The Jungian Journey: Transcending Trauma and Reclaiming the Soul in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* and Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black*

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Abstract

Trauma transcendence is a common theme within Margaret Atwood and Hilary Mantel's works, and it is also an important steppingstone in achieving Soul reclamation. From a Jungian perspective, the Soul and the Self are two terms often used interchangeably, both describing "the totality of the whole psyche" (Jung and von Franz, *Man and His Symbols* 161). Soul reclamation happens when an individual becomes one with their full identity, exploring and accepting all the parts of the psyche as one. During this process, an individual partakes in a mystical journey of sorts through a process of individuation. This thesis, "The Jungian Journey: Transcending Trauma and Reclaiming the Soul in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* and Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black,*" follows the Jungian journey of Soul reclamation after trauma within a metaphysical context. Written only decades apart, both novels portray two very lost women with strong ties to the mystical. By exposing the Jungian archetypes of Persona, Shadow, and Animus within the female protagonists of *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*, trauma theory can be applied in a way that exposes the psyche's relationship to the metaphysical along with how this relationship determines the failure or completion of the journey to the Soul.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, Walter. The unyielding support and love he showed me during his lifetime shines through all things I accomplish today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introducing Jungian Theory in *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* 10

Current Criticism on *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* 15

Advancing the Conversation on *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* 18

Unveiling Jungian Theory 20

Exploring Jung's Journey to the Soul 23

The Lost Souls of *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* 25

II. A Soul Lost: Joan Foster's Jungian Journey in *Lady Oracle* 28

Joan Foster's Childhood Soul through a Jungian Lens 29

The Shadow of the Self and the Persona 33

The Anima vs. Animus 35

Metaphysical Mirrors of Self Reflection 38

Reclamation of Self: A Failed Journey to the Soul 40

III. A Soul Found: Alison Hart's Jungian Journey in *Beyond Black* 42

Alison Hart's Childhood Soul through a Jungian Lens 43

The Shadow of the Self and the Persona 47

The Anima vs. Animus 50

Metaphysical Mirrors of Self Reflection 52

Reclamation of Self: The Journey of Healing the Soul 54

IV. Conclusion.....57

Atwood, Mantel, and Carl Jung: A Brief Review 57

Future Extension of Atwood and Mantel Research 58

V. Works Cited 61

Chapter One

Introducing Jungian Theory in *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*

"Listen to the reed, how it tells a tale, complaining of separations"–Rumi

The separating of the reed Rumi speaks of mirrors the splitting of the Soul in Jungian theory. Rumi's reed complains of the separations of Self inhibiting wholeness; it complains of a totality that can only be reached through acceptance and trauma transcendence. Reaching Jungian totality of the Self, or reunion with the Soul, is only possible once the full identity is understood and trauma transcended (Jung, *Collected Works: Symbols of Transformation* 164). This thesis, "The Jungian Journey: Transcending Trauma and Reclaiming the Soul in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* and Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black,*" will follow the Jungian journey of Self reclamation after trauma within a metaphysical context. It will expose the effects of trauma on the Soul, also known as the Self in Jungian theory, as well as the resulting detachment of the Shadow from the Self, and the process of reconnecting all parts of the Soul in "peregrinatio," an individual's mystical journey (Jung, *Collected Works: Symbols of Transformation* 133). Through his works, Carl Jung connects the psychological and the psychic, forging the perfect lens for observing *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black's* protagonists, oracle writer Joan Foster and medium Alison Hart. Both *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* explore female trauma in a psychological sense. Each novel encapsulates Jung's process of individuation—the union of the psyche's parts—by exposing the archetypes of the Shadow, Persona, Anima, and Self within the novels' protagonists. Through a Jungian lens, the protagonists have the tools to reclaim their souls, but only if they succeed in making the full journey.

Margaret Atwood and Hilary Mantel's novels present the mystical feminine as an atypical female protagonist in two different ways. *Lady Oracle*'s Joan Foster is a writer who

turns to the metaphysical during a case of writer's block, and *Beyond Black*'s Alison Hart travels as a medium using her metaphysical talents to make a living. The trauma of parental neglect paves the way for these female protagonists to journey through lives of trauma and soul searching. What makes the novels singular for a Jungian interpretation is their focus on mystical females as victims of abuse as opposed to more ordinary domestic women. Through these powerful works, Atwood and Mantel connect childhood abuse with Self exploration through mystical means to potentially achieve individuation, or wholeness of identity. Each of the text's protagonists serve as mystical women with a chance at reformation and reclamation of Self, just like Rumi's reed.

Classified as Gothic psychological fiction, *Lady Oracle* satirizes Gothic literature, criticizing the romance of the genre through the miserably fabricated life of the protagonist, Joan Foster. Written in 1976, *Lady Oracle* follows the life of Gothic romance writer, Joan, and the events leading up to her brush with fame in her success as an overnight oracle writer. The novel begins with Joan's relocation from Canada to Italy to escape her most recent identity crisis; it then shifts between eras of Joan's life, from her deeply traumatic childhood to her tumultuous life as an adult. Throughout the text, Joan is haunted by the shame of her identity, and even with metaphysical intervention, never truly accepts herself as she is.

Early in the novel, parental traumas flood Joan's childhood memories, leading to shame, lack of self-worth, and loss of self-identity. In short, her Jungian Soul takes a hit. As a child, Joan becomes aware of her own mother's disgust with her daughter's appearance, so Joan's larger physique becomes central to her detachment from her identity deep down. In other words, Joan's weight overshadows who she is as an individual. Alongside years of motherly rejection,

she faces an ever absent, always indifferent father who neglects to save her from a destructive childhood.

As she ages, Joan's fondness for her Aunt Lou grows as her relationship with her parents—especially her mother—diminishes. Like Joan, Aunt Lou is overweight, but even so, she is a bright light of a person, especially for Joan. Aunt Lou's charm, incomparable comfort, and unique beauty provide solace for the protagonist. It is through a trip to Lou's spiritualist church that Joan is first introduced to the metaphysical realm by spiritualist minister, Leda Sprout. Leda introduces Joan to automatic writing, which is the process of a person writing from a trancelike stream-of-consciousness that is not their own, typically derived from the other side (Rice 26). Eventually, Joan takes Leda's advice and discovers her metaphysical inclination by incorporating automatic writing into her own creative writing processes.

As *Lady Oracle* progresses, Joan recalls her three detrimental romantic relationships. After Aunt Lou's death, Joan loses weight at her aunt's request, collects her inheritance, and sets off for England. In London, she meets the first of her traumatic trio of men, beginning an affair with a man titled the Polish Count. During her secret relationship with the Count she first lies about her identity and past. This relationship also marks the start of her work in Gothic romance novels, where the romances she authors parallel the events of her own life, leading her to conjuring up a falsified, more desirable existence. Joan's own life parodies the genre as she continuously romanticizes traumatic situations to overshadow the abuse she endures. Joan admits, "I fabricated my life, time after time" (Atwood 150). Her next romantic interest is Arthur, the man introduced as her husband at the start of *Lady Oracle*. With Arthur, she once again fabricates a past, even initially hiding her authorship from him; eventually, Joan finds herself stuck in a resentful marriage. Well into this marriage and unable to write, Joan turns to

automatic writing, her direct connection to the metaphysical. She publishes the resulting mystical poetry, becoming known as *Lady Oracle.* During her brush with fame, she meets and has an affair with the Royal Porcupine, an outrageous visual artist, while still married to Arthur, leaving her a victim of blackmail. The fear of being stalked, hurt, or outed is what drives Joan away from what little identity she has for herself in Canada.

Compared to *Lady Oracle*, the plot of Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* also centers around a mystical protagonist bound to a past she struggles to recall. However, Mantel's novel outweighs its predecessor metaphysically and traumatically. *Beyond Black* is a psychological Gothic fiction novel published in 2005 and set in grim motorway circling London. Like Atwood's novel, this book explores concepts of mysticism and clairvoyance, but it does so in a non-satirical way. It offers interpretations of reclamation and trauma-healing from a different type of mystical perspective. *Beyond Black* follows the neglectful childhood, loveless adulthood, and phoenix-from-ashes story of medium, Alison Hart. Throughout the text, Alison, a true medium, is followed by the literal ghosts of her past before she reaches emotional rebirth, finding her identity. As Joan's identity disappears, Alison's emerges.

Beyond Black opens with the introduction of Alison's soon-to-be assistant, Colette. Colette, having decided to leave her husband, first meets Alison at a psychic fair. Shortly after some conversation over tea, she agrees to follow Alison on the road as her assistant. During the story, *Beyond Black* sheds light on Alison's work during her travels as a psychic reader. These descriptions of Alison's life at first come from Colette's perspective. Colette's admiration for Alison and her abilities shifts quickly from admiration to resentment. Alongside what is still left of Alison's own memories, Colette's perspective sheds light on the underlying unhappiness Alison so desperately hides beneath a charismatic mask.

Gradually, a young Alison's horrifying childhood is revealed through a series of conversations and flashbacks. Alison admits to Colette that she suffers memory loss surrounding much of her childhood trauma, and it is implied that Alison was molested by the criminal men she calls the fiends that were welcomed into her home by her mother, Emmie. Since she was a child, Alison longed for the identity of her father. Eventually, Alison has in-depth conversations with an elderly Emmie regarding her painful past, revealing the depths of the sexual abuse she experienced when she sold young Alison to the fiends; Emmie would let the men "disappear her" to do as they pleased (Mantel 390). Alison also learns of the deaths of innocent people on their property at the hands of those same men. Morris, Alison's spirit guide, presents himself early in the novel, tormenting and abusing Alison daily. He was a fiend from Alison's childhood. Unfortunately, as her guide, Morris is her connection to the metaphysical realm. Alison suffers through the physical affects and anxieties of a medium with a dark history, and Morris is a ghost from her childhood past, continuing to abuse her into adulthood.

In its final chapters, *Beyond Black* provides full memory recollection for Alison when she listens to a ghostly recording where the fiends reveal the identity of her father, the literal epitome of Satan. It is then that she breaks free of Morris's control over her connections to the metaphysical. Though Alison herself is good despite the traumas she suffered, her father is a supernatural godfather. With her newly discovered status, Alison cannot be touched. Not only is Alison a clairvoyant, but she is the offspring of the metaphysical realm's most feared and powerful being. Even with this knowledge, Alison finds her own individual strength and meaning. On her own terms, she claims her right to the metaphysical. Alison's unearthed memory allows her clairvoyance to transcend her childhood traumas. It goes from imprisoning her to serving as a means of escape.

