartre’s description of the functional identity from *Being and Nothingness*:

There is the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavour to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer. Society demands that he limit himself to his function as a grocer, just as the soldier at attention makes himself into a soldier-thing with a direct regard which does not see at all, which is no longer meant to see ... There are indeed many precautions to imprison a man in what he is, as if we lived in perpetual fear that he might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition.<sup>21</sup>

According to many authors (Baudouin<sup>22</sup>, Zamfirescu<sup>23</sup>, Vogel<sup>24</sup>), the persona can be compared with the Heideggerian the “they” [*das Man*]. The persona shares with the “they” at least four of its characteristics: distanciality [*Abständigkeit*], averageness [*Durchschnittlichkeit*], levelling down [*Einebnung*], and disburdenment of being [*Seinsentlastung*]. *Abständigkeit* brings along a sort of obsession of differentiation for the *Dasein* who does not feel comfortable of recognizing the same essence in the “other,” who values separation over the acknowledgement of identity, and is, therefore, unable to utter the Sanskrit *tat twam asi*. “In one’s concern with what one has taken hold of, whether with, for, or against, the Others, there is constant care as to the way one differs from them.”<sup>25</sup>

*Durchschnittlichkeit* aspires to a sort of normative “mediocrity”: everything that doesn’t fit its pattern is marginalized or re-educated. “In this averageness with which it prescribes what can and may be ventured, it keeps

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<sup>20</sup> CW 7 §305.

<sup>21</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, New York, Washington Square Press, 1993, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Baudouin, *L’œuvre de Jung*, Paris, Éditions Payot, 1993, p. 354.

<sup>23</sup> Vasile Dem. Zamfirescu, *Filosofia inconștientului*, București, Ed. Trei, 2009, p. 445.

<sup>24</sup> Ralf T. Vogel, *C. G. Jung für die Praxis. Zur Integration jungianischer Methoden in psychotherapeutische Behandlungen*, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2016, p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford, Blackwell, 1978, §27, p. 163, henceforth BT.

watch over everything exceptional that thrusts itself to the fore."<sup>26</sup> Heidegger's *Einebnung* (levelling down) reminds us of the Nietzschean notion of *Ausgleichung*, also translated with "levelling"<sup>27</sup>: "Every kind of priority gets noiselessly suppressed.

Overnight, everything that is primordial gets glossed over as something that has long been well known."<sup>28</sup> The fourth Heideggerian feature makes mention of *Seinsentlastung* or disburdenment: "It 'was' always the 'they' who did it, and yet it can be said that it has been 'no one' ... Thus the particular Dasein in its everydayness is disburdened by the "they" ... Everyone is the other, and no one is himself ... The 'they'... is the "nobody" [*das Man ... ist das Niemand*]."<sup>29</sup> The disburdenment required by the "they" is not unlike depersonalization: it is like moving backwards on the Ego-Self axis, the devolution towards persona and *das Man*.

It is obvious that persona, as a mechanism of adjustment to the "dictates" of society, shares with *das Man* its inconspicuousness and unascertainability [*Unauffälligkeit und Nichtfeststellbarkeit*]<sup>30</sup>: "We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, we should investigate the relationship between persona and Jean Paul Sartre's version of inauthenticity: *mauvaise foi* or bad faith. Bad faith was defined as an internal lie, a manner of lying to ourselves. "Bad faith ... is ... a lie to oneself. To be sure, the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth."<sup>32</sup>

As several existentialist commentators show (see for instance Cooper<sup>33</sup>), bad faith has a paradoxical feature: I have to know the truth and lie to myself at the same time, I have to simultaneously know and not know, because the deceiver and the deceived are the same person. However, if we examined ourselves, we would observe that bad faith is a widespread phenomenon in our daily existence: rather the rule and not the exception. We tend to refuse to acknowledge the truth and accept the convenient lie, to adjust and make things

<sup>26</sup> BT §27, p. 165.

<sup>27</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil*, edited by Rolf-Peter Horstman and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman, Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 134.

<sup>28</sup> BT, *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> BT §27, p. 165-6.

<sup>30</sup> BT §27, p. 164.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *op. cit.* p. 49.

<sup>33</sup> David E. Cooper, *Existentialism. A Reconstruction*, Malden, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1999, p. 117.

easier. As Nietzsche wrote in one of his posthumous fragments, we can be described as “self-actors” or “actors before ourselves” [*Schauspieler vor euch selber*]<sup>34</sup>.

