

BBC broadcasters' unpublished views on Jung: Priestley and Freeman

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This article shows the unpublished views of J. B. Priestley and John Freeman, two significant BBC broadcasters on Jung. Priestley puzzled over individuation in Jung, but his most striking comment was that H. G. Baynes' death in 1943 had been an enormous loss to Jungians in Britain. Freeman strikingly commented on Marie-Louise von Franz as the most important person in Jung's life after Emma Jung's death, on Jung's immediate entourage regarding him as a sort of demi-God in his last years, and on India perhaps being more than he could sustain. Freeman acted as co-ordinating editor of Jung's final book, *Man and his symbols*.

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J. B. Priestley introduced Jung to the British public on BBC radio in 1946; John Freeman conducted the famed interview with him on BBC television in 1959. Both broadcasters thus played leading roles in bringing Jung and his ideas before the public. My book, *C. G. Jung: His friendships with Mary Mellon and J. B. Priestley* (1998), discussed Jung's friendship with Priestley primarily from Jung's point of view. In this article I bring forth Priestley and Freeman's hitherto unpublished views on Jung.

Priestley

A playwright, novelist, and very popular BBC broadcaster, Priestley had read all Jung's books published in England and in 1946 proposed to do a radio talk on Jung and his work. Their mutual friend Gerhard Adler wrote to Jung on Priestley's behalf, and Jung agreed to see him. Priestley visited Jung at his home in Küsnacht in May and the two men hit it off extremely well (Priestley to Jung, personal communication, May 3 and 20, 1946). Priestley's broadcast talk on Jung on June 18 was enormously successful. He received many letters of congratulation from psychologists and others who knew something about analytical psychology, and he fielded numerous inquiries requesting the titles of Jung's books (Priestley to Jung, personal communication, July 23, 1946). Violet de Laszlo MD – who had known Jung since the early 1930s, had lived in England for ten years, and was active in analytical psychology there – has said that before the Second World War nobody in England had any knowledge of Jung except persons with a very particularized interest, e.g., practicing Jungian analysts or persons who had had analysis (de Laszlo, 1970, p. 55). Before Priestley's broadcast Jung was still little known to the public. Priestley was delighted to send

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Jung a transcript of his broadcast; Jung replied that he had never seen a better summary of his main ideas in such a concise form – he called it a masterpiece (Jung to Priestley, personal communication, August 9, 1946).

After Priestley's broadcast, the BBC wanted Jung to give a talk. Jung, however, initially declined. In September Priestley wrote Jung that the organizers had asked him to add his voice to their appeal. He noted this particular programme was intended for intelligent and educated listeners. As he knew from his own talk on Jung, there certainly was now in Britain a great interest in Jung and his work (Priestley to Jung, personal communication, September 4, 1946). Priestley's note had its effect: Jung reconsidered his decision and agreed to do a talk for the BBC, though he was somewhat overwhelmed by various obligations at the time (Marie-Jeanne Schmid, Jung's Secretary, to Priestley, personal communication, September 18, 1946). Indeed, in September, Jung was Winston Churchill's dinner companion at an official reception given by the city of Zurich during Churchill's visit to Switzerland. Jung gave his broadcast talk on the Third Programme of the British Broadcasting Corporation on November 3, 1946: 'The fight with the shadow.' It later appeared slightly revised in Jung's *Collected works* (1964).

Priestley and Jung corresponded with each other until 1955. Priestley and Jacquetta Hawkes, his wife, dedicated their book, *Journey down a rainbow* (1955), to Jung. After it was published Priestley sent Jung a copy (Priestley to Jung, personal communication, October 24, 1955). When Jung received it he was just leaving for his retreat at Bollingen. He asked his secretary to thank them very much for the book and for the kind dedication. He would write them as soon as he read the work (Aniela Jaffé, Jung's Secretary, to Priestley and Hawkes, personal communication, November 1, 1955). On November 27, 1955, Emma Jung died after she became seriously ill in early November. For several months after her death Jung did not look at his correspondence, and afterwards it was simply too much for him at the age of 80. This was the reason – his secretary subsequently explained to Priestley – why Priestley had never received a response from Jung to *Journey down a rainbow*, which he had, in fact, read and enjoyed (Jaffé to Priestley, personal communication, December 9, 1956).

