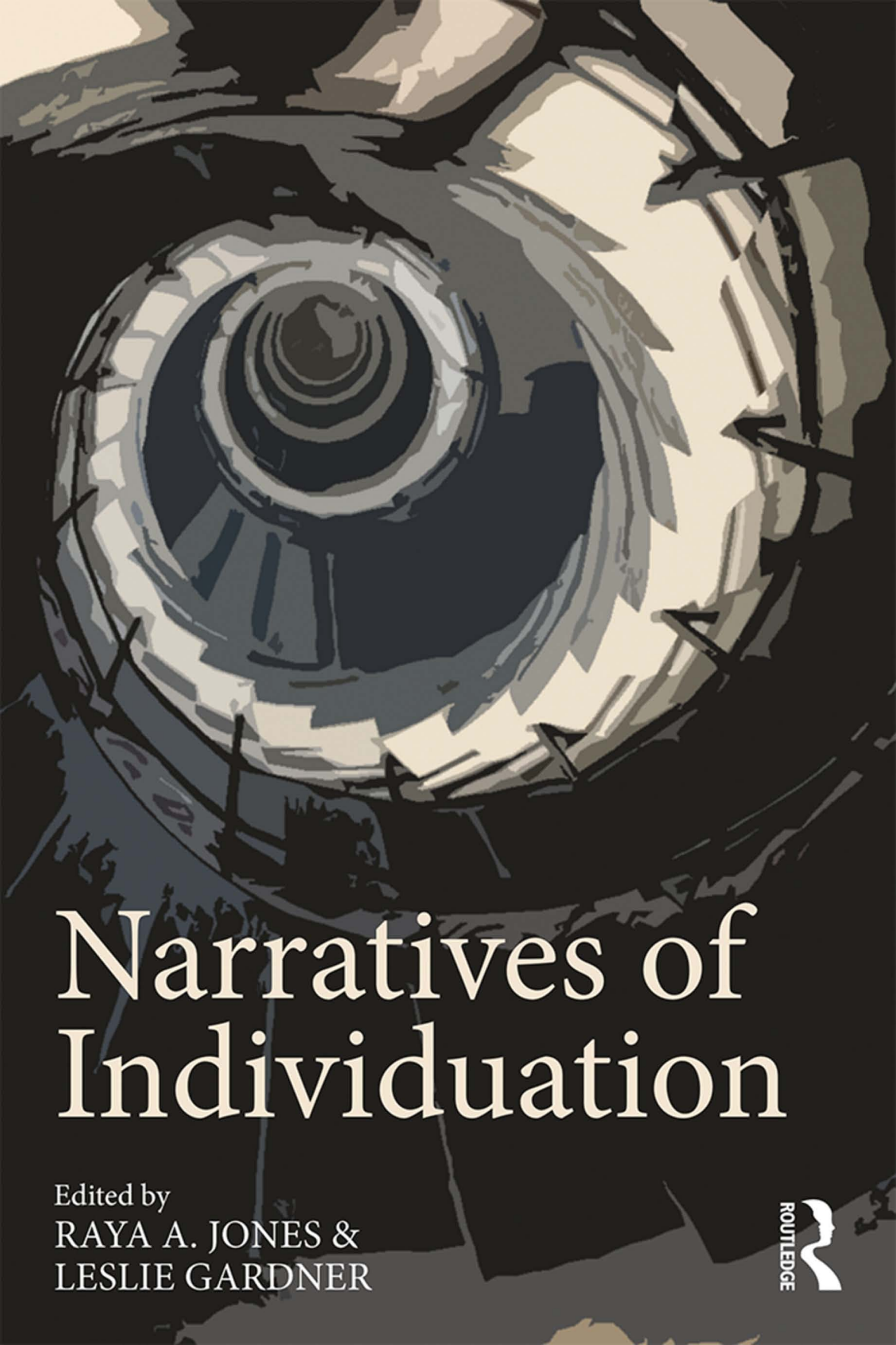

Narratives of Individuation

Edited by
RAYA A. JONES &
LESLIE GARDNER

ROUTLEDGE

Narratives of Individuation

In *Narratives of Individuation*, Raya A. Jones and Leslie Gardner present 12 cutting-edge essays that bridge Jungian and narrative approaches to self-understanding, and offer critical appraisal of both approaches. Exploring the Jungian concept of individuation and the related interest in dreams, as well as the premise of the narrative self and the related interest in life-stories, this innovative volume interprets the topic in unique and unprecedented ways.

An outstanding selection of contributors covers several overarching themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of these two powerful narratives. The contributors explore historical and conceptual issues concerning the narrative self, as well as applying it, including to Jung's autobiography. Chapters also examine how Jung developed his theory of individuation, and engage with contemporary thinking in anthropology, psychology (including the dialogical self) and Jungian psychotherapy, towards refiguring how people arrive at self-understanding. Written by leaders in the field, *Narratives of Individuation* is a valuable interdisciplinary resource that illuminates a multitude of perspectives on individuation and self-realisation.

