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## The Language of Good and Evil in regard to Jung's Psychology

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I have come to some further precision in the last week regarding the question of good and evil in Jungian psychology. These reflections will serve as a way into discussion of Answer to Job. I have fourteen points regarding the language we use to speak of good and evil. The upshot of these points is that Jung misused language at this point in his analysis of the process of individuation and that his misuse is both misleading and mystifying.

I take as my lead the statement I have quoted several times from "On the Nature of the Psycho": "Archetype and instinct are the two most polar opposites imaginable, as can easily be seen when one compares a man who is ruled by his instinctual drives with a man who is seized by the spirit. But, just as between all opposites there obtains so close a bond that no position can be established or even thought of without its corresponding negation, so in this case also 'les extremes se touchent.' They belong together as correspondences, which is not to say that the one is derivable from the other, but that they subsist side by side as reflections in our own minds of the opposition that underlies all psychic energy. Man finds himself simultaneously driven to act and free to reflect. This contrariety in his nature has no moral significance, for instinct is not in itself bad any more than spirit is good. Both can be both." (Vol., 8, p. 206).

We have viewed the individuation process as a progressive reconciliation of the opposites of spirit and matter, through the psychic production of images and symbols which, when interpreted, can provide bases for decision on the part of the existential subject. These symbols are the point of the unification of matter and spirit, though they need the action of the conscious subject if their meaning is to be realized. The goal of the process is full individuation, a goal proleptically signalled for Jung by symbols of the self. The process itself is what we are all involved in. None of us has reached the goal.

Now, though no moral significance can be attached to the simple fact of the contrariety in our nature, the following statements can legitimately be made about the moral significance of the process of individuation:

1. Moral significance can be and is attached by Jung to the process itself. It is good to make the process as conscious as possible, good not only in the sense of psychologically healthy, but in the moral sense according to which it is proposed as a responsibility incumbent on increasingly more and more men and women today. Jungian psychology has flourished to date largely within a therapeutic context, but Jung himself saw it in far more liberal terms than these. He and a number of his followers emphasize that what he is proposing in terms of the withdrawal of projections and the fullest possible conscious integration of the various aspects of the totality is a moral necessity for our age. Without it, we cannot sustain our lives together in the global village our earth has become. Thus, the first sense in which we may speak of good and evil in terms of Jungian psychology is that it is good to seek individuation and evil to refuse that undertaking when the demand for it arises within my life.

2. The goal of individuation is further specified by Jung, albeit in a very heuristic manner, when he speaks of it, or at least allows us to interpret it, as the integration of spirit and matter through the aid of archetypal images. If this is indeed what the goal is, and if the pursuit of this goal is a moral good, then any action genuinely furthering this goal is good, and any deviation from it is evil.
3. The quotation from Jung cited above prevents us from allowing either spirit or matter (instinct) alone to determine what furthers the goal and what deviates from it. This can be determined only in terms of the appropriate conjunction of spirit and matter at any particular stage in the process of living my way into the self.
4. If neither spirit nor instinct is in itself good or evil, if both can be both, then it is important, in the interests of a morally good pursuit, that one discriminate the ways in which spirit and instinct can be either good or evil in one's own concrete experience. Not any conjunction of spirit and instinct will do, but only that conjunction that humanizes both. The I Ching, and Taoism in general, help us to see this. Spirit or the light-force or yang can be arrogant (cf. top line of hexagram 1). Matter or the dark force or yin can be seductive (top line of hexagram 58 or 29). But spirit or yang can also be a strong and creative force; and matter or yin can also be yielding and receptive. They can join, moreover, in appropriate constellations so that there is a good conjunction of light and dark, of yang and yin, of spirit and matter, of heaven and earth (hexagrams 11, 17, 15). And they can join in ways that are not appropriate, that are accounted evil (hexagrams 44 and 54). There are various conjunctions possible. Some further the end, and some deviate from it. Some are good and some are evil.
5. If this is the case, then the discrimination of the good and evil aspects of both spirit and matter is not only important, but is a necessary feature of the individuation process. And such discrimination can only be done by what I would like to call a tutored subjectivity: one that knows the difference between attentiveness and drifting, intelligence and stupidity, sound judgment and silliness, responsibility and carelessness; in brief, between self-transcendence and self-enclosure. (Jung needs Lonergan!)
6. The basic model according to which we must view the individuation/<sup>process</sup> is thus the model of self-transcendence. This model is more inclusive of all the dynamics of the process than the model of perfection which Jung effectively disposes of and the model of wholeness with which he replaces the model of perfection. The model of perfection and wholeness are both models of the goal, not of the process. The model of wholeness, I submit in agreement with Jung, is a far more accurate model of the goal than the model of perfection. But what we need is a model of the process, and for this wholeness will not do.
7. The model of self-transcendence, moreover, fits the empirical data as presented by Jung better than does the model of wholeness if the latter is interpreted as a model of the process. It leaves open for conscription into the model those moments of agonizing emptiness in which all one can do is wait for a solution to show itself. It leaves open for incorporation into the model the via negativa of detachment from inner states and outer objects so insisted on by both the

Such discrimination is what the spiritual tradition of the West has called the "discernment" of spirits.

Such discrimination will involve purification of both spirit and matter (instinct)

mystics and Jung himself in his counsel on withdrawing projections and not fixing our position. If wholeness is used as a model for the process and not reserved for the goal alone, it is constabulating, closed. It is 4 rather than 5, 8 rather than 9.

8. It follows that Jung's talk of an unqualified unity of good and evil as descriptive of either the goal or the process is misleading. It is misleading as descriptive of the goal because the goal is good. It is misleading as descriptive of the process because pursuit of the goal is regarded as a moral responsibility, and fulfilment of a moral responsibility is also good. It is misleading as descriptive of either the goal or the process because it is a use of terms ruled out by Jung's correct statement that neither spirit nor instinct is in itself good or evil. When Jung speaks in other contexts of the unity of good and evil, he is referring to the light or spirit as good and to the dark or matter as evil, and is thus violating his own canons for the use of such language.

9. None of us along the way will consistently hit upon the appropriate conjunction of spirit and matter. The process is filled with pitfalls. No human being is consistently self-transcending. Thus we will deviate from the Tao. In themselves, according to the logic of this exposition, such deviations will be evil rather than good.

10. However, there is no law that states that such deviations are irreparable. Some are more serious than others, as the I Ching makes abundantly clear (top line of hexagram 29). But even these are detours rather than complete breakdowns along the way to individuation.

11. Moreover, not only are these deviations not irreparable, but there is also seemingly a law that recovery from these deviations can strengthen the pursuit of the goal far beyond what would have been possible had there been no deviation.

12. In this way alone can we speak of the integration of evil into the process and into the goal. More precisely, however, the evil is not so much integrated as it is transformed into good.\* To speak of transformation into good, however, is not to reinstate a perfection model of the goal, for perfectionism implies that the subject has himself by means of his own efforts brought himself to completion.

13. According to this process so conceived, the notion of evil as privatio boni can be maintained, with one possible exception. The evils of refusing the quest and of deviating from the pursuit of the goal, as evils, are the absence of what ought to be present, and their results, if permitted to accumulate, are a progressive truncation of the human subject. A truncated subject is one who is not what he or she ought to be and could be. The absence of what ought to be has no being in itself. It is a privatio boni. The one possible exception to this judgment concerns the modalities according to which spirit and instinct can be evil as well as good. Further clarification is needed here.

14. Jung's semantic confusion on the question of good and evil is nowhere more obvious than in his projection of the problem of opposites onto God in Answer to Job. In all fairness to Jung, it is important to remember that in the Preface to this deservedly controversial book, he reminds us and begs us to remember that he claims to make no assertions about the being of God, that he is dealing only with the development of God-images, and more precisely that he leaves open the question of whether this is or is not a function of a development in God. It is also important (and, I might add, embarrassingly obvious)

\* If the self is the totality of what I am, it includes the totality of what I have been, including the pain, tragedy, and guilt that have been a part of my life.

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that Jung had almost no familiarity with Biblical scholarship. It is my evaluation of this book that it contains much that is important and valuable concerning the religious task of the present age, but that all of this needs to be rewritten from a stance harmonious with the position on good and evil offered here. Besides containing much worthwhile material, moreover, the book reflects, I believe, a profound religious malaise that affected Jung for most of his life, that was intimately connected with his non-negotiation of his own relation with his father, and that was quite manifest in the dream of Jung's that preceded his writing of the book, in which his father led him into the Highest Presence, before which he would not, could not submit.