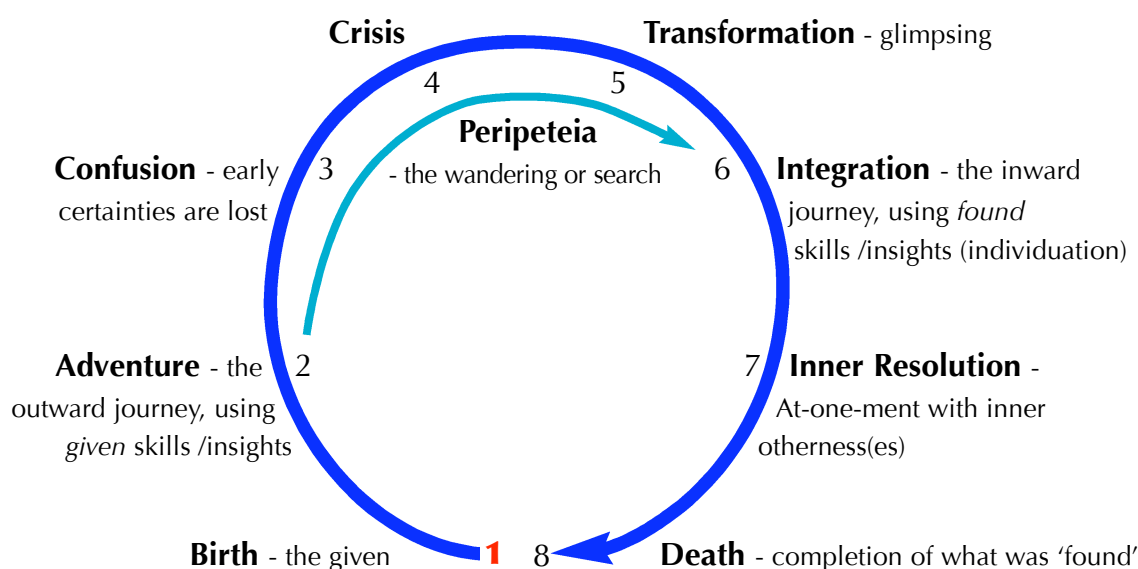


# 'The Jungian Octave'

*The cycle of life as depicted in the writings of  
Marie-Louise von Franz*

A talk given by Michael Maxwell Steer in August 2007  
at the Ethics/Spirituality/Philosophy Field of the Big Green Gathering



## Introduction

I nominate Marie-Louise von Franz (1915-1998) as the wisest woman of the 20<sup>th</sup>C. Having studied her writings over a couple of decades I've come to see, especially in her masterly analysis of fairy tales, that there is an underlying consistency in the dynamic of the many differing narratives. This led me to consider whether there were principles to be uncovered which might be useful to decoding the cycle of life? We are all more or less familiar with the first 4-5 'notes' of the 'octave', but the higher notes require a conductor with a good 'ear' to guide our 'intuinity' or, to mix metaphors, to guide us away from the illusions which characterise the early stages of life.

I've called this cycle 'The Jungian Octave' because its 8 stages correspond to the way in which an ascending musical scale returns to its key note at the eighth note, but at twice the frequency (cycles per second, now called Herz). Just as we have to sing more powerfully to produce higher notes there is in personal development a corresponding need for greater energy to reach the highest states, and a corresponding accolade of clarity and authority for those who persist.

It will be observed that the cycle corresponds not only to the greek omega Ω (the ultimate letter of their alphabet, thus the 'last word'), but also to the Uroborus, the self-consuming snake symbolising the recurrence of life. The overall pattern also exemplifies a remark by Jung, which I cannot currently trace, that activities of the early part of life relate to firing our 'arrow'

into the air, while those of the latter phase relate to observing its return to earth. I believe watching the arrow's descent with the intention of being fully present at its /our return to the earth is the essence of most spiritual traditions, notably the Tibetan.

To illustrate each phase succinctly I have chosen a passage from one of Von Franz's writings – tho I could have chosen dozens. Taken together they offer an insight into the diversity, range and detail of her wisdom. What sets her writing above mere speculation or theory is that all Von Franz's ideas were solidly grounded in her experience as a therapist. At every stage she illustrates any given thesis with an actual 'for instance' of its manifestation in a client's experience. A classicist by training, Von Franz researched into many arcane subjects such as alchemy and astrology, but she never refers to such subjects without firmly grounding them in the 'feeling reality' of a psychological conundrum she encountered.

