

D0137

143, Mar. 22, 1 Becker on Character (cc. 3+4)

1. The Child will emerge from the defeat of the first causa sui project via the body with "character" --

i.e. "he accepts to work on becoming the father of himself by abandoning his own project & by giving it over to "The Fathers."

He becomes socialized, submits to "social reality,"

plays it safe in the world of the powerful elders.

The second causa sui project, then, is culture, the socialization of the ego.

2. We go this route

because of the fear of standing alone,

standing on our own two feet.

B. quotes w. approval the expressions of Maslow:

the fear of one's own greatness,

the evasion of one's destiny,

the Joule's syndrome,

the evasion of the full intensity of life.

Character, then, is a result of

cutting back the full intensity of life,

of partializing experience thru repression.

We are unable to open ourselves to the totality of experience,

and to gain any self-esteem in this way,

bec. exp. is too overwhelming,

and all it does is impress on us our own inferiority.

We can move about in this overwhelming world

with some measure of strength & directness

only thru the repression of experience,

including of fear,

that is taught us by our culture.

143, Mar. 22, 2

We invent & create out of ourselves
the limitations of perception
& the equanimity that permit us to live.

We create our character,
and that character is a vital lie.

P. 52: "The ind'l has to repress globally . . ." (read)

The character w. wh. we emerge from childhood
is then

"his way of using the power of others,
the support of the things & the ideas of his culture,
to banish from his awareness the actual fact
of his natural impotence.

Not only his impotence to avoid death,
but his impotence to stand alone,
firmly rooted on his own powers." (54)

Character is our falsification of the human condition,
thru our defenses wh. give us a basic sense
of self-worth, of meaningfulness, of power.

These defenses allow us to feel that we do control
our life & our death,

that we really do live & act as a willful & free
individual,

that we have a unique & self-fashioned identity,
that we are somebody.

This dishonesty is necessary. We are necessarily driven
away from ourselves, from self-knowledge,
toward things that support the lie of character.

But these things themselves are filled w. a secret anxiety:
symbiotic relationships that support us but also bind us,
things, money, & success.

p. 55 - we are always
dependent on
something that transcends
us, but we won't
admit it

143, Mar. 22, 3

" Even in our fancies we are mercury children
playing w. toys that represent the real world.
Even when these toys crash & cost us our lives
or our sanity,
we are cheated of the consolation that we were in the real world
instead of the playpen of our fantasies.
We still did not meet our doom on our own manly terms,
in contest w. Objective reality.
It is fateful & ironic how the lie we need
in order to live dooms us to a life that is never really ours."

(56)

The shedding of the lie
is what depth psychology
& religion
are both all about,

P. 6

but this shedding is a terrible risk.
It means that so much of us must die,
and that we must be reborn,
& reborn not into another world of illusion,
but into the world as it is.

"What does it mean 'to be born again' for man?"

It means for the first time to be subjected
to the terrifying paradox of the human condition,
to the full ambiguity of one's life. (p. 58)

And this rebirth does not dispel anxiety:

it is impossible to stand up to the terror
of one's cond'n w/o anxiety.

(The reason for prolonged psychotherapy?)

143, Mar. 22, 4

Much of the therapeutic enterprise
has labored under the illusion
of a promise of a freedom from anxiety,
a freedom to "enjoy one's full humanness,"
a freedom from all repression.

But, says B., "full humanness" is one's
primary mis-adjustment to the world,
and what one comes face to face with when one
surrenders one's defenses
is genuine despair, or what K. will call "dread."

"When you get a person
to emerge into life,
away from his dependencies,
his automatic safety in the cloak of someone else's power,
what joy can you promise him
with the burden of his aloneness?"
(transference)

How can you take away from people the defense of their existence,
and leave them joyous?

There are real dangers involved,
and they must be stressed,
or one risks schizophrenia.

(drugs vs. psychotherapy)

Conclusion, p. 66. (read).