Studies in Jungian Psychology by Jungian Analysts

JUNG at HEART

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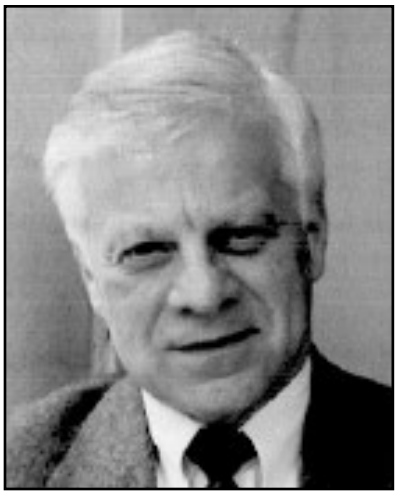
INNER CITY BOOKS was founded in 1980 to promote the understanding and practical application of the work of C.G. Jung

JAMES HOLLIS on the vital importance of questions

From the introduction to On This Journey We Call Our Life: Living the Questions (title 103, 160pp, $16)



One way of looking at this journey is to observe that psyche presents us with two large questions, one for the first half of life and one for the second. The question of the first half of life is essentially this: "What is the world asking of me?"

That is, what do I have to do to respond to the expectations of Mother and Father; and, later, how do I meet the demands of school, work and relationship? Our response requires the development of ego strength and an operational sense of self.

The question of the second half of life, however, is quite different: "What, now, does the soul ask of me?" When we recall that the word ***psyche,*** from the Greek, means "soul," then we realize that we have shifted from a biological and social agenda in the first half of life, to a psychological and spiritual agenda in the second half.

Each of these questions is necessary for the development of personhood. First comes ego development and social participation, then comes the relocation of the ego in a larger context, a reframing by and in response to what is transcendent to the ego's limited capacity. The person who has reached midlife and still not created an ego identity, and a stake in the social context, has much unfinished business. But the person who clings to the values and idols of the first half—youth, status, continuous reassurance from others—is locked into a regressive and self-alienating pattern in which he or she colludes in the violation of their soul and their summons. Thus, not only do we have questions, but life has questions for us.

In the second half of life, whether through volition or necessity, we become obliged to read surfaces in order to go beneath surfaces, which is to say, become psychological beings. A psychological being is one who asks, what is going on here, what causes this, from whence in my history, or the history of the other, does this arise? Not to ask such questions is to be at the mercy of the autonomous, affect-laden ideas that Jung called complexes. These are energy clusters which have a life of their own and, when unchallenged, put one's life on automatic pilot.

Naturally, we do not take the usurpation of conscious control lightly, yet it occurs moment to moment in our lives. This gives rise to patterns derived from the looping contents of complexes and their reflexive world views. When we acknowledge the power of our genetic and cultural coding, and the autonomous clusters of programmed and re-programming energy at work within us, the range of free choice seems limited indeed. Whatever freedom of choice is possible, we can only reach it when we have reflected on these autonomous histories within.

I am persuaded that the chief goal of the second half of life, and that of therapy by the way, is to make one's life as interesting as possible. That seems a modest claim, especially for a person in deep pain, yet our lives are an unfolding mystery, only partly in our control, in which we are not only the protagonist but often the most amazed of witnesses. Each of us is a carrier of cosmic energy and a crucial part of a great, unfolding pattern. We will not see the end of that pattern, but we need to carry our own part of it to the end. No mosaic exists without its separate, brilliant fragments. Something is living us, even more than we are living it. As a child, you knew this; as an adult you must remember it.

Your story is enfolded within the world story, and the world story is wrapped around your private story. The moral and spiritual texture of each story is the progressive embodiment of a set of questions, some conscious, some unconscious. The more consciously we address the questions of our lives, the more we will experience our lives as meaningful. □

— INSIDE —

On the psychology of renewal

From the introduction to The Archetype of Renewal: Psychological Reflections on the Aging, Death and Rebirth of the King by D. Stephenson Bond (title 104, 128pp, $16)

Renewal is a theme that expresses itself in every culture, every individual life, every analysis. We all confront situations where we find that old ideas and habits of being are no longer sufficient to the moment. We all experience ebbing tides of energy, when the things that used to fascinate and motivate suddenly seem stale. There are times at life's deepest reach when the guiding principles that once made sense of the world seem to falter.