I prefaced the talk with the following quotation from one of Von Franz's most profound writings. In her book *Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales*, she uses the Chinese folk tale 'The Rejected Princess' to offer a vivid insight into the way in which cultural movements interact within the body politic.

While the Western scientists were interested in what causes what, the Chinese also had a real science, one based on a different but equally legitimate question: "What events 'like to' happen together?" The Chinese knew about causality quite well and used causal principles in the practical concerns of life, but they thought causality was not

# The Jungian Octave

nearly as scientifically interesting as the question of how to understand synchronous events, even those not causally related.

Jung coined the term *synchronicity*\* to cover this phenomenon. And his view was that everyone influences what happens around them, both rationally by conscious engagement and

non-rationally through unconscious influences such as wishes, aspirations or fears. Thus, one way or another, we are led to take responsibility for what occurs in our lives. Jungian thought also uses certain words in a specific sense, so I have provided a brief **Glossary** at the end, together with **Bibliographical** details.

## 1. Birth

*Projection & Re-Collection In Jungian Psychology: Reflections of the Soul* is one of Von Franz's masterpieces, in my estimation, tracing ideas of collective versus individual identity from antiquity to the present day. This passage is from chapter 1, 'Definition of Projection', where she explores the meaning of 'Projection in Everyday Life'. I have to say, however, that to gain the full resonance of this book requires considerable knowledge of Jungian typology, and thus is not the optimum place for someone to begin a study of Von Franz's thought.

The projections\* of parents onto their children are especially influential, because children and young people are very suggestible, for their ego-consciousness is still weak.

As this is a common situation it is frequently pictured in myths and fairy tales. In Grimm's fairy tale "The Six Swans," the witchlike stepmother throws a garment over her stepsons, thereby transforming them into swans. This can be taken quite literally as projection: the mother, being negatively disposed to the children, sees in them not their own human nature but rather throws over them, the projection of something (bird-image) existing in her – namely, her own unconscious, neglected spiritual side. One comes across this quite often in everyday life, when a mother, out of laziness or for other reasons, neglects her own spiritual development. To compensate, she expects the achievement from her son or sons and 'bewitches' them into something that is alien to their nature. The sons, for instance, may have to pursue an ambitious academic career in order to satisfy the mother's unconscious expectation. In the fairy tale just mentioned, they become birds, that is, rootless, dehumanized spirit-beings.

The release of the bewitched beings in the fairy tale occurs when the loving sister (or sometimes the bride) sews a shirt of starlike flowers for the bewitched and throws it over them, whereby the birds once again assume human form. This, too, is a projection, albeit one that fits the object, which indeed actually makes it possible for him to appear in his true nature. Many people are, in fact, brought back to themselves through the loving appreciation of another person.

The teacher or the therapist who gives credit, so to speak, to his pupil or patient through the expectation of positive results can often nurture a blossoming of the other's real personality and gifts. Perhaps it is not important that it is a projection; it operates like a bridge across which the other can come into himself.

These observations can be supplemented by a passage from *Dreams in Antiquity* where von Franz discusses dreams by the mothers of St Bernard of Clairvaux & St Dominic, both of whom founded medieval orders. She writes:

These dreams reveal a particular pattern, and on what level this pattern is lived depends on the human peculiarity of mother and son. Bernard & Dominic lived the pattern of a mother complex, but in a high and admirable form. In such cases the goal of analysis is to discover how such a powerful mother complex, which cannot be changed, can be lived. Such factors are too deep to be eliminated. We are dealing with a basic archetypal\* pattern: it cannot be arrested, it can only be lived in a human and acceptably adequate way, compatible with the personal values of the man whose soul it contains. With the saints it results in a sacrifice of personal values, and the church is right to canonize them. Another man would perhaps live the life of a real dog [both mothers had dreamt of giving birth to a dog in pregnancy]. When a mother suppresses her instinctual life, then the son will probably live it out to an excessive extent. But he can only do this if he manages to break away. More often, however, he will live the wishes of his mother not to come at all into contact with the world.

## 2. Adventure

We return to 'The Rejected Princess' from *Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales* for this delineation of 'the outward journey'. We are all familiar of the image of a hero such as Dick Whittington setting out to find his fortune, but here the unfamiliar social context provides additional illumination. It is a normal state of affairs for parents and mentors to encourage any child to follow his natural aptitude/s, and thus young people are channelled at an early stage into what is considered an appropriate learning stream, and thus life patterns are set in place purely on the basis of intellectual or manual ability, not on the inner needs of the individual. This provides fruitful soil for following steps of the 'octave'. Similarly, any artist of calibre emerges before the public with the exuberance of a 'natural language', and only later discovers how hard it is to evolve from or within the 'cage' which that language has created for the public.

