

Facts, dreams, culture, intimidation – another Jung life

Deirdre Bair's biography of C.G.Jung

Peter Geyer

Deirdre Bair: *Jung: A biography* Little, Brown 2003.

Can you follow?

Now that the trace is fainter in the sand?...

*Try sleeping with the dancers in your room.....*Jack Bruce (1971)

Part of the enchantment surrounding C.G. Jung seems to be that many people want to find out about him and some others are prepared to oblige them with the occasional weighty tome about his life and times from a particular point of view. Read, unread, or dipped into at random, these texts over the years have built up a Jung *mythos*, appropriate in some ways for such a controversial and influential man.

An adequate history of Jung the person seems hard to grasp. His own, rather mixed contribution to the field, contained within *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* has an undeserved autobiography status, but still sells as such. Other authors have set out to honour a valued guide (Barbara Hannah, 1976), explain his ideas and life together (Anthony Stevens), left the whole thing as a myth (Marie-Louise von Franz) or psychoanalyse him, thus finding him wanting (Ronald Hayman).

There are many more besides, particularly if you read Jung's Freudian and other antagonists. The only Australian review I've located of Deirdre Bair's opus, by Helen Elliott, stops dead at one point in some bewilderment that Jung is taken seriously, as all those Freudian claims must be right, notwithstanding that the book she's writing on carries on an extensive investigation of those issues that seem carefully thought out and well researched.

In fact, if anything could confidently be stated about Deirdre Bair's work, it's that it is well-researched. A substantial proportion of her 800+ page book is Notes of clarification or discussion. Phrases like "I could find no evidence for this", references to interviews or private documents and other information abound, which pleases my historical bent, even if it does lead to some complex reading. Bair seems to be interested in facts and winking them out, a fairly useful attribute for a biographer, particularly someone like Jung.

This doesn't mean it's all plain sailing. She admits, as an American presuming some sort of openness to scholarship, to seriously underestimating the extreme privacy of Swiss culture which almost stopped her project before it started. Interestingly enough, the book seems to have benefited, as it places Jung and his family and colleagues in their cultural and historical milieu in a way I haven't read before. This means a lot of things are de-mystified, so we get a less sanitised view of these people, but from someone who, unlike others, seems to have no axe to grind.

So we are treated to the complexity, the argument, the hyperbole of the invention of a psychology. Friendships and lives fall by the wayside. You discover Jung was never really accepted by the Zurich cultural elite. He was considered boorish and uneducated (crime novels rather than modern literature and art) and of course a bit of a boat-rocker, even though he himself fitted into Swiss family culture more or less in the traditional way, and didn't really question it.

Jung's relationships with females and males are also given a lot of attention, with various associations or liaisons examined and the tensions apparent between Emma Jung and Toni Wolff over some years. Even Emma Jung regretting that her famous husband had "no real friends". Presumably his personal acquaintances were professionals, not boon companions, or mates. It's rather sad, really, but one can see how it came about, and Jung as a lonely man is something to take away from Bair.

This is not to say he was asocial, or morbid, because he was good company, and enjoyed a laugh, something quite unusual in his profession, apparently. There's the wit and the bullying and the anger as well, and one suspects that this tall, large man was intimidating in more ways than one. It follows that not all his ideas were his own.

As far as translation of his works into English was concerned Jung, fluent in the language (and others) in any case, also seemed greatly enamoured of the work of R.F.C.Hull, his Collected Works translator with whom he struck up a friendship and supported him in difficulty. Translation is not a word for word activity and Jung valued Hull's appreciation of meaning in the German language and its attendant culture, notwithstanding the latter's complete unfamiliarity with Jung's writing prior to commencing the task.

Jung knew nothing about money, and apparently was in some needless disarray after Emma died regarding finances. Interestingly, it seems he had the contemporary midlife red sports car in a much loved red convertible. Revelations about his involvement in American secret service activities during World War II are extremely interesting, and complexify the perennial discussion about whether Jung was anti-Semitic. He does make a particularly NT word distinction on this issue at one point.

As to his type, the prevailing view for Jungians and others is still for INTJ, this view being largely centred around his investigations into the unconscious, hence introverted intuition (e.g. Giannini 2004). I found some evidence for that, but no evidence that Jung was a "J" in MBTI terms: the reverse in fact. So I wonder in this case whether there are two different constructs being discussed. In these cases, eyewitness testimony or observation can be contingent on the knowledge of his typology and the definitions carried by people. Hinkle's published views (1923) and the work of van der Hoop (1939) and Joan Evans (1939) come to mind as examples, for me at any rate.