Current Criticism on *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*

Lady Oracle and *Beyond Black* fall under the genre of Gothic and psychological fiction, with both novels featuring atypical, mystical women. Both Atwood's and Mantel's novels highlight a journey of sorts, combining the aspects of the psychic and the psychological throughout. Margaret Atwood is a Canadian author widely known for her feminist fiction. Published in 1976, *Lady Oracle* parodies Gothic romance while also exploring metaphysical elements. Hilary Mantel's works are best known for their exploration of gender and social issues, and *Beyond Black* is no exception. Published in 2005, Mantel's novel presents the life of a clairvoyant as a mask for her trauma. Each of these female-authored works feature powerful women who have lost their direction in the face of heavy trauma, but only one fully finds her way back on the journey to Self while the other loses her way further after traveling into the metaphysical.

Current conversations surrounding *Lady Oracle* center around its categorization as a Gothic novel and the other elements that follow suit. Critics like Mary Jean Green derive their critical analysis of *Lady Oracle* from its Gothic archetypes, particularly the female grotesque and the archetype of the mother. Several of the literary articles examining *Lady Oracle* focus on the female grotesque, with Yael Shapira's work serving as a prime example. Shapira observes the role of female grotesqueness in *Lady Oracle* as Joan's way of rebelling against gender standards surrounding beauty and personality (62). Joan, graceless and overweight for most of her life, rejects beauty standards and social expectations expected of her as a female. In all, Green and Shapira argue that Atwood's novel disrupts social expectations imposed on the Gothic female by shedding light on so-called undesirable female characteristics, embracing the grotesque as a means of empowerment.

The concept of grotesqueness paves the way for other topics of critique over *Lady Oracle* as well. According to Patricia F. Goldblatt, Joan's larger figure presents itself as a type of disfigurement or fault, and it certainly does not fit her "mother's definition of femininity" (278). Goldblatt hits the nail on the head in that much of Joan's distorted sense of identity lies in the rejection she feels from her mother regarding her appearance. In short, this hints at the importance of exploring the effects of motherly neglect and the daughter's development of self-worth. Goldblatt's research equally explores the trauma associated with toxic mother-daughter relationships.

Delving further into mother-daughter relationships, Edina Szalay's research addresses the "female oedipal drama" that unfolds through Joan's grotesqueness (188). Szalay's research addresses the male gaze and how Joan's mother reinforces those standards on her own daughter, forging a love-hate relationship that leaves Joan resentful of her mother, but also longing for her acceptance in a cruel world. Szalay's perspective opens the door for the next theme.

Lady Oracle's existing research also examines themes of female transformation. According to Goldblatt, "[Atwood's] stories deal with the transformation of female characters from ingenues to insightful women" (275). These women—in ways—are the heroes of their own stories as they attempt to reconstruct their lives while dealing with a society built to work against them. Goldblatt also examines the trauma present within the lives of Atwood's female protagonists, in this case Joan Foster, and how this shapes the way these women view themselves as they seek fulfillment through romance. A large part of Joan's story is not only her own work as a writer, but the stories she continuously fabricates in her relationships about her own past.

Compared to *Lady Oracle*, there is significantly less literary research available about *Beyond Black* as some of Mantel's other works have overshadowed this novel. Even so, there is

still enough research to grasp the direction of most current critiques. Like Atwood's novel, *Beyond Black* is commonly observed through its heavy "critique of humanism," particularly the social and gender-based standards women face. In her article, Leigh Gilmore explores a "disturbance of the outside world" through the livelihood of its protagonist in *Beyond Black* (Gilmore 90). Gilmore explores limited bodily agency in the novel, as it applies to Alison Hart, as well as the physical and psychological pain she feels as a clairvoyant with heavy childhood trauma. As a child, Alison is deprived of bodily agency, and in the most perverted ways, she continues to be robbed of this bodily agency into adulthood: "Morris was sprawled in Al's chair when she came into her dressing room. He had his dick out and foreskin pushed back, and he'd been playing with her lipstick" (Mantel 28). As displayed in this excerpt, Morris's presence is a prime example of this. From physical abuse to the destruction of personal items like her lipstick, Alison loses control of her own agency.

The theme of trauma and pain explored in Gilmore's research paves the way for other concepts currently observed in *Beyond Black*. Critics like Lucy Arnold recognize that the central trauma of *Beyond Black* is linked to the novel's spectral elements. In her research, Lucy Arnold observes the use of ghosts to express the immortality of trauma as a central characteristic; this "hauntedness" expresses the return of the suppressed for her works' protagonists. She argues that these spectral elements enhance trauma bondage (Arnold, "Reading Hilary Mantel: Haunted Decades" 2). Considering this perspective, Alison is trauma-bonded to Morris, the literal epitome of ghosts past.

In a separate work titled "Where the Ghosts of Meaning Are: Haunting and Spectrality in the Work of Hilary Mantel," Arnold introduces the spectrality in the novel in relation to the domestic as a Gothic text (144). Working in a highly demanded but highly criticized psychic

field, Alison Hart does not fit the typical English domestic roles. She is “largely incompatible” with the surrounding culture that *Beyond Black* is set in, more closely aligning with some secretly desired, darker feminine figure (146). Arnold’s critique on *Beyond Black* observes Alison’s vivid public self as a rejection of typical domestic roles. She embraces a controversial line of work as a medium, portraying herself in an exotic light. Victoria Stewart’s critique further explores mediumship's purpose in the novel, exposing its exploitive tendencies (295). Therefore, even though Alison portrays herself as an exotic clairvoyant, contradicting typical domestic female roles, she still bleeds herself dry for the satisfaction of her audience. She still pursues life superficially to maintain a socially desirable image.

Advancing the Conversation on *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*

Written decades prior, *Lady Oracle* trumps *Beyond Black* with significantly longer time on the bookshelves. Still, I found that both works have not yet developed robust literary scholarship, likely because many newer works have yet to gain the literary traction of their more classical counterparts. Both Atwood and Mantel’s novels are significant, female-authored psychological Gothic works, and I hope to add valuable critique to the scholarship on these novels. This study will advance existing conversations regarding trauma transcendence and female identity reclamation, and the role the metaphysical plays in contemporary feminist literature. Whereas current scholarship explores trauma and healing from a feminist perspective, a Jungian lens will reveal a deeper explanation for how the metaphysical abilities of these women affect their journeys to Self. This thesis will expand the conversation regarding trauma while also strengthening meaningful connections between the psychic and the psychological within the two novels.

Regarding this thesis, concepts surrounding spectrality and otherness as discussed in Arnold's article, the toxic mother-daughter complexes discussed by Green, and the overall trauma theory are applicable. While I will discuss these concepts, it will be through the scope of Carl Jung's theories surrounding the journey to the Soul. Through a Jungian lens, this thesis will expose the loss of Soul and the journey to its recovery, particularly how this is done through heavy trauma and metaphysical influences. The female protagonists of Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* and Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* each suffer heavily damaged identities, and the metaphysical abilities each character carries holds the key to self-rediscovery, or further self-loss.

To enhance application of Carl Jung's journey to the Soul within *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*, this thesis will also incorporate trauma theory from Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, a well-known Dutch psychiatrist and author, as written in his text *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. First published in 2014, *The Body Keeps the Score* backs Jung's theory by providing research-based evidence from real studies paralleling the childhood trauma within Atwood and Mantel's novels. Van der Kolk's study specifically explores the lasting effects of trauma, particularly in early age groups like infants, children, and adolescents. *The Body Keeps the Score* provides evidence and analysis of how these traumas affect memory, identity, and other processes of the mind, directly correlating with Jung's work pertaining to the human psyche. Van der Kolk's work further emphasizes Jung's importance of understanding the depths of the unconscious in reaching totality of Self, a journey following the "imperceptible process of psychic growth" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 161). Naturally, this process emphasized by Jung and Van Der Kolk requires acknowledgement of trauma so it can be transcended. Aside from psychic growth regarding trauma theory, observation of dreams by

Jason Ciaccio provides further insight into dream theory as a twilight state that is metaphysical in a sense (137). Overall, transcendence assists in growth towards finishing the journey.

The metaphysical is a significant factor within *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*'s storylines, heavily influencing the protagonists' individual journeys. To examine the aspects explored by Jung in his studies like *The Red Book*, this thesis will assume that the metaphysical is a real element of the human mind. By exploring basic elements of spiritualism, mediumship, and even the occult, the role of ghostliness within both *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*, this thesis can determine its individualized role as a symbol for trauma retention within the protagonists' personal journeys. Incorporating insight from occult articles by Carol Haywood and Julian Holloway will expand understanding of the metaphysical realm, particularly from a spiritualist perspective that applies to Jung and the protagonists of *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*. Overall, Jungian theory serves as the primary scope for this thesis. In terms of Carl Jung's works, I will employ *Man and His Symbols*, Jung's final work revealing in depth insight into the world of the human subconscious, *The Red Book*, and several of his other collected works.

Unveiling Jungian Theory

The work of Carl Jung exposes the science, as well as the mystical elements, behind *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*'s trauma processing and search for Self. Jung's chapters in *Man and His Symbols* bring forth applicable connection between the psychological and psychic, paving the way for several other theories to be added to the mixture. Jung's work begs the question: how do we connect trauma, mysticism, and the subconscious? What makes Jungian theory so fitting for observations of *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* is its acknowledgment of the soul-splitting effects of childhood trauma as well as the existence of psychic human energy from a psychological basis. Remember, Jungian concepts of Self and Soul are interchangeable.

Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and student of Sigmund Freud. Though much of Freud's work influenced Jung's studies, he shaped his own psychoanalytical theory, paving a way for deeper understanding of the human Soul (Self). In short, Jungian theory considers the constant play within the human psyche; it examines interactions and divisions between the conscious and subconscious and how certain aspects of each affect the Soul as whole. In *Man and His Symbols*, published in 1964, Jung states that there are "unconscious aspects of our perception of reality" and that "even when our senses react to real phenomena, sights, and sounds, they are somehow translated from the realm of reality into that of the mind" (20-1). Essentially, there is much more to human existence than what happens from day to day. Jung's statement insists that much of our human experience is translated by the subconscious in ways that may not be apparent on the surface, but that deeply affect the person's perception. When the reality experienced reaches the psyche, its influence grows significantly, embedding itself in everything experienced afterward.

The subconscious refers to the feelings lying beneath the surface that we are not aware of. The subconscious often includes memories or intentions that are not consciously present, but actively affect a person's feelings and behavior (*The Oxford English Dictionary*). Naturally, factors contributing to trauma often hide within the subconscious layers of the psyche. The major sectors of Jungian theory's subconscious are the ego, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious. If the psyche was a sphere with a field, then the ego would be the field's central point, not the center of the sphere, as portrayed in the figure below (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 161). It is a part of human identity built strictly around conscious experiences. The ego is the superficial layer of the mind. This small part of the Self, this ego, contains only the conscious

aspects of psychic awareness; it does not explore the depths of the mind. However, the next few layers of the psyche do just that.