... the hero is a man who failed his exams. I haven't seen this in any other fairy tale, but in China, for all higher posts in the state service, one had to achieve an advanced education in a very demanding system. One had to study for many, many years, learn all the classic books by heart, and so on. When a student had done this and passed the very difficult examinations, he could then qualify for the senior posts at the emperor's court, or in the military.

When Liu I failed the exams, he was finished socially. He could only

retire and live as a private person (if he had money), or else become a lowly employee of some kind. We can find parallels from other countries where the hero of the story is also a social failure. For example, it could be the youngest son whom everyone considers stupid. Or there are many European fairy tales where the hero is a soldier who deserts: he was in military service but then he tires of it and runs away. He becomes an outlaw who doesn't know where to go or where to turn. Or you might have a wounded soldier who has been sent away from the army because he is of no more use; he wan-

## The Jungian Octave

ders around as a cripple without money and then comes into the fairy world, there to become the great hero.

You can see immediately the difference between the archetype itself and an archetypal image. It [is] the archetype of the hero to be some kind of social failure, but in each country the specific image differs slightly. [cf the Hollywood archetype of the loner or loser.] Only the basic structure behind it is common to them all.

In this case, a man has arrived at a *cul de sac* that he doesn't know how to get out of. And that, as Jung pointed out, *is typically the beginning of the individuation\* process*. It is as if the unconscious arranges a complete failure for those it has called to become heroes and achieve higher consciousness or some specific inner task. So Liu I's failure in his exams marks that call from the unconscious that he is meant to go some inner way.

Still, you can imagine his utter despair, no longer having a secure future. When he rides home, a bird flies up; that frightens his horse, which runs ten miles away-not in the direction he wants to go, naturally.

The appearance of the bird is an augury. You know that birds appearing and doing the unexpected represents a sign from the gods. For instance, the Roman legions preferred to camp where they saw an eagle circling overhead, especially in the vicinity of an eagle's nest. And in the science of bird watching, it was important to note if they

came from the right or the left, where they circled or settled, etc. These things were part of a whole science among the Etruscans, and bird watching continued to be a science among the ancient Romans. Also, in the Germanic civilization, the ravens of Wotan had something to say, the appearance of the eagle was interpreted, and so on. In China it is the same way; for instance, to see the flight of wild geese in the sky is a lucky sign.

In our story we don't know what type of bird it is, but we know this appearance is a typical sign from the unconscious. The bird represents an intuitive, autonomous thought jumping up, so to speak. It is the unexpected spiritual content that spooks Liu I's horse.

This is so frequently the case: the first intimation people get that the unconscious is really real simply terrifies them. Jung often quotes the dream of a professor of theology who had started analysis with him. One of his first dreams was that he was going through the woods to a dark lake, and the lake was lying quite undisturbed in the darkness, when suddenly a gust of wind came and rippled the surface of the lake in little waves. He woke with a cry of terror, and then left analysis. He had had enough. The panic was too great. Jung comments that this is like the miracle of the pond of Bethesda, a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, just the kind of thing one might think a theologian would be deeply moved and delighted about. But obviously, this man was one of those who like to talk about such things and yet panic when faced with them in reality.

### 3. Confusion

A regular pattern of any undertaking is that after a promising start complications enter which blow us off course. In life, a 'promising career' is often 'cut short' by a misjudgment or indiscretion. These may occur as a result of apparently unrelated external events, or as self-induced deviations, conspicuously in the sexual area. In either case, Von Franz maintains that, one way or another, we subconsciously 'attract' the events that occur in or around our lives; and that we do this in order to acquire a fullness which only emerges from struggling with and resolving the darker aspects of our subconscious.

In *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (p93~) Von Franz introduces a central Jungian concept of 'inner otherness' which in men is an inner feminine called the *anima\**, and in women an inner masculine called the *animus\** – a term not to be confused with the conventional usage expressing dislike of someone.

