

Fike, Matthew A. *Four Novels in Jung's 1925 Seminar: Literary Discussion and Analytical Psychology*. Routledge, 2020. 120. ISBN-13 978-0367420659

Reviewed by D. J. Moores

Jung's ideas on the anima speak to the critical importance of the contra-sexual archetype in the individuation process. As both personal complex and archetype, the anima poses a significant challenge to the individual in a confrontation with the unconscious. According to Jungian theory, the resolution of the problems that erupt in experiencing the shadow is only possible through an honest identification of contra-sexual energies and their successful integration. Matthew Fike's latest book, *Four Novels in Jung's 1925 Seminar: Literary Discussion and Analytical Psychology*, focused as it is on the anima, is thus of central importance to analytical psychology and to Jungian literary criticism. In his erudite discussion of the problems associated with analysis of the contra-sexual archetype in works of fiction, particularly (but not limited to) the four novels Jung chose in his 1925 seminar, Fike shows how professors of literature can enrich the already-rich, multidisciplinary study of Jungian psychology. His wide-ranging analyses of Henry Rider Haggard's *She*, Pierre Benoit's *L'Atlantide*, Gustav Meyrink's *The Green Face*, and Marie Hay's *The Evil Vineyard* represent original ways of reading in literary study and also important new insights in post-Jungian theory. Although Fike builds upon some of the ideas that originated in the 1925 seminar, he does so with courage and originality that call some of Jung's concepts into question. *Four Novels* is an insightful monograph that demonstrates the relevance of Jungian thought in a post-Jungian age.

One of the ways in which Fike challenges Jung, for instance, is in his discussion of a central topic explored in the 1925 seminar: the visionary versus the psychological mode of literary creation. In the visionary mode, the writer is a conduit through which archetypal forces flow and is inspired, however unwittingly, by the constellation of collective psychic energies. In the psychological mode, by contrast, the author creates a narrative out of personal psychological energies. The difference between the two modes, then, is whether the psychodynamics proceed from the collective or the personal psychic stratum. A visionary writer creates under the influence of one or more constellated archetypes, whereas the psychological author does not. In binary logic Jung saw these two modes in terms of his character types, labelling the visionary mode "extraverted" (because it represents the collective layer of the psyche) and the psychological mode "introverted" (because it represents the personal layer). Fike challenges this notion, calling it "bipolar thinking" and a "false dichotomy" (2). In his analysis of Haggard's *She*, he takes it a step further, claiming that the "non-psychological novel, one that reflects the author's subjectivity to zero degree," represents an impossibility that does not exist (21). Just as all visionary narratives also reflect the author's personal psychology to some extent, so are all personal psychological narratives informed by archetypal energies. The two are inseparably and complexly interwoven. In each of the four novels he analyzes, Fike demonstrates this commingling of the personal and the archetypal in a sophisticated analysis that builds on and ameliorates Jung's ideas.

Four Novels has other virtues. Throughout each of its seven chapters, Fike displays immense learning and familiarity with other literary texts. In making meaningful connections to the Shelleys, Swift, Byron, Spenser, Marcus Aurelius, Shakespeare, the Bible, Augustine, Milton, and many others, he lives up to the expectation that a professor of literature should be familiar with a vast array of texts. In his chapter on Benoit's *L'Atlantide*, he admirably shows a philologist's engagement with the novel's original French, and throughout the entire monograph he uses and/or challenges the work of several literary critics. His discussion of Marie Hay's *The Evil Vineyard* is highly original in that there is little extant criticism on the novel. Building on the work of another Jungian, Barbara Hannah, Fike not only generically reclassifies Hay's narrative as a ghost story but shows how Jung missed some of its aesthetic depths in his dismissal of it as being only "passably good." In a post-Jungian spirit, Fike draws upon the work of feminist and postcolonial theorists in his challenge to some of Jung's essentialist ideas on gender and nonwestern peoples. As he points out in his discussion of Haggard's *She*, Jung's assessment of the text as an exemplar of the visionary mode completely overlooks that it also reflects "Victorian males' anxiety about new opportunities to advance that were becoming available to Victorian women" (25). In the same challenge to Jung's visionary mode, Fike uses Said's orientalist concept when noting the many negative associations in the novel with the word *yellow*, "which reflects the Victorian fear of yellow hordes overtaking the West" (33). *Four Novels* is rich in critical insight and profoundly engaged not only with the primary and secondary texts but also the *Collected Works of C. G. Jung* and contemporary theoretical perspectives. Fike is a first-rate scholar.

Like all critical studies, however, *Four Novels* is not without a couple of rough spots. Chapter three, for instance, is only four pages long and pleads for further development. It should have been substantially developed or cut. Also, there is no overall conclusion summing up the various arguments, connecting back to the contra-sexual archetype and answering the difficult question: What is this study's relevance? Such a fine monograph warrants better closure, one in which Fike ties up all loose ends and makes it clear how he has enriched Jungian ideas. But what study is flawless? And, moreover, it is possible he had not-so-obvious but justifiable motivations for these features.

For all this, *Four Novels* is an exceedingly worthy study of Jungian ideas on the contra-sexual archetype as they appear in fictional narratives. It represents a fine addition to the field of literary discourse, but even more impressive is its interdisciplinarity. As we progress through the twenty first century, the lines of distinction that previously demarcated fiercely defended, disciplinary boundaries are blurring, as scholars realize the value of disobeying "no trespassing" signs and venturing into previously restricted terrains. Matthew Fike, in his latest book (his fifth), is one such daring individual. *Four Novels in Jung's 1925 Seminar: Literary Discussion and Analytical Psychology* is an important juncture where literature, psychology, and critical theory productively intersect.

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