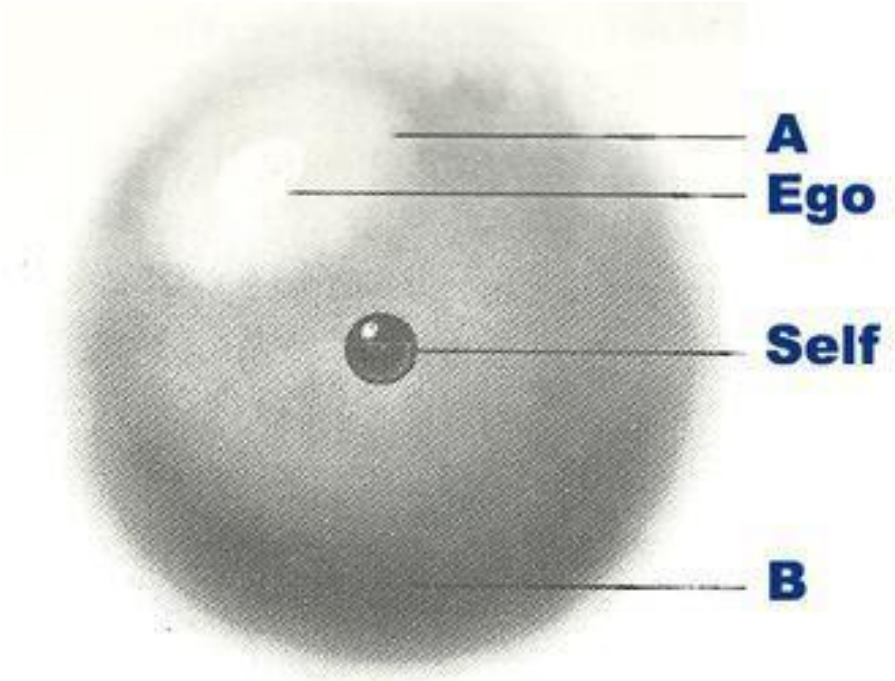

Figure 1"Diagram from Jung's Man and His Symbols"

The next sector of the subconscious psyche is the personal unconscious. As its name suggests, the personal unconscious is an individualized experience. Jung argues that each person undergoes certain events that they have not consciously noted; they are experiences that have "remained, so to speak, below the threshold of consciousness" but later reemerge (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 23). A person's individual experiences in the "realm of reality" shape the chemistry of their personal psyche. Essentially, this personal unconsciousness is the plethora of an individual's memories, whether they are easily accessible or stored away in the dark depths of the psyche. It is an all-encompassing, individualized Shadow.

While equally important, the collective unconscious is an entirely different concept. It is the subconscious's final layer. According to Jung, there are many "collective representations" that humans share; he asserts there are many symbols shared across humanity that are inherently

collective in nature (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 55). In other words, there are parts of the psyche that the human population shares collectively and has over the course of human existence. An example of this collective consciousness might deal with dreams, which ties directly into Jung's interpretations of psychic phenomena. The collective unconscious provides the deepest sector of the psyche to be explored. Much of Jung's theory discussed in *Man and His Symbols* and *The Red Book* also bridges into the study of dreams, as his work deemed them important between the subconscious and the known Self. Hidden depths of the Soul's experiences can be found in dreams, and for the purpose of this thesis, will be expanded into the Jungian journey.

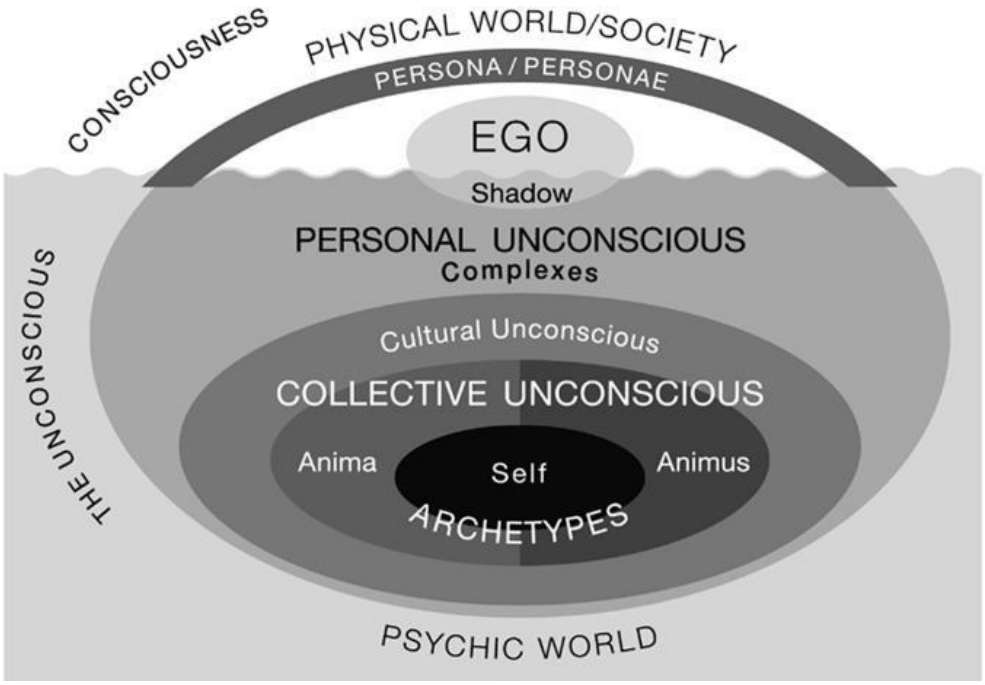

Figure 2 "A Jungian Model of the Psyche"

Exploring Jung's Journey to the Soul

The complexities of Jung's theory are nearly as complex as the psyche itself. Through his interpretation of the human psyche, Jung opens the door to examining the metaphysical, truly tying together his theories. The journey in question is the Jungian concept of individuation,

peregrinatio, and desire for wholeness. Jung explores this concept of journey to the Soul firsthand. In his text, *Liber Novus*, commonly known as *The Red Book*, Carl Jung shares a recording of his own personal journey to the Soul. Before publishing *The Red Book* as a psychoanalytical study of his journey, his metaphysical experiences were written in a personal journal collection, the *Black Books*. Author and editor Sonu Shamdasani names *The Red Book* "the center of [Jung's] oeuvre," and it was even nominated as the nucleus of his works by Carl Jung himself (Jung, *The Red Book* 193). Jung recognized that human nature often leads individuals to search for their Soul—their full identity—through outside elements; however, to reach fulfillment, a person must journey within themselves. Journeying outside the Self will not bring results. In creating this work, Jung explored his own psychoanalytic theory of the Self through a metaphysical lens.

Prior to his personal journey to the Soul, Jung discovered a sort of "mythlessness" within himself; as a result, Jung's pursuit of his personal "myth"—his mystical Soul—ensued (Jung, *The Red Book* 193). 1912 proved a monumental year for Jung's thoughts on the journey. Jung experienced bewildering dreams, influencing his search for interpretation (Jung, *The Red Book* 199). He recorded his mystical experiences from dreams, trance-like states, and fantasies in the *Black Books*. The Swedish psychiatrist once spoke on the significance of the unconscious in psychoanalytical studies. According to Shamdasani in *The Red Book*'s foreward, this text's significance lies in its overall theme of "how Jung regains his soul" or his "refinding" of it (Jung, *The Red Book* 207). By recording his mystical escapades in the *Black Books* and analyzing those events in *The Red Book*, Jung breaks the barrier between the realm of the human mind and that of the metaphysical, taking his own existing studies of the unconscious mind to new heights.

This journey to finding the Soul encapsulates four major Jungian archetypes: the persona, the Shadow, the Anima and Animus, and the Self. Reunion with the total Self, the full Soul, requires reunion of all the Jungian archetypes. Each of these archetypes has dual aspects. On the surface lies the Persona or the "mask that one presents to the world" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 286). Through their Persona, a person hides their true character and identity, often morphing themselves to be more palpable or easily accepted. Underneath the Persona is the Shadow; this archetype is a "moral problem that challenges the whole ego personality" (Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung: Aion* 8). The Shadow is the dark side of an individual. A person's Shadow thrives on the negative aspects of a person and their experiences, lurking deep within the psyche. The Shadow sets the tone for the next dual archetype: the Anima and Animus. Like the Shadow, the Anima and Animus have the potential to reflect the darker sides of the psyche. The Anima and Animus symbolize female and male mentality, or more specifically, the Anima is the unconscious feminine traits of the male psyche, and the Animus is the unconscious masculine traits of the female psyche. This dual archetype can "bring life-giving development and creativity to the personality, or they can cause petrification," leaving individuals frozen and reach full potential (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 216). The final archetype is the Self. It is reunion of each of the above archetypes, resulting in rediscovery of the Soul.

The Lost Souls of *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*

A Soul is lost, or no longer whole, without union of all the archetypes mentioned above. Jung's concepts of "lost souls" and "mystical participation" provide a significant lens for observing the mystical connections in Joan and Alison's traumas. Jung defines the "loss of soul" as "a noticeable disruption (or complete dissociation) of consciousness (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 24). In *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*, each protagonist loses pieces of themselves

through trauma-induced dissociation like Alison or suppression of the true Self like Joan; either way, the two mystical women fall victim to their Shadows, losing hold of their identities, and thus—their Souls. Understanding the full depth of trauma requires understanding human consciousness on a spiritual level. Human nature is more than scientific existence, and Jung's works support this concept in a way applicable to *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*.

In addition to understanding the human Soul and its traumas, Jung's studies support a link between the psychic and the psychological with what "psychologists call psychic identity, or 'mystical participation'" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 45). According to Jung, "we are so accustomed to the apparently rational nature of our world that we can scarcely imagine anything happening that cannot be explained by common sense...[y]et the emotions that affect us are just the same (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 45). Here, Jung's trauma theory feels very spiritual; he acknowledges a certain "otherness" to humanity that opens human psychology up for many possibilities. Take for example Joan's explorations in automatic writing in *Lady Oracle*: "I stared at the candle in the mirror, the mirror candle...I looked down at the piece of paper. There, in a scrawly handing-writing that was certainly not my own, was a single word: *Bow*" (Atwood 220). Again, automatic writing involves a trancelike stream-of-consciousness derived from the metaphysical (Rice 26). Rather than using it as a tool to contact the other side, Atwood employs automatic writing as a means of overcoming conscious writer's block by exploring Joan's unconscious through metaphysical inner reflection. Joan unconsciously travels to the other side, where she enters both into and outside of herself. It is through this activity that she explores emotional depths that unearths forgotten information. Jung also states, "[s]he can see, hear, touch, and taste; but how far [s]he sees, how well [s]he hears, what [her] touch tells [her], and what [s]he tastes depends on the number and quality of [her] sense" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols*

21). This "sense" applies to the instance above; mirroring and automatic writing are activities that allow Joan to further her senses in new ways. Jung writes, "[t]here are certain events of which we have not consciously taken note...they have remained below the threshold of consciousness" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 23). While *Lady Oracle*'s Joan Foster is a bit more aware of her trauma-based actions, *Beyond Black'*s Alison Hart is less aware, but heavily affected by the traumas that lie under her threshold. Applied to Atwood and Mantel's novels, these concepts of mystical participation and otherness open into something much bigger due to the nature of the traumas and victims.