This points to a very subtle problem in connection with the realization of the anima. Men who know nothing about psychology tend simply to project the anima onto a real woman, experiencing her entirely outside. But if through psychological introspection they realize that the attraction exerted upon them by the anima is not only an outer factor but is something they carry within themselves – an inner image of a feminine being which is the true ideal and the soul guide – then often, as a next problem, the ego raises a pseudo-conflict between the inner and the outer realms by saying, "I don't know if this dream figure is my anima inside or if it concerns the real woman outside. Shall I follow up an anima fascination in the external world, or shall I introject it and take it as purely symbolic?" When people use that phrase, there is a slight "[merely]-symbolic" undercurrent. With our strong disbelief in the reality of the psyche, people usually add something like, "Must I only realize it within? May I not have something outside and concrete as well?" There you see that consciousness, with its extraverted bias, gets caught in a false conflict between concrete outer and symbolic inner realization and in this way cuts the phenomenon of the anima artificially in two. [...]

Another aspect of this pseudo-conflict is: "Must I think of my anima with spiritual devotion? For instance, pray to the Virgin instead of

looking at a beautiful woman's legs and loving her sexually?" There is no such difference! The upper and lower are one and, like all contents of the unconscious, have a whole range of what we would call spiritual and instinctual manifestations. Basically in their archetypal appearance there is a oneness of those two factors, and only consciousness cuts these aspects apart. If a man [really learns] to contact his anima, then this whole problem collapses, for then the anima will manifest immediately, and he will always remain concentrated on her reality and look away from such a pseudo-conflict which arises around her. To put it in very plain and simple words, **he will try constantly to follow his feeling, his Eros side, without considering any other elements, and in that way walk through seemingly incompatible worlds on the razor's edge**. Keeping to what Jung calls the reality of the psyche is an achievement like that of an acrobatic test, because our consciousness has the natural tendency always to be pulled into unilateral interpretations, always formulating a program or a recipe instead of **simply keeping between the opposites with the flow of life**. There is only one loyalty or constancy Within all that: a loyalty to the inner reality of the anima, and this is beautifully expressed in the jumping through the ring, the anima in a midair position, accurately in the center and moving through it.

### 4. Crisis

There is no more common frequent butt of humour than the proverbial 'mid-life crisis', and yet nothing is more painful for the individual than reaching that point where all one's youthful certainties evaporate – often in the wake of a departing partner or a

## The Jungian Octave

business collapse. Equally it can happen when our intentional plans get derailed. Our first reaction is always to ask ourselves what went 'wrong'. Von Franz argues that this phase should be viewed as a normal part of the life cycle, by which we are brought to see both the light and dark within ourselves. She argues that not merely in such classics of mystical literature as *The Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Dark Night of the Soul* do we encounter the idea that the 'price' of integration is the *dis*integra-

Another typical anima conflict raised by the unconscious to force a man to differentiate his Eros is the marital triangle. When he gets into this conflict, he is liable to say, "If I cut off the other woman, I am betraying my own feeling for the sake of conventionality. If I run away from my wife and children with the woman on whom my anima projection has fallen, then I am behaving irresponsibly and following a mood that will collapse fairly soon, as one always knows. I cannot do both, and also I cannot prolong an impossible situation forever." (If the anima wants to impose herself upon a man's consciousness, she often brings about such a conflict.) His wife's animus will say, "You must make a decision!" And the girlfriend's animus goes up in the air and says, "I cannot just hang on like this!" Everyone and everything push him toward wrong decisions.

There again loyalty to the reality of the psyche gives the only possible solution, and generally the anima tends to maneuver a man into a situation which is meant to be without issue. Jung said that to be in a situation where there is no way out or to be in a conflict where there is no solution is the classical beginning of the process of individuation. It is meant to be a situation without solution: the unconscious wants the hopeless conflict in order to put ego consciousness up against the wall, so that the man has to realize that whatever he does is wrong, whichever way he decides will be

tion of cherished 'illusions' that prevented us seeing the bigger picture, but that we constantly find this theme in fairy tale literature where the hero/ine gets lost in the wood, only to be saved by an outside intervention, often by a lucky animal which, she would say, expresses the reconnection to an instinctual world that has nearly always been lost or overlaid in the earlier 'adventure.

This passage *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales* follows directly from the previous one.

wrong. This is meant to knock out the superiority of the ego, which always acts from the illusion that it has the responsibility of decision. Naturally, if a man says, "Oh well, then I shall just let everything go and make no decision, but just protract and wriggle out everywhere," the whole thing is equally wrong, for then naturally nothing happens. But if he is ethical enough to suffer to the core of his personality, then generally, because of the insolubility of the conscious situation, the Self manifests. In religious language you could say that the situation without issue is meant to force the man to rely on an act of God. In psychological language the situation without issue, which the anima arranges with great skill in a man's life, is meant to drive him into a condition in which he is capable of experiencing the Self, in which he will be inwardly open to an interference by the *tertium quod non datur* (the third, which is not given, that is, the unknown thing). In this way, as Jung said, the anima is the guide toward the realization of the Self, but sometimes in a very painful manner. When thinking of the anima as the soul guide, we are apt to think of Beatrice leading Dante up to Paradise, but we should not forget that he experienced that only after he had gone through Hell. Normally, the anima does not take a man by the hand and lead him right up to Paradise; she puts him first in to a hot cauldron where he is nicely roasted for a while.

