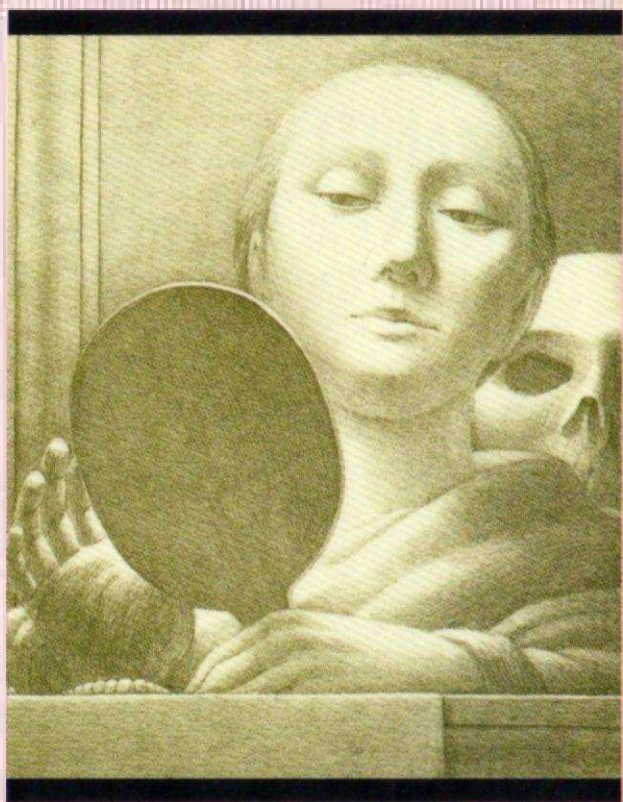


OWNING YOUR OWN SHADOW



UNDERSTANDING THE
DARK SIDE OF THE PSYCHE

ROBERT A. JOHNSON

AUTHOR OF HE AND SHE

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of the Psyche*

ROBERT A. JOHNSON



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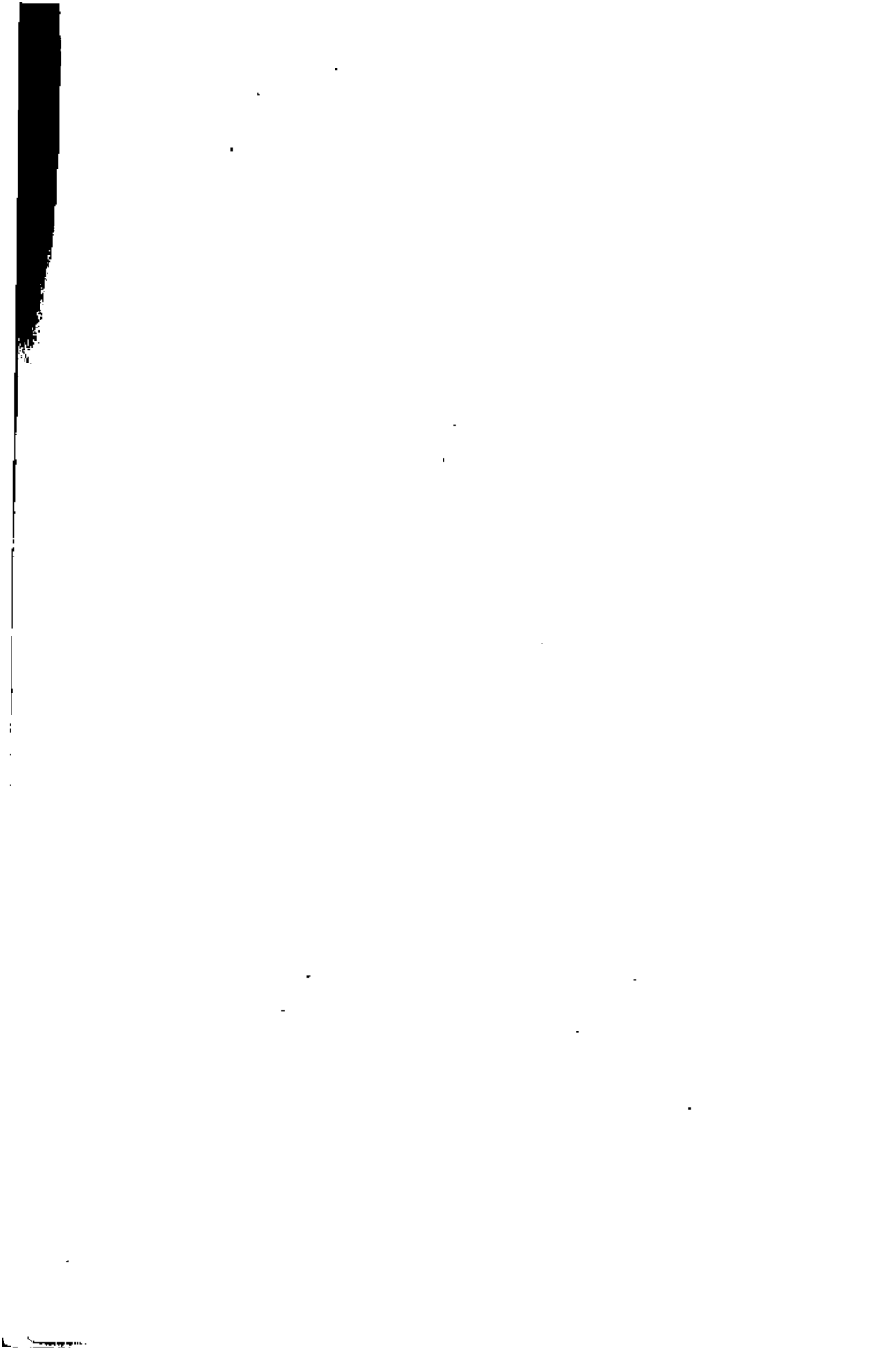
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Introduction

It was said that Dr. Jung's favorite story went something like this: The water of life, wishing to make itself known on the face of the earth, bubbled up in an artesian well and flowed without effort or limit. People came to drink of the magic water and were nourished by it, since it was so clean and pure and invigorating. But humankind was not content to leave things in this Edenic state. Gradually they began to fence the well, charge admission, claim ownership of the property around it, make elaborate laws as to who could come to the well, put locks on the gates. Soon the

well was the property of the powerful and the elite. The water was angry and offended; it stopped flowing and began to bubble up in another place. The people who owned the property around the first well were so engrossed in their power systems and ownership that they did not notice that the water had vanished. They continued selling the nonexistent water, and few people noticed that the true power was gone. But some dissatisfied people searched with great courage and found the new artesian well. Soon that well was under the control of the property owners, and the same fate overtook it. The spring took itself to yet another place—and this has been going on throughout recorded history.

This is a very sad story, and Jung was particularly touched by it, since he saw how a basic truth can be misused and subverted into an egocentric plaything. Science, art, and particularly psychology have suffered from this dark process. But the wonder of the story is that the water is always flowing somewhere and is available to any intelligent person who has the courage to search out the living water in its current form.