Carl Jung defines the Self as the "totality" of the psyche (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 161). Any possibility of Joan Foster or Alison Hart transcending their traumas and reclaiming their Souls depends on their ability to unite the Jungian archetypes within themselves. They must cease living only within their Shadows, digging deeper within. This thesis is an observation of their Jungian journeys, so their success in reaching their Soul depends on their ability to overcome their Shadows and live as their truths (Jung, *Collected Works: Symbols of Transformation* 133). "Chapter Two: Joan Foster's Jungian Journey in *Lady Oracle*," and "Chapter Three: Alison Hart's Jungian Journey in *Beyond Black*," will be divided into subheadings pertaining to the lost Soul, the Shadow and Persona, the Anima vs. Animus, self-reflection, and reclamation of Self. Chapter two will examine the consequences of failure in reaching journey's end for Joan Foster, and chapter three observes Alison Hart's successful union of the Jungian archetypes in reaching full Self. For each novel's protagonist, their metaphysical connections greatly influence their successes and failures.

Chapter Two

A Soul Lost: Joan Foster's Jungian Journey in *Lady Oracle*

Throughout *Lady Oracle*, unhappy Gothic writer Joan Foster does not live, but rather exists disguised under the fabricated life she has created. Paralleling her romance novels, Joan rewrites her own life traumas and romanticizes her abusive experiences to cope. In Jungian theory, to reach the true inner Self, "individuation" must occur; according to this theory, individuation's focus lies in "integration of consciousness...within both the light of lived experience and the shadows" that transcend the psyche (Darabimanesh et al. 423). This journey has a certain place in trauma transcendence, especially when that transcendence allows individuation to take place. A few chapters into *Lady Oracle*, Joan Foster admits, "I'd always tried to keep my two names and identities as separate as possible," a simple statement with substantial weight (Atwood 33). The two identities Joan refers to are her fabricated life and her true traumatic past. Through application of Jungian concepts of the Shadow, the Persona, the Animus vs. Animus, and the Self, *Lady Oracle*'s metaphysical elements serve as a tool for identity-exploration and trauma transcendence. According to Jungian theory, each person has a Self; this Self originates with a sense of "wholeness," and a certain "totality of the psyche" emerges as life progresses (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 128). Application of Jung's journey to the Soul exposes the link between the psychic and the psychological in *Lady Oracle*, in turn providing the key to understanding Joan's Gothic-influenced coping mechanisms as well as the metaphysical realizations she requires to find herself again.

Through the transformative life of writer Joan Foster, *Lady Oracle* explores the metaphysical, but not directly in a way to transcend the traumas she has faced. For Joan, the most notable aspect of her character is her reliance on the mask she wears and the strong disconnect

she has created regarding her identity, parodying the Gothic romances she writes. According to Jung, transcendence is a person's release of any confining pattern of existence as he matures (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 149). However, Joan thrives through her Soul's confinement. Repeatedly, she builds on this disconnect, consciously living by her Shadow and through her person, denying reunion of her Jungian archetypes to the Self. Often, the concept of transcendence has mystical connotations and can be applied thus. Jung's journey to the Soul mystically lies in discovery of an individual's uniqueness; Soul searching interprets as a process of individuation. This chapter will explore Joan's failed transcendence to Soul regardless of several potential breakthroughs she has throughout the novel. Transcendence of trauma and Self-discovery can only occur for Joan if she rejects her Shadow.

Joan Foster's Childhood Soul through a Jungian Lens

Throughout the first chapters of *Lady Oracle*, parental neglect clouds Joan's childhood and adolescence. The earliest developments in Joan's psyche are painful to say the least. In brief, her mother, Fran, expresses disappointment in everything from Joan's actions to her heavy appearance, while her father, who is not emotionally abusive in comparison to her mother, shows indifference towards young Joan. According to the protagonist, her father was "simply an absence" until later in the novel after the death of her mother (Atwood 69). Growing up, Joan's environment greatly influences her sense of Self (or lack thereof). Her sense of worth lacks proper development during her early stages, and she grows distant from the person she was born as. Joan Foster never receives reassurance as a positive existence within her parents' lives, and this is something she so desperately seeks in her youngest years. Rejection sets the tone for her tarnished self-view with childhood trauma encapsulating Joan's sense of identity.

Joan's lack of self-identity results from multiple instances of childhood neglect and traumatic interactions with her mother. The mother daughter relationship greatly affects a child's concept of Self. According to Jung, "circumstances or outside events 'happen' to us and limit our freedom"; thus, the Self is often "assimilated" by these "unconscious components of the personality" that result (Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung: Aion* 6). Joan's experiences with her mother happened to her, completely outside of her control. From a Jungian perspective, this parental trauma heavily influences Joan's sense of freedom to be herself; it trains her to see value in the assimilation rather than the Self. In addition to Jung's notion, Mary Jean Green states that "many of the writers who have placed the mother at the center of their work have been women, and this is not surprising" and "[t]he fictional model approximates very closely the relationship of mother and daughter as it has been described in modern psychoanalytic theory" (41-42). Considering Green's analysis, a daughter's worth comes from genuine connections with her mother figure. The mother is not only a role model, but a model of how the daughter, in this case Joan, should view themselves. Feeling accepted by her mother, her protector, would implant a sense of self-worth in her subconscious early on. Instead, she is taught to be ashamed of her natural state by her biggest psychological influence.

Van Der Kolk further supports this concept. According to Van Der Kolk, children who feel "seen and known by their mothers" can "learn to communicate not only their frustrations and distress but also their emerging selves" (123). Van Der Kolk aligns with Jung's views of the Self, providing further evidence of the psychological effects of Joan's relationship on her psyche. From a young age, Joan's awareness of the disappointment her unconventional appearance brings her mother teaches her to devalue herself. Joan recollects, "[a]t first I was merely plump...When I reached the age of six the pictures stopped abruptly. This must have been

whenever my mother gave up on me, for it was she who used to take them; perhaps she no longer wanted my growth recorded. She had decided I would not do" (Atwood 43). This passage is heartbreaking to say the least, and it serves as a hard blow to Joan's development of Self as she distances herself mentally from her physical body. Joan's relationship with her mother is one relationship she does not romanticize, but it does serve as her most influential trauma. Her mother's reactions to her body engrain the idea that physical appearance equates to her worth.

The impact of motherly trauma on Joan's broken Self is so significant, it ignites Joan's journey into the metaphysical. It creates Joan's trauma, but it also provides a means for healing. The empowering presence of Aunt Lou, Joan's mother's sister, helps as well. Aunt Lou, a woman who is physically like Joan herself and treats her with the womanly dignity she craves, introduces Joan to Jordan Chapel, a Spiritualist church. At the chapel, Joan's connection to the metaphysical begins. Leda Sprout, Spiritualist leader and minister of the chapel, approaches Joan after her first service. Leda claims that she senses psychic ability in Joan and that her mother's astral body is trying to reach out to her. Joan, unhappy with this, replies:

> 'That's my mother!' I said to Aunt Lou in a piercing whisper. 'She's not even dead yet!'...Leda Sprout explained that everyone had an astral body as well as a material one, and that your astral body could float around by itself, attached "I, particularly, did not like the thought of my mother, in some sort of spiritual jello, drifting around after me from place to place...Nor did I want to hear that she was concerned about me: her concern always meant pain (Atwood 111).

Joan's reaction solidifies the damage her relationship with her mother has caused her over the years, triggering Joan's lack of self-worth and spiritual "wholeness." According to Green, "women feel hostility toward the mother, but they are never able to abandon their strong feelings

of attachment to her" (Green 42). This motherly trauma is the first to literally transcend mystical boundaries, connecting Joan to her mystical abilities. While this astral encounter marks Joan's connection to the metaphysical realm, it also solidifies her Jungian Shadow. According to Jung, the tragedy that envelops a person fuels the Shadow "other" of the Self. This tragedy is an "unconscious factor which spins the illusions that veil his world (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 93). In Joan Foster's case, the "other" of her personality is this shadow—her twisted self-view and longing to disappear. The appearance of her mother's astral body in the excerpt mentioned above proves that even when she does not feel directly cloaked by her Shadow, its negativity is always waiting to resurface.

This sense of "totality" the soul longs for, the Jungian self-archetype of individuation, fails to show itself for Joan, even outside of the home (Darabimanesh 423). A central trauma from Joan's schoolgirl days paves the way for her developed coping style. As a young schoolchild, Joan's ego-distorted longing to feel wanted by her parents, peers, and strangers adds a new layer to her trauma because she has no outlet to truly verify her wholeness aside from her Aunt Lou. One day after being tricked and bullied by a group of older students, Joan is left tied and stranded at a bridge in the road; eventually, a middle-aged man, commonly referred to as the Daffodil Man, approaches and helps her. Just days before this rescue, the Daffodil Man had probably revealed his genitals to her:

> He was standing at the far side of the bridge, a little off the path, holding a bunch of daffodils in front of him. He was a nice-looking man, neither old nor young...his taffy-colored hair was receding, and the sunlight gleamed on his high forehead...He smiled at me, I smiled back, and he lifted his daffodils up to reveal his open fly and the strange, ordinary piece of flesh that was nudging flaccidly out (Atwood 60).

The Daffodil Man disguises his perverted act behind beautiful flowers, giving young Joan the means for overlooking the trauma of sexual exposure at an early age. Joan, already looking for acceptance in all the wrong places, does not understand the dangers the Daffodil Man poses. She imagines him as a savior when he unties her from the bridge rather than a potential danger. Here marks the beginning of Joan's reinvention of her surroundings—her positive reimagining of unpleasant events—to provide her inner child with a safety blanket. Unfortunately for *Lady Oracle*'s protagonist, there is no true safety in fabrication. Joan's incidences with the Daffodil Man ignite a toxic tendency to bury trauma with fictionalizations. By romanticizing negative truths, her grasp on reality, and thus the Self, is lost. This loss of Self and reality follows her into adulthood, where her Persona and Shadow overtake her life.