The theme of renewal was an important aspect of Jung's work and of his own life. Perhaps his most dramatic encounter with the problem of renewal was that moment in 1912, just after the publication of part two of ***Symbols of Transformation,*** when he asked himself, "But in what myth does man live nowadays?" He realized he could not claim to be living in the Christian myth. So he asked, "But then what is your myth—the myth in which you do live?" And he could not answer.

Jung's story is an example of how this issue is both an intimately personal crisis and a collective dilemma. The loss of a guiding principle amounts to a crisis of faith—in the sense that the usual way of going about life, a way that seemed meaningful and purposeful, no longer engages us.

Jung explored the issue of renewal at a collective level in ***Aion***. However, with reference to how the problem of renewal appears in personal life and in analysis, there is no better description than the chapter on "Rex and Regina" in his ***Mysterium Coniunctionis.*** Here the problem of renewal is expressed symbolically in the mythological tradition relating to the aging, death and rebirth of the king.

In chapter four of ***Mysterium Coniunctionis,*** Jung discusses the psychology of the archetype of the king specifically:

> The apotheosis of the king, the renewed rising of the sun, means . . . that a new dominant of consciousness has been produced and that the psychic potential is reversed. Consciousness is no longer under the dominion of the unconscious, in which state the dominant is hidden in the darkness, but has now glimpsed and recognized a supreme goal.

Jung hints here that the ancient story of the king has to do with "dominant[s] of consciousness." It seems to me that this idea has been too little explored, and that is unfortunate. Disturbing as the idea may be, in analysis and certainly in everyday life it is imperative to have some overarching awareness that the beliefs we hold dear at one phase of life may age and decay as life continues. Their motivating energy wanes, no matter how beloved to the ego they are.

Early myth and ritual associated with the king arose in ancient Sumer about 3500 B.C.E. Originally, the annual coronation of the king was held in connection with the New Year's festival. In ancient Babylon this was called the Akitu ceremony, and it gives us the complete mythologem of the renewal of the king. All aspects of the renewal of the king are included, whereas later rituals often represent only fragments of the original Akitu celebrations.

Historically, the Akitu is thought by some to represent the earliest record of such celebrations; that is, although our knowledge of it comes from Babylon, it is clearly derived from older Sumerian forms. Hence, the Babylonian Akitu ceremony gives us the opportunity to explore an ancient symbol system that remains at the heart of a variety of mythological undercurrents still prominent to this day: death and rebirth of the king, the end of the world and the dawn of a new age, the apocalypse, millennial thinking, etc. And, in that sense, I believe the Akitu gives us a chance to explore the underpinnings, theory and meaning of the psychological operations that lie in the background of the archetype of renewal.

In this book I explore the ritual of the Akitu as a mythological statement that expresses the psychological operation involved in the aging/death/rebirth of the king. A psychological operation, in this sense, refers to a natural intrapsychic process that routinely operates in typical human situations. The Akitu provides a picture of a completed cycle of the operation. Furthermore, I hope to demonstrate how aspects of this operation express themselves in the framework of analysis, as well as in common experiences of daily life.

The commonality between the psychological process Jung describes in ***Mysterium Coniunctionis*** and the ritual aspects of the Akitu is striking. Jung names four stages in the psychological process of the king's renewal, and Theodor Gaster describes four stages in the ritual of the New Year festival.

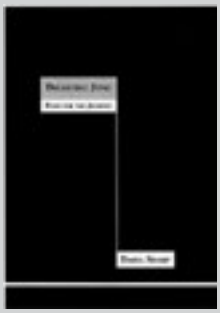
Jung's Stages	Gaster's Stages
1. Ego-bound state with feeble dominant	"Topsey-turveydom"
2. Ascent of the unconscious and/or descent of the ego into the unconscious	Mortification/ Purgation
3. Conflict and synthesis of consciousness and the unconscious	Invigoration
4. Formation of a new dominant; circular symbols of the Self (e.g., mandala)	Jubilation

Following this schema, I divide the material into four main sections: The Aging and Dying King; The Disappearance of the King; The Battle; and The Renewal of the King.