## **5. Transformation**

Like The Prodigal Son, we often only accept the necessity for change when reduced to extremity. In the same way, physical illness often seems to lead downhill until a 'healing crisis' is reached. The way in which the transformative intervention enters people's lives is almost always uniquely personal, and thus correspondingly appropriate. The fact that it rarely occurs before the individual has been 'nicely roasted' demonstrates the way in which the subconscious does in fact control the timing of events. By 'rescuing' someone because one feels moved by their suffering we can, and usually do, interrupt the natural cycle that might have led to their deeper integration. This is obviously not applicable to every case, but it does show the need for intelligent discernment.

I believe that one aspect of the 'transformation' is (the beginning of) a liberation from literalism, or the identification with the physical – which would include the prevailing illusion that the mind is synonymous with the soul or Self\*. When we can glimpse the idea that reality is metaphorical, albeit at first dimly, then we acquire a triangulation point by which to 'survey' the topography of our lives without the compulsions that have previously magnetised us. They remain present, of course, but the 'transformation' is that we become aware they they are 'negotiable' and not *absolute*.

This passage in *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales* precedes the previous two excerpts.

Often in mythology there is one figure accompanied by two acolytes (followers): Mithras and the Dadophores, Christ between the two thieves, and so on. Such triadic mythological formations stand for the oneness and its polarity, the one thing which unites, and the opposites as the two poles between which the uniting center appears. A certain difference has to be made between three things of the same kind, or a group of three where the one in the middle is really the whole thing and the two opposites are represented as a kind of illus-

tration of what is within, of that wholeness. Or there is a dualism and a connecting third thing, but basically you never run off the main line if you keep in mind that the three has to do with movement and time, mostly an inexorable unilateral movement of life. That is why in fairy tales the story, the *peripetia*, is often divided into three phases, and then comes the fourth as a *lysis*\* or catastrophe. The fourth leads into a new dimension, which is not comparable to the three previous steps.

# The Jungian Octave

## **6. Integration**

Jungians use the term Individuation\* to describe the process by which our inner wisdom (our true Self\*) transforms and integrates our experience of crisis into lysis\*. In *Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche* (p312~) Von Franz expands on the central tenet of an 'inner otherness' (the *anima/ animus*) and the processes involved in coming to recognise and reconcile our unwanted or shadow\* aspects.

Like the anima, the animus, too, consists not only of negative properties. It too has an extraordinarily positive and valuable side, in which it, like the anima, can form a bridge to the experience of the Self and perform a creative function. The following dream of a 45 year-old woman shows this clearly:

Over the balcony into the room climb two figures shrouded in gray hooded cloaks. Their intention is to torture my sister and myself. My sister hides under the bed, but they get her out with a broom and torment her. Then it's my turn. The leader of the two shoves me against the wall. But suddenly the other one lays out and draws a picture on the wall. Then I say as I see it, "Oh, but how well drawn that is!" Then the two of them let me pacify them, and they become quite friendly.

The tormenting aspect of the two figures was well known to the dreamer, for she repeatedly suffered from serious panic attacks in which she could not help imagining that people she loved were in danger of death or had died. The duality of the figures, however, shows that these intruders represent something that has two possible ways of working, that these animus figures might bring about something besides tormenting thoughts. The dreamer's sister, who tried to escape from them, is tortured-in reality she died relatively early from cancer. She was artistically talented but did not try to make anything of her gift. In the dream, it is now revealed that the intruders are artists in disguise; and when, as a result of their actions, the dreamer acknowledges her own talent, they drop their intention of torturing her. This shows the meaning of the dream. Behind the panic attacks are, on one hand a serious danger of death, but on the other, a creative potentiality: the dreamer was extraordinarily gifted at drawing and painting but always doubted the meaningfulness of this activity. The dream lets her know in no uncertain terms that this gift should and must be developed. If she did that, the destructive animus could turn into a creative force.

