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Positively viewed,  
but only a partial  
account, <sup>big of using Jung</sup>  
elements / <sup>subjectal phenomena</sup>

### H. 5. The Experience of Conversion:

- a. We come today to the final point in a theological introduction to the second half our course.
- a. Blame and guilt: healthy & unhealthy positions  
b. Compassion for self and others  
c. Love of self and others  
d. Being in love in an unrestricted fashion  
e. hope and faith

We have been trying to specify

how psychological and religious-theological concerns integrate with one another in the development of the person.

In doing so,

we have come to see sin as basic

to all other human evil,

including the evil of psychological suffering.

This last point is difficult to grasp,

for it entails a vision of a human situation where radical evil

holds sway in a powerful way:

where we are all inescapably the victims of evil,

even when our deepest desire is not to cooperate with evil

but to participate in God's work

of transforming the human world with His love.

There is a power of evil so pervasive of the human situation

that Christian thought

views all of us as caught in its grip

from the moment we come into the world.

And yet, this power of evil is ultimately an absurdity

according to this position:

for if what makes acts evil  
or situations evil  
is not something that positively characterizes  
these acts or situations,  
but a lack of reality,  
a privation of the good  
which, if it were present,  
would turn the act into good  
and the situation into a good one.

The human intellect cannot intelligently grasp an absurdity.  
Absurdity is incompatible with human intelligence,  
which can only intelligently grasp and reasonably affirm  
what is and not what is not.

Evil, then, on this position,  
is ultimately unintelligible,  
which makes it so difficult to talk about.

It is like the surd in mathematics,  
which is an irrational number,  
and thus cannot be positively understood,  
yet plays an important role in mathematics.

So too, evil in its roots  
cannot be positively understood,  
for it is not in itself a positive reality,  
yet it plays an all-pervasive role in human life.

We anticipate being positively able to understand evil,  
yet we cannot.

All we can do is grasp that certain acts  
and certain situations  
are what they are, w/o being able <sup>ever</sup> to grasp really why.

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Someone asked the other day,

Where are we to place the ultimate blame for all this evil?  
This is a question that cannot be answered,  
in the last analysis.

It represents an attempt to explain evil,

and that is precisely what cannot be done.

We can only explain

what positively is,

for only what positively is has a cause.

We can explain acts and situations that are not good  
by tracing them to causes, for they are real

but we cannot explain the absence of reality in their reality,  
for that is not,

and if it is not,

it has no cause.

The human intellect wants complete explanation of all phenomena,  
and yet it must stop short at this point.

There is no explanation that can be given  
of the basic sin:

I am not responsible for it,

nor are you. None of us is to blame.

We are responsible for our own actions,

but not for the basic evil that permeates the whole  
human situation.

We are all victims of this evil,

we are even born its victims, and we have all suffered from it  
in different ways.

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When you try to put the blame for it on anybody,  
you can't.

You can't point the finger at anyone and say,  
You are responsible for all absurdity, all suffering, all sin  
in the world.

No: all you can do with respect both to yourself and to others  
is to say:

a) We are all victims of evil

b) We are all responsible for  
our own free responses  
to a human situation where evil  
victimizes everyone.

c) Thus the blame and guilt  
of any one person  
extends only so far as the <sup>effective</sup> freedom of that person  
to respond in a manner that does not  
extend and perpetuate the evil,  
but that rather reverses the path of evil  
by introducing something positively real  
into the human situation.

To the extent

that a given person has not responded  
to the degree of his or her effective freedom,  
to that extent

one can speak of blame and guilt --

but only to that extent.

And one's effective freedom

is in inverse ratio to the extent one has been

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victimized by evil:

the person whose psychological state  
has been severely victimized  
is to that extent not accountable.

Thus Jesus can say,

"From him to whom much has been given,  
much will be demanded."

What is asked from each of us, in the solution to the prob. of  
evil,  
is in direct proportion to our effective freedom.

The healthy guilt feelings

are then a function of false expectations  
one puts upon oneself --  
expectations which only further victimize oneself,  
and render one less effectively free.

→ To ask, what is conversion? is to ask what would be the solution, however partial,  
to the problem of evil. In doing this, I will show how Jung can be helpful even when one takes a different position as to evil.

c. If the basic affirmation that can be made about evil  
is that we are all victims of evil,  
the basic positive response to the problem of evil  
will be compassion for self and others. Not stamping out  
evil, as some of you wrote.

Getting into Jung's groove.

Life has been victimized by evil  
in ourselves and in others.

It has been, to use a Christian symbol,  
crucified.

There is no possible human solution  
to the problem of evil,  
without this first identification  
of ourselves with the victims of evil  
in ourselves and in others.

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How will this compassion manifest itself?

First, it will be very different from  
the usual manner

in which we try to deal with the problems of evil.

Our spontaneous response

is frequently: let's stamp it out,

let's fight it,

let's beat it down,

let's use violence against it

and overcome it in that way.

This response fails to see

that our most radical implication with evil

is that we are its victims,

not its causes.

And the proper way of treating a victim

is not, let's stamp him out,

beat him down,

use violence against him.

That is sadism,

and sadism only perpetuates

the problem of evil.

The proper response to a victim,

the only healing response,

is compassion.

Compassion does not mean a maudlin romanticism,

but it does mean "suffering with,"

treating tenderly,

refusing to break the back

of a heavily burdened fellow sufferer.

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## Compassion for self

means the following:

- a) acknowledging that there are parts of my being that have suffered as a result of the world's evil;
- b) refusing to further victimize these fragments of my being by identifying with the evil that has hurt them;
- c) rather, identifying with these fragments, sympathizing with them, allowing them to come back to life, allowing their renewed life to give me life;
- d) following through in my actions on the renewed life given to me by the restoration to life of the fragments of my being.

In one word or one phrase,

Compassion for self  
means establishing  
an interior ecology

of energies,

restoring a balance

of spirit and matter,

of differentiation and integration,

of No. 1 and No. 2,

of ego and self.



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Compassion for self

means, in our culture at least,  
slowing down the ambitions of the ego  
so that they are in keeping with the counterbalancing  
energies of the body, the psyche, nature.

Gandhi was perhaps most sympathetic  
to the need for compassion for self:

He once said, vis-a-vis the Western way of life,  
"There is more to life than increasing its speed."

Our Western manner of dealing with our victimized selves  
tends to perpetuate and extend the evil:

we are not good to ourselves,  
we are split off from our energies,  
we demand too much of our bodies and our psyches,  
we further victimize and fragment our being  
by our ambition for power, money, and  
worldly success.

We tend to mislocate the evil in ourselves; the place of our own  
we place it in the part of ourselves <sup>actual sin</sup>

that has been victimized,  
rather than in the victimizing.

We place it in the body and in the psyche,  
rather than in our freedom,

which is spirit,

in our ego's.

St. Ignatius: Riches, Honor, pride: ambition.

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Compassion for self, then,  
means wanting to be human,  
not divine,  
having limitation,  
coming to say, "I am just this."

It means taking very seriously  
the integration aspect  
as well as the differentiation aspect  
of development.

It means, in negative terms,  
curbing ambition  
that would further victimize the self.

It is ambition  
that constitutes our contribution  
to the building up of the shadow,  
that part of our being that is the victim  
of ~~our~~ sin,  
of the sin of the world  
and of our own sin.

If it is true that  
only the integrated person  
can be self-transcending,  
and that  
effective freedom is a function of integration,  
then it is also the case

that self-transcendence  
depends on compassion for oneself.  
for non-integration is a function of being victimized either  
by the sin of the world  
or by the sin that  
occurs