Owing to its original ideas and breadth of scope, *Narratives of Individuation* will appeal to academics and students of Jungian and post-Jungian studies, anthropology, psychology, literary studies and anyone examining concepts of selfhood and the significance of narrativity. It will also be of great interest to Jungian analysts and psychotherapists, and analytical psychologists.

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Introduction

Raya A. Jones

Narratives of Individuation brings together two powerful narratives about self-understanding. One narrative originates in depth psychology and pivots on a unique concept of individuation that the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung articulated in the first half of the twentieth century. It remains central in Jungian clinical practice, and various aspects of Jung's analytical psychology have become topics for scholarship in the humanities. The other narrative emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, initially in the humanities and later in the social sciences, and has been articulated by many scholars who locate self-understanding in the unfolding of one's personal narrative. This postmodern 'turn' to narrative has constellated into distinctive research programmes that involve analyses of life stories, written and oral, and cut across disciplines within the academia. Interdisciplinarity characterises both the Jungian and narrative movements; but the two have not merged. They seem separated by a shared terminology, each having a different construal of selfhood, individuation, and the significance of narrativity.

What is 'individuation'? According to the 2018 online edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), individuation is '1. The state or condition of being an individual; separate and continuous existence as a single indivisible entity; individuality, personal identity.' It is also '2. a. The action or process of forming something into an individual entity, or of distinguishing an individual entity from others of the same kind. Also: the process of becoming an individual person or entity, individualization.' *Narratives of Individuation* prompts a critical evaluation of the postmodern attribution of personal identity construction to autobiographical telling. We may concur with Charles Taylor (1989, p. 47) that the fact 'we grasp our lives in a narrative' is an 'inescapable feature of human life … a basic condition of making sense of ourselves', and yet wonder whether there's more to human self-experience than narrativity.

The Jungian framework, with its emphasis of the unconscious, provides an Archimedean vantage point from which to critique the postmodern view. The *OED* informs: '2 d. *Psychology*. In the analytical system of C. G. Jung: the process of establishing the wholeness and autonomy of the individual self by integrating consciousness and the collective unconscious. Also more fully

individuation process.' Under this entry the dictionary quotes, inter alia, Jung (1921, para. 757): 'Individuation, therefore, is a process of differentiation, having for its goal the development of the individual personality.' When read out of context, however, this quotation fails to convey the extent to which the Jungian concept opposes notions of individualisation. He employs the term 'differentiation' to denote a refinement of psychological functions (thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition) – for instance, 'Undifferentiated thinking is … continuously mixed up with sensations, feelings, intuitions' (Jung 1921, para. 705). For Jung, the 'goal of the individuation process is the synthesis of the self' (Jung 1940, para. 278). His idea is close to what the *OED* lists under the phrase, *principle of individuation*: 'b. Chiefly *Metaphysics*. The principle by which the constituent parts of something are integrated into a single whole.' *Narratives of Individuation* prompts a critical evaluation of Jung's metaphysics. The narrative framework and other postmodern frames-of-reference (e.g. dialogical, psychosocial), with their emphasis on relational being or the social genesis of selves, provide an Archimedean vantage point from which to critique the Jungian premise.

Three general themes guide the sequence of the chapters, though we resist the division of the book into Parts. The themes overlap, and chapters thematically lead into each other, as follows.

Theme 1: the examined life

In the heyday of postmodernism and specifically in the context of the narrative movement, Socrates' counterfactual, 'the unexamined life is not worth living', became a kind of slogan. It was oft-quoted towards asserting that the worth of one's life unfolds by virtue of examining it, and therefore the examined life is the life worth living. For some, the adage served to justify the analysis of autobiographies. This cluster of chapters includes this element too, but also goes beyond any simplistic application.

In Chapter 1, which may serve as an extended introduction, Raya Jones defends the characterisation of Jungian and narrative psychologies as each other's 'other' through a critical comparison of their respective ontologies and epistemologies. Jones uses a real-life vignette to engage with the question of what each psychology enables us to see (and what it leaves out) regarding the processes whereby people find meaning in their lives.

The historical reflection specifically on the narrative movement that is introduced in Chapter 1 is taken further, in greater depth, by Mark Freeman in Chapter 2. Freeman, himself a major exponent of narrative psychology since the 1990s, provides a critical retrospect, querying some aspects of the original argument for narrative knowing. In a way, he challenges the challenge that decades ago he and others had articulated. The butt of their argument was the traditional conceptualisation of development in psychology; that is, development described as maturation towards a predetermined end-goal. We can find the contested conception of teleological progress also in the Jungian idea of individuation as an

optimal end-state of adult development. Nevertheless, Freeman approvingly highlights other aspects of Jung's theory. He also raises important questions of ethics and values. To paraphrase, individuation involves a movement of coming-to-consciousness, but the quality of the resultant insight could vary from a gratifying sense of self-realisation to a horrifying sense of the profound ways in which one has been in the dark. Freeman defines individuation as an interpretive process.

