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1. Rev. of Whitehead, Ch. 1, intro

Our concern, following what we taken so far,
is the relation between the individual
and the collective,
and we saw briefly how for both Jung
v. Louergan,
the most radical turn to interiority
or subjectivity
is a discovery of my community with all other men + women
of all cultures
and times,
and thus that the structure of the self
as I have presented it,
synthesizing Jung + Louergan,
is cross-cultural, universal humanity.

We are now turning to Whitehead,
who emphasizes ~~the~~ in similar fashion
that as the religions became more universal
in their meaning and concern,
the solitariness of the individual became more
noteworthy as the heart of religious concern.

Thus W. too sets up a paradoxical or dialectical relationship
between individuality and universality,
similar to the one that appears from the synthesis
of Louergan and Jung.

Religion, W. argues, has been
until modern times
an unquestioned factor in human history,
even though its meaning
and the interpretations men have given
to its doctrines and scriptures
has changed and presumably will continue to change
in the future.

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I rooted this phenomenon of changing meanings,
or of the development of doctrine,
in the fact that ^{practically} all religious statements
employ symbolic language,
and symbols are inexhaustible in their meaning.

Cf. the phenomenon of commentaries on Scripture:
they will never exhaust the meaning of Scripture.
The only trap is to literalize,
and try to render the meaning univocal:
fundamentalism.

From our vantage point today,
which is what W. is working from
in section 1 of Ch. 1, "Religion Defined,"
we are able to see that
the primordial religious fact
consists in an experience of need for transformation,
for being justified or set right,
for being cleansed.

It is this, W. says, that most basically
is the meaning of his statement
that we are religious.

And so he offers his first definition of religion:
"force of belief cleansing the inward parts"
and demanding a "penetrating sincerity."

Moreover, a given religion,
insofar as it issues in doctrines,
is "a system of general truths
which have the effect of transforming character
when they are sincerely held
and vividly apprehended."

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Religion, then, has to do with conversion,
with a profound transformation of living
that affects not merely external actions
but the internal reality known as character.

From this point, W. moves on to two more
general and perhaps more contemporary
definitions of religion:

"the art and theory of the internal life of man,
so far as it depends on the man himself
and on what is permanent in the nature of things,"
and "what the individual does with his own solitariness."

The last will be the principal definition W. works with in
the book,

but includes

the notions of transformation
and changing
and of the moral finality of doctrine
mentioned explicitly in the other definitions.

Religion today has evolved to the point
where its ultimate concern
is internal life as a fact for its own sake,

"the awful ultimate fact,
which is the human being,
consciously alone with itself,
for its own sake."

W. is obviously in agreement with
what we have said
about religion as a factor in
self-constitution,
in the question of the existential subject,
"What am I going to make out of my life?"

Religion comes into play
 when that subject
 knows that if he is going to make
 something worth while out of his life,
 he will need to be changed,
 transformed,
 cleansed,

when he knows
 that as he is
 he cannot make something worth while
 out of his life,
 that he is
 incapable of sustained development
 on the basis of his own resources,
 that he suffers
 from moral impotence.

This incapacity
 is what the Christian religion
 has called original sin.

Its traditional explanations may no longer satisfy us,
 but what the doctrine is getting at
 is the experience

of needing to be cleansed, transformed,
 liberated, healed, redeemed,

if I am to make something
 worth while out of my life,

and this experience,

it seems to be saying,
 is a permanent feature of all religion.

We know today that this sense affects primarily the individual, even if in different ways:

- ritual impurity,
- lovelessness,
- alienation due to an inner rift or bondage,
- self-enclosure & the self-transcendence,
- a flight from truth,
- a fear of living and a fear of dying --

however it may express itself, it is a sense that all is not right with me, that I am somehow divided from myself, from my fellows, from the cosmos, and from the deity, and can only be restored to harmony by virtue of a penetrating sincerity:

"The truth will set you free."

Paul Ricoeur has studied various forms of this avowal of fault in The Symbolism of Evil;

Lonergan has made the same point in "The Future of Christianity": the function of religion in human living is to ground a return to authenticity.

Religion's concern, then, is with this setting right, justification, redemption, liberation,

we realize today, the need for which is experienced always in a radically individual way:

i.e., the details of my alienation are different from yours.

We are alike in being divided from ourselves, our fellows, the cosmos, and God, but what divides me is other ^{in all details} than what divides you.

Exp. of individually directed retreats
 has made this very clear to me:
 the uniqueness of the religion of each individual,
 even though the pattern is always the same:
 division, conversion, healing or harmony.
 (cleansing the inward parts
 thru "penetrating
 sincerity")

I suspect it is this pattern that allows Whithead
 to speak of the three stages that religious men through
 if it evolves to its full satisfaction: p. 16: (later he makes it
 historical)
 "It is the transition from God the void (after solitariness, the
 "awful fact")

to God the enemy (understanding that I must be
 set right),

and from God the enemy to God the companion (conversion or
 cleansing, ~~the~~ healing and
 harmony).

5. We will simply note
 for the moment, without developing it yet,
 the strange point of the last two paragraphs on p. 17:
 what emerges from the experience of being set right,
 i.e., a sense of worth or character,
 may not be necessarily good.

Religion, what the individual does with his own solitariness,
 may be very evil, diabolical, degrading, destructive.

Religion, ^{itself, like everything else,} is a very ambiguous phenomenon,
 it can itself be evil,

and it is, ^{says he,} a dangerous delusion to be obscured by
 its necessary goodness.

In your religion, you may be making a pact with destructiveness and
 degradation.

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You may be coming to terms with
"the God of destruction,"
and experiencing transforming intimate convictions
that are diabolical in extent and purpose.
Evil has a strange way of itself creating the sense of having
been put right, justified, redeemed,
and even of creating a sense of mission
that is violent in its destruction
of the greater reality.

Evidence: Jesus agst. religious authorities, Kierkegaard agst. established church of Denmark,
L.W. Willie agst. hierarchy of R.C. church,
Ideologies as religion, justifying abomination:
totalitarian religions bent on power,
Nazism, cult of personality, worship of emperors,
Manson cult, rooted in a particular holy wars,
interpretation of Eastern religions
(compare the way the Bhagavad Gita
influenced Gandhi with the way it
influenced Manson:
R.C. Zaehner, Our Savage God).

The question of how to evaluate
religion is a major one
that we will have to face.

For now, I suggest only
that the map or grid of es
is key to this evaluation --
if these imperatives are transcendental,
they stand over agst. even religion.

Self-righteousness
of Nixon,
use of Billy Graham,
Sunday Church
services,
fundamentalism.
Jung: suppression of
the dark side
by religion,
only causing
it to break out
evidently 1. th.
to serve as a
nourishing
support for life.