Therefore, one could redefine bad faith as an internalized Jungian persona: through it I mask for myself some features of my personality. I don’t want to know that I know certain things. The conception of an internalized persona which conceals from me certain aspects of my ego and shadow brings us to the aspect of the *half-truth* (this peculiar combination of lie and truth). The half-truth of bad faith (as inner mask) is a greater enemy of truth than the lie because the disclosed lie gives the chance of an ontic reconstruction, “a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted”<sup>35</sup>. But an existence entirely established upon an undiscovered half-truth is a castle built on sand, a poisonous and subtle form of inauthenticity.

### **Authenticity as “Ownedness” and Integration of the Shadow**

Many researchers of existential philosophy (Flynn<sup>36</sup>, Michelman<sup>37</sup>, Guignon<sup>38</sup>, Carman<sup>39</sup>) claim that Heideggerian “authenticity” must be understood as “ownedness”.

***Eigentlichkeit = eigen (own) + tlichkeit***

***Authenticity = own + edness***

**Αύθεντης = one who does things for himself (αυτός)**

(Macquarrie<sup>40</sup>).

“Heidegger’s account of authenticity exploits the etymology of the German term *Eigentlichkeit*, derived from the word *eigen*, ‘own’— in the sense of ‘a room of one’s own’— similar to how the English word *authentic* derives from the Greek word *autentes*, ‘author or originator of an action,’ one who does something on his or her own authority.”<sup>41</sup> Authenticity can also be understood, in a more general meaning, as “the project of becoming the person you are”<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, Bd. 9, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1880-1882*, Hg. von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1999, p. 182.

<sup>35</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *op. cit.* p. 70 n.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas R. Flynn, *Existentialism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Michelman, *Historical Dictionary of Existentialism*, Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth, Scarecrow Press, 2008, p. 43.

<sup>38</sup> Charles B. Guignon, *On Being Authentic*, London, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 68-9.

<sup>39</sup> Taylor Carman, “Authenticity” in Hubert L. Dreyfus, Mark A. Wrathall (Eds.), *A Companion to Heidegger*, Malden, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 285.

<sup>40</sup> John Macquarrie, *Existentialism. An Introduction, Guide and Assessment*, London, Penguin Books, 1972, p. 75.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Michelman, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>42</sup> Charles B. Guignon, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

The existential maxim “werde was du bist” [*become who you are*], adapted from Pindar by Nietzsche, urges a person to become the author of his or her own life. “To be authentic means to invent one’s *own* way and pattern of life”<sup>43</sup>, to realize a “potentiality that is properly my own”<sup>44</sup>. Authenticity has this distinctive feature of originality, nonconformism and rebellion against convention, because the dictatorship of *das Man* shall always impose a pattern that must be followed automatically and without amendments, otherwise one would be banished and even excluded from society. Moreover, the quest for authenticity could be defined as an awakening from the robotic slumber of *das Man*. The Emersonian “law” of “self-reliance” could provide inspiration for an individual who wants to become who he is, in his progression towards authenticity: “Nothing is sacred but the integrity of your own mind ... No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it.”<sup>45</sup>

According to a recent Jungian scholar<sup>46</sup>, existentialist authenticity can be compared to the Jungian process of individuation. The becoming unto being takes place on the *Ego-Self [Ich – Selbst]* axis. We are born in a state of inflation and as the Ego advances as the unconscious ocean of the Self is retreating. According to Jung, in the first half of our life we have to develop a strong and socially responsible sense of Ego. Just around midlife or *Lebenswende*, the Self begins to lead the Ego, guiding him sometimes against his will. One could say that every step towards Self is a step beyond Ego and somehow against him. The relationship between Ego and the Self is similar to the connection between *passive* or *active*, or Earth and Sun. This relationship can be internalized, as the one supposed between Goethe and Faust, or Nietzsche and Zarathustra. “I ... distinguish between the ego and the self ..., since the ego is only the subject of my consciousness, while the self is the subject of my total psyche, which also includes the unconscious... In unconscious fantasies ... the self often appears as supraordinate or ideal personality, having somewhat the relationship of Faust to Goethe or Zarathustra to Nietzsche.”<sup>47</sup>

If, in a general fashion, authenticity can be compared with individuation, we can also add, that the progression towards authenticity is particularly similar

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<sup>43</sup> Jacob Golomb, *In Search of Authenticity. From Kierkegaard to Camus*, London, New York, Routledge, 1995, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Taylor, 1991: *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, London, Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance and Other Essays*, New York, Dover Publications, 1993, pp. 21-2.

<sup>46</sup> Sanford L. Drob, *Reading the Red Book. An Interpretative Guide to C. G. Jung’s Liber Novus*, New Orleans, Spring Journal, 2012, pp. 121-5.

<sup>47</sup> CW 6 §706.

with the process of the integration of the shadow. For a number of times in his *Collected Works*<sup>48</sup>, Jung defines the shadow as an *inferior personality*. The shadow must be understood as a personal inferiority which contrasts with the superiority of the ideal of the Ego, represented by the persona<sup>49</sup>. We display the persona and repress the shadow. According to a Jungian commentator<sup>50</sup>, there are five steps of the phenomenology of the shadow: projection, recognition, dissociation, identification, and integration. Three of them are especially interesting for our argument: projection, identification, and integration.

The projection of unconscious content into our surroundings alters the individual's perception of his or her world. One can say that projection leads to a sort of autism, transforming the world into a dream through the externalization of our inner fantasy. It is not meaningless that Jung adapted the mechanism of projection from the Freudian research concerning paranoia. Therefore, we find on the outside what is hidden on the inside: most of the time, the sense of hostility from our surroundings might be a projection of our own hostility. The evil we mostly find outside ("l'enfer c'est les autres") might be a reflection of our inner negativity ("l'enfer c'est moi"). However, projection is so seductive because it maintains "Ego's monarchy." "Projection causes the least amount of distress to the ego, which can observe its twin but at a safe enough distance as to allow for the illusory sense of separation"<sup>51</sup>. One could say that shadow projection is completely inauthentic: it is almost a form of bad faith, a way of running away from the truth and from ourselves. To move in the direction of individuation, we have to practice "the path of attention"<sup>52</sup>, and retreat some of our projections in order to observe some aspects from our shadow. We have to realize that when we despise someone deeply and irrationally, we repress contempt for ourselves. The projection is only a detour through which we hide our dissatisfaction for ourselves.

The identification with the shadow (a phenomenon used by Jung to diagnose Nietzsche's inflation) is a manner of "collision with the unconscious" transforming the affected individual "into a hero or into a godlike being, a superhuman entity."<sup>53</sup> More exactly, this identification refers to "the taking over of our shadow contents in our own identity. The destructive actions are no longer

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<sup>48</sup> CW 7 §78, CW 9/I §513, CW 9/II §15, CW 16 §134.

<sup>49</sup> Jolande Jacobi, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>50</sup> Mario Trevi, „Sul problema dell'ombra nella psicologia analitica”, in Mario Trevi, Augusto Romano, *Studi sull'ombra*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2009, pp. 18-26.

<sup>51</sup> D. J. Moores, "Oh Gigantic Paradox: Poe's William Wilson and the Jungian Self", *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 7 (1), 2006, p. 34.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*, edited by William Booth, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1988, p. 47.

<sup>53</sup> CW 7§40.



perceived as foreign by Ego, being accepted as 'normal' and natural parts of our personality"<sup>54</sup>. If the unconscious seems to overpower consciousness in the process of the identification with the shadow, integration of the shadow intends, conversely, to make us aware of our unconsciousness: to pull out the primitive and infantile content from the abyss of the id and build a sort of *Lichtung* in the *tenebrositas* of the shadow. Integration of the shadow is "the beginning of the *objective attitude* regarding our personality"<sup>55</sup>. Moreover, if we were able to integrate our shadow, we would gain access to the immense energy repressed by the shadow<sup>56</sup> and advance towards individuation and wholeness.

Just as persona (a mask devised to deal with the outer world) was considered an equivalent of the Heideggerian *das Man*, the integration of the shadow through the particular movement towards individuation on the Ego-Self axis could be regarded as a version of Heideggerian authenticity. The integration of the shadow is a transgression and transformation of the shadow (understood as the "other" in ourselves), a way of becoming aware of our unconsciousness (or of illuminating the darkness), and also a manner of becoming who we are. The integration of the shadow is a kind of exploitation of "ownedness," which "carries with it a connotation of owning oneself, owning up to what one is becoming, and taking responsibility for being one's own"<sup>57</sup>.

If the final, heroic moment of the integration of the shadow is the epitome of authenticity, the preceding moment of the identification with the shadow is a mode of failing to realize our progression towards authenticity. However, we must note that both individuation and authenticity are continuous processes, in which Becoming takes precedence over Being: we cannot completely unburden ourselves from our shadow and it is a symptom of inauthenticity to brag about our authenticity. In other words, both integration of the shadow and authenticity are "metastable"<sup>58</sup> conditions: only a completely enlightened being could "burn" his shadow integrally or become attain a sort of pure authenticity. This is why one Jungian therapist emphasizes that at a mundane level, one should not speak of total integration of the shadow: one should aspire to acknowledge it and take responsibility for it<sup>59</sup> (Kast 1999: 21).