Jung died in 1961. In 1969–70, Gene F. Nameche conducted interviews with Priestley, Freeman, and many others who had known Jung. The transcripts of the interviews were placed in an archive in the Harvard University Medical Library and restricted – i.e. they were not allowed to be seen – for at least ten years and in some cases many years longer. For example, portions of Freeman's interview were restricted until 1995!

Priestley told Nameche that he and Jung had met only a few times, partly because his travels were nearly always a long distance from Switzerland, but also because he did not want to make demands on Jung. He added that they did exchange a few letters. On the latter point his memory is faulty, for he wrote to Jung eight letters and a telegram still extant. Priestley's privately-held chief criticism – unexpressed to Jung – about Jung's theories was that he sometimes attributed to the unconscious a kind of virtually conscious wisdom (cf. Brome, 1988, p. 340), as though, Priestley commented, down in the dark a little door opened and God poked his face in and talked. Priestley's most striking comment was not about Jung but about Jungians in Britain. He thought that H. G. Baynes' death in 1943 had been an enormous loss to them. In London he was acquainted with some Jungians but, in his opinion, they did not measure up to Baynes – a very large man who had in many ways been like Jung (Priestley, 1969, pp. 3, 9–10).

When the interview turned to Jung's ideas on psychological types, Priestley suggested that he was probably, speaking roughly, an extroverted intuitive, whereas Jung himself had been an introverted thinking and intuitive type. Priestley knew Jung's theory of types well. As an intuitive his inferior function would be sensation; his wife, Jacquetta Hawkes, was an introverted sensation type (*ibid.*, pp. 21–22). Indeed, Priestley and Hawkes had written a play, *Dragon's mouth* (1952), in which each character represented one of Jung's four psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition.

Priestley puzzled over the whole process of individuation in Jung. It was wonderful to develop the self, but to Priestley it seemed that by the time you had developed it you would probably soon lose it to death. This would be the case unless you were not going to die, he significantly added (Priestley, 1969, p. 22). In this regard he believed that individuation was a preparation for existence outside time (cf. Brome, 1988, p. 435).

Freeman

John Freeman was even more influential than J. B. Priestley in introducing Jung and his ideas to the public. His filmed interview with Jung for BBC television in 1959 'has undoubtedly brought Jung to more people than any other piece of journalism and any of Jung's own writings' (McGuire & Hull, 1977, p. 424). Freeman became in his view a rather close friend of Jung and made several visits to Jung in Switzerland. In this respect he knew Jung better personally than Priestley had. Freeman later became editor-in-chief of the *New Statesman* magazine and British ambassador to the United States (1969–71). I note that Stephen Black had interviewed Jung for the BBC in July 1955 on the occasion of Jung's 80th birthday. But unlike Priestley and Freeman, who formed friendships with Jung that continued until his death, Black did not know Jung well, and Nameche did not interview Black for the Harvard Countway Library Archive which contains written transcripts of interviews with persons who knew Jung.

I begin Freeman's unpublished views on Jung with portions of his interview (on May 19, 1969) that were restricted – not allowed to be seen – for twenty-five years. I wish to make absolutely clear that some of Freeman's comments are speculations by him. I have never been one to engage in 'Jung-bashing' (cf. Schoenl, 1996 and 1998). Freeman, however, did say what I report. But first a background comment. Freeman had observed that Jung was surrounded by women. He thought that Jung's pattern of thinking and approach to human problems may have evoked a more immediate response from women than from men. He also supposed Jung could inspire a high level of personal devotion and that in contemporary Western society this was more likely to be found among women. In the restricted portion of the interview he said he thought also that sex had a good deal to do with it. Although Jung never talked to him about his sex life and Freeman assumed that by the time he knew Jung it was vestigial, it was clear to Freeman that the women who surrounded Jung were in love with him to some degree and that he accepted their favors with a slightly dry, ironical pleasure.