The Shadow of the Self and the Persona

Comprehending the effects of Joan Foster's childhood trauma on her identity loss requires thorough comprehension of the mask Joan presents as she matures. Undoubtedly, Joan feels a sense of acceptance around her Aunt Lou, but even these feelings are somewhat shrouded in untruths; Aunt Lou is dating a married man, Robert, and masks much of her own unhappiness in clutter and gaudy accessories. Joan recalls her first interaction with Robert and how Aunt Lou tailored a facade to impress him: "Aunt Lou had even cleaned up the apartment for him...though I could see the toe of a nylon stocking nosing out from under the best chair"; she also adorned herself with one of her "most astonishing hats, powdered her nose, and took her gloves matter-of-factly in hand" (Atwood 105). While Aunt Lou is the only person who accepts Joan throughout her childhood and teenage years, Lou also fabricates portions of her life. Joan's infatuation with fabrications further severs the tie to her total Self. She sees firsthand that even Aunt Lou changes herself to achieve her desires. Joan reflects often on past conversations with

Aunt Lou: “You can’t change the past, Aunt Lou used to say. Oh, but I wanted to; that was the one thing I really wanted to do. Nostalgia convulsed me” (Atwood 10). In a Jungian sense, Joan living as her true Self is out of the picture. Joan references her disdain for nostalgia, but the events that happen to a person—the good and the bad—formulate who they become. These events must be recognized and accepted in a person’s journey. For Jung, “releasing our inner spirit and true selves” is a major part of individuation; there is an “inherent dialogue...between matter and nonmatter, between body and soul” (Darabimanesh et al. 432). Clear is the trauma bonded to Joan’s sense of identity; the repeated rejections form a distorted nostalgia that latches onto the Self. Joan paints herself as who she desires to be rather than facing her trauma and becoming one with her true Soul.

Regardless of her own conflicting image, Aunt Lou wants the best for Joan. After she dies, Aunt Lou leaves Joan an ample inheritance. After she dies, Aunt Lou leaves an ample inheritance for her niece. The only catch? Joan must lose a substantial amount of weight before she can collect it. It seems cruel, contradictory even, of Aunt Lou after spending all her time convincing Joan to accept herself. But digging below the surface, Aunt Lou’s request symbolizes the shedding of the Persona, the cloak Joan hides under. Joan admits that “without [her] magic cloak of blubber and invisibility [she] felt naked, pruned, as though some essential covering was missing” (Atwood 141). In a way, her unhappiness with her body’s appearance has given Joan reason to wish to be someone else, but by shedding weight, she can confront her trauma and take control of her life (or so a person would think). Ideally, she would no longer hide after shedding weight, collecting her inheritance, and moving across the Pond.

Life overshadowed by trauma is all Joan knows, and as a result, Joan always cloaks herself in something more desirable. Carl Jung's Shadow is the “psychic energy that appears to

have been lost in this way" serves to "revive and intensify whatever is uppermost in the unconscious," forming "an ever-present and potentially destructive 'shadow'" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 93). Even after losing weight and moving to England, Joan continues her habits of fabrication. In fact, her Persona and Shadow follow her into adulthood, strengthening their grip as she experiences new traumas within her romantic relationships. Her relationships mentioned in *Lady Oracle* include an affair with Paul, a Polish count and fellow romance author, her husband Arthur who knows nothing of her writing career until she writes *Lady Oracle*, and Chuck Brewster (the Royal Porcupine), an artist she starts an affair with during her brush with fame. Within each of these relationships, Joan never reveals her identity or past. Each relationship is based on a fabrication resulting from a broken Self. Still, her Soul is hidden.

A few chapters later, Joan encounters her mother's ghost, mistaking it for her again wonders: "How had she found me? She was standing, very upright, on the clay-colored rug, dressed in her navy-blue suit...Then I saw that she was crying, soundlessly, horribly...It was her astral body, I thought, remembering what Leda Sprout told me. Why couldn't she keep the goddamned thing at home where it belonged?" (Atwood 173). Further applying Jung's Shadow concept and what it encompasses psychically, this movement from seeing astral projections to full spirits suggests the intensity of Joan's metaphysical connections and connections within. Identifying Joan's Shadow clarifies her path to transcendence and wholeness of Self.

The Anima vs. Animus

In each of her romantic relationships, Joan lives under a Shadow-dictated mask, facing crippling belittlement by her partners. Each time she journeys closer to her desired natural state, her lovers discourage her so that their needs are met instead. Jung visits a similar concept in "The Magician" chapter from *The Red Book*. In "The Magician," Jung states, "You want to sever my

soul's embrace...Who are you? And who gives you the power? Everything that I strove for, everything I wrested for myself, do you want to reverse it again and destroy it?" (Jung, *The Red Book* 327). Jung's realizations in this vision align with Joan's own love life. Joan constantly feels the need to project an identity that benefits the men around her, and when she does embrace her own inner power, those men feel threatened. How can Joan retain any sense of identity if the person she projects herself as is not real? The "power" Jung references is the Animus. It is the "natural destination" of the spirit; it is a Jungian instinct that is aroused "to cleave to the realities of the soul" (Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* 396). Repeatedly, *Lady Oracle*'s protagonist loses grasp of her Animus, her masculine energy, for the sake of her partners.

Joan's first romantic relationship after moving to England is with the Paul, the Polish Count. According to Joan, she meets this initial lover exiting a bus. Shortly after sparking a relationship with him, Joan decides to lie, saying she had moved to London to study art. After some time, she discovers Paul's identity as "Mavis Quilp," a female pen name he uses in writing nurse-themed romance novels (Atwood 147; 153). Inspired by his success, she first begins publishing her own Gothic romances under her Louise K. Delacourt. Paul serves as an example of how Joan reimagines negative events as positive ones. Joan compares Paul to the "man with the bouquet of daffodils" with his sense of "misplaced gallantry" (Atwood 157). Eventually though, Paul's support of Joan's writing sours as he, fully aware of his Anima or feminine traits, grows jealous when Joan finds the same power within herself. Unhappy with Joan's growth, success, and blossoming identity, he begins tearing her down for not fulfilling womanly roles the way she should. Joan loses her Animus just as quickly as she finds it to satisfy the ego of her lover.

Arthur, Joan's current husband, was her second serious relationship that severely challenging her Animus. As with her relationship with Paul, Joan's relationship with Arthur requires her to quieten her talents, actions, and strongest traits. God forbid she be "stamped as *wrong*" by him right away (Atwood 162). Immediately, Atwood portrays Arthur as someone with very liberal interests politically, yet very conservative concerning his women. To Arthur, "a bald man is not looked upon as an unnatural horror, but a bald woman is" (Atwood 166). Unfortunately for a lustful Joan who had already fallen head over heels, she once again rejects her own potential to satisfy a man. Once again, she changes herself in hopes of receiving the love she was too traumatized to receive as a child. She falls back into quieting her Animus to be accepted by others. Unfortunately, this outside acceptance means not accepting herself.

For *Lady Oracle*'s protagonist, the closer she gets to her Animus, the closer she gets to reclaiming her metaphysical Self and transcending the trauma withholding her. Unfortunately, her claims to her Animus are discouraged each time they surface. Eventually, Joan begins an affair with Chuck, the Royal Porcupine, while married to Arthur during her brush with fame after she writes *Lady Oracle*. During this affair, her Animus is full-fledged. Arthur, she had realized, was only interested in her defeats and failures (Atwood 210). The Royal Porcupine was outrageous, a ridiculous sight. His own wild antics paved a way for an animalist freeness and passion that Joan had not felt in her previous relationship, let alone her current marriage to Arthur. They're love-making was just as animalistic; so animalistic in fact that their first time making love involved the dog blood and the phrase "to fuck a cult figure" (Atwood 244). Through her affair with Chuck, Joan's Animus is on its way to becoming full-fledged, but as soon as she begins grasping this power, it gets shut down: "'You stomp all over people's egos without even knowing you're doing it,' [Chuck] said" (Atwood 268). Eventually, Chuck

interprets Joan rising Animus as a blow to his own masculinity. Joan embracing her inner strength on her own terms intimidates Chuck. For the third time, Joan equates her Animus to unluckiness in love. Embracing her Animus makes her undesirable.

Metaphysical Mirrors of Self Reflection

Before her affair with Chuck, Joan writes *Lady Oracle*. It is when she encounters heavy writer's block that she finally investigates automatic writing, an action first encouraged by Leda Sprout years prior, to produce her work. In this process, Joan seats herself in front of her "dressing table mirror" and focuses on a candlelit reflection to induce a trance-like state (Mantel 219). Her focus on the mirror allows her to be taken over metaphysically. At first staring at reflections, she is eventually absorbed into a new dimension on the other side. Within this metaphysical realm, she travels down a corridor, but in her physical body, she writes. Frequently in Jung's theories, a type of dream world exists that parallels the metaphysical world in *Lady Oracle*. Examining this concept in "Modernity's Waking Dreams: Walter Benjamin, Carl Jung, and the Illuminations of Twilight States," Jason Ciaccio comments heavily on Jungian Theory, particularly in relevance to waking dreams. This text further examines that the "waking dream," this type of twilight state between worlds:

> occupies a different space—rather than relying on an alienation of dreaming from waking, it designates the preservation of some form of the 'I,' often even dramatizing it, yet always in displaced, adumbrated, or fragmented form...states in which some thread of awareness accompanies the dreamer through the labyrinth of the reverie—but also rendering awake of dreams, a sense that preserves the verbal force of the active participle, and indicates the process of incorporating the dream into waking life, or alternatively of establishing waking life on the horizon of the dream (137).

How is this applicable to Joan's development and healing? In *Lady Oracle*, Joan eventually surrenders herself to a version of Jung's twilight state, the metaphysical realm, through automatic writing. In this state of her subconsciousness, she explores the depths within herself and crosses borders into another ghostly realm. For Joan, automatic writing solidifies the connection to the metaphysical; bridging the gap between the psychic and the psychological. In comparison, Jung's journal entries in *The Red Book* encompass a form of automatic writing; personal analysis of his own visions heavily relate to Joan's experiences. For Jung, *The Red Book* contains the stages of his "process of individuation" and provides "a unique window into how he recovered his soul" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 219, 221). Similar to Jung's visions, automatic writing gives Joan a purposeful connection to the metaphysical realm, and more importantly mystical talent within herself. Like Jung, this experience could provide an escape into herself.

Unfortunately, Joan's opportunity for self-reflection backfires as she becomes more lost to herself than she was before. Joan says, "there was the sense of going along a narrow passage that led downward...I would find the thing, the truth, or word person that was mine, that was waiting for me"; only pages later, she adds: "I went into the mirror one evening and I couldn't get out again. I was going along the corridor, with the candle in hand as usual" (Atwood 2231, 223). Joan's Jungian archetypes are too imbalanced for self-reflection; the trauma Joan correlates with her real-life identity creates anxieties for her in the metaphysical realm as well. Upon entering the mirror, Joan's Shadow holds onto her Soul. Due to the severity of her identity detachment and resistance to trauma transcendence through fabrication, her fear of the journey rears its head, trapping her temporarily in the mirror. When she finally returns from her mirrored

state, she finds the results of her automatic writing: *Lady Oracle*. In this work, Joan's personal revelations beg the completion of her Soul search.

