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The Political Essence of Jungian Psychology: Thoughts on the Death of Marie-Louise Von Franz

IBPP Editor
bloomr@erau.edu

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Abstract. This article posits that a democratic, nonracist politics permeates Jungian psychology.

Much has been made of what has been termed the racist, fascist, totalitarian overtones of Carl Jung's psychological writings. He has been termed a sympathizer and even a supporter of Nazi ideology. His concepts of archetypes and interpretations of myths and symbols have been, in turn, interpreted as foundations for a master race, for subjugation of others, for inevitable political exploitation. (The same conceptual case has been made for the writings of Nietzsche--a case rightfully critiqued by Nietzsche interpreters such as Walter Kaufmann.)

However, a reassessment may be in order with the recent death of Marie-Louise Von Franz, a Jungian expert and Jung's successor at Zurich's C.G. Jung Institute. Her own prodigious analyses of fairy tales, work that was encouraged by Jung, underline the most essential aspect of Jungian theories: that there are universal unconscious psychological substrates that are shared by humankind and have been shared throughout history. The assumption of universality transcends race, ethnicity, religion, epoch, and locale. The universal substrates impel a conclusion that we all share the basic elements of humanity: the same hopes, dreams, desires, and fears, the same propensities for the greatest acts of good and of evil.

Although the conscious realization of a shared humanity among all of humanity still continues to be a fiction, a fairy tale--and some archetypes may suggest that one universal theme of humankind is the continuing difficulty to apperceive such universal themes--Von Franz and her Mentor might well posit that hope lies with the fairy tale as nonfiction, as enchantment with what has always been, is, and will be. (See Hewison, D.S. (1995). Case history, case story: An enquiry into the hermeneutics of C.G. Jung. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 40, 383-403; Kaufmann, W. (1974). *Nietzsche: Philosopher, psychologist, antichrist* (4th ed.). Princeton University Press; Neher, A. (1996). Jung's theory of archetypes: A critique. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 36, 61-91; Rosen, D. (1996). If only Jung had a rabbi. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 41, 245-256; Samuels, A. (1996). Jung's return from banishment. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 83, 469-489; The question of Jung and racism reconsidered. (1995). *Psychohistory Review*, 23, 283-298; Thomas, R. (March 23, 1998). Marie-Louise Von Franz, 83, a Jungian legend, is dead. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>.) (Keywords: Jung, Racism.)