Deirdre Bair writes logically and clearly on a difficult topic, in contrast to Hayman's work, which I reviewed some time ago, which is curious as they have some affinities in their choices of people to investigate. A biography can never be the last word on a topic as huge as the life as C.G.Jung, particularly as his heirs have recently agreed to release more material.

This will include the famous *Red Book*, and be under the general editorship of the John Coltrane-loving and controversial choice of Sonu Shamdasani, whose recent book is worth a read, even though his scanty information on the MBTI is quite incorrect (2003). But the attempt by to stick to available facts, with some consequent speculation is recommendation itself., I found it better to read the book a chapter at a time, so the notes made sense.

SOME REFERENCES

- Jack Bruce *Can you follow?* (Jack Bruce-Pete Brown) Bruce Music, from *Harmony Row* Polydor CD 065-605-2 [1971] 2003
- Helen Elliott Review of Deirdre Bair's biography of C.G. Jung in The Weekend Australian Review c2004
- Joan Evans *Taste and temperament: a brief study of Psychological types in their relation to the visual arts* Macmillan 1939
- John Giannini *Compass of the Soul* CAPT 2004
- Peter Geyer *The Truth is out there, somewhere: Ronald Hayman's biography of C.G.Jung* in the Australian Psychological Type Review Vol 2 No 2, 2000 pp 5-7
- Barbara Hannah *Jung: His Life and Work-A Biographical Memoir* G.P.Putnam's Sons 1976
- Ronald Hayman *A Life of Jung* Bloomsbury 1999
- Beatrice Hinkle *The Re-Creating of the Individual: a study of psychological types and their relation to psychoanalysis* Dodd, Mead & Company [1923] 1949
- C.G.Jung *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* [Recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe] Collins and Routledge and Kegan Paul 1963
- Sonu Shamdasani *Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology: The Dream of a Science* Cambridge 2003
- Anthony Stevens *On Jung* (Second Edition) Princeton 1999
- J.H. van der Hoop *Character and the Unconscious: a critical exposition of the psychology of Freud and of Jung* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd 1923
- Conscious Orientation: a study of psychological types in relation to neurosis and psychosis* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd 1939
- Marie-Louise von Franz *C.G.Jung: His Myth in our time* Inner City Books [1972] 1998

Peter Geyer teaches about and researches personality. www.petergeyer.com.au

Selected References:

- Maggy Anthony: *Jung's Circle of Women: The Valkyries* (Nicolas-Hays 1999))
- John Cale & Victor Bockris: *What's Welsh for Zen* (Bloomsbury 1999)
- Robin Dunbar: *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language* (Harvard, 1997)
- Henri Ellenberger: *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (Fontana, 1994)
- Michael Fordham: *Freud, Jung, Klein: The fenceless field Essays on psychoanalysis and analytical psychology* (Routledge, 1998)
- Marie-Louise von Franz: *Psychotherapy* (Shambhala, 1993)
- C.G.Jung: His Myth in our time* (Inner City Books 1998)
- Peter Guralnick: *Last Train to Memphis: The rise of Elvis Presley* (Little, Brown 1994)
- Barbara Hannah: *Jung: His Life and Work A biographical memoir* (Shambhala, 1991)
- Patrick Humphries: *Nick Drake: The biography* (Bloomsbury, 1998)
- C.G. Jung: *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Flamingo, 1986)
- Ronald Hayman: *Jung at Heart* : extracts from " A Life of Jung" published in *The Age* magazine Good Weekend February 5, 2000.
- Verena Kast: *The Dynamics of Symbol: Fundamentals of Jungian Psychotherapy* (Fromm, 1991)
- Walter Kaufmann: *Freud, Adler and Jung: Discovering the Mind, Volume 3* (Transaction Publishers, 1993)
- Al Kooper: *Backstage Passes & Backstabbing Bastards: Memoirs of a Rock 'n Roll Survivor* (Billboard Books 1998)
- Arnold M. Ludwig: *How do we know who we are: A biography of the Self* (Oxford, 1997)
- William McGuire and R.F.C. Hull (eds.) *C.G.Jung Speaking* (Thames & Hudson, 1978)
- Peter O'Connor: *Understanding Jung* (Mandarin, 1994)
- Saul Rosenzweig: *Freud, Jung and Hall the Kingmaker: The Expedition to America (1909)* (Hogrefe & Huber, 1992)
- Andrew Samuels (ed.) *Psychopathology: Contemporary Jungian Perspectives* (Guilford 1991),
- Anthony Stevens: *Archetype: A Natural History of the Self* (Routledge 1982)
- On Jung* (Second Edition) (Princeton 1999)
- Anthony Storr: *Jung* (Fontana, 1995)
- David Tacey: *Get off his Case: a review of Ronald Hayman's A Life of Jung* in The Courier-Mail April 15, 2000.