The animus frequently appears, as it does in this dream, as a group of men, or as some other collective image. Thus also the pronouncements of the animus-possessed woman usually begin with "one should" or "everyone knows" or "it is always the case..." etc.

Many myths and fairy tales tell of a prince, who has been turned into an animal or a monster by sorcery, being saved by a woman. This is a symbolic representation of the development of the animus toward consciousness. Often the heroine may ask no questions of her mysterious lover, or she is only allowed to meet him in darkness. She is to save him through her blind faith and love, but this never works. She always breaks her promise and is only able to find her beloved again after a long quest.

As the anima does with men, the animus also creates states of possession in women. In myths and fairy tales this condition is often

represented by the devil or an "old man of the mountain," that is, a troll or ogre, holding the heroine prisoner and forcing her to kill all men who approach her or to deliver them into the hands of the demon; or else the father shuts up the heroine in a tower or a grave or sets her on a glass mountain, so that no one can get near her. In such cases, the heroine can often do nothing but wait patiently for a savior to deliver her from her plight. Through her suffering, the animus (for both the demon and the savior are two aspects of the same inner power) can be gradually transformed into a positive inner force.

In real life, too, it takes a long time for a woman to bring the animus into consciousness, and it costs her a great deal of suffering. But if she succeeds in freeing herself from his possession, he changes into an "inner companion" of the highest value, who confers on her positive masculine qualities such as initiative, courage, objectivity, and intellectual clarity. Like the anima in a man, **the animus also commonly exhibits four stages of development.**

*In the first stage* he manifests as a symbol of physical force, for example, a sports hero [or film /rock star].

*In the next stage*, in addition he possesses initiative and focused ability to act.

*In the third stage*, he becomes "the word" and is therefore frequently projected onto noteworthy intellectuals, like doctors, ministers, and professors.

*On the fourth level*, he embodies the mind and becomes a mediator of creative and religious inner experiences, through which life acquires an individual meaning. At this stage he confers on a woman a spiritual and intellectual solidity that counterbalances her essentially soft nature. He can then act as a liaison connecting her with the spiritual life of the time. When this occurs, women are often more open to new, creative ideas than men. That is why in the past women were often used as mediums able to make knowledge of the future available to the world of the spirit. The creative courage in the truth conferred by the animus gives a woman the daring to enunciate new ideas that can inspire men to new enterprises. Often in history women have recognized the value of new creative ideas earlier than men, who are more emotionally conservative. The nature of woman is more closely related to the irrational, and this makes a woman better able to open to new inspirations from the unconscious. The very fact that women normally participate less in public life than men do makes it possible for their animus to act as a "hidden prince" in the darkness of private life and bring about beneficial results.

## **7. Inner Resolution**

Jung's term is *mysterium coniunctionis* – the mystery of union, or mystical marriage. In many places Von Franz speaks of the emergence of mandala\* or wholeness symbols occurring in the unconscious imagery of analysands presaging their full recovery or inner healing. She believes that in showing us what is hidden from consciousness dreams are an infallible guide to our conditions both in sickness and in health. In *Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche* (p324~) she talks of how the true inner Self\* that manifests in our dream-world seems to be the motivating force and also the magnetic power that draws each of us towards fullness or completion.

## The Jungian Octave

### The Self

When a person has inwardly struggled with his anima or with her animus for a sufficiently long time and has reached the point where he or she is no longer identified with it in an unconscious fashion, the unconscious once again takes on a new symbolic form in relating with the ego. It then appears in the form of the psychic core, that is, the Self. In the dreams of a woman, the Self, when it personifies itself, manifests as a superior female figure, for example, as a priestess, a sorceress, an earth mother, or a nature or love goddess. In the dreams of a man, it takes the form of someone who confers initiations (an Indian guru), a wise old man, a nature spirit, a hero, and so forth. An Austrian fairy tale recounts the following:

A king posts a soldier to keep watch on the coffin of a cursed black princess who has been bewitched. It is known that every night she comes to life and tears the guard to pieces. In despair, not wanting to die, the soldier runs away into the forest. There he meets an "old zither player who was, however, the Lord God himself," and this old musician advises him how to hide in different places in the church and what to do so that the black princess cannot find him.

With the help of this miraculous old man, the soldier succeeds in evading the princess's attack and in this way is able to redeem her. He marries her and becomes the king,

The old zither player 'who is really God himself', expressed in psychological language, is a symbol of the Self. He helps the soldier, that is, the ego, to overcome the destructive anima figure and even to redeem it.