Also, following Jung, I consider the Akitu as one manifestation of the process evoked when a conscious dominant has lost its energy. I contrast and compare the symbolic material in the Akitu with the alchemical material Jung presents in ***Mysterium Coniunctionis.*** In the end we should emerge with a better understanding of both the Akitu and Jung's "Rex and Regina," and we shall have explored the central aspects of the psychology of renewal. □

Feeding the hungry

Digesting Jung: Food for the Journey by Daryl Sharp (title 95, 128pp, $16), reviewed by Lila Stonehewer in C.G. Jung Society of Montreal Newsletter, September 2001



This book came to hand over the summer and, as it turned out, was perfect for summer reading. Daryl Sharp has a good sense of humour. The format is that of a light and tasty repast that one might take while sitting by a lake on a bright and sunny day. It even has an hors d'oeuvre at the beginning of each chapter followed by a complementary main course animated by Sharp himself from the point of view of a practicing analyst.

As number 95 in the series "Studies in Jungian Psychology by Jungian Analysts," ***Digesting Jung*** is aimed at the novice in Jungian psychology, but it also acts as a refresher for those of us who would like to reacquaint ourselves with key Jungian concepts. For example, the first chapter is drolly entitled "It's a Complex Life." The pun is intentional.

Each brief chapter begins with an appropriate quotation from C.G. Jung, followed by an explanation in simple, clear language, blessedly bereft of psycho-babble, by Sharp. One amusing example deals with the concept of introversion/extroversion, and transference. Through these Sharp demonstrates the perils of social behavior. He tells us about his relationship with his room-mate at the Jung Institute in Zurich. Their difficulties in getting along—some of them hilarious—were the direct result of not perceiving shadow behavior in each other, and their typological differences, as unconscious elements within themselves.

Humorous it often is, but make no mistake, this is a serious book. Sharp is dealing with the big questions in life—Who am I? Why am I here? Why am I such a failure? What makes me behave this way? He addresses these questions with empathy and understanding.

The first eleven chapters deal with concepts: complex, archetype, typology, persona, shadow, projection, identification, conscious/unconscious, and so on. Sharp then goes on to apply these concepts to particular situations, drawing on his personal experience.

The following ten chapters hone in on the central concern of the analyst, that is, to assist the individual on his or her journey to wholeness, or as Jungians call it, individuation. This focus is played out through the Jungian concepts, some of which were mentioned above. In relationships we must deal with our own personality. Complexes and projection are set in motion that can never solve relational problems because the problem is oneself and it is here that one must begin work.

Sharp begins the process by saying that "Jungian analysis is not about improving yourself or making you a better person. It is about becoming conscious of who you are, including your strengths and weaknesses." The following chapters deal with what happens in Jungian analysis, such as why one goes into it, what one can expect from it and the journey one must undergo to achieve an understanding of oneself.

Paradoxically, in order to become conscious one must delve into the murky domain of the unconscious. It is here that we begin to discover all we never wanted to know about ourselves. Man is a social animal. This is the arena where we must play out how the world perceives us and why we react the way we do.

However, Sharp warns that the popular ideal of togetherness, with others being central to self-understanding and happiness, is false. Self-knowledge means psychological independence ("intimacy with distance"). This frees us to understand each other better. We learn that mutual respect for boundaries helps to maintain a relationship. The more we know about what is going on in the unconscious, the more we become conscious. The role of the analyst is to listen and try to help the analysand to discover who she or he is through exploration of the unconscious. Logic, theories or science will not do it.

Sharp stresses that Jung did not see his school of psychology as a religion. Nevertheless, exploring the psyche with a view to achieving a better understanding of oneself often involves a spiritual attitude which may be interpreted as religious.

The book concludes by stressing that individuation is a long and often frightening process. If the goal is achieved, however, you will be a wiser and more balanced person. But it doesn't stop there. As one passes through middle age to old age, changes take place; new problems take the place of old problems. We must always be alert to what is happening in the unconscious.

The knowledge achieved through individuation can even be a hazard. Jung quotes St. Paul in Corinthians, "Knowledge puffeth up . . . for new knowledge can turn the heads of many." In Jungian parlance this is called inflation, and is a regression of consciousness into the unconscious. This all-knowing attitude is disastrous.

For those who would like to read further on any particular topic, there is a wealth of references to follow up, and also a bibliography. I think anyone interested in the analytical process or Jungian thought will get a kick out of this book. The language and tone are simple and clear. It is heavily anecdotal, often amusing and always interesting. □

Marion Woodman speaks from her heart

An excerpt from Conscious Femininity: Interviews with Marion Woodman (title 58, 160pp, $16), interviewed here by Anne A. Simpkinson in Common Boundary, July/August, 1992

Marion Woodman: Most of us have no idea of the depth of the wounding of the feminine in the unconscious of both men and women. When I write about the tremendous damage that has been done through the negativity of the mother complex, I'm certainly not talking about the personal mother.

