

NAME A RESPONSE TO WALTER J. KUKKONEN, "THE BEYOND WITHIN" NO. D-69

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A Response to Walter J. Kukkonen, "The Beyond Within: Where Theology and Psychology Ought to Meet" -- American Theological Society, Nov. 4, 1977

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There are several features of Professor Kukkonen's paper that led me to describe it to myself immediately after my first reading as "approachable, inviting, attractive, personable." First impressions are often deceptive, but not in this case, for I found his paper all the more humane and compassionate and dialogical with each successive reading. The paper invites dialogue--indeed in its sub-title even anticipates a dialogue--precisely because it proceeds so directly and forthrightly from the inner dialogues that feature so centrally in the Jungian-guided journey to selfhood.

The issues that Professor Kukkonen raises are crucial for any theologian, of whatever denominational persuasion, who has found as he has found that Jungian psychology helped one, even rescued one, at certain key moments in one's ongoing personal development, while one's theology passed one by on the other side. With Professor Kukkonen, I do not believe it ought to be that way, and with him too, I think a change will have to take place both in one's theology and in Jung's psychology if the two are concretely and existentially to meet.

I will divide my comments, then, into two sections: first, I will offer some general methodological considerations concerning the questions that will have to be raised if we are going to get beyond the situation of having Jungian psychology show up the ineptitude of our theology; secondly, I will suggest some of the changes that will have to take place if theology and analytical psychology are to meet.

Methodological Considerations

Professor Kukkonen has quoted Bernard Loomer to the effect that "theology is subject to what has been disclosed in the concreteness of individuality." We are slowly coming to recognize that what Loomer is on to here is not just a description of our contemporary theological situation, but that it is something of an inevitability, that it has always been true, and that today we can proceed theologically only by self-consciously accepting that this is the case. Such an inevitability has been sufficient to persuade me of the significance of the Jungian maieutic of selfhood for any future theology. This is a controversial claim. ^{I became aware of how controversial it is} Several years ago, ^{when} I submitted my doctoral dissertation to my board at Marquette University for their final approval. The dissertation is an initial heuristic attempt to locate Jung's pertinence to theological foundations. One of my readers indicated during my defense that he had approached another reader and asked him, "Is Doran trying to tell me that I have to undergo Jungian analysis?" and the other reader replied, "Not only you, but your wife and your children too."

In order to establish this claim, then, we must ask what precisely is the pertinence of Jung's psychology for the concreteness of individuality that is theology's foundational reality? I assume when I ask this question, that we are treating Jungian psychology as Professor Kukkonen treats it, i.e. not in an abstractly academic manner, but existentially, as a series of guideposts on one's own inner journey to personhood. The question for the theologian, as Professor Kukkonen's paper implies, becomes then, not primarily but only derivatively a conceptual question of correlating theological and depth psychological categories. ^{Prof. Kukkonen places this question of correlation precisely where it belongs, as derivative.} Primarily or foundationally ^{there} it is a more basic existential question about the person one is becoming and about how that

development is to be objectified in one's progressive self-understanding. Questions like the following have to be faced: What is the relationship of individuation as a lived process into identity that one has self-consciously and deliberately embarked upon in response to an inner call, a being-drawn, to mature freedom, and the process of transformation in Christ that one perhaps committed oneself to and entered upon before one ever heard any talk of Jung and individuation, before one ever paid any attention to one's dreams and their disclosure of the concreteness of one's individuality? Are they indeed the same way? Is the Jungian maieutic, without remainder, a path to the retrieval of the elemental symbols through which the primal Word of revelation can address itself to the Being-hungry consciousness of post-Enlightenment secular Western humanity? Is it a disclosure of the very sacramentality of consciousness itself? Only in terms of one's answer to those questions does there arise the derivative problem of correlation: namely, how am I to articulate the Jungian categories drawn from a branch of human science with what Bernard Lonergan calls the special theological categories derived from religious interiority? Before that question can be answered, one must have taken a definite position on precisely how religious interiority and the realm of the imaginal disclosed in Jungian praxis are related to one another.

That prior set of questions, it seems, is what Professor Kukkonen addresses himself to in his ^{the bulk of} paper. And, I conjecture, it is that prior set of questions that accounts for the "consciousness of battle" that he tells us was the atmosphere in which he wrote his paper. The battle, which I also experience in trying to envision and articulate where theology and Jungian psychology ought to meet, is not a conceptual struggle as much as it

Or is such a position or commitment at least subtly reductionist? If not, why not?

is a personal one, and this for two reasons: first, as I already indicated in agreement with Professor Kukkonen, the theology and the psychology both have to change if they are to meet, they both resist this change mightily, and we can feel this double resistance in our bones; secondly, and more radically, where they will meet once they give way to one another is in the theologian's psyche--not in some book, but in some persons, and, more concretely, in oneself. And we academics still resist this avowal of personal involvement. I found this resistance in myself a week ago. I was talking with Professor Kukkonen on the phone, and in the course of our conversation he asked me what my background was in Jungian psychology. In typical academic fashion, I answered something to the effect that I thought I knew my way around fairly well in the Jungian corpus. I thought afterwards, That was not the proper answer to his question; that was evading the issue; what he probably meant by his question was, how well do you know your way around in yourself?