Freeman engaged in some speculations without presenting supporting evidence for his views. He speculated, though adding it was not for him to speculate about what their relation may or may not have been, that by far the most intimate of Jung's entourage was Dr. Marie-Louise von Franz. He regarded her as a woman of great distinction and quality, and he had no doubt that Jung had a special relation with

her. He further thought a great deal of visible jealousy existed between Marie-Louise von Franz, Aniela Jaffé, Jung's secretary and a scholar, and Ruth Bailey, Jung's housekeeper and companion, and that sometimes friction arose out of it. He had no doubt that, at any rate after Emma Jung's death, von Franz was the most important person in Jung's life; he regarded her as, at least so far as Jung's academic work was concerned, now the most intimate expert on him. Later, in another restricted portion of the interview, Freeman said he was unsurprised that the greatest intimacy in Jung's later life apart from his wife was with von Franz, a 'well-born Austrian princess' (Freeman, 1969, pp. 6–9, 23–24). Actually she was the daughter of a baron. More significantly, a better word than 'intimacy' might be 'closeness'. In a BBC Radio interview in 1975, the 100th anniversary of Jung's birth, she said that she could never have been intimate or impertinent with Jung; she always felt awe or respect (BBC, 1975, p. 32). In this regard Freeman might have projected his own views onto von Franz and Jung.

I will now consider the portions of Freeman's interview that are important in themselves or relevant to the restricted portions. Freeman observed that by the time he knew Jung his immediate entourage regarded him as a sort of demi-God. Anthony (1990) comes close to Freeman's comment when she suggests that the women around Jung regarded him as more than a mere earthly man in that he reached them in a meaningful way at a deep level (p. 110). To Freeman, Jung himself seemed ambivalent about this. He enjoyed, in a way, the almost exaggerated attention paid to every word that came from his lips. But he could stand aside and laugh at it; from time to time he made ribald, although not contemptuous, remarks to Freeman about the veneration in which the ladies surrounding him held him. Jung made a tremendous physical impression even at his great age. He was a giant of a man. Freeman took his future wife, Catherine, to see Jung around the time of Jung's 85th birthday. Jung was stimulated by Freeman's arrival with a comely and much younger woman and spent three hours with them. It was obvious to Freeman during the whole of that time that Jung's interest was in her, not him. At lunch Jung asked what her tastes were in wine and she answered, whereupon Jung dashed down to his cellar. Ten minutes later he came up with the bottle of wine she had said she liked. A great deal of squeezing of her hand took place, and she was impressed that so much energy should reside in an 85-year-old gentleman. Freeman had no doubt that this area of Jung's life was important to him and years earlier had been more important, though Jung's entourage spoke rather guardedly about his family life (Freeman, 1969, pp. 5–8).

Catherine had lived in India for a short time, but her health was bad, so she had to leave. Jung replied that when he had visited India, psychosomatic illness (and, much more, amoebic dysentery – which Freeman did not mention) had afflicted him while there and that the tensions, pressures, and contradictions of Indian social and religious life were more than he could sustain. He suspected the same thing had happened to her. She thought this very perceptive and very likely true. Freeman said that according to Jung's own account this was one thing that had been too much for him to cope with (*ibid.*, p. 10).

Freeman acted as co-ordinating editor of Jung's final book, *Man and his symbols* (1964). The response that the BBC television interview in 1959 had evoked from members of the public and the fact that the publishers did not insist upon his writing the whole book himself, provided he would assume responsibility for it and supervise it, were some of the reasons why he agreed. With this understood he made it plain that he would undertake it with von Franz as his principal collaborator. Eventually

different sections were allocated to different people. He would write the first and guiding chapter; von Franz would write what Freeman regarded as the most important and revealing chapter – on individuation; Joseph Henderson, Aniela Jaffé, and Jolande Jacobi – other close colleagues of Jung – would each contribute a chapter. Jung used Freeman as a sort of litmus test to judge whether his writing would be intelligible to a non-expert public. If Freeman explained to him that something was unintelligible, he would begin by saying that it was not and that if it were changed the meaning would be altered. But eventually he gave way with good grace. He permitted a lot of editing in the interests of intelligibility – with every effort to leave the balance or meaning unchanged. Jung himself approved his chapter in total. It was the last act of his life. He had been reluctant to undertake the work and had put much of himself into doing it. About ten days after he approved his chapter, he became fatally ill and died shortly thereafter. Subsequently von Franz undertook his role in the work: she worked with Freeman and other assistants of the publishers to get the other contributors to complete their chapters. Freeman concluded that he thought he had now told the interviewer very nearly all he knew about Jung, except what was already publicly on record (Freeman, 1969, pp. 11–12, 14).

Notes on contributor

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