Our mothers and our grandmothers were ravaged in the very cells of their bodies, as many of us were. Few of them had any way to access their unconscious shame. We have inherited it and we are bringing it to consciousness. Jung pointed out that our actual parents are nominal. Our real parents are our ancestors.

Common Boundary: How do you suggest working with this material?

MW: It is very important to be able to recognize the voice of that inner complex. It's powerful. Ancestral voices are powerful. If you hear a voice deep in your body or in your dreams that says you are no good, that you are a failure, that you don't have any right to live, you may think it's you talking. But it's the complex.

You have to become strong enough to say, "This is the complex talking here. I do not have to submit to it." To stand up and hold your self-esteem while that voice is doing everything it can to pull you down is not easy.

CB: But many people would say, "That voice sounds like my mother."

MW: That's because their mother may have identified with the paralyzing negativity of the feminine archetype. She may have experienced herself as being judged and, in turn, may have judged her child. That judgment can paralyze, destroy the flow of life. If you are able to distinguish that voice, then you can stand up against it and say, "I choose to live my own life."

Every addict has to make that choice. "Do I want to follow the unconscious death goddess and die, or do I choose to live my life?" To choose to live is to open to the cherishing side of the mother archetype. That means cutting out the toxins—physical and psychic—that are killing you. It takes immense strength to turn that energy around. Redeeming the ancestors is a huge undertaking.

Photo by John Conway, Kripalu Center, Lenox, MA

CB: It seems as if there's an incredible internal landscape we're just becoming familiar with.

MW: I think that what you call the inner landscape is a new ethos we are in the midst of shaping. In the early nineteenth century, romanticism constructed an inner landscape that idealized nature. Nature was the nourishing mother. Darwin put an end to that.

Now we are beginning to realize the consequences of ignoring both sides of the mother archetype. We have no time to be sentimental in our thinking or actions. There's a mutation being demanded in the evolution of consciousness. I think that ***mater***—the Latin word for mother, the body—wants to become conscious, wants to release light from the density of matter. This is what the French Impressionists were painting. It is where quantum physics and dream imagery meet. This, to me, is the new level of conscious femininity that's never been in the world before: the conscious recognition of energy, wisdom, Sophia, in matter.

That's why my work honors the body as part of the psyche. So often at the psychic level, the process is moving in a very healing direction. But then, I may reach out to touch my analysand and the body pulls back. It doesn't feel worthy. It says, "I am unlovable." That voice is in the cells. Therefore it's at that level that the transformation has to take place.

CB: Based on that thinking, do you feel you're doing psychological work? You use the term soul-making. Others might say spiritual development .

MW: Psychological work is soul work. Psychology is the science of the psyche, the soul. Having looked at so many dreams for so many years, I believe there is a process that guides the soul. By soul, I mean the eternal part of us that lives in this body for a few years, the timeless part of ourselves that wants to create timeless objects like art, painting and architecture. The creative process for me is extremely important.

Whenever the ego surrenders to the archetypal images of the unconscious, time meets the timeless, so to speak. Insofar as those moments are conscious, they are psychological—they belong to the soul.

John Keats uses that term soul-making, and I loved his poetry long before I ever heard of psychology. Keats talked about learning life by heart. Isn't that a wonderful expression?

"Psychological work is soul work. Psychology is the science of the soul. By soul, I mean the eternal part of ourselves that wants to create timeless objects like art."

For me, soul-making is being open to the eternal essence, allowing it to enter through every orifice of one's body, so that the soul grows during its time on earth. Soul-making goes on through constantly confronting the paradox that an eternal being is dwelling in a temporal body. That's why it suffers, and why it must learn by heart.

CB: You are talking about a kind of reli-

"The healing powers of the unconscious are available to any man or woman willing to listen to the powerful images found in poetry, myth, dreams and personal experience."

gious experience, aren't you?

MW: Some of us were brought up in a religious faith that we lost in our teens and twenties. But, if we go into analysis, the religious imagery may come back in our dreams, often to our great bewilderment and anger. We thought we were through with that nonsense. But when we dream of a little baby with golden skin and burnished hair, then Christmas becomes something very different.