In 'The Rejected Princess' von Franz makes another important point:

Power and Eros exclude each other totally. Jung writes, "Where love reigns, there is no will to power; and where the will to power is paramount, love is lacking." You cannot combine the two; it's either one or the other. Jung said that no man can ever assimilate or even get to know what the anima is before he has overcome power-schemes in connection with feminine contacts, purely sexual drive or purely aesthetic considerations. As long as a man looks at a woman for sex or for her good looks, or maybe for her bank account, there is no question of love and therefore no question of getting to know what the anima could even be. .

## **8. Completion**

In *Creation Myths* (p331, 'Creation Renewed & Reversed') Von Franz comes up with her most resonant exposition of the function of the whole transformative process. Here she is essentially saying that the truths taught by the great spiritual traditions combine to tell us something accurate about the nature of the afterlife and the steps needed to understand and enter the experience on its own terms. For me, this passage is one of the supreme examples of Von Franz's observation in an essay 'The religious or magical attitude' in *Psychotherapy* that "art as a primordial psychic phenomenon fulfills a religious task and represents an aspect of 'care-full taking account of transcendental powers' that parallels the chants, prayers and rituals of priests."

... in other words, the idea of the philosopher's stone of the alchemists is identical with the idea of the glorified body. This offers an archetypal approach to some Eastern ideas, because in different Eastern yoga practices and meditation the goal is to produce within oneself the so-called diamond body which is an immortal nucleus of the personality.

There existed long ago in Tibetan, Indian, and partly also in Chinese Buddhism the idea that the religious practice of meditation serves the goal of producing within the still-living and mortal body the diamond body into which you move, so to speak. Already in this lifetime you use your diamond body more and more as a dwelling

place, so that at the moment of death, like a skin which falls off from a fruit, this mortal body falls away and the glorified body -or in Eastern language, the diamond body- is already there. The glorified body, a sort of immortal substance as carrier of the individual personality, is already produced by religious practice during one's lifetime. This same idea, which is strange to official Christian teaching, does come up vigorously in alchemical philosophy. The alchemists, too, strove from the beginning to produce such a glorified or diamond body, and Christian alchemists from the beginning identified it with the glorified body. In order to build up this glorified body, called the philosopher's stone, you must repeat the whole process of creation.

# The Jungian Octave

## Glossary

- Anima** The feminine aspect of the male psyche. In early adulthood this is 'projected' onto our partners, but Von Franz suggests that during individuation\* we may come to see this as a displacement of the process of reconciliation that needs to occur within ourselves.
- Animus** The masculine aspect of the female psyche. Ditto.
- Archetype/al** Patterns of individual &/or collective behaviour which constitute a characteristic response emerging autonomously in response to certain influences. As opposed to a stereotype where people conform to a pattern as a result of social pressure or programming.
- Ego** The conscious mind. Jungians tend not to use the Freudian terminology of *super-ego* and *id*.
- Individuation** The process of inner reconciliation by which the Self\* emerges as the unifying
- Introjection** The (negative) adaptation someone makesto a hostile attitude projected\* by someone else.
- Lysis** The dissolution or resolution of a crisis, often climactic.
- Mandala** A circular image characteristically found as a spontaneous image of completeness in Buddhist art.
- Projection** The process of identification by which we engage with another person, whether in love, admiration or hatred.
- Self** The Self corresponds to *the soul* in religious language – our true centre manifesting in the impulse to wholeness, and as a guiding presence in dreams.
- Shadow** Negative or unwanted aspects of the ego\* which we initially wish to suppress or dissociate from; but which we have to encounter and absorb on the journey to individuation\*.
- Synchronicity** The way in which events in 'the real world' parallel or reflect the 'reality' of our inner psychic world.

## Websites

**Complete Booklist** <http://www.marie-louisevonfranz.com/en/>

**The Grail Legend – my summary of implications of this profound book** <http://msteer.co.uk/analytical/graillegend2.html>

**Wikipedia biography & references** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie-Louise\\_von\\_Franz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie-Louise_von_Franz)

## **Selected Bibliography**

### **Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche** 1997 (de: 1994) ISBN: 1-57062-426-7

The world of myths, fairy tales, visions, and dreams are examined for expressions of the universal symbol of the Anthropos, or Cosmic Man - a universal archetype that embodies humanity's personal as well as collective identity. Von Franz shows that the meaning of life - the realization of our fullest human potential, which Jung called individuation - can only be found in relationship to others, whether between the sexes or nations, races, religions and political factions.