Reclamation of Self: A Failed Journey to the Soul

According to Jung, "there are symbolic thoughts and feelings, symbolic acts and situations...even inanimate objects co-operate with the unconscious in the arrangement of symbolic patterns" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 55). Surely these objects—the mirror and *Lady Oracle*—are metaphysical symbols of Joan's potential growth. While automatic writing is usually guided by outside spiritual sources, it seems that for Joan, it is guided by her mystical inner Self. Her title, *Lady Oracle*, comes from the following poem: "She sits on the iron throne / She is one and three / The dark lady the redgold lady / the blank lady oracle / of blood, she who must be obeyed forever / Her glass wings are gone / She floats down the river / Singing her last song" (Atwood 226). Joan is an oracle foreseeing her own trauma transcendence. Who could this dark lady be other than Joan's Shadow, finally severed from its grip on the soul? Joan holds the power within to unite her Jungian archetypes to reach the Self. Her Soul longs for wholeness, even under metaphysical influence. Unfortunately for Joan, her "natural symbols of wholeness" hold trauma that she does not choose to overcome (Jung, *Aion* x). The metaphysical identity Joan harbors as the *Lady Oracle* could be used to overcome her trauma. Unfortunately, Joan goes to embrace the famous Persona she gains from the oracle writings rather than embracing the true Lady Oracle within. Once again, she chooses to embellish that which is already whole.

The concept of transcendence has mystical connotations, but none are more mystical than transcendence in terms of healing and recovery. Numerous times, Joan works towards finding her Soul, and each time she is seduced by the appeal of fabrications. Carl Jung claims that dreams dealing with events of human importance, "such as a death," help explain "perception at

a distance or at least make it more intelligible" (Jung, *Dreams* 48-9). Interpreting Joan's metaphysical encounters through this same scope suggests their potential at allowing Joan to view her Shadow from a safe distance. She can see the negative for what it is and finally break free from it; however, that does not mean she falls through. Through the turbulent life of Joan Foster, *Lady Oracle* explores psychic opportunities to transcend intense traumas at the hands of an unforgiving society. Jung also states that transcendence is a person's ability to release any confining pattern of existence as he matures (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 149). Joan chooses fabrications over transcendence repeatedly. From a Jungian perspective, Joan cannot transcend simply because she consciously confines her existence to untruths.

With the help of the metaphysical, Joan has the potential to sever her Shadow's hold and unite her Jungian archetypes. The true test in Joan's journey to the Soul was becoming the Lady Oracle. Revelations of identity and freedom reveal themselves in her work, but once again, she rejects the opportunity. The final pages of *Lady Oracle* circle back to her dilemma in Terremoto Italy, where she has not only run away from her husband, but also her identity and entire life. Joan Foster's staged death leaves her more confused than ever; she is caught between returning to her life with Arthur in Canada or continuing to run away from life as she knows it with an entirely new identity. Not only has Joan's trauma-induced Shadow kept her identity hidden in the events leading up to her present place in the text, but it reignited an entirely new Persona. Instead of transcending, Joan solidifies her Shadow. The novel ends with no closure for Joan, and a complete failure to reunite with the Self. In *Lady Oracle*'s Joan's journey to the soul is never completed.

Chapter Three

A Soul Found: Alison Hart's Jungian Journey in *Beyond Black*

In *Beyond Black*, Hilary Mantel presents the clairvoyant Alison, a middle-aged spiritual medium in English suburbia, and her newfound, newly divorced assistant, Colette. In the grim circuit surrounding London, Alison begins a psychological journey exploring the mystical elements bonding her to a formidable past. As a child, Alison Hart undergoes heavy physical and sexual abuse. Jung's concepts of peregrinatio and individuation, processes of journeying the soul, leads to the unearthing of Alison Hart's forgotten past. It is not until she redeems her lost soul and takes control of her psychic abilities that spiritual healing and trauma transcendence takes place (Jung, *Collected Works: Symbols of Transformation* 133). The beginning of *Beyond Black* reads, "[t]he motorway, its wastes looping London... There are nights when you don't want to do it, but you have to do it anyway. Nights when you look down from the stage and see closed stupid faces. Messages from the dead arrive at random. You don't want them and you can't send them back. The dead won't be coaxed and they won't be coerced" (Mantel 1). An undertone of toxicity presents itself within the first lines of the novel, with the Shadow of death and trauma in control. Through application of Carl Jung's journey to the Soul, *Beyond Black* explores the connection between the mystical and the human mind, particularly regarding the Self and Shadow as Alison Hart must conquer the metaphysical, reclaiming her identity as her own.

Much of Mantel's work focuses on "ghosts of past" alongside elements of "spectrality," and *Beyond Black* works as a prime example (Arnold 2). With Mantel's dual use of "ghosts of past" within the novel, the metaphysical serves simultaneously a hub of trauma and means of salvation for Alison. Aside from her assistant Colette, Alison is the focal point of the text as she

makes a living as a professional medium; however, Alison's connection to the other side didn't start with her work as a medium. Alison is a "Sensitive": a clairvoyant individual who sees and speaks to the dead (Mantel 7). What makes Alison's case so unique is her central trauma that will be explored later in this chapter and her resulting dissociation. Jung frequently toys with the concept of "Soul." According to his work in *Man and His Symbols*, "[consciousness] is frail, menaced by specific dangers, and easily injured"; Jung deems his explanation of the phrase "loss of soul" as a form of "dissociation" in human consciousness, and "dissociation" is, in short, the "splitting of the psyche" (24). It is this splitting of the psyche that Alison encounters during childhood. This chapter will explore Alison's eventual transcendence of trauma through a breakthrough in her Soul journey and identity reclamation. To fully grasp Alison's journey and reclamation, it is vital to first comprehend the obstacles she overcomes over her narrative. Alison has all the potential to *be* that confident, in-control medium who is in control of her identity, but initially, her relationship with the metaphysical is not in her favor.

Alison Hart's Childhood Soul through a Jungian Lens

Throughout her earliest recollections of her childhood, Alison's clairvoyance works as an escape from her horror-filled reality. Her interactions with one ghostly figure, Mrs. McGibbet, provide her some sense of comfort in an abusive, unstable home. In fact, Mrs. McGibbet is Alison's first regular ghostly encounter, and this gentle spirit offers her solace as a grandmotherly figure. In her recollections, Alison recalls that "[she] was perhaps five years old when the little lady first appeared, and in this way, she learned how the dead could be helpful and sweet... 'My name is Mrs. McGibbet, darlin', she said. 'Would you like to have me round and about? I thought you might like to have me with you, round and about'" (Mantel 94). Mrs. McGibbet's comforting existence demonstrates a longing for a healthy motherly relationship—

something she finds in the metaphysical but not in life. It also provides evidence of Alison's capacity to use the metaphysical for her own benefit as Mrs. McGibbet poses the metaphysical realm as a "sacred space" for Alison. According to Julian Holloway, the presence of ghosts can be examined as "sensations" that are "symptomatic of a politics of identity" (186). Considering this observation, Holloway's research supports the Jungian importance of identity in reconnecting with the Soul. Alison's ghostly encounters have the potential to internalize trauma for Alison, but the innocent encounters like the ones with Mrs. McGibbet enable positive connection to her metaphysical identity, even if it is short-lived.

While Alison's initial relationship with the metaphysical came from a place of comfort—a tangible escape from the darkness of her childhood—her psychic ability more often connected her to the many horrors of having a mother associated with devilish fiends. These fiends, simultaneously human and devil, serve as paragons of real life and supernatural evil. Regardless of the initial sense of comfort and identity it provided young Alison, her connections to the metaphysical do her more harm than good. During their lifetimes, these fiends participated in horrible acts of senseless killing, rape, and violence, and what Alison did not witness in person, she witnessed supernaturally. The presence of Gloria, her mother's ghostly companion, completely drove Mrs. McGibbet's ghost away from a young Alison due to the darkness shrouding her spirit. Like Mrs. McGibbet's beloved son years prior, Gloria was killed by the fiends (Mantel 101). Alison recalls, "seeing Gloria's head in the bath was more worrying to her, somehow, than seeing Gloria entire. From the age of eight, nine, ten, she told Colette, she used to see disassembled people lying around, a leg here, an arm there. She couldn't say precisely when it started, or what brought it on. Or whether they were bits of people she knew" (Mantel 113). As early as childhood, Alison's mystical connections exist, but the safe space it provided for her

during was severely short-lived. Her abilities and young age opened her up to manipulation by terrible people and horrible ghostly images. These experiences gradually began separating the parts of her Soul, but they are nothing compared to the loss of Self she encountered at the hands of her own mother.

In terms of trauma, dissociation and memory loss resulting from trauma differentiates the story of *Beyond Black* from that of *Lady Oracle*. Jung's "splitting of the psyche" defines Alison's trauma and keeps her from progressing past it for much of the novel. The intensity of Alison's split is what makes her eventual journey completion so remarkable. Van Der Kolk describes dissociation as the "splitting off and isolation of memory imprints" where the "sensations, thoughts, and emotions of the trauma" are essentially separated in the mind as "frozen, barely comprehensible fragments" (182). In other words, memory lacks completeness as a form of protection for the person traumatized. Additionally, Psychoanalyst Karlen Lyons-Ruth makes this connection between motherhood and Carl Jung's theory, stating a "relationship between maternal disengagement and misattunement during the first two years of life and dissociative symptoms in early adulthood," insinuating the significance of dissociation between mother and child early on in childhood development (Van Der Kolk 123). After all, a mother should be a protector, not a perpetrator of pain and trauma for her child. Alison experiences severing of her psyche from the toxic relationship with her mother, Emmie, which opens the door for all other traumas following.

Beyond Black reveals Emmie's prostitution early on, but the extent of the affects her sex work has on young Alison is more alarming than prostitution. Emmie's work takes place within their home, exposing young Alison to the worst kind of perversions and sexual deviancies. When Emmie is elderly, she recounts:

> ‘They used to disappear you,’ Emmie says. ‘For a laugh. Sometimes you’d be gone half an hour...There was all sorts of money tied up in you. Trouble is with me I couldn’t keep me books straight.’ ‘You didn’t have books. You had a vase.’ ‘I couldn’t keep me vase straight. Bob Fox was always dipping in it. And then the boys fell to quarrelling about who was to go first at you. MacArthur put down his deposit, but oops! You see, I had borrowed money off Morris Warren. Morris said money owed counts for more than money down. And he wouldn’t leave it alone, I’m owed this, I’m owed that’ (Mantel 390-91).

