

## VON FRANZ

Marie-Louise von Franz. 1915-1998. Her nickname was Malus, although she could also be called Jung's 'Anna Freud'. She was very much a daughter-figure to Jung, and (like Anna F.) devoted her life to making the 'father's' works known, and updating them, without breaking in any way seriously from him. Joseph Henderson apparently called her 'the best of the bunch'. And it is difficult to disagree. She was certainly one of Jung's most devoted followers and the Jungian most often thought of as carrying on his legacy. She came from a noble Austrian family and was born in Germany, but lived most of her life in Switzerland.

Marie-Louise first met Jung in 1933, at the age of 18, when she was on a school trip (a classmate was related to Jung). Famously, Jung told her group about a client of his who had dreamed she was on the moon. Jung insisted that the client **was** actually on the moon: by which he meant that dreaming reality was as real as external reality. Once (after some resistance) von Franz understood Jung's meaning she became interested in his psychology. In an interview with the BBC in 1975, she described her first meeting with Jung.

'Suddenly out of the bushes, what seemed an enormous man came with a dirty shirt and dirty trousers and gold-rimmed spectacles and I thought "what an incredible face he has" (love at first sight?).' He shook hands, sent the boys to look at the lake and set von Franz to cutting cucumbers. She cut her thumb, he bandaged it and roared with laughter and the relationship had begun.

von Franz wanted to do analysis with Jung, but had no money. So Jung analysed her for free in return for von Franz undertaking the translation of some Latin and Greek texts of interest to him. Marie-Louise finished a Ph.D. in classical philology (linguistics), immediately became one of Jung's assistants and eventually became one of the world's most foremost lecturers, writers and analysts in Analytical psychology. In other words, her life was devoted to both Jung and his psychology. She is said to have interpreted over 65,000 dreams and wrote over 20 major books. She wrote especially on fairy tales (many of these books being really write-ups of her lectures and all the more interesting for that), but included major works on active imagination, alchemy, the psychology of numbers and many other topics. She also completed Emma Jung's book on the grail quest, after the latter's death. At Jung's suggestion, she lived with Barbara Hannah until the latter died and built her own private tower (a smaller version of Jung's). Jung was the only man in her life, but there was never any suggestion of an affair between them.

von Franz became one of the most popular teachers at the Jung Institut. When I was there she was spoken of in hushed and reverential tones (the quarrel with other members of the curatorium was going on at that time – 1984). Her devotion to Jung and her clarity and breadth of writing meant that she had a large following. In the 1950s she was a major opponent of Fordham and his 'modification' of Jung's ideas, including the incorporation of ideas from the object relations theorists and concentrated (everyday) analysis rather along the Freudian model. Then, as stated in Jung and the Post-Jungians, when Guggenbuhl-Craig introduced courses in group therapy von Franz withdrew from the institute. While the dispute was eventually settled (lectures on group therapy are now allowed, but not practical

classes), von Franz never fully returned. She eventually set up her own 'research and Training Centre for Depth Psychology' (on 8.5.94), strictly following her (very accurate and faithful) development of Jung's original ideas and emphasis on the 'spirit of Jung'. So the classical school was outflanked by a super classical school, even in Zurich. The Training Centre continues despite the death of von Franz. It has a Journal (*Jungiana*) and specializes in students unable to spend long periods in Switzerland. It is now called the *Foundation for Jungian Psychology*, with a web site of the same name.

Back to her collaboration with Jung. When Jung became very interested in alchemy in his later years, von Franz was his major collaborator. In a sense, she then rather usurped the place of Toni Wolff as Jung's most important collaborator – Wolff did not follow Jung completely into his interest in Alchemy. Von Franz appears to have believed that these studies are under-represented in Jung's *Collected Works*. According to Anthony, she told of a dream where a stack of Jung's writings on alchemy dropped to the ground and a tremendous wind came and started blowing all the papers away. She had to run around collecting all the pages and putting them together again. Surely indicative of the way she made herself the guardian of Jung's ideas and writings (and not just on alchemy).

In 1984 (soon after publishing *On Dreams and Death*), von Franz fell ill with Parkinson's disease. She believed that the book and the illness were related. However, in the thirteen years of the disease she refused medication (which she believed clouded her mind) and remained an inspiration to friends and followers. She did, though, reflect a good deal on death and tried to summarize her life and her work and see whether it had any meaning. *Apropos* of which, she seems to have been aware that she (like many of the women around Jung) had lived 'animus' lives. They were able to see Jung as a positive animus figure and to live (rather like him) in the mind and in the thinking function. Von Franz thought that this might be why they never married.

### **Some Books**

Alchemical Active Imagination.

Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology.

Animus and Anima in Fairy Tales.

Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche.

Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales.

C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time.

Creation Myths.

Individuation in Fairy Tales.

The Feminine in Fairy Tales.

Number and Time.

On Divination and Synchronicity.

On Dreams and Death: A Jungian Interpretation.

Projection and Re-collection in Jungian Psychology: Reflections of the Soul.

Psyche and Matter.

Psychological meaning of Redemption Motifs in Fairy Tales.

The *Puer Aeternus*: A Psychological Study of the Adult Struggle with the Paradise of Childhood.

The Cat: A tale of Feminine Redemption.

The Golden Ass of Apuleius: The Liberation of the Feminine in Man.

The Interpretation of Fairy Tales.

The Problem of the *Puer Aeternus*.

Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales.

See also her chapter in *Man and his Symbols*.

There is also a splendid series of 3 DVDs in the *Remembering Jung* series.

I would like to give a brief account of one of von Franz's writings, to illustrate how marvelous they are. Although she has often been accused of over-intellectualization, of assuming that her readers have as much knowledge and have read as many books as herself, and of filling her writings with obscure alchemical and other symbols, I have always found her works to have three characteristics. Clarity – of writing, language and thinking. Profundity – like Robert Johnson, everything von Franz writes is packed with thought, research and understanding (expand – even the simplest statement bit). And, derived from the first two, a great simplicity. She gets to the heart of things and finds that the heart is simple – in the end. No doubt this is why she was always (despite being a loner) able to talk with people of all sorts of intelligences and was humble about her own intelligence.

### **Man and His Symbols. Chapter 3: The Process of Individuation.**

70 pages, but really less because it is filled with beautiful illustration. It is at the same time detailed and erudite and simple. It is also classical Jung. Reflecting but clarifying his (later) ideas with great care.

It begins really with a number of definitions of individuation and (a bit later) the self. She starts by asking what is the purpose of a person's total dream life – the role of dreams in one's life as a whole? She then posits that they follow a pattern and are all part of one great web of psychological factors. (Inevitably an image of a giant ball of wool, the threads of which may or not be united, forms in my mind).

### **Individuation is the pattern of one's lifelong dreams.**

If you look at the sequence over years, then particular contents appear, disappear, reappear and change slowly but perceptibly (my water wheel example). The process, she says, can be accelerated by one's conscious attitude. And underneath the pattern is a hidden regulating or directing tendency at work.

### **Individuation is the growth that is thus caused**

A wider, more mature personality is the result.

### **The organizing centre is the self**

A psychic nuclear atom. The organizing centre and the source of (?all) dream images.

Another definition.

### **The self is the totality of the whole psyche**

Compared to the small part of the psyche that is the ego. The tribal protective fetish spirit, the Greek inner daemon, the Egyptian Ba Soul, the Roman native genius To North American Indians the friend or inner companion in the heart that is immortal and leaves the body at death (more definitions & not just hers below).

Von Franz provides a heap of definitions/descriptions of the self. As an inner guiding factor that can be grasped **only** through understanding one's dreams. A regulating centre whose maturation actually depends upon ego receptivity (this being an innate function of the ego). The ego as the earth to the flower, noticing and promoting aspects of the development of the self. She believes that individuation only occurs if the individual is aware of the process, but this is very arguable. She is very keen on individuation, compared to outer success as the greatest human achievement and simply following one's destiny (as she did). You can't measure or do stats. on the growth of individuation, of course.

This two approaches to the nature of the self is a problem for Jungians – as they try to grasp the ungraspable (old man of the sea example). Just a mystery, perhaps.

**How It All Happens.** The rest of the chapter.

Almost a neat, clockwork model of the psyche. Clearly NT stuff.

Von Franz begins this section by pointing out that childhood dreams may represent one's lifelong fate. She also talks of the ego-building stage. And gives another definition of individuation

### **The conscious coming to terms with one's own inner centre (self)**

She also says it generally begins with a wounding of the personality. Fisher king stuff. Demons, drought as representing the first meeting with the self. A call: seeking that which is impossible to find or just unknown. And one needs to focus on the unconscious to see what it is saying, or what is coming. Now to the classical stages.

### 1. Realization of the Shadow

Von Franz provides a huge number of instances of how the approach of the shadow may be manifested. Omissions, impulses, projections, negative images in dreams – cellars, passages, mazes, wild horses, desperados. The shadow energy may be negative or positive and –importantly – it may point the way the self points. So, don't judge it hastily. Luther is a good example of the problems here; he is famous for his agonies over whether he was listening to God's voice or his own pride and obstinacy when he created the reformation. Which god speaks? The personal shadow and/or the self?