At any rate, where theology and analytical psychology will meet is in oneself, and only from this inner word can their meeting be articulated by the self-reflective intelligence of the theologian who already knows, from having lived it, the phenomenon of their coupling.

There is one further difficulty, I think, that contributes to the consciousness of battle, and that is that at present we are able to catch no more than fleeting glimpses of the meeting-place of theology and Jungian psychology. We are equipped for no more than a phenomenology of what we glimpse and for a heuristic account of how to proceed toward that meeting-ground. In Professor Kukkonen's phrase, we can say where they ought to meet, but we are not yet there. And, I suspect, it will be some time before we are there. We will arrive there only when Jungian insight, however transformed

by the encounter with theology, features centrally in our mediation of the Christian past through interpretation and history and in our mediating of the tradition to the present and the future in doctrinal and systematic theology. At present Jungian insight is influential in neither phase of the theological enterprise, and the reason is that we are still dealing with the prior set of questions concerned with what Jungian insight discloses about the concreteness of our individuality--in Bernard Lonergan's terms, with the questions of dialectic and foundations. These necessarily preoccupy theology today.

Perhaps we may console ourselves with the thought that Jung himself seems to have indicated, in his usual oracular fashion, that it would be about 600 years before we will come to the meeting-place in any thorough fashion. This at least is part of the significance I attach to Jung's interpretation of a dream of one of his followers. Jungian analyst Max Zeller tells us that he interrupted his practice of analysis in the summer of 1949 to go to Zurich for three months in order to attempt to come to understand more deeply and personally the meaning of what he was doing as a Jungian analyst. He studied and consulted with Jung for the entire period without arriving at a satisfactory answer to his question. In typical Jungian fashion, the answer came to him in a dream two nights before he was due to leave Zurich and return to the United States. In this dream, a mammoth temple of vast proportions was being built by people from all over the world. There were multitudes of people working on the temple, and they came from China, from India, from Russia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Zeller was one of those working on the construction of the temple. The foundations of the temple were already laid, but the building was just beginning to be constructed. Zeller took this dream to Jung. Jung referred to the temple as the new religion. He

said it was being built by people from all over the world, people that we do not even know. He implied that Zeller, i.e. Jungian analysis, was but one minute contributor to the construction of the new home of God among men. And he said that his own dreams and those of others indicated that it would take 600 years before the temple is completed. Zeller accepted the dream and Jung's *interpretation of it* ~~question~~ as the answer to his question of the meaning of what he was doing as a Jungian analyst.

If I may transpose Jung's interpretation into another context, I would say that Jung is one of the architects of a stage of meaning that is still very incipient, a period or epoch in the history of consciousness for which what is disclosed in the concreteness of individuality will be self-consciously foundational of knowledge, morality, and religion. Perhaps Bernard Lonergan has articulated the watchword of this new stage of meaning: Authentic subjectivity is the source of all objectivity. We are not used to that self-understanding. We are not at home with it. We have not yet claimed it. And it will take us a long time to get used to it. It is an axial period that we are in, and axial periods do not happen very often. According to Karl Jaspers, the last axial period--the only one on record--occurred some 2500 years ago, when, at least in Greece, theory became the controller of meaning. We are now moving into a post-theoretic stage of meaning, and it involves a radical shift in the controls. Jung, I think, is one major contributor to that shift. Whatever theology emerges in the new stage of meaning will unquestionably benefit from Jung's work.

Christian Theology and Analytical Psychology: A Mutually Transformative Encounter

When Professor Kukkonen tells us on page 1 of his paper that the theology referred to in the title of his paper is Lutheran and the psychology is Jungian, "but I trust that where I suggest they meet is neither," I extrapolate to the position that any Christian theology and Jungian psychology will have to undergo change if they ever are to meet. Professor Kukkonen has highlighted some of the changes that will have to occur in theology, changes that Jung himself eagerly desired. Jung was deeply pained by his inability to communicate with both Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians, and he would applaud the changes in theology that Professor Kukkonen calls for. I find four such changes recommended in his paper, and I will simply list them and indicate my agreement.

First, there must be restored to theology's very method the element of madness: the madness of prophecy, of initiation, of poetry, of love, of mysticism. This restoration, in Professor Kukkonen's words, can be aided by listening "to the men and women who have devoted their lives to helping people lost in the realm of madness to find their way back into the world of conscious methods without losing their message." Secondly, Professor Kukkonen wants introduced into the theological curricula of seminarians practical training in pastoral dialogue. I would extend this recommendation to include some analogous personal experiences in the theological curricula of all theological students. Thirdly, he recommends the dissolution of the language barrier between theology and analytical psychology by the experiential grounding of all categories or, as I would phrase it negatively, by the ruthless elimination of all conceptualism. And fourthly, he recommends explicit connection of theological consciousness with the elemental symbolic function that Jung calls the collective unconscious.