CB: That reminds me of a story in one of your books. A woman says she wants to know God. "I have religious beliefs," she writes. "I just don't know what they are." Then about halfway through her story she remarks, "My search for God is taking me far from the God of my Sunday school. Far from Christianity as I know it, and far from that historical figure called Jesus Christ." But in the end, that's not true at all. Hers is a very poignant journey.

MW: Yes, she had rejected patriarchal dogma and conventional religion because it was dead for her. She saw how patriarchal bureaucracy dominated her experience within the church, so she withdrew from it. But the reality behind the dogma was still in her bones, and it came through in her dreams in totally different ways.

CB: She found the true meaning of the symbol for her.

MW: And the true feeling. I think feeling is crucial. If a symbol isn't resonating in your body, your imagination and your head, it is not working for you. The whole personality—emotion, imagination, intellect—is involved.

Jung says you can never really understand the symbol. It is a mystery. Like a diamond, you can see its facets, but you cannot pin it down. You cannot say, "That's exactly what it means," because ten years later it may come again in a dream and your whole body will resonate and you say, "Oh, that's what it meant." And, in another ten years, it may come yet again. I'm just beginning to understand dreams I had twenty years ago, and I still don't know what they're fully about.

CB: At certain points the dream feeds you, perhaps to the extent that you can be fed.

MW: Exactly. Symbols are meaningful at the level you're at when you receive them, and that's why they are healing. Metaphor comes out of your bones; it's organic in the body. It resonates and you feel whole. Sometimes you wake up from a dream and you have no idea what the metaphor means, but you feel whole because emotion, imagination and intellect have come together, if only for a moment. The experience becomes a touchstone because you have experienced wholeness. That's where healing begins.

It's important for us to be in touch with our dreams, because most of us have no models. We don't know what the new feminine is going to be, no idea what the new masculine is. We have to depend on our own imagery to guide us. We have to be able to imagine ourselves moving beyond where we've been before we can even think about going there.

It's similar to Olympic jumpers who have to be able to imagine themselves going over the high bar before their physical body can leap with their imaginary body. If they can't imagine it, they can't jump it. They must surrender to energy beyond their conscious effort.

CB: How do you work with the body? Do you work hands-on in sessions or do you tell people to get massages, to dance?

MW: It depends. Sometimes I work in sessions. Sometimes I ask an analysand to go to a specialized body worker. Much of the work goes on in workshops where we work for two hours a week over a period of weeks. Each participant works daily as well as in the workshops because one has to stay with the process and gently go deeper and deeper into what is buried in the muscles: chronic fear, grief, shame. Suffering opens us to others. Love—a pulsation in the room, a healing power—is released.

The body is what makes us human. Those of us who have been brought up in a patriarchal world tend to stay in our heads. We want to stay with ideals. We want to put spirit ahead of body. We want to live outside the limitations of this poor stupid thing below the neck that can't, or won't, do what we want it to do.

CB: But working with imagery can get a bit ticklish because people may try to impose a particular image on their psyche. They want to be healthy or they want to be more successful, and they use imagery in a willful way, to force reality to change.

MW: That is not the feminine way. The unconscious has treasures that consciousness has no idea of. If you take your own imagery and allow it to transform as it wants, it will go exactly where it is needed.

CW: I guess discipline is a necessary part of the process.

MW: Discipline is a bad word in our cul-ture. People associate it with having to do what they're told. But discipline comes from the same root as disciple; it means seeing yourself through the eyes of the teacher who loves you. We have that teacher within ourselves; we also have the wild animal that needs to be disciplined with love. We need all its instinctual energy and wisdom. □

Marion Woodman's other Inner City titles are *The Owl Was a Baker's Daughter, Addiction to Perfection, The Pregnant Virgin* and *The Ravaged Bridegroom.* More than 600,000 copies of her books have been sold, in 10 languages.

Two by Edward F. Edinger

1) The Psyche in Antiquity, Book 1: Early Greek Philosophy (title 85, 128pp, $16)
2) The Psyche in Antiquity, Book 2: Gnosticism and Early Christianity (title 86, 160pp, $16)
reviewed by Mary Addenbrooke in Journal of Analytical Psychology, vol. 45 (2000)

Those familiar with Edinger's other works, such as ***Ego and Archetype*** and ***The Living Psyche,*** will know how he illustrates psychodynamic points richly and imaginatively with reference to myth, poetry and philosophic writing. In these new books, published posthumously, the order is reversed. Here he delineates the thought of the early Greek philosophers and early Church fathers, and proceeds to show how the key ideas and concepts from these sources underlie and illuminate analytical psychology.