While the narrative framework locates the interpretive process in the unfolding of self-narratives – whether these life stories are explicitly told or implicitly lived by – the Jungian framework attends to a vertical movement, a thrust upward to consciousness. Individuation in the Jungian sense is both an ideal state of being (marked by a balance across conscious and unconscious elements of the self) and personal development towards this state. Jung postulated a regulating principle, whereby the unconscious has its say in dreams, artwork, myths, fairy tales, visions or hallucinations, the themes of which compensate for the one-sidedness of ego-consciousness. It nevertheless involves an interpretive process. The spontaneous thrust would remain ineffective, a dream forgotten soon upon waking, unless it stirred a 'horizontal' movement by entering one's conscious dialogue-with-oneself and with others through engagement with one's images (especially under the guidance of a Jungian analyst). In Chapter 3, Megumi Yama demonstrates this process in practice. She presents a case study concerning a young woman, 'Min', that speaks for itself: the account shows how Min's dreams and self-narrative intertwined over time, and intertwined also with Yama's own narrative about her, all of which progressively led to Min's empowered sense of her personal identity as a third-generation ethnic Korean in Japan.

Issues of identity in cultural contexts became highly topical in the closing decades of the last century. Sociologists and anthropologists noted how globalisation, accelerated change, and the fragmentation of society, led to a dissolution of the 'grand narratives' of politics and science and, instead, the 'small' narratives of real lives became prominent. Auto/biographies became popular, and also attracted scholarly interest. The trend manifested itself in an interest in Jung's autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, in its own right (as opposed to an interest in Jung's theory per se). Fascinated by how a life becomes a text, literary critic James Olney (1972) analysed Jung's autobiography, unperturbed by the extent to which it was edited and partially written by Aneila Jaffé. Yet, Jung (and Jaffé) had an agenda. In Chapter 4, Leslie Gardner interrogates Jung's memoirs alongside Augustine's *Confessions* and Giambattista Vico's *Autobiography*, and underlines autobiographical narratives as agenda-driven.

Theme 2: 'Jung' examined

The chapters clustered here represent a 'stream' within contemporary Jungian studies, which is characterised by critiques of how Jung went about developing his theory. A focus on Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* is carried into

Chapter 5, but in this chapter Mark Saban challenges us to consider the extent to which the canons of analytical psychology are owed to Jung's personal myth. Saban's analysis of the autobiography highlights Jung's self-reported sense of having two personalities (Personality No. 1 and Personality No. 2) and how these conjointly influenced his life-course choices. This personal myth of 'split' personality may have underpinned not only Jung's interpretation of the particular course that his own life had taken, but also his formation of a model of the psyche as a divided whole.

In Chapter 6, Paul Bishop points to the unfolding of Jung's personal narrative in a different, more existential way. Bishop proposes to view the opus of Jung's *Red Book* (originally a folio manuscript in which Jung gave free rein to his fantasies, musings and visions) as a self-narrative – not in the autobiographical sense, but in the sense that the narration of the fantasies that gushed forth from Jung's unconscious at the time follows a conventional narrative configuration (a crisis-to-resolution plot line).

In Chapter 7, Terence Dawson goes as far as to suggest, provocatively, that the application of analytical psychology in clinical practice is an offshoot of Jung's analysis of texts that caught his imagination; and that his works first and foremost present a narrative or textual theory. Indeed, Jung's later writings seldom provide clinical material and, instead, present analyses of myths, fairy tales, medieval and ancient texts, and (to a lesser extent) literary works. Dawson problematises Jung's assumptions about the spontaneity or 'purity' of written fantasies, using E. T. A. Hoffmann's 'The Golden Pot' to make his own case.

Literary stylistics have long explored many approaches to narrative, but it seems that only in the twentieth century was the language of the psychological interior first assimilated into narratology, insofar as the modern study of texts approaches stylistics as dynamically motivated, revealing personal drives and agendas. Chapter 4 shows how autobiographies may serve their authors' agendas. In Chapter 8, Leslie Gardner contrasts Jung's assumption about the significance of affect in the process of individuation with the role of affect in the rhetorical device of *narratio* as discussed in the classics. She suggests that while the ancients problematised the rhetorical use of affect, Jung might have place too much faith in the authenticity of emotional 'irruptions'.

Theme 3: 'individuation' refigured

Paul Ricoeur (1984) identified three aspects of narratively representing human experience in literary fiction: prefiguration, configuration and refiguration. The same may apply also to how *Narratives of Individuation* presents its topic. In Ricoeur's literary theory, prefiguration refers to the fact that any fiction presupposes some prior understanding of the real world. Likewise, this volume's expositions of theories and practices – and our very project of bringing them together – reflect prior understanding of the fields in which those theories and practices have emerged. For Ricoeur, narrative configuration denotes how events

are assembled into a narrative with a plot. Here, our ordering of the chapters 'tells a story'. We arrive at refiguration: 'an endless spiral' that could revisit the same point from different attitudes (Ricoeur 1984, p. 72). The final juxtaposition of chapters samples the 'fluidity' of the topic area that *Narratives of Individuation* seeks to demarcate. Narratives about individuation are in constant flux even within a well-defined frame-of-reference such as the Jungian, let alone the more nebulous narrative-centred. Particular premises are revisited, reformulated, partially or wholly abandoned by some exponents, and at the same time traditional insights continue to inspire, be applied and elaborated, by others. In our journey through the following chapters, we first move away from Jungian and narrative psychologies, and then return afresh to the 'old' concept.