What I wish to indicate briefly are some changes that I believe will have to take place in analytical psychology before it can come to a meeting-place with Christian theology, even with a Christian theology that has undergone the changes that Professor Kukkonen recommends. There are three such changes I wish to specify.

First, we need a clearer ^{a more explanatory} delineation than Jung provides us in his programmatic essay, "On the Nature of the Psyche," of the tripartite constitution of the human person, which he there designates as matter, psyche, and spirit. Matter and spirit Jung heuristically characterizes as "psychoïd," that is, understood by analogy with our understanding of the psyche. More precisely, what I believe we need is a sharper clarification of the organic and spiritual dimensions of the person, and a concomitant delimitation of what is covered in the term, psyche. We need especially a delineation of the differentiation of psyche from spirit, and of the role of spirituality-- which, with Bernard Lonergan, I take to include the operations of human ^{Project,} ^{questioning,} understanding, judgment, decision, and agapic love--in the individuation process that is reflected and promoted by the images of psyche's dreams.

Secondly--and here I fear that ^{I might be} departing from Professor Kukkonen--I do not believe that the Jungian treatment of the symbolic significance of the person of Christ can emerge uncriticized from the dialogue of theology and analytical psychology. Professor Kukkonen presents two aspects of this treatment: Christ is the hero who, by being faithful and completing his journey, became the Way for others to accomplish theirs; and Christ is "our nearest analogy of the self and its meaning," "the supreme symbol of the Self." Both aspects of Jungian thought on Christ are, I think, suspect from a theological point of view. I will treat primarily Jung's understanding

of Christ as archetype of the Self, and derivatively the understanding of Joseph Campbell and others of Christ as symbol of the heroic quest.

In his later writings on the subject of Christ as archetype of the Self, and particularly in Aion, Jung provides us with an interpretation of Christianity such that, if individuation as Jung understands it were to be correlated with any specifically theological category from Christian tradition, it would be, not with such notions as conversion, justification, transformation in Christ, or redemption, but with the notion of apocatastasis. For in Aion, we are presented with a notion of the Self which is only partly expressed in the Christian imaging and understanding of Christ. The other half, as it were, of the Self is expressed in the Christian imaging and understanding of Satan. These two halves of the Self, Jung tells us, have been warring with each other during the astrological age of Pisces, but in the emerging age of Aquarius they will blissfully embrace.

This, I believe, is pure wishful thinking, not helpful fantasy. My friend and colleague at Marquette University, Sebastian Moore, has provided in his recent book, The Crucified Jesus is No Stranger, a far more helpful model of how Christ can be understood as a symbolic incarnation of the Self. It is in his crucified condition that he embodies the Self--the Self that is killed, victimized, by the ego infected by the sinfulness of the denial of its own contingency. The Christian contemplative experience of entering into the Crucified has been, Moore says, also an experience of the emergence into life of the Self that the ego has killed, an emergence that is empowered by the forgiveness of the sin of the ego meeting with love the murderous acts that victimized it. With reference to Jung's understanding of Christ as symbolic of the heroic quest, then, we might say that, if Christ is our way to God, it is only because more radically he is God's way to us, God's *way*

of transforming what we have victimized and killed into the center of a life that stretches to the limits of agapic love. If, as Edward Edinger insists, we oscillate between ego ^{self union} and Self ^{self separation} throughout our lives--thus calling into question the paradigmatic status of Jung's distinction between the first half of life and the second half of life--it is for Moore because we exist throughout our lives in the polarity of crucifier and crucified. The implications of Moore's thesis for the reworking of the Jungian theory of the final stages of the analytic process are substantial. In brief, Moore preserves Jung's insight into our customary misidentification of the locus of evil in ourselves, while removing definitively the hopeless ambiguity of Jung's own treatment of evil in its relation to goodness.

Finally, and with more specific reference to the problem of evil, Jungian psychology will have to make a distinction between two quite different dimensions of the transpersonal symbolism that originates in what Jung calls the collective unconscious. I draw here on Northrop Frye for a distinction between the archetypal and the anagogic. Archetypal symbols are taken from nature and imitate nature's processes: a helpful maternal symbol in one's dreams is an analogue of the personal mother in her nourishing and life-giving capacities. Anagogic symbols are taken from nature and from history, but they are not so much imitative as radically transformative of the dimension from which they are derived. They are the stuff of eschatology and apocalyptic, and they provide, I think, the inclusive symbolic horizon in terms of which all other elemental symbolic productions will receive their most adequate interpretation. With such a distinction, one is enabled to differentiate those opposites that admit of ^{natural} reconciliation with one another and those

whose contradictoriness is resolved only by ^adivinely originated solution. Among the former are the opposites that join in the psychological androgyny-- the masculinity of intentionality and the femininity of psyche. The latter are the opposites of good and evil, opposites that never join because of the radically unintegratable quality of that evil that, despite Jung's protestations to the contrary, is not superficially but most profoundly understood by such Christian theologians as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas as privatio boni.