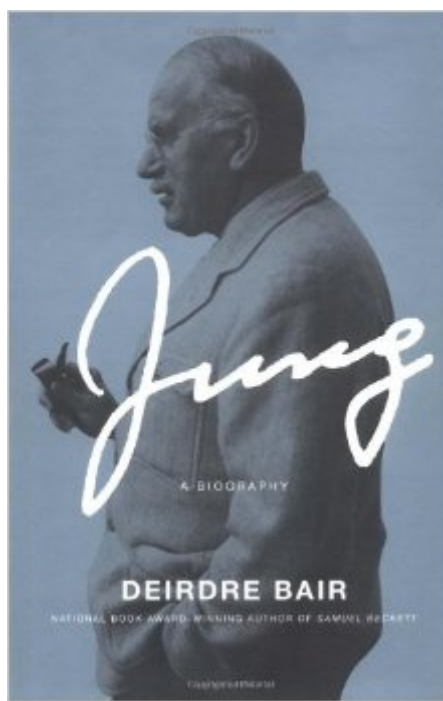


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Jung: A Biography



Synopsis

Deirdre Bair has written about some of the most influential figures in 20th century culture-Samuel Beckett, Simone de Beauvoir, and Anas Nin. Now she turns her expert eye to the one person whose teachings and writings are the most influential of all: psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung. The founder of analytical psychology, Jung became the first president of the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1910. Jung had a professional relationship with Sigmund Freud until he broke with the elder father of psychoanalysis over his emphasis on infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex. As Freud's influence has waned over the years, Jung's ideas-the collective unconscious, the archetypal myths underpinning all societies, synchronicity, 'new age' spirituality, and much more-have achieved an overwhelming ascendancy. Bair addresses the myths about Jung-accusations that he was an anti-Semite and a misogynist, and that he falsified data-with evidence from his own writings and from those of his colleagues and former patients. The result is a groundbreaking and accessible work that promises to be the definitive life of Carl Jung.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

C.G. Jung spoke about his number one and number two personalities, one corresponding to his physical/outer life experiences and the other to his psychological/inner life experiences. Like some of the editorial reviews above, I found Bair's biography to be sorely lacking in coverage and understanding of this second and most important aspect of Jung's life and work. The following quote he used in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* to describe someone else could just as easily be applied

in this case:"Without the psyche there would be neither knowledge nor insight. Yet nothing was ever said about the psyche. Everywhere it was tacitly taken for granted, and even when someone mentioned it...there was no real knowledge of it but only philosophical speculation which might just as easily take one turn as another. I could make neither head nor tail of this curious observation" (MDR,98).Look up "psyche" in the index of Bair's biography and you'll make the following unbelievable discovery: it's not there. She has written a biography on psychology and somehow left out the psyche, its most essential aspect.After reading Bair, I picked up Sonu Shamdasani's "Jung Stripped Bare By His Biographers, Even." Rather than containing a heavy dose of vitriol, it is a very level-headed overview of biographical writing in general as well as of many of the bios on Jung up to the current one under discussion. Shamdasani proceeds to attack this latest biography from his carefully laid foundations. Highly erudite and equally highly readable.In the case that you do decide to read Bair's book, I would label Shamdasani's book a "must-read" as well.

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