

Transcription of D0080, First class in Course, M.U., Fall 1975, Theology 196 C:  
Jung and the Psychology of Religion

Purpose – understanding of the *role of the psyche* in religious and particularly Christian experience. Complicated, my own position ever more complicated, three stages. Use Jung as one who has approached this question, dealt with it extensively and who must be taken seriously and more than that, but must be gone beyond.

Another way: understanding the psychic function of religion, understanding of religious experience as this *affects* the psyche. This formulation points to where I will differ with Jung. Religious experience happens to the total human being, is an experience of the whole person – body, psyche, spirit. Has psychic manifestations, sometimes very vivid; *transforms the psyche*. But Jungian psychology tends to be a *religion* of the psyche, a religion which takes its *directions* from the psyche, and at this point goes astray. Psyche provides *data*, not direction.

My view, then, is that there is something *essential* about Christian religious experience, particularly as it is described in the New Testament, which demands another formulation of religious psychology than Jung's, something which Jung does not and cannot handle or account for or even *take account of*. This does not negate the central thrust of Jung's religious psychology. But the "something" is the *Christ-experience* (the Christian experience of Christ), which I believe is the *genuine pointer to the Self*. The Christ-experience demands a *different formulation of the problem of God in the context of the mystery of evil* than is afforded by Jung. *Evil – Father- the Christ-self*: this triad is *not* properly accounted for in Jung's writings. Thus part of what I will be doing is attempting a different articulation of the Christ-experience from Jung's. With the help of Sebastian Moore's *Journey into a Crucifix*. This will be the essence of my critique of Jung.

This critique, however, ultimately has to affect *the entirety of the vision of man*, for the Christ-experience is of the whole man. It affects, effects, me in my totality. Thus in this course I shall begin to elaborate *an alternative phenomenology of the psyche*, other than that expressed by Jung. This is the task I left unfinished at the conclusion of my doctoral dissertation on Lonergan and Jung. Now I am taking it up, in order to complete my own work.

The point of all this is quite simple, at least in essence, though hard to come by. What the New Testament, and especially the letters of Paul, say about Christian existence is based on an *experience*. It is not any speculation, but *the report of a religious experience*. There comes a point in Jung's phenomenology of the psyche

where it stands in direct opposition to the experience detailed in Romans 5-8. The point is precisely when Jung is dealing with *the Christ-experience in relation to the problem of God in the context of the mystery of evil*. Thus there is an experience recorded in the New Testament and repeated in one form or another in the writings of the saints that is not accounted for in Jungian psychology. Jung, if you want, stands in a different mystical tradition from that which reaches from the New Testament through Irenaeus, Augustine, Aquinas, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Ignatius Loyola, and into the twentieth century in Rahner and Lonergan in theology, in T.S. Eliot in religious literature, and in Thomas Merton in mysticism. Jung's tradition is rather that of the apocrypha, Gnosticism, alchemy, Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa, Jakob Boehme, Goethe, Nietzsche, and romanticism. Can we grasp the difference between these two strands of Western mysticism? Having grasped it, can we choose between them? What will be the criterion of our choice? What is our foundation? Two mystic traditions in the West: intentionality mysticism and romantic mysticism. Difference = relation of intentionality and psyche.

Cf. Jung's statement on the new religion. Ties in with Lonergan on a new control of meaning in terms of interiority. It is here that I shall begin with the first chapter of my dissertation.

Our course, then, will be in many respects an exercise in *theological dialectic*. Dialectic is the functional specialty in theology which deals with conflicts centering in Christian movements, and with the historical accounts and interpretations of these movements. Dialectic aims at a *unified base* from which the theologian can proceed to an understanding of the character, oppositions, and relations of the viewpoints found in conflicting Christian movements and in their histories and interpretations. The conflicts are a result of *diverging viewpoints* which must be *compared* with one another and *criticized*. *Comparison* will show where the divergences are irreducible, where they are complementary and could be integrated within a larger whole, and where they can be regarded as successive stages in a single process of development. *Criticism*, on the other hand, calls incoherent viewpoints to greater consistency, purges unsound reasons, *ad hoc* explanations, and stereotypes, and determines what differences are serious and profound, and what superficial and even incidental. Dialectic, then, is 'a generalized apologetic conducted in an ecumenical spirit, aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds, real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions.' *Method in Theology* 130.