Jung (e.g. 1950) referred to mandala symbolism as intuitive representations of the self as a complex whole, symmetrically differentiated – and closed. In Chapter 9, Fabrice Dubosc challenges that monadic conception. He prompts attention to the 'open' mandala implied in contemporary anthropology and philosophy. His tour-de-force of current trends draws upon Viveiros de Castro's ethno-narrative of disempowered cultures, Gilbert Simondon's philosophy of the transindividual, and more. Dubosc's account underscores ontologies that decentre from the 'I' of individuated human consciousness and reposition the possibility of consciousness in a relational web that also includes nonhumans and ecosystems.

In Chapter 10, Vincent Hevern directs our attention to everyday life as lived in this century – life with the internet and social media. It is perhaps significant that, in this chapter and other recent publications, Hevern (who promoted narrative psychology throughout the late 1990s and 2000s in a website he had created) considers the impact of communication technologies on human experience through the lens of Hubert Hermans' theory of the dialogical self. The move from the narrative metaphor of the self to the dialogical, with its Bakhtinian emphasis on multivoicedness, has been a 'natural' progression for some psychologists (Raya Jones included).

Having moved a considerable distance away from the Jungian tradition in the above two chapters, we conclude the volume with two chapters that represent contemporary work in the spirit of this tradition.

Interestingly but unsurprisingly, the narrative movement that swept across the academia has made little impact in the Jungian world. The late-twentieth century zeitgeist also manifested itself in subtle shifts of emphasis in the Jungian world – shifts that are sometimes presented as if seamlessly continuous with Jung's own thought, sometimes problematising it. While there is no evidence for a 'narrative turn' within the Jungian community, sporadic publications sought to connect Jungian ideas with narratology (e.g. Roesler 2006; Dobson 2008). In his early work, Christian Roesler (2006) drew directly upon narrative psychology (citing Jerome Bruner and Dan McAdams) towards developing a narratological methodology for identifying archetypal story patterns in life stories. Nevertheless, the very quest for archetypal pattern affirmed his commitment to Jungian ontology.

Reinforcing this commitment in Chapter 11, Roesler directs attention to the 'second' author of the self, the unconscious (originally understated or ignored by narrative psychologists), and reports a new index for content analysis of dream series, a Structural Dreams Analysis (SDA), developed by him. As Dawson (Chapter 7) puts it, key to the Jungian concept of individuation is that active confrontation with one's dreams over time could lead to a balanced acceptance of oneself, but Jung realised that it is not easy to measure such change in a person. As seen, Yama (Chapter 3) provides a vivid example of such confrontation; she mostly lets the dreams speak – a narrative of individuation unfolds in the telling – but also reflects on her own subjective responses. This could hardly be more diametrically opposed to Roesler's SDA procedure, whereby patients' dreams are coded by several 'blinded' interpreters who are deliberately not told anything about the dreamer and the case history. Put side by side, Chapters 3 and 11 demonstrate two very different directions in which the 'classic' Jungian premise is translated into clinical practice.

Finally, while the creation of self-narratives through the interpretation of dreams – as well as 'spontaneous' paintings (see Chapter 8) – is staple in Jungian practice, in Chapter 12 Inna Semetsky takes *Narratives of Individuation* along the 'road less travelled' (although extensively explored in her numerous publications): self-understanding by means of reading and interpreting the archetypal images of Tarot cards.

Summing up, the various roads travelled towards self-understanding are sampled here, albeit with particular reference to the Jungian. Jung started to lay the conceptual cornerstones of his analytical psychology in the 1910s. By mid-century, Jung (1954) regarded his own concept of individuation as confirmed, so much so that 'To one familiar with our psychology, it may seem a waste of time to keep harping on the long-established difference between … the coming-to-be of the self (individuation)' and 'the coming of the ego into consciousness' (Jung 1954, para. 432). Having embarked upon the project of *Narratives of Individuation*, we do not regard it as 'a waste of time' to harp on the difference between the two aspects of self-experiencing. On the contrary, it is important to consider both.

Historically, the Jungian and narrative movements appear like islands within the vast sea of modern discourses about selfhood. For decades, the two of us (Jones and Gardner) navigated the waters between the Jungian and the narrative in our own ways and from our respective backgrounds in the humanities (Gardner) and the social sciences (Jones). Gardner's study of rhetoric and the classics in the context of Jungian studies links to psychoanalytical-psychosocial and feminist theories, whereas Jones' engagement with Jungian studies is grounded in social psychology, in particular dialogical and narrative frameworks. In conceiving the idea for an edited book, we wished to create a space for voices other than only our own, even if particular essays remain in one 'island' or the other. We hope that the juxtaposition of the essays will allow readers who are familiar with one perspective and not with the other to get a glimpse of the other shore.

The promise of the book does not end there. While both the Jungian and narrative movements continue to thrive at the time of writing, following their own trajectories, neither is the 'last word' historically. The present-day zeitgeist – with its discourses of posthumanism and transhumanism, cyberspace, New Materialism, the Age of the Brain, 'turns' to affect, and debates about the Anthropocene – puts the original canons of both Jungian and narrative psychologies under scrutiny within their respective intellectual communities. *Narratives of Individuation* arrives at this arena.

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Chapter 1

Dialogues with a talking skull that refuses to speak

Jungian and narrative psychologies

Raya A. Jones

Coming across a talking skull

A hunter walking in the jungle came across a human skull, and wondered aloud, 'What brought you here?' To his astonishment, the skull replied. 'Talking brought me here,' it said. The hunter ran back to the village to tell the king. The king didn't believe him and sent a guard to verify the hunter's story, with orders to kill him if it wasn't true. All day long the hunter begged the skull to speak but it remained silent. The hunter was killed. As his head rolled next to the skull, the skull asked, 'What brought you here?' The hunter's head replied, 'Talking brought me here.'

This tale is widespread throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The above paraphrases a version collected from the Nupe of Nigeria, reported in Leo Frobenius' *Volksmärchen und Volksdichtungen* in 1924 (translated: Frobenius and Fox 1937/1983, p. 161). Bascom (1977) documented 43 versions gathered by various researchers. I found a few more in folktale anthologies. Often, the message is not to tell lies. Sometimes the skull talks to the executioner, who then realises that the hunter told the truth. As told by the Yoruba of Nigeria (reported in Bascom), the skull speaks to the executioner, who in turn tells the king, who sends another guard to verify the story. Again, the skull refuses to speak, the first guard is killed, and the skull talks to his executioner. The cycle repeats until an appropriate ritual of atonement is performed for the original deceased. In a Somali variant told in 1998, the skull says, 'Beware of divulging secrets, because that is what got me here, dead' (Morgan 2013, p. 181, n. 41). Morgan notes also the appearance of the tale in a novel by the Irish novelist Peter Murphy, in which an African immigrant to Ireland tells another version of the tale.

While the tale's origin is uniquely African, it has made an unexpected impact in a Welsh community. I first heard it from Jack (pseudonym), a middle-aged working-class white Welshman with no African connections. During the 1990s he used to participate in storytelling events, and came across the Frobenius and Fox version reprinted in Yolen (1986, p. 8). Not long afterwards, an acrimonious situation unfolded in his workplace, which involved a conflict with his boss over some project. Jack resorted to telling the tale to his boss in order to communicate

his own frustrations. The humour diffused the immediate confrontation but didn't resolve the practical situation. Subsequently among Jack's colleagues, the phrase 'talking skull' became insider-code for situations when opening your mouth to try to improve things, or perhaps volunteering to do something, ends up making matters worse or awkward for you. Ever since he shared that anecdote with me I've been noticing talking-skull situations in my own working life. But we wouldn't be having the current dialogue with the tale if that was all.

The talking skull acquired meaningfulness beyond words for Jack. He started to collect visual reminders, such as a cartoon skull for the background on his phone and laptop, and also showed me a small skull-looking pebble he had found and kept. Why?

Hearing this 'why' as querying Jack's peculiar obsession prefigures the inquiry as a clinical or quasi-clinical case study. Investigating the case would require in-depth interviews with Jack, on the basis of which we may create some story about him (possibly co-constructed with him and likely changing his self-understanding in the process). I was not inclined to pursue the case-study line, however, and did not invite my friend to participate in formal research. His story remains anecdotal because my interest lay in the kind of inquiry where the 'why' raises theoretical issues about general processes of meaning making. The 'Jack and the Talking Skull' vignette became assimilated into my academic narratives in a variety of ways (Jones 2002, 2008, 2010, 2014).

The present return to the vignette aims to bring together Jungian and narrative approaches without losing sight of their differences. What may come into sight when we look at this empirical material through Jungian-tinted glasses? What may come into sight through a narrative-psychological lens? This is my position: the two psychologies are not options for explaining the same phenomenon. It is not a case of some phenomenon becoming an object of study, and therefore can be understood correctly or incorrectly. Instead, Jungian and narrative psychologies are discrete discourses that construct different abstract entities under similar, even identical terms, and consequently identify different phenomena as relevant for their constructs.

The problem of meaning

It's plain to see that the talking skull was meaningful to Jack, and reasonable to assume that there is a psychological explanation. The problem with 'meaning' as a scientific problem starts with the lack of consensus about what exactly is the phenomenon in question, and is exacerbated by the irony of objectively investigating subjectivity. As Jung (1948a) pointed out, modern psychology 'does not exclude the existence of faith, conviction, and experienced certainties of whatever description,' but 'completely lacks the means to prove their validity in the scientific sense' (Jung 1948a, para. 384).