Both books originated as lectures, given in Los Angeles in 1993 and 1994. The benefit of this format, which conveys the author's message in small, distinct sound-bites, is that these volumes form a potentially valuable source of information for those interested in discovering or elucidating the psychological relevance of key thinkers at the dawn of Western civilization. I can imagine a student enhancing a thesis both by using the material presented, and by further exploration of the themes which the material might well stimulate in anyone who is alert to the potential of the world Edinger opens up for us; that is, a psychological view of spiritual and cultural phenomena.

I found it easy to relate to his picture of the early Greek philosophers as visionaries gripped by the numinosity of certain archetypal images. In those days philosophy was not abstract intellectual discourse, but "the phenomenology of the psyche expressing itself in a naive way." As it evolved, it changed from an initial preoccupation with nature to a preoccupation with the spiritual world beyond nature. These philosophers were the first to articulate certain ideas and images that are central to the Western psyche. I found particularly stimulating the chapter on Heraclitus, Jung's favorite among the Greek philosophers, who was inspired by the concept of opposites, and of enantiodromia within human life. His doctrine of ***panta rei*** (everything flows, i.e., is in a state of becoming) leads one to reflect on the concept of "process." Plotinus, by contrast, deals with alienation and with aspects of the ego/Self relationship, in Jung's terms. These thinkers represent the ideas of a culture which had just stepped out of the mists of a ***participation mystique*** with nature.

In Book 2, the predominant theme is that of the Messiah figure born in the context of the clash between force and love—power, in the embodiment of the Roman Empire, and the spiritual autonomy of the Jews. Particularly interesting to me was his contrast between the Gnostics and early Christian fathers in terms of the individualism of the former, which descended into fragmentation, while the Church came to embody a collective expression of brotherhood in faith. There was much to think about in the Gnostic imagery which granted numinosity to matter and to realms of darkness, particularly potent being the image of light trapped in darkness. Throughout this second volume the themes of individuation and of the vicissitudes of the ego/Self relationship are the key areas explored.

Edinger's writing is tinged with the imaginative spark kindled by his material. Themes lying at the heart of analytical psychology are introduced with a fine clarity in deceptively simple style, so that suddenly the reader becomes aware that a new dimension is unfolding, almost without one realizing the shift. And for those who are already familiar with the "characters" presented, I suggest that they will experience this, as I did, with delight. □

"A passionate invitation to the soulful life"

Body and Soul: The Other Side of Illness, by Albert Kreinheder (title 48, 112pp, $16), reviewed by Susan Payton in Friend's Review, Winter 1994

Willie died and Albert's cancer went away. Albert knew that Willie, his cat, had somehow died for him—that there was a soul connection between the two events. Willie's story, and the implications behind it, opens ***Body and Soul.*** Jungian analyst Albert Kreinheder eventually died, in 1990, of a recurrence of that cancer, but in the intervening years he wrote some brilliant and soul-making prose.

Body and Soul is a series of thematically linked chapters that read like diary entries as well as spiritual testimonials. Some are simple and sweet, some deep and philosophical, some are cool musings, while others sizzle with passion and heat.

Kreinheder shares many dreams; here is one: "I had a dream which announced that before I became an analyst I had to get the permission of 200 mothers."

So he prayed to the mother goddess and learned to love the body of his mother that he found living within himself. Indeed, Kreinheder's writing reveals a profound honoring of the body, "as if the body itself were sentient, feeling, emotive, highly eloquent, but in a totally nonverbal and nonlinear way."

The mother goddess evolved into a love goddess and Kreinheder went with her through dreams and active imagination into the core of his passion. He learned that he needed to ride the edge of this intensity and love in order to merge with the archetypes. Only in these heightened states of being could he feel safe from disease.

Yet, Kreinheder doesn't shun disease; he embraces it and teases out its meaning. He writes: "With every invading symptom there comes also a symbolic content, and it is the task of the soul to expand itself so it can include the invading images and symbols."