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<sup>54</sup> Ralf T. Vogel, *Das Dunkle im Menschen. Das Schattenkonzept der Analytischen Psychologie*, Stuttgart, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2015, p. 43.

<sup>55</sup> Toni Wolff, *Studien zu C. G. Jungs Psychologie*, Zürich, Rhein-Verlag, 1959, p. 153.

<sup>56</sup> Mario Trevi, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-6.

<sup>57</sup> Charles B. Guignon, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>58</sup> Gary Cox, *How to Be an Existentialist or How to Get real, get a Grip and Stop Making Excuses*, London, New York, Continuum, 2009, p. 87.

<sup>59</sup> Verena Kast, *Der Schatten in uns. Die subversive Lebenskraft*, Mannheim, Patmos Verlag, 1999, p. 21.

### Existential Death in *Being and Time* and *the Red Book*

The existentialist revolution regarding the understanding of “death” refers to avoidance of the thematisation of “our modes of existence ... in a transcendent, post-mortem life,” emphasizing instead “the presence of death in actual life and the consciousness of the existent being”<sup>60</sup>. “For existentialists, death is not a physical event or biological process but the awareness that one is going to die.”<sup>61</sup> For the purpose of this paper we can reconstruct the Heideggerian Being-towards-death with this simplified scheme:

***Angst* → *Vereinzlung* → *eigenste Möglichkeit*  
(anxiety → individualization → ownmost possibility)**

“Anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about - its authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world. Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its own most Being-in-the-world, which as something that understands, projects itself essentially upon possibilities. Therefore, with that which it is anxious about, *anxiety discloses Dasein as Being-possible ...*”<sup>62</sup> Anxiety, as *Grundbefindlichkeit* or basic state-of-mind cuts us off from the circuit of *das Man*, offering us a radical access path from the vicious circle of inauthenticity: anxiety is an invitation to “selfhood,” to individualization, to finding a personal modality of existence. We further see that death is fundamentally mine, being connected with *Jemeinigkeit* or “mineness”: “Dying is something that every Dasein itself must take upon itself at the time. By its very essence, death is in every case mine, in so far as it 'is' at all. And indeed death signifies a peculiar possibility-of-Being in which the very Being of one's own Dasein is an issue. In dying, it is shown that mineness and existence are ontologically constitutive for death.”<sup>63</sup> Moreover, “*Dasein* has a *Jemeinigkeit*, and, because it has a *Jemeinigkeit*, it is *I[Ich]*”<sup>64</sup>.

Only because I have direct and unmediated access to my death, I have the possibility of building an authentic existence: “Only by realizing that he is the wholly unique possibility of his own death does a person cease to treat himself as

<sup>60</sup> Anton Hügli, „Tod” in Urs Thurnherr, Anton Hügli, *Lexikon Existenzialismus und Existenzphilosophie*, Darmstadt, WBG, Darmstadt, 2007, p. 253.

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Michelman, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>62</sup> BT §40, p. 232.

<sup>63</sup> BT §47, p. 284.

<sup>64</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, translated by Bettina Bergo, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 24.

though he is a copy of the next man and of all men ...”<sup>65</sup> Moreover, “death is a possibility-of-Being which Dasein itself has to take over in every case. With death, Dasein stands before itself in its own most potentiality-for-Being ... Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein”<sup>66</sup>. This possibility of impossibility is my own [*eigen*] and it is constitutive of my subject, which has to deal with finitude. The possibility of not-Being extracts me from the somnambulism of *das Man*, and makes me face the inevitability of my disappearance.

One cannot transcend the grim possibility because sooner or later I have to confront death. A life deprived of its *memento mori* is a tranquil existence as long as we are immersed in *das Man* and are able to quiet the distinctive voice of anxiety. Conversely, the embrace of mortality or the courage to respond to anxiety *essentializes* the Dasein, according to his or her inner rigor and its resistance to the dictatorship of *das Man*. Heidegger adds that death “does not just 'belong' to one's own Dasein in an undifferentiated way; death *lays claim* to it as an *individual* Dasein. The non-relational character of death, as understood in anticipation, individualizes Dasein down to itself”<sup>67</sup>. This connection of the *Dasein* to his or her self (between the self as *Dasein* and the self as Being-towards-death) presupposes a sort of destruction of the network of *Mit-Sein*: the individualization of the *Dasein* brings along isolation from the “seductive” totalitarian system of *das Man*.