Recently, the editors of a book entitled *The Psychology of Meaning* (Markman, Proulx and Lindberg 2013) announced the emergence of a science of

meaning as 'a distinct discipline … just now beginning to coalesce', commenting that the word *meaning* – formerly 'the province of existential philosophy, existential psychology, and the related clinical literature' – started to appear more frequently in social psychology, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience (Markman *et al*. 2013, p. 4). Nevertheless, as their description implies, a psychology of meaning remains a loose assemblage of ideas and issues that have diverse disciplinary trajectories and gravitate towards a shared interest. The array of contributions to Markman *et al*.'s volume attests to this heterogeneity. It also reveals a bias. While narrative psychology is duly represented in a chapter by Dan McAdams, a leading figure in this field, only three out of the 23 chapters mention Jung in passing, and none engages with what Jung had to say.

The omission of analytical psychology reflects the historical marginalisation of Jung in the academia, a situation that has resulted in ignorance about his ideas. More significantly, however, Jung and his followers approach meaning in a fundamentally different way than do traditions such as existentialist, humanistic and constructivist psychologies. In the non-Jungian contexts, the focus is on meaning-making, that is, how persons negotiate life's challenges through articulating their perceptions, feelings, and evaluations of events and situations. This presupposes a self-aware subject who *makes* meaning, however tacit the construction process might be. In contrast, Jung's analytical psychology describes how meaning *happens* to people. Our dreams, fantasies, projections and affective reactions give expression to lived experiences, and in this way make *us*, our constitution as self-aware subjects. The two psychologies may pertain to different stages in an epistemic process: someone is troubled, has dreams, intrusive thoughts and inexplicable emotions that symbolically represent her anxieties and predispose her subjective orientation (enter analytical psychology). Eventually she finds a 'narrative' that makes sense of it all (enter narrative psychology).

Yet, the two psychologies conflict regarding the origins of psychological interiority. Jungian theorising is committed to the idea of an innate blueprint for the psyche; i.e. pregiven rules or principles. This blueprint (so-called the 'objective psyche' or 'collective unconscious') disposes us towards particular kinds of experiences and governs the expression of experiences, and its constituents, archetypes, are 'the "human quality" of the human being, the specifically human form his activities take. This specific form is hereditary and is already present in the germ-plasm' (Jung 1954a, para. 152). In contrast, the discourse of 'meaning making' that emerged in psychology and psychotherapy during the second half of the last century is grounded in constructivism.

In a nutshell, constructivism holds that the human mind generates tacit rules, 'models' or templates of the world based on one's lived experiences, and these templates serve the person to make sense of past experiences and to anticipate future experiences. Mahoney and Granvold (2005) define constructivism as a meta-perspective according to which much of 'human activity is devoted to *ordering processes* – the organizational patterning of experience' – which are 'fundamentally emotional, tacit, and … are the essence of meaning-making'

(Mahoney and Granvold 2005, p. 74, emphasis in original). Different constructivist frameworks interpret this premise differently, or bring different themes to the fore. Narrative psychology locates the ordering process in narrativity. Jungian psychology too pertains to the mental organisation of experience but (unlike constructivist theories) assumes a pre-existing biologically given template. The incommensurability of ontologies aside, the question at this juncture is which parts of this proverbial elephant – the problem of meaning – particular premises touch, and what they leave untouched. The following illustrates with concrete examples.

Apropos helping people to cope with loss and grief, constructivist therapists Gillies, Neimeyer and Milman (2014, p. 208) define *meaning-making* as a process of negotiating life's challenges by 'retaining, reaffirming, revising, or replacing elements of their orienting system to develop more nuanced, complex and useful systems'. They distinguish the meaning-making process from its outcomes, the *meanings made*. The cited paper reports the development of a 30-category coding system, the Meaning of Loss Codebook (MLC), for analysing meanings made in the wake of the death of a loved one. Gillies *et al*. propose that the MLC could aid the analysis of personal accounts of bereavement experiences such as in diaries, blogs and clinical interviews. The MLC provides a standard list of meanings-already-made by bereaved adults who could articulate their feelings. Coding the presence of particular references in someone's account, however, cannot shed light on how this person arrived at these meanings. Self-reports of feeling grief, guilt, depression, emptiness, regret about things done or left undone, or missing the deceased (Categories 21–24 of the MLC) are a step removed from the 'raw' emotional experience, which in some cases might be expressed in one's inability to talk about a traumatic loss.