My thesis in this course is twofold:

1 Jung has discovered a way into the mythopoetic core of human imagination which can be and ought to be appropriated by the Christian theologian as *foundational* for his work in theology, and by the Christian seeking spiritual growth.

2 There is *an irreducible difference* between Jung's position on the problem of God and of man as the image of God, and the Christian interpretation of the relation of man and God. This irreducible difference centers around the interpretation of *the mystery of evil* and of *the nature of the Self in the context of this mystery*, and affects the articulation one will give to the discovery of the Christ-Self.

But Christian theology until very recently has neglected the experiential aspect of the religion on which it ought to be reflecting, on which it is founded. Christian theology is today at the beginning of a profound transformation and reconstruction which can only be thought of on the analogy of a *revolution*. It is in search of entirely new foundations. The first thing I want to discuss with you is this search for foundations, and particularly as it has been illuminated by the work of Lonergan and as I have come to suggest a necessary complement to Lonergan's work in my own attempt to integrate depth psychology in the foundational quest. In discussing this search for foundations, I will be expounding my first thesis, namely, that there is much in the methodology of the Jungian contribution to *psychic self appropriation* that must from now on be regarded as an *indispensable foundation for theology*, and as a very helpful and perhaps in the future necessary step in religious development.

Two strands of mysticism:

A *Intentionality mysticism* or the mysticism of spirit. What A.N. Whitehead in *Religion in the Making* calls 'rational religion.' 'Rational' does not mean rationalistic. It means rather that reason or intentionality has its proper place in the total complex of factors that constitute religious living. These factors may, I think, be regarded as three: reason/intentionality, feeling/psyche, and transcendence/grace. Reason is *discriminating*, differentiating, discerning. It is discriminating of feeling and of the experience of transcendence. Without reason in its proper place, there is no *discernment of spirits*. Without reason, *everything* that is experienced as 'other' is also assumed to be from God. God then becomes, not just mystery, but a *complexio oppositorum* which extends to such opposites as light

and darkness, good and evil, holy and demonic. Then too, the Self of man, created in the image and likeness of God, is a *complexio mysteriorum*. The *authentic* Self of man is light and darkness, good and evil, holy and demonic. *Discrimination* between these is ruled out. *Authenticity* is not a matter of taking a stand on or for one of these opposites, but rather the realization – conscious and deliberate – of both.

This is *romantic mysticism* or the mysticism of psyche. It is, ultimately, the mysticism of Jung. It posits as lying within the potentiality of man the achievement of a position *beyond good and evil*, beyond the opposites. It *takes its lead* from the psyche, from myth, symbol, and dream. The goal of man is rather to *discover* the myth according which one lives rather than working out one's salvation in fear and trembling, rather than *constituting* through decision the direction one's life is to take, using psychic indications as data, not guides.

Now frequently, romantic mysticism arises as a reaction against the aberrations to which intentionality mysticism is prey. For it is very easy for a religion which acknowledges the role of reason to suppress or repress the roles of feeling and of transcendence. Such religion then becomes self-delusion. It is oblivious of the subterranean foundations and of the fact that grace transforms these foundations. It is *pharasaical, hypocritical*. Romantic mysticism then goes to the opposite extreme and, instead of granting to the subterranean depths their rightful place as *data* on one's religion, grants to these irrational and instinctual bases a *directive* and *constitutive* role. Intentionality, with its fundamental precepts – Be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, loving – then capitulates to the rhythms and processes of nature and of the psyche.