### **Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales** 1997 ISBN: 0-919123-77-5

"This book is a collection of fairy tale interpretations I chose because they were unusual. I wanted to show both their diversity and their underlying similarities, so that one could appreciate what is nationally or racially specific and what is common to all civilizations and all human beings, demonstrating Jung's method of interpreting archetypal fantasy material."

### **Creation Myths** (aka: Patterns of Creativity Mirrored in Creation Myths) Shambala 1972 ISBN: 1-57062-606-5

These most central of all myths concern the basic patterns of existence and the ultimate meaning of life. Among the topics discussed are: •Why the creative process is often accompanied by anxiety, depression, loneliness, and fear of the unknown. •The meaning of creation motifs such as the egg, the seed, the primordial being, the creative fire, the separation of heaven and earth, and the four stages of creation. •Creation symbolism in the alchemical opus of medieval tradition. •How creation-myth motifs appear in the dreams of people who are on the verge of a leap forward in consciousness.

### **The Grail Legend** (with Emma Jung) 1970 (de: 1960) ISBN: 0-691-00237-1

An ancient Celtic symbol of plenty as well as a Christian symbol of redemption and eternal life, the Grail Legend sheds light on man's search for what makes life most meaningful. Researched for 30 years by Jung's wife Emma, the book was completed after her death in 1955 by Von Franz, as a lucid exposition of a myth that remains profoundly relevant to modern life. Weaving together narrative and interpretation, the authors show how the legend reflects not only fundamental human problems but also the dramatic psychic events in the background of Christian culture.

### **The Interpretation of Fairytales** (aka: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Fairy Tales) 1970 ISBN: 0-87773-526-3

"It was my intention to open up the archetypal dimension of fairy tales to the students. In contrast to the heroes of adventure sagas, the hero/ines of fairy tales are abstractions - that is, in our language, archetypes. Therefore, their fates are not neurotic complications, but the expressions of the difficulties and dangers given to us by nature. For example, the hero-child is nearly always abandoned in fairy tales. If one interprets his fate as the neurosis of an abandoned child, one ascribes to it the neurotic family novel of our time. If, however, one leaves it embedded within its archetypal context, namely that any new idea is generally to be found in the ignored and unconscious corner of the psyche (eg, the birth of Christ in a stable) then one comes to see that each 'abandoned child' is called upon to turn toward. but not to identify with. his suffering."

### **Projection and Re-Collection in Jungian Psychology: Reflections of the Soul** 1980 (de: 1978) ISBN: 0-87548-417-4

It describes the phenomenon of projection and discusses how projections are withdrawn and integrated by an individual. The book stresses the historical role of projection, from its use in primitive religions to its expression in modern science, and includes such topics as the projection of evil, the reality of demons as well as "helpful spirits," and the importance of "reflection." It is the author's contention that projection is the greatest problem facing human beings as they constantly try to improve their relationships.

### **Psychotherapy** 1993 (de: 1990) ISBN: 1-57062-621-9

In twelve essays the internationally known analyst Marie-Louise von Franz explores important aspects of psychotherapy from a Jungian perspective. She draws on her many years of practical experience in psychotherapy, her intimate knowledge of Jung's methods and theories, and her wide-ranging interests in fields such as mythology, alchemy, science, and religion to illumine these varied topics: •Projection •Transference •Dream interpretation •Self-realization •Group psychology •Personality types •Active imagination •The therapeutic use of hallucinogenic drugs •The choice of psychotherapy as a profession •The role of religious experience in psychological healing

### **Shadow and Evil in Fairytales** 1974 ISBN: 0-87773-974-9 – **probably the most accessible book to begin with.**

Fairy tales seem to be innocent stories, yet they contain profound lessons for those who would dive deep into their meaning. Among the many topics discussed in relation to the dark side of life and human psychology are: •How different aspects of the shadow\* are personified in the giants and monsters, ghosts, and demons, evil kings and wicked witches of fairy tales •How problems of the shadow manifest differently in men and women •What fairy tales say about the kinds of behavior and attitudes that invite evil •How ghost stories and superstitions reflect the psychology of grieving •What fairy tales advise us about whether to struggle against evil or turn the other cheek. Every rule of behavior that we learn from the unconscious through fairy tales and dreams is usually a paradox: sometimes there must be a physical struggle against evil and sometimes a contest of wits, sometimes a display of strength or magic and sometimes a retreat. Above all, she shows the importance of relying on the central, authentic core of our being - the innermost Self, which is beyond the struggle between the opposites of good and evil.