Sarbin (2001), who championed narrative psychology in the 1980s, described his own grief and crying when his wife of 50 years died. He used the personal account towards a theoretical point about emotions, reiterating his ontological position that 'we live in story-shaped worlds' (Sarbin 2001, p. 218). Contending that 'actions traditionally subsumed under the substantive term "emotion," such as anger, fear, pride, joy, shame, guilt, etc., are the names of narrative plots,' he proposes that instead of regarding a grieving widow as 'a passive victim gripped by specific emotions,' we should observe that she 'has agentially gripped a narrative plot' of grief (Sarbin 2001, p. 219). The act is agentic not because one can choose to grieve or not to grieve (for instance) but because that's how human agents engage with events. Sarbin (1986) argued that virtually everything psychologists study is storied or story-like – we 'think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures' – opining that suffices it to 'reflect on any slice of life' in order to 'entertain seriously the proposal that the narratory principle guides thought and action' (Sarbin 1986, p. 8). He underlined the real even when considering fiction. Reflecting on historical cases of novels influencing lives, such as the wave of suicides that followed the 1774 publication

of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (the protagonist commits suicide due to unrequited love), Sarbin (2004) drew attention to the power of the imagination as necessary for readers' identification with literary fiction. As I have commented elsewhere, thinking oneself 'into' a novel requires imagination, but 'it takes something else *to feel* its message so powerfully that one's own destiny ends up mimicking the fate of non-existent beings in an imaginary world' (Jones 2010, p. 561; emphasis added).

Literary works can also be their author's means of investigating something otherwise inarticulable, ill-understood or too painful (Jones 2014). Carvalho (2008) presents a clinical case study of an elderly woman approaching death. To convey his patient's melancholia, he quotes a poem, 'The Setting of the Moon' by Giacomo Leopardi, who died in his 30s after many years of ill health:

> undiminished is desire, hope extinct
> dry the wells of pleasure, pain
> ever growing, and good withheld
> forever
>
> (Carvalho 2008, 53, p. 7; Carvalho's translation)

As an expression of the poet's own end-of-life melancholia, the poem attests to meaning made through artistic creativity and symbolic representation. It is meaningful – and yet eludes analysis in the manner of reality-centred narrative analysis, let alone the aforementioned Meaning of Loss Codebook. It is knowable through qualities of feeling. Carvalho's citation involves the reader in meaning-making beyond words. If we are moved by the poem, the efficacy of its pathos demonstrates the activation of a psychological process in us. The poem creates a mood that the reader enters through empathy. If we succumb to the mood, we might end up ruminating about our own mortality.

Dialogue and subjectivity in contexts

Ruminating about mortality: the iconic image is of Hamlet holding up Yorick's skull. The Shakespearean skull doesn't talk. Hamlet's dialogue is with himself. But there is a dialogue.

According to the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin, *dialogue* is the very essence of authentic human existence and its expression:

> The dialogic nature of consciousness, the dialogic nature of human life itself.… To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds.
>
> (Bakhtin 1984, p. 293)

Bakhtin's dialogism provides not only a kind of answer to the problem of meaning – more precisely, a direction – but also an epistemology. The ontological statement encapsulated in the above quotation sets a direction for investigating meaning-making as an emergent property of embodied dialogic participation (consciousness), with the corollary that meanings-made depend on the particular context. Bakhtin coined the term *heteroglossia* to express the fact that the same word can have different meanings when uttered under different sets of conditions. Epistemology-wise, dialogism provides a lens through which to engage with one's subject matter (Jones 2017).

Bakhtin (1986) described scholarship as a 'special kind of dialogue' that consists of complex interrelations between a given text constituting the object of study and the 'framing' context that is created through 'questioning, refuting, and so forth' this text (Bakhtin 1986, pp. 106–107). Bringing Jungian and narrative perspectives together in the course of questioning, refuting, and so forth their respective claims creates a context that frames them in relation to each other, and generates some narrative about them both.

Both Jungian and narrative psychologies frame what is relevant for psychologists to know about meaning in relation to what is important to know about selfhood. Put another way, in both psychologies the scientific problem of meaning is closely linked to the scientific problem of selfhood (in contrast to how semioticians study meaning, for instance). In both, the problem-space shifts in ways that one problem appears as a kind of answer to the other problem. When the problem is meaning-making, what is relevant to know is 'answered' by deference to selfhood; that is, assuming a human subject for whom things are meaningful, and explicating what is meaningful and why. When the problem is selfhood, what is relevant to know is 'answered' by deference to meaning; that is, postulating processes whereby people become aware of their existential meaning.

The oscillation between the two problems is reminiscent of optical illusions in which we see the same picture as alternately showing one of two images (a young/old woman, a duck/rabbit) and cannot hold the two images simultaneously in our gaze. Nevertheless, the cognitive act of to-ing and fro-ing between those two images depends on the constant presence of the physical picture and constancy of a perceiver looking at it. Underlying the to-ing and fro-ing between the twin problems of meaning and selfhood there is a constancy of assuming a self-aware human subject. The history of modern psychology could be told in terms of how the rise and demise of schools of thought reflected different attitudes to the so-called Cartesian subject. It was variously taken for granted, ignored, challenged, rejected, and problematised afresh. The issue of what Jungian versus narrative psychologies identify as important to know about meaning and selfhood is nested within that history. But, in accordance with the principle of heteroglossia, how the history is told can change its meaning.