These seminal thoughts presented by Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927) are anticipated by Jung in *The Red Book* (1913-17/2009). In the chapter *One of the Lowly*, the description of the death of a tramp (an episode reminiscent of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) leads the narrator to a philosophical understanding of death:

The knowledge of death came to me that night, from the dying that engulfs the world. I saw how we live toward death, how the swaying golden wheat sinks together under the scythe of the reaper, / like a smooth wave on the sea-beach. He who abides in common life becomes aware of death with fear. Thus the fear of death drives him toward singleness. He does not live there, but he becomes aware of life and is happy; since in singleness he is one who becomes, and has overcome death.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Gary Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>66</sup> BT §50, p. 285-294.

<sup>67</sup> BT §53, p. 308.

<sup>68</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Red Book. Liber Novus*, edited by Sonu Shamdasani, preface by Ulrich Hoerni, translated by Mark Kyburz, John Peck and Sonu Shamdasani, New York, London, W. W. Norton & Company, 2009, p. 267a.

The relationships between fear and death, on one hand, and fear of death and singleness, on the other echo with the Heideggerian description of anxiety of “authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world” and individualization [*Vereinzelung*]. Regarding individualisation or individuation, Jung adds: “To attain individuality, we need a large share of death.”<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the phrase “we live toward death” anticipates almost verbatim the expression *Sein-zum-Tode* or Being-towards-death. In the chapter *Death*, we find the most substantial description of existential death from *The Red Book*:

We need the coldness of death to see clearly. Life wants to live and to die, to begin and to end ... If I accept death, then my tree greens, since dying increases life ... Joy at the smallest things comes to you only when you have accepted death ... Therefore I behold death, since it teaches me how to live. If you accept death, it is altogether like a frosty night and an anxious misgiving, but a frosty night in a vineyard full of sweet grapes. You will soon take pleasure in your wealth. Death ripens. One needs death to be able to harvest the fruit. Without death, life would be meaningless, since the long-lasting rises again and denies its own meaning. To be, and to enjoy your being, you need death, and limitation enables you to fulfil your being.<sup>70</sup>

“The coldness of death” resonates with the Schopenhauerian description of the *passio* of life understood as endless striving and sufferance and to the detachment of death understood as a cure to the passionate and painful will to be. Moreover, this “coldness” relates to the elegant, almost mathematic necessity of death, which brings an end to illness, sadness or distress. “Life is a task to be worked off; in this sense *defunctus* is a fine expression.”<sup>71</sup> The fruit that must be harvested with the assistance of death could be “the fruit of knowledge,” or of consciousness. In existentialist terms, anxiety of death leads to authenticity understood of “ownedness,” cutting us off from the tranquillity and security of *das Man*. The ontological fruit of anxiety wakes us up from everyday slumber of imitation, conformism and mechanical response.

“Death ... teaches me how to live” reminds of the famous principle μελέτη θανάτου (*Phaedo* 81a), which describes philosophy as the “care” or “solicitude” for death<sup>72</sup>. This ancient tradition is implicitly presupposed in the Jungian phrase

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<sup>69</sup> C. G. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 307b.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274b-275a.

<sup>71</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>72</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, translated by David Wills, Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 12-5; Jean Greisch, *Ontologie et temporalité. Esquisse d'une interprétation intégrale de Sein und Zeit*, Paris, PUF, 1994, p. 280.

but also in the Heideggerian concept of *Vorlaufen in den Tod*<sup>73</sup>, anticipation or rather *forerunning to death*. *Vorlaufen* acts as a *memento mori* disguised as *memento vivere*. “What my anticipation of my death as a possibility reveals to me is my life,” writes a Heidegger exegete<sup>74</sup>. Or, in Gabriel Liiceanu’s words: “It doesn’t matter that I will die someday, what matters is that death influenced my way of life”<sup>75</sup>. “Death ripens” could refer to the authentic focus of those who manage to overcome the dispersion and *acedia* of *das Man*<sup>76</sup> (Pieper 1986: 54-5). My death is a treasure if I am able to integrate it into my life. The slumber of inauthentic existence resembles to a sort of death in life, while the authentic acceptance of finitude adds meaning and value to existence.

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<sup>73</sup> BT §53.

<sup>74</sup> William Large, *Heidegger’s Being and Time*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p. 79.

<sup>75</sup> Gabriel Liiceanu, „Excurs asupra câtorva termeni heideggerieni din *Ființă și timp*”, in Martin Heidegger, *Ființă și timp*, translated by Gabriel Liiceanu and Cătălin Cioabă, București, Humanitas, 2003, p. 618.

<sup>76</sup> Josef Pieper, *On Hope*, translated by Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1986, pp. 54-5.