

D0131

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143, ~~Feb 27, 5~~

5. ~~Why the perversion of civilization?~~ Religion & civilization
Why did the masses permit

& accept so meekly
the turning of the goods of civilization
to the interests of a few?

The only possible explanation,

M. says,
is the compensation provided
by the projection of the ideal self
onto the hero,
the god,
& their combination, the king.

Despite the fragmentation of personality
resulting from social regimentation
& economic exploitation,

this projection solidified the emergence of the human ego
by providing an exalted image of the individual
& his capabilities for action & achievement.

pp. 49 f., read, "In the person of the hero . . ."
life had become a contest

and civilized man was able to endure it
because of his projections onto the hero.

Furthermore, the gods

were made the ones responsible for the way things were,
and all one could do before their will
was to submit in blind obedience

Religion enabled endurance in an inhuman fate
opened another world & another life
as a happy destination.

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Religion, then, served the social order
of civilization,
& itself became also highly institutionalized.
As it did so, it fell prey
to corruption by conscious manipulation
and to conscription by organized political power.
Yet it also created
a sense of ideal presence
that enabled a certain resignation
& even cheerfulness
to permeate an otherwise dull life,
and thus provided
a stability that civilization
could not have found elsewhere,
a balance, however uneasy,
between the inner & outer state of man.

And eventually, from the class set aside
for nourishing religion,
there would arise the prophet, the sage, the poet,
who wd break through
the compulsive routines
& compensation
and preach a new religion
that called into question
the injustices & imbalances
of civilization.

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Religion, then, was the way
civilized humanity
drew upon springs of life in the ues
to offset the aridity & rigidity of daily life,
the claims of work,
etc.

The balance was uneasy,
for if the demands of outer life become too heavy,
even the ues becomes empty of life-giving resources
& has in its retinue only "a turbid,
poisonous residue of demonic life"
which we are beginning to realize in our own time,
where warfare has reached such an organized
efficiency that it can be conducted
from a distance w. cool detachment,
and where the very energies of the ues are poured
out into life-destroying technocratic institutions;
where the destiny of a nation
is placed in the hands of ruthless,
power-hungry men,
and where religion itself no longer
nourishes the products of the ues,
but is itself organized into a machine
that compromises & co-operates w. the State.

6. The precariousness of civilization

Civilization has never been experienced
as a sufficient fulfilment of human nature,
and every civilization in its, says M.,
has degenerated into a dreary & unadventurous
stage void of meaning & purpose (cf. the

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comparison of our time ^{in USA} with the decline of the Roman Empire).
The reason is always internal:
it is not military defeat,
economic crisis,
political disunion.

There are only (and at best) symptoms.
The deep cause is "man's self-alienation
from the sources of life" (56).

Escapism, drink, sexual promiscuity, drugs
are resorted to,

or one concentrates even further
on the machine that has made ~~to~~ life so
meaningless,
makes it an object of his
otherwise thwarted love.

Organized religious cults
offer no relief from this kind of disease.

The only course yet opened to dev. beyond this point
has been provided

by the "axial religions"
wh. challenged the presuppositions
of civilization
& placed human life on a new foundation.