Back in the day when 'narrative' was talk of the day, Sarbin (1986) made his case for narrative psychology by drawing upon Pepper's (1942) root-metaphor

theory of how worldviews evolve. People wishing to understand the world may settle upon some common-sense fact and apply it to other areas. This becomes the basic analogy, and its structural characteristics become the basic conception of explanation and description. Pepper delineated formism, mechanism, contextualism and organicism – in that order – as the four standard metatheories in modern sciences (dismissing animism and mysticism as irrelevant in modernity). Sarbin identified formism, mechanism, organicism and contextualism – in that order – in modern psychology. The order of listing those '-isms' is significant. It performs an act of meaning. Unlike Sarbin, Pepper did not favour any particular worldview, and indeed set forth his root-metaphor theory as challenging dogmatism, wryly concluding his book with the open question, 'Am I not dogmatically undogmatic?' (Pepper 1942, p. 348). Organicism comes last in Pepper's list, perhaps because in the 1940s it was the youngest of metaphysical systems. Jung's worldview readily accords with the organism metaphor (he likened the psyche to the body throughout his works). Sarbin (1986) placed contextualism last, however, as if to say: this is better than anything listed before it.

Sarbin located narrative psychology in contextualism, having rejected the machine and organism metaphors that had dominated psychology. Contextualism is historically associated with the American pragmatists – William James, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead are usually cited as forerunners – and with quests to understand human behaviour in its natural setting. But what exactly is humans' 'natural setting'?

In the 1950s, Roger Barker and associates, based in Oskaloosa, Kansas, believed that it was important to understand the synergy between people's activities and structural features of everyday settings in which the activities take place, and that this scientific goal required charting the kinds of habitats (termed 'behaviour settings') into which children grow up. The researchers meticulously observed streams of behaviour in schools, shops, parks, hospitals and more. In a music lesson, the fly-on-the-wall observer noted that ten-year-old Anne entered the classroom, sat down, picked up the music book, listened to the teacher, watched other pupils, and raised her hand in response to the teacher's questions a few times (Barker 1968, p. 12ff.). Those researchers were not interested in what the music lesson meant to Anne herself, her story, or (to paraphrase Sarbin) the story-shaped world she inhabited. Nor were they interested in how the behaviour setting, its rules and power relations, shaped the child's subjectivity – an issue that postmodern scholars who define *subjectivity* as the 'condition and experience of being a subject, including the process of production of subjects through subjectification or subjection' (Walkerdine 2014, p. 1880) may regard as critical to know.

Furthermore, while the behaviour setting analysts documented mundane behaviours, they were not intrigued by the mundane fact that Anne could make her body walk into the classroom, sit down, and so forth. Countless philosophical theses have grappled with this classic mind–body problem, associated with Descartes; namely, how the mind causes bodily movement, such as raising

one's hand at will. In 1748, La Mettrie purported to resolve the problem of Cartesian dualism by regarding all mental faculties as aspects of corporeal or material substance, boldly concluding that Man is a machine. A paradox of modernity was already present in La Mettrie's conclusion (de Vos 2011). There is inevitable subjectivity in *imagining* oneself as machine-like with zero subjectivity. By the 2010s, brain–computer interface technology apparently solved the puzzle of how the conscious mind can make one's body move. Successful demonstrations of a mind-controlled robotic arm that paralysed people can control by thought alone – making it pick up things, wave, and so forth – are already old news. If we inquire what picking up something, waving, etc., mean to the actor, we implicitly assume that the person has intentional states.

From early childhood, it is obvious to all humans (barring neurological impairment such as associated with autism) that they and others have mental states. And yet scholars in certain academic enclaves construe this fact as metaphysically freakish. It is inherent in the paradox of modernity that having to acknowledge our undeniable subjectivity is like coming across a talking skull.

Picking up the talking skull

'Regardless of the goal of the research, the only possible point of departure is the text' (Bakhtin 1986, p. 104). This is technically correct, but the text is also a point of arrival. Scholars arrive there in the middle of a journey that follows a sequence of questions already articulated within particular disciplinary contexts. Bakhtin probably had in mind texts such as literary novels and philosophical treaties. In the social sciences, research questions often lead to the production of texts-to-be-analysed. If social scientists who analyse personal narratives happened to be interested in Jack's case, they would arrive at the specific study in the pursuit of other issues that generate reasons for looking into his case, and likely conduct an interview with him, thus creating the text (the interview transcript) that will serve as the point of departure for their analysis.

For some purposes, the folktale itself may serve as a point of departure. Unlike literary novels, philosophical treatises, and even interview transcripts, an orally transmitted tale often has numerous variants (rather than a single text). Taking some definitive theme as the 'textual' point of departure inevitably entails interpretation – and any interpretation arrives at the given text from the standpoint of the scholar's value-laden judgements, disciplinary-specific criteria and cultural associations. The tale's manifest content is reconstructed through its latent content.

Toward the classification of folklore, Bascom (1977) identified the refusal to speak on demand as the defining feature of this family of folktales, and therefore also included in his documentation of its occurrences African stories of speaking and singing animals refusing to perform. The theme he singled out could be construed as the archetypal trickster (cf. Morgan 2013). While the skull and its mischief are the tale's manifest content, its latent content lies in how it 'speaks' to