### 2. The Anima

All the female tendencies in a man. For example moods, receptivity to the irrational, love, a feeling for nature. This is very much of her era and you might, as you read this chapter think about how many of her examples would seem appropriate today as (e.g. love of the earth?). She gives the example of Eskimo shamans wearing female clothes because they can express both the masculine and feminine.

The anima is generally shaped by the mother (and then...?) for good or ill. It can be negative and destructive – the *femme fatale*. Queen of the night, a Lorelei, a rusalka etc. All very interesting, but does it mostly reflect the male-female gap in European society in past centuries? There is a bit on projection (and helplessness in the face of projection). The anima as demon, as illustrated in the films *Blue angel*, and *Fatal Attraction*. Or a guide/mediator to the world within: Isis, Beatrice etc.

Von Franz believed that there were four stages of anima development. A. The primitive woman – e.g. Eve. B. Romanticized beauty – still sexy, like Helen (various). C. A stage of spiritual development – e.g. the virgin Mary. And D. Wisdom, transcending a-c – e.g. the subject of the Song of Solomon or a goddess of wisdom (?Athena). The important thing is the idea of the perfect four stages and of development – but it will be far more complex than this within our genome. She also talks about romantic love and the knight dedicated to his lady, but Robert Johnson does this bit better.

### 3. The Animus

Treated as a separate entity (is this right? Or are the anima and animus a 'contrasexual continuum'). The male in the female, shaped by the father etc. Less often erotic (well, that's her view – would it be true today?). Again, von Franz sees four stages (and note that Jung must have too).

A. Physical power – Hercules/Schwarzenegger. B. The initiator of planned action – Shelley. C. The word/professor – Jung. D. The incarnation of meaning – Gandhi. But beware of projection, she warns again. A modern version might include Howard/Rudd as a stage B example, and man of wisdom, Nelson Mandela. Make up your own list.

#### **4. The Self**

After confronting the shadow and anima/us, there comes an encounter with a new symbolic form of the unconscious – the self. The innermost nucleus (again). She gives all sorts of examples of figures –innocuous or overwhelming - that might indicate the approach of/to the self. For a woman a priestess, a nature goddess, the world tree. For a man a guru, the great spirit in the sky (?). A wise old man like Merlin or Gandalf. For either god, a dragon (*Excalibur*), the art of the fugue(?), nirvana, a youth on a horse. Whatever. The Christ child in the St. Christopher legend is a good one. Tiny and heavy, young and old, innocent and all-knowing, perhaps. I would add here the concept from Laurence Durrell and Edinger that one becomes aware that one is being observed by the 'other'. Symbols of four are apparently common (all those dreams) and, of course, figures like Christ, Buddha and perhaps Adam. The alchemical stone that can never be lost or dissolved. DNA (the only part that is truly material). The royal couple or royal marriage.

#### **5. The Relation to the Self**

Von Franz talks of our modern terrible boredom and emptiness, as if we are waiting for something that never appears. The existentialists, too, are especially keen on this. In my opinion we drown this in sensation/indulgence etc. She says we must have a relationship with the self, but should get in contact through dreams and active imagination not through standardized eastern practices. How to do it?

Be like a cat watching a mouse hole, she says. Not too alert, not too relaxed. Read how it's done in fairy tales. Fall into a reverie. Dream. Follow animals (instinct). Use the Alice in Wonderland principle. Draw, paint, write poems. Don't ruminate on subjective thoughts and feelings – follow the expressions of dreams and genuine fantasies. The self will emerge, she says and the ego will get an inner power and the possibility of renewal.

A warning. All the archetypes, including the self have a dark side (think of Jehovah). Sauron, the Empire in *Star Wars*. Contact with this may overwhelm and lead to psychosis. At the least make you grandiose and delusional. Not much more on this or whether the self can be corrupted or is basically evil in some.

#### **6. The Social Aspect of the Self**

Read with caution as it shows her (and perhaps Jung's) biases about the collective). She admits that there is such a thing. But says that everything depends on the individual.

Using the St Christopher example again she says that the self can weight you down. You must obey the self rather than the family or society when there is a conflict. Dreams show you a better/more realistic relationship with others. Hm! Very arguable. She states that all activities and obligations that belong exclusively to the outer world do definite harm to the secret activities of the unconscious. She adds that fanatical political activity is incompatible with individuations (but what about fanatical religious activity?). That genuine liberation can

start only with a psychological transformation. And that collective opinion distrusts and rejects the path to life of psychic images. You can see her antipathy to collective actions and ideas!

She makes the further argument that all official religious doctrines belong to the collective consciousness but, long ago, sprang from the unconscious of an individual. Religious people will often hate this idea and insist upon absolute 'revelation'. But individual experience/revelation leads to ritual and is then 'explained' by dogma, says von Franz.

All of which leads us on to fairy tales. So now look at the fairy tale file.