Given Alison’s established trauma dissociation, it is understandable why she is not fully aware of the sick extent of her mother’s involvement until they discuss her childhood later in the novel. The amount of violation on Alison perpetrated by her mother aligns with Van Der Kolk’s connection between maternal disengagement and dissociation (123). According to Jung, a child’s relationship with their mother, particularly daughters, heavily influences their sense of self-worth. Alison’s mother does not value her daughter as a child, much less a human, allowing unthinkable situations to occur. This severely damages what Carl Jung names “totality of self” of psychological wholeness (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 128). Unfortunately, Alison’s position as Emmie’s daughter amplifies her dissociation. To her mother, her daughter’s Soul is worth no more than the sexual satisfaction of sick old men. Emmie dehumanizes young Alison in the worst sense.

Alison’s central childhood trauma revolves around a specific gang rape she suffered at the hands of the fiends. This specific event marks Alison’s dissociation to being molested. She only knows what she is told, and up until this point, she blacks out the degree of pedophilia behind her upbringing:

> By the time Al was ten, she had begun sleepwalking. She walked in on her mum, rolling on the sofa with a squaddie. The soldier raised his shaven head and roared. Her mother roared too, and her thin legs, blotched with fake tan, stood straight up into the air…A few nights later she woke suddenly. It was very dark outside, as if they had been able to shut off the streetlamp. A number of ill-formed greasy faces were looking down on her...She closed her eyes. She felt herself lifted up. Then there was nothing, nothing that she remembers (Mantel 107-8).

Alison's psychological trauma is severe. Again, Emmie offers her daughter no protection. She thoughtlessly invites these men into her home, has sex with them, and does not give a second thought to them having their way with her daughter. With so much trauma and resulting dissociation, it is impossible for her to identify with herself without extreme pain. The result? The psyche refusing to self-identify at all to avoid that pain. According to Van Der Kolk, "helplessness and immobilization" often keeps victims from defending themselves, while "desensitization to our own or to other's pain tends to lend an overall blunting of emotional sensitivity" (219, 224). Alongside her dissociation, Alison develops habits of desensitization early on. Being desensitized to the stress, violence, and sexual assault she encounters keeps her alive, but only as a shell of a person. When a child desensitizes themselves to that extent, they lose their grasp on the darkness of reality, becoming more susceptible to their own Shadow.

The Shadow of the Self and the Persona

From Jung's perspective, a person's "hero's journey" towards a rebirth of self; a person needs to "sever unhealthy identifications and restore a healthy persona" (Darabimanesh 425). If Alison is to succeed in her own journey to the Soul, she must be one with who she really is, accept it, and find the strength to unite the parts of her psyche. On the surface, adult Alison is

intriguingly confident. Considering Jung's archetypes of psyche, however, this is only her outer Persona. From Colette's perspective, Alison's "persona is bolstered by a burlesque aesthetic with [she] described as 'a genius with make-up'"; Colette also notes how Alison is always "carefully constructing herself for the stage, donning fake opals and vividly coloured clothing in 'emerald, burnt orange, [and] scarlet'" (Mantel 4-5). From the audience's perspective, Alison is in control of her mediumship because she markets it that way. She embellishes herself with glittering stones and bright, magical attire, but insecurity in her personal relationship with the metaphysical shrouds her. Considering her childhood trauma, this Persona is not a healthy portrayal of herself, simply because the confidence she portrays is fabricated. Arnold argues that Alison appears to have control over her relationship with the supernatural early on as she essentially markets a "sustained description of the spirit world" and "sells it to her customers"; the hold it has on her is *initially* greater due to the trauma bond she shares with it (Arnold 148). Regardless of the Persona she portrays, Alison's life as a medium outside of the spotlight is much different. Her life when she is not center stage is dictated by her Jungian Shadow. Repeatedly throughout *Beyond Black*, it becomes clear that Alison's charismatic Persona is a distraction.

Regardless of her dissociation, the ghosts of past trauma vengefully follow Alison into adulthood. Morris, a fiend and traumatic figure, dictates her life. Alison's "embodied existence" represents the "potential for precariousness, discomfort and exposure inherent within such embodied existence" (Arnold 233). *Beyond Black*'s protagonist's "embodied existence" halfway in the living world and halfway among the dead cultivates an environment where discomfort and trauma exist incessantly. Again, because of Alison's clairvoyant ability, the scars of this trauma literally never leave her. Not only does this central trauma mark Alison's severed Soul, but it also marks the negative hold the metaphysical realm initially has. Jungian theory supports that

"the individual [self] emerges during the transition from infancy through childhood" (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 128). Unfortunately for Alison, Morris is just one of the criminals who raped young Alison with the consent of her mother.

Application of Carl Jung's definition of "spirit" clarifies Morris's metaphysical hold on Alison. In "*The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales*," Jung suggests that the spirit "always appears in a situation where insight, understanding, good advice, determination, planning, etc., are needed but cannot be mustered on one's own resources. The archetype compensates for this state of spiritual deficiency by contents designed to fill the gap" (Jung, *Archetypes and the Collected Unconscious* 207). Due to Alison's repressive dissociation after being molested, Morris fills the "gap" in Alison's spiritual deficiency or Jungian loss of Soul. Jung's psychoanalytical definition of "spirit" is also applicable. In his text *Spirit and Life*, Jung writes that "the phenomenon of spirit, like every autonomous complex, appears as an intention of the unconscious superior to, or at least on a par with, intentions of the ego. If we are to do justice to the essence of the thing we call spirit, we should really speak of a 'higher' consciousness rather than of the unconscious" (Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* 319). Therefore, from this psychological standpoint, Alison's higher consciousness—her Soul—is completely blocked by that of an outside guide.

In the same perverted manner he did during her childhood, Morris pursues Alison after his death; he is an unending, ever-present artifact of her trauma. In many ways, it is implied that Alison has grown so used to Morris, that she almost accepts his presence as it is, like a victim accepting abuse without seeing a means of escape. Afterall, how could she recover her lost Soul if even after death, those who stole it still follow her and hold the power? Morris's harassment follows wherever she goes:

> ‘It was almost the worst thing, having him around at times like these, in your dressing room, before the show, when you were trying to calm yourself down and have your intimate moments. He would follow you to the lavatory if he was in that sort of mood. A colleague had once said to her, ‘It seems to me that your guide is on a very low vibratory plane, very low indeed. Had you been drinking when he first made contact? ’No,’ Al had told her. ‘I was only thirteen’ (Mantel 5-6).

In this way, death is not an escape from Alison's existence but a prison. Due to her gift as a clairvoyant, she is never free from the ghosts of her past. Her pain is prolonged. Though she possesses psychic gifts, she does not hold power due to the severity of her lost Soul, especially with her spirit guide as a heavy contributor to her childhood terrors. Morris greatly represents the entirety of her childhood trauma; he embodies all the negativity and abuse Alison suffered from her household, mother, and abusive men, beating her down and undermines her psychic ability.

The Anima vs. Animus

Alison’s detrimental relationship with Morris is a pivotal aspect of the text’s entire storyline. According to literary analyst Victoria Stewart, “*Beyond Black* charts the often-fractious relationship between Alison Hart, who has had mediumistic powers since childhood, Colette, who becomes her assistant and business advisor; and the repugnant Morris, who acts as Alison’s link with the spirit world, and whom only Alison can perceive” (294). Morris serves as the singular link tying her to the metaphysical. A repressed Alison is trauma-bonded due to him, and he uses this to his advantage:

> [Alison] is now established as a mind reader; and if she can tell Gillian something about herself, her family, so much the better... But long before this point Alison has become conscious of a background mutter (at times rising to a roar) situated not there in the hall

> but towards the back of her skull, behind her ears, resonating privately in the bone. And on this evening, like every other, she fights down the panic we would all feel, trapped with a crowd of dead strangers whose intentions towards us we can't know (18).

As spiritually gifted as she is, how does Alison Hart lack complete ownership of her abilities? When almost all of English suburbia believes in her power, why can't she fully? She holds a power—a genuine connection to life after death—that is recognized by those around her, including other psychics. From a Jungian perspective, her lost Soul condemns her, and Morris is the source filling her "spiritual deficiency" (Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* 319). This spiritual deficiency can be interpreted as her lack of Animus in the presence of Morris. Overall, she does not have the confidence in her own identity to override him.

Still, Alison can find her footing again, she just must overpower Morris. According to Jung, the Animus of a woman and the Anima of a man grapple with the nature of humanity. Jung argues, "when Animus and Anima meet, the Animus draws his sword of power and the Anima ejects her poison of illusion" (Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung: Aion* 15). Within Mantel's novel, Alison represents the Animus and Morris the conflicting Anima. Like the Anima spirit mentioned by Jung, Morris is a parasite hellbent on sucking any potential joy out of Alison's life after death, just the same as he did when he was alive. His "poison" is his power. Alison's Animus, while beaten down and hidden underneath her shadow of trauma, is still present. Alison's "sword" is not only her natural connections to the metaphysical and extraordinary mystical talent, but her perseverance in the face of an unhappy life. In *The Red Book*, Jung writes, "[m]y friends, it is too wise to nourish the soul, otherwise you will breed devils and dragons within your heart" (232). This excerpt provides insight into Alison's situation. Applying

The Red Book to *Beyond Black* foreshadows growth in Alison where Soul reunion is possible if she can it from her personal demons.

Metaphysical Mirrors of Self Reflection

Morris's presence transcends the psychological. He perpetrates new abuse against Alison daily. Not only does she deal with the mental revenants resulting from childhood abuse, she also continuously suffers sexual and physical abuse as a middle-aged woman by a symbolic representative of those same figures. Alison reflects on her situation with Morris during her observations of her body. In fact, part of the reason her evil spirit guide manages such control over a lost Soul such as Alison's is that he uses his metaphysical relationship with her to form a physical trauma bond to match:

> Alison turned back to her packing. She was perplexed. It had never occurred to her that she might have inflicted the damage herself. Perhaps I did, she thought, and I've just forgotten; there is so much I've forgotten, so much that has slipped away from me. It was a long time since she'd given much thought to the scars. They flared, in a hot bath, and the skin around them itched in hot weather. She avoided seeing them, which was not difficult if she avoided mirrors...he remembered Morris saying, we showed you what a blade could do! For the first time she thought, oh, I see now, that was what they taught me; that was the lesson I had (147).

Shrouded in Jungian "animosity," Morris reignites physical control over Alison again and again, breaking the spiritual bounds that should hold him from earthly contact such as this; in fact, the relationship between the male and female, the Anima and Animus, with the male Animus often drawing his "sword of power" (Jung, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung: Aion* 15-6*).* However, this

animosity—physically and metaphysically—does not hold Alison once she is able to look within.