Body and Soul is a simple and elegant account of soul that belongs with the best of the works of James Hillman, Thomas Moore and Robert Sardello. It is a passionate invitation to the soulful life and a convincing affirmation of the reality of inner experience. □

This author walks with crones

Coming To Age: The Croning Years and Late-Life Transformation by Jane Prétat (title 62, 144pp, $16), reviewed by Michele F. Cooper in Crone's Nest, Summer 1995

It's easy to start a conversation with Jane Prétat about ***Coming To Age.*** She is happy about the success of her book, which has just been published in Dutch and is also being translated into Swedish, Portuguese and German. That's quite impressive for a relatively slim volume that only came out last year.

The author is a fascinating woman who has personally lived out the exciting central thesis of her book: that the twenty or so years between middle and old age, a so-far unnamed period of life, are just as important as midlife, and that the trials many experience at this time can often be a prelude to transformation and creativity. What a wonderful thought.

How did she live it out? After earning her B.A. in English and M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy, she entered Jungian training in her fifties and became a certified analyst in her sixties.

Why did Prétat choose to focus on aging and the crone? "The crone is a pattern imprinted deep within the human psyche," she writes. "She is the third face of the Triune Goddess, who embodies the fresh possibilities of youth, the productiveness of middle age, and both the deprivation and wise nurturance of old age.

"Of these three, the crone aspect is perhaps the most powerful. Her face is weathered like old gnarled wood; her penetrating eyes see deep into our souls and beyond to the depths of the universe. Something at the core of our being knows that this could be one of our greatest creative tasks—to accept and serve the archetypal demands of our own aging."

Once upon a time the wise old woman was called crone. She was honored by her people because she knew how to heal and could see through to the true meaning of events. Nowadays, few of us believe that older women are repositories of wisdom. Rather, they are perceived as parodies, figures of ridicule, as hags. Unfortunately, many older women also see themselves in this way.

In Western society, most people hold

the narrow-minded idea that crones have already experienced the major transformations of life and have only one more transformation to go through: death. Prétat counters by showing in three ways how elders experience lively and empowering transformations in their lives.

She cites elder-biographies of well-known figures such as C.G. Jung and his wife Emma, both productive into advanced old age. She cites the experience of herself, analysands and other elderwomen as they meet the challenges of aging, loss and change. And she cites the dazzling Greek myth of Demeter, the goddess who lost her daughter Persephone, her spring and youth, and had to accept a new parental and womanly role.

Demeter was one of the lucky ones. She grew from her experience and was able to rejoin the gods on Mt. Olympus with a goddess's grace. But we all know those who are not so lucky. They have lost the youthful maiden within, a maid who will have to be reawakened to help them adapt to life changes with elasticity and openness. And lest you think that old myth should also be discarded, Prétat's wonderful story of "Marion" shows how the myth of Demeter resonates in our own time.

The term "crone," Prétat emphatically declares, should be an honorable one. We should stop teaching youth that when an object shows wear or breaks down, it should be thrown away and replaced. A better lesson is that being a crone means being as creative as anyone else. One has all the tools necessary to fly as never before.

Prétat also makes excellent use of images in her writing and thinking. I especially welcomed the guardian dragon, the well-aged wine, the steaming cauldron, the tree of life, spiraling to the core, even the routine opening and closing of drapes as a metaphor for stagnation.

Perhaps the richest vein, however, regards the vital and energizing role of change and transformation in all our lives. Many people become depressed when they face their aging and mortality for the first time. But Prétat shows convincingly how ennui is often a prelude to growth and change that can be truly inspiring.

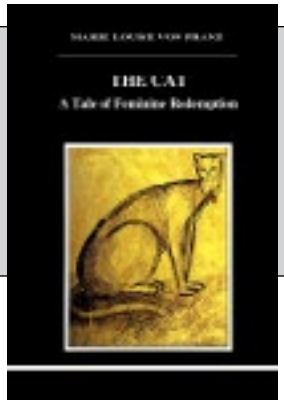
"When we are lost in empty lives," she writes, "it's hard to hear the instinctual voice. The doors of the past close behind us. The doors to the future are still unopened. Too often we forget that only by enduring our time in the liminal space between those doors, waiting for an opening, can we eventually move freely across a threshold into the future."

"The crone is a pattern imprinted deep within the human psyche, embodying the fresh possibilities of youth, the productiveness of middle age, and the deprivation and wise nurturance of old age."