For all that Jung protests that this capitulation is not what he is championing, he ultimately falls victim to it, in the context of his treatment of the mystery of evil and of God in relation to that mystery. This will be my fundamental thesis in these lectures. I am only beginning to develop this interpretation of Jung, I hope to learn much from this course.

There is something about the northern European psyche which takes to *romanticism*, to non-differentiation of feeling and transcendence. And probably in reaction to another tendency of this same psyche to duty, work, thrift, etc. There is something seething underneath in the Germanic psyche. We have seen its release in this century. At times Jung maintains the right perspective here, i.e., that we have a *moral responsibility* to acknowledge the ambiguity of the subterranean depths and not delude ourselves into hypocritical self-righteousness. Especially

when he speaks of Nazism. But at times he claims that this ambiguity is the final word, that our responsibility stops at making this ambiguity and relativism conscious rather than extending to the point of asking ourselves, What am I to do about it? There is a *dialectic* between intentionality and psyche which can become a *conspiracy*, in which one wins over one's dark brother and allows his redemption from the grip of non-differentiation. But the dialectic can also go the other way. Intentionality can succumb to psyche, and the result is alienation, relativism, subjectivism. Jung remains to the end ambiguous, and thus ultimately romantic. It is here that we must criticize him. I want to attempt a synthesis of these two forms of mysticism.

The basis of my own position, then, lies in an articulation of the structure and dynamic of intentionality. It is with this that I must begin. I take this articulation from Bernard Lonergan.

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For Reading Jung: You can save yourself a lot of difficulties if you make the following terminological substitutions:

- (1) For 'consciousness,' substitute 'the ego,' or 'differentiated consciousness,' or 'knowledge.'
- (2) For 'the unconscious,' substitute 'undifferentiated consciousness.'
- (3) for 'the collective unconscious,' substitute 'the archetypal function.'

I shall explain as we go along why I suggest these linguistic transpositions. It should quickly become clear to you how the overall philosophical framework which I shall be providing demands some such change of terminology as this.

Jung's statement on the new religion ties in with Lonergan's analysis of modern culture in its quest for a new control of meaning in terms of interiority.

Recommended reading:

Lonergan, 'Dimensions of Meaning'  
Lonergan, 'The Subject'

I shall begin by summarizing and commenting on these two papers, then move on to a further articulation of Lonergan's position on the subject as moral and religious, thus locating the place of the psyche in morality and in religious experience.

Purpose: to develop an accurate understanding of the psyche's role in religious experience, with the aid of C.G. Jung's psychology. Thematic, not historical. Not primarily interested in presenting a systematic overview of the whole of Jungian doctrine. Primarily because one cannot really understand Jung unless one understands oneself in one's psychic being. Jungian psychology is not a system that can be learned by reading a number of books. It is rather a series of exercises, a process of moving toward individuation.

Also the only way to test the validity of Jungian psychology.

Reading: don't aim at assembling the system of Jungian doctrine. Aim at understanding, not Jung, but yourself with the aid of Jung. Begin to attend to your own inner psychic reality in a particular way, in the way suggested by Jung. Jung did not want "Jungians." He wanted people to become themselves.

Presuppositions of my approach: convinced there is something about Christian religious experience that contradicts Jungian psychology and demands another formulation than Jung's.

First reading: Jung's autobiography. Will exemplify what I have been talking about. A doctrine in constant development, based on experience.

Jungians have by and large not followed this example. They have created a deposit of faith. Many things Jung never experienced, could not experience (e.g., Rome) Also, many things he did experience which can be more accurately understood than he manages to achieve. Particularly, God as a problem in the context of the mystery of evil. At this point, I will strive toward a more accurate articulation.

Preliminary requisites for getting into the material:

- a. To develop a notion of religion
- b. To develop a notion of the psyche in relation to the rest of who we are.