Grasping the strength behind Alison's metaphysical ability requires thorough knowledge of the hardships she faces because of it; the more agony she faces, the more power it takes for her to overcome—and she *does* overcome in the end. To reclaim her strength, Alison must rebuild her connection with the metaphysical realm. According to the *Cassell Dictionary of Superstitions*, "mirrors have always been regarded as magical objects" and that "the theory that what a person saw was not a mere reflection but a visual representation of the soul, which was thus temporarily divorced from the body" (Pickering 171). As a gothic novel rooted in the spectral, the importance of and heavy use of mirrors within Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* is no coincidence. The text's women often focus on their own mirror reflections throughout the entire narrative, and medium Alison Hart is no exception to this trend.

Physical mirrors within the novel are not Alison's only gateway to self-reflection and power reclamation. To renew a sense of confidence, Alison begins participating in more fulfilling clairvoyant encounters. In doing this, she also renews her sense of importance in her role as a medium and the significance of her relationship with the metaphysical world. In a way, this begins just short of halfway through *Beyond Black*, upon Lady Diana's death and the arrival of her ghost. With *Beyond Black*'s setting in London's orbital roadway of the 1990s, it was prime time for Diana's popularity as a highly respected, publicly loved female figure. As such, the honor Alison feels being approached by her during the afterlife is significant. After Alison reveals the extent of personal interactions with the late princess's ghost to Colette, the concreteness of their connection is clear: "Diana manifested: a blink in the hall mirror, a twinkle. Within a moment she had become a definite pinkish glow" (Mantel 7). Then, speaking to Alison

directly, Diana chooses her for the following directive: "Give my love to my boys,' Diana said. 'My boys, I'm sure you know who I mean.' Al wouldn't prompt her: you must never, in that fashion, give way to the dead... 'So,' the princess said, 'my love to them, my love to you, my good woman'" (Mantel 7-8). Princess Diana, at the time, married into the Royal Family, was widely loved by the public; she was a humanitarian and doer-of-good for the people regardless of her struggle to find acceptance within the royals. Showing herself to Alison before crossing over reflects Alison's disposition as a moral person—a kindly medium—who like Princess Diana, faces critique amid good deeds. Diana provides self-reflection for Alison.

Reclamation of Self: The Journey of Healing the Soul

For Alison Hart to use her clairvoyance for her own good, to gain power in the metaphysical, she must know herself. Van Der Kolk quotes the following words from Stephen Cope:

> The night sea journey into the parts of ourselves that are split off, disavowed, unknown, unwanted, cast out, and exiled to the various subterranean worlds of consciousness...[t]he goal of this journey is to reunite us with ourselves. Such a homecoming can be surprisingly painful, even brutal. In order to undertake it, we must first *agree to exile nothing* (Van Der Kolk 125).

The hold that Morris has over her—due to its overall representation of her traumatic past—has long been established. Considering this, Alison's eventual move in taking back her power speaks volumes. According to Van Der Kolk, "[t]raumatized people simultaneously remember too little and too much," but it is not until a memory is "complete" that the victim can be "accompanied by the appropriate feelings" (181). Part of Morris's power—his ability to manipulate Alison's psychic abilities and use them for his own treacherous reasons—lies in her memory loss.

Once Alison regains her memory, painful as it may be, she can reclaim her hold in the metaphysical for herself. Once she learns her identity, she holds claim to herself. Throughout the novel, Alison wonders who her father is. She says to her elderly mother, “Mum, who’s my dad...I cannot rest, till I know” (Mantel 401). Finally, during a ghostly recording of the fiends, Alison uncovers her answer. MacArthur asks, “‘Who is her dad, then?’” (Mantel 411). After a few goings back and forth, the fiends realize Alison’s father is Nick, the ringleader of the fiends and the epitome of Satan. Her father is “the great man himself.” According to the fiends, you did not dare mess with Nick’s family. Morris, Alison’s infamous spirit guide, says that the worst thing that can happen to a fiend is to be “eaten” — wholly consumed—by old Nick (Mantel 412). Morris is not one to take that risk.

The symbolic death of Morris—the trauma bond he forges—brings Alison the symbolic rebirth of herself. When Alison discovers her father is Satan, her dissociative memory loss diminishes, and she finds confidence in a true sense of self-discovery. Because of this, Morris is determined to have no further control as he is now able to move on or be “promoted” (Mantel 380). Jung’s studies of the psyche, he notes how certain cultures a youth may need to suffer a symbolic death to be reborn (Jung, *Man and His Symbols* 295). Early in this chapter, Alison’s public Persona as a medium gleaming in knowledge and power was mentioned. It was also mentioned that this powerful Persona did not necessarily reflect Alison’s personal reality. This all changes. Alison finally realizes the survival of her trauma as a sign of strength. Mantel writes, “You can’t scare Al. When you’ve been strangled as often as she has, when you’ve been drowned, when you’ve died so many times and found yourself still earthside, what are the neighbours going to do to you that’s so bloody novel?” (405). Alison, someone whose potential was cloaked in fear and dissociation is now strong enough to fight back any fiend—dead or

alive—because her father is the father of evil. Not only that, but Alison's ability to continue a moral connection with the metaphysical after learning of her heritage is another level of reclamation of its own. She proves her Soul is hers and no one else's, no matter her bloodline. Regardless of the perversion Alison experienced as a child (as well as her own acts of violence in retaliation), she continues showing signs of a moral connection with the metaphysical as an adult. The fear that dictated her childhood has no hold. Alison makes her own claims to identity.

The final chapter of *Beyond Black* is nothing short of supernatural Soul reclamation. Mantel opens the final pages of the novel in reference to Alison's journey: "At some point on your road you have to turn and start walking back towards yourself. Or the past will pursue you, and bite the nape of your neck, leave you bleeding in the ditch. Better to turn and face it with such weapons as you possess" (385). This is the breaking point for Alison—through the metaphysical—that she can find answers, cut ties with her Shadow, and ultimately find wholeness in herself. In remembering, she reclaims her Soul. In the true spirit of the chapter's opening, Mantel finishes the novel, writing, "Alison checks her rearview mirror. She pulls out to overtake a truck; she puts her foot down. She moves into the fast lane, half hidden by the spray. Unmolested, unobserved, they flee before the storm" (Mantel 416) Powerfully written, this novel's ending signifies freedom in the journey of Self. The word "unmolested" holds significance; for the first time in her clairvoyant life since childhood, she is unmolested, unbothered, and not traumatized. Spirit reclaimed through her personal strength and connection to the metaphysical, Alison is reborn, and in a Jungian sense, finds her Soul.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

"Everyone who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it."

—Rumi

Atwood, Mantel, and Carl Jung: A Brief Review

Once again, Rumi's perspective gives heavy insight into the Soul's journey, mirroring the union of the Jungian archetypes. While one of the female protagonists purified her Soul, the other did not. In *The Red Book*, Jung ends his story with some insight: "I bring you the beauty of suffering. That is what is needed by whoever hosts the worm" (359). Considering this excerpt in relation to this thesis, trauma is suffering, often heart wrenchingly so. Trauma wedges itself into the psyche, feeding the Shadow and separating the parts until the Self is completely lost. However, with trauma comes strength. Coming face to face with traumas past to reclaim identity is the key to succeeding in Jung's journey to the Soul. All parts of the psyche must exist in union. Knowing the Self is the beauty of suffering. It is not only seeing the opportunity to connect to the mystical for transcendence and identity reclamation, but also having the courage to act. The applicability of Carl Jung's psychoanalytical theories pertaining to journey to the Soul within Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* and Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* is discernable on many levels. With both female-written works employing mystical talents through highly traumatized protagonists, Atwood and Mantel suggest an opportunity to connect to the metaphysical for transcendence and healing.

Lady Oracle's main selling point on Joan Foster lies in its open ending. Regardless of the many opportunities Joan has throughout the novel in redeeming her Soul, rebuilding her trauma-

ridden identity, and reclaiming her raw literary and mystical talent, she always falls back into her Shadow. Time and time again, her inability to accept who she truly is influences her fabrication of new identities. Atwood introduces Joan on the run from her life having just faked her death, and at the end of the book, her path is still unclear. Either way, her Shadow reclaims her each time. Though her journey progresses numerous times with her metaphysical talents opening the door for self-reflection, something—likely her Shadow—always pulls her back. It seems even into *Lady Oracle*'s final chapters, Joan remains a master of disguise. From a Jungian perspective, Joan fails to complete her journey to the Soul. It is unclear whether she is alive or dead by the novel's end, but even so, dying without Soul union adds permanence to her lostness.

Beyond Black's story offers more trauma and different results compared to the Atwood's novel. Immense tragedy continuously fills Alison Hart's life throughout the text. During her childhood, she was physically abused and molested by the wide range of bad men her mother brought inside their home. Unlike Joan who hid her traumas consciously, Alison is unable to do so; Morris, a literal ghost from her past, serves as her spirit guide, continuing his abuse daily. While Joan was keen on hiding who she was, Alison seeks her identity throughout *Beyond Black*, finally learning who her father is. Alison comes to terms with the abuse she once dissociated from, finds her full Self, and reclaims her metaphysical power for her own. Observed through a Jungian lens, Alison succeeds in her journey to the Soul.

Future Extension of Atwood and Mantel Research

Examining Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle* and Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* through a Jungian lens led to many opportunities in terms of research, both psychoanalytically and literarily. Finding ample current literary research over the novels was challenging, particularly for Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black*. Some of the current research I found pertained to Atwood and

Mantel's works as a whole, all of which focused on female protagonists overcoming some sort of trauma or social bounds. However, having limited direct sources over the two novels pushed me harder to read between the lines in the articles I could find, build valuable connections between themes, and apply the research in more meaningful ways. Additionally, it challenged me to present whole new concepts and ideas to existing critique on *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black*.

Due to my work in this thesis, I plan to further my research on *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* as literary pieces, but I also want to look at trauma theory in other texts. When conducting my research on Carl Jung and his theories of Self and journey to the Soul, I encountered analysis and work of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī, more commonly known as Rumi. I want to further my research of the Self by comparing the works of Jung and Rumi. Comparing Jung's psychoanalytical views to Rumi's artistic ones would broaden understanding of the concept of Self as a whole; this study would be invaluable for further understanding of *Lady Oracle* and *Beyond Black* as well as the study of similar works within the genre of female-authored Gothic psychological fiction.

Finally, I aim to delve deeper into analysis of the mystical in future observations of Atwood and Mantel. While the metaphysical was not the primary focus of this thesis, my future research will expand on the relationship between the feminine and metaphysical. In *Lady Oracle*, women like Joan, Aunt Lou, and the spiritualist minister Leda Sprout are more strongly connected to the metaphysical than most of their male counterparts, suggesting the female gender has heavier ties to the other side. Similarly, *Beyond Black* portrays certain abilities within female medium Alison Hart that male mediums are unable to reach. There is a metaphysical link between not only to the women in the novels themselves, but also to feminine objects or

symbols, such as opals, pearls, and mirrors. In the future, I plan to explore why the metaphysical is heavily gendered and what this represents socially.

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