Coming To Age is a book for anyone remotely interested in the world of the elderly. The material is fascinating; the approach is a breath of fresh air. But it is not a book to browse in for five minutes or bring to the beach on a holiday weekend. Too much could be missed. I recommend it to anyone willing to read at a thoughtful

Redeeming the feminine

The Cat: A Tale of Feminine Redemption, by Marie-Louise von Franz (title 83, 128pp, $16), reviewed by Ann Walker in Psychological Perspectives, no. 40 (2000)



This small volume is an amazing gem containing an exciting, penetrating, and crystalline view of the very difficult psychic work that is required in developing the inner feminine. Since von Franz's focus is on the deep archetypal level of the psyche throughout this book, her ideas are equally applicable to the anima in men and to the inner feminine foundation of women.

Based on a lecture series given at the Jung Institute in Zurich, the writing flows in an easy, straightforward manner, as if von Franz were chatting gently with us about this quite challenging theme. A Romanian myth called "The Cat" provides the backbone and structure, and is remarkably well suited to this task. It is a relatively modern myth, with unique features that bring in such contemporary issues as addiction and the archetypal meanings of marriage and childbirth.

The myth begins with two kingdoms, one in which the queen is dead—the feminine is lost—and one in which the queen is barren. In the kingdom where the queen is unable to have a child, she travels by ship to the island of the Virgin Mary, where she conceives a child. She returns, their daughter is born, and on her sixteenth birthday the princess becomes a cat.

In the kingdom where the queen is dead, the king, who is an alcoholic, sends his three sons out to find a bride. The youngest son finds the kingdom of the cat-princess, is drawn to her by his bodily needs, and suffers nakedly before he can meet her.

The cat-princess is now a divine image of the new feminine, and the hero must redeem her by appearing to kill her. In the end, the hero has to fight openly with his old, lecherous, alcoholic father, the king, and forcefully take the kingdom for himself and his new bride, the humanized and transformed cat-princess.

Von Franz begins her analysis by pointing out how the two kingdoms described in the myth well symbolize our present Christian world where the spiritual feminine is lost to us. The journey to redeem the feminine begins with a long period of barren emptiness, symbolizing a long depression. Depression is important because it shows us that a big problem is brewing, needing our focus and energy. The dampening effect of depression allows psychic energy to build in the unconscious. This building of psychic energy culminates in the birth of the new feminine, which is symbolized in this myth as the shadow figure of the Virgin Mary—a very important development, as von Franz notes, for she brings in the opposite to the Virgin Mother who represents our consciously held and one-sided image of the spiritual aspect of the feminine. She also brings in something completely new to transform and redeem the lost and barren feminine.

A hero comes into the picture as an image of the conscious ego. The hero must be tricked into contact with the new feminine, the cat-princess, through his desires. He then suffers, loses control, before he is able to encounter the new spiritual feminine, the cat-princess. She longs for a human relationship, and from the moment they meet, the hero embarks on a series of adventures that redeem her.

I was captivated by von Franz's description of the final steps of the redemption of the feminine. To integrate the new spiritual feminine and learn to relate to this divine cat-woman, the hero must slowly become aware of his moods and observe and analyze them without allowing them to be acted out in the world. He also has to work with the divine cat-woman and cut her down to human size, which is intensely painful for him. In the end, the hero has to take a very strong stand against the old ways of relating to the feminine, and indeed he must be inexorable and ruthless in pushing back those old ways so that they cannot absorb his relationship with the new feminine.

Along the way, von Franz delightfully amplifies the meaning of a number of symbols, including the king or emperor, ships, apples, nuts, corn, cats, dogs, mice, the forest, rain, thunder and lightning, and the meaning of somersaults. She also amplifies the symbolic meaning of alcoholism and addiction in general, and the functioning of the relativity of time and space in the unconscious. She discusses the symbolic meaning of marriage and love and the deep archetypal significance of childbirth. She also gives us a brief but deep examination of the development of the spiritual feminine from Isis through the Virgin Mary and the Black Madonna, and explains how the modern era calls out for a new development of the divine feminine.

Von Franz presents this material in the most engaging manner. Her writing is light, clear and lyrical, continually drawing from the myth to illuminate the mystery of the redemption of the feminine. On one level this little volume is easily read, yet on another level it is teeming with von Franz's extraordinarily deep insights into the archetypal workings of the unconscious. It is quite a nourishing meal—an amazing gift von Franz left behind for us, a book to read and re-read. □

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