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Outline: 6. Faith in the outcome of psychoanalysis

1. Rank on neurosis
2. The need of myth
3. Neurosis and sin
4. The scientific psychological criteria for myth

5. Mental illness as failed heroics

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Becker has been moving toward the argument expressed on p. 174 that, in Rank, ψ joins ¹⁷⁴Kierkegaard in the belief that one should not stop and circumscribe his life w. beyonds that are near at hand, or a bit further out, or created by oneself. One should reach for the highest beyond of religion: man should cultivate the passivity of renunciation to the highest powers no matter how difficult it is. Anything less is less than full development. . . . The true heroic validation of one's life lies beyond sex, beyond the other, beyond the private religion -- all these are makeshifts that pull man down or that hem him in, leaving him torn with ambiguity. Man feels inferior precisely when he lacks 'true inner values in the personality,' when he is merely a reflex of something next to him and has no steadying inner gyroscope, no centering in himself. And in order to get such centering man has to look beyond the 'thou,' beyond the consolations of others of the things of this world. Man is a 'theological being,' concludes Rank.

Did R. turn soft in the head? Or is this the legitimate concl. of a psychoanalyst?

Ch. 9 → R. on neurosis:

1. The neurotic is one whose lie, ^{or refusal of reality} can no longer be sustained. It begins to have damaging effects on himself & others.

It may begin to constrict his life-style too much, prevent free forward momentum, new choices, growth. E.g. the safe heroics of a love relationship. Or the lie about one's own potential development. → neurotic guilt. (cf. Max Scheler on Resentment). Guilt results from unmet life. Resentment takes it out on others. Or the depressions of the person who in effect says, "If I do anything at all, I will die." The constriction becomes expressed in the compulsive or obsessive symptoms, where one takes the whole world & fuses it into a single object or a single fear. P. 181: "The ironic thing. . ." (Read) Too much "Agape," merging.

Or it may lead to taking in too much experience. Cf. the creative person, why they are so close to madness. They take in the world as a total problem. Too much pros, making one's own complete claim. "Some ind'ls are unable to separate and others are unable to unite. The ideal of course is to find

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some balance between the two motives.

The artist or creative type avoids clinical neurosis because, when he takes in the world on a grand scale, instead of being oppressed by it, he reworks it in his own personality and recreates it in the work of art. The clinical neurotic is precisely the one who cannot create. He chokes on his introversions. He exhausts himself in self-preoccupations, and in others, on whom he works out his problems, trying to mold them, to make them his work. But people are not clay to be moulded by another person. 184: "The neurotic's frustration as a failed artist can't be remedied by anything but an objective creative work of his own. . . . Either you eat up yourself & others around you, trying for perfection; or you objectify that imperfection in a work, on which you then unleash your creative powers. In this sense, some kind of objective creativity is the only answer to the problem of life." Plunging in on one's own terms, not as a reflex of the world. "He takes in the world, makes a total problem out of it, and then gives out a fashioned, human answer to that problem." (195) Finding one's own gift and employing it. The neurotic never finds his own gift. He can neither sustain the lie of the cultural project nor create something new, a new illusion, a new myth. And so he opts out of life because he is having trouble maintaining his illusions about it.

This poses a new and revolutionary question to the science of psychotherapy:

On what level of illusion does one live? Or, as Jung put it, what is our myth today? What is creative play? "Man needs a 'second' world, a world of humanly created meaning, a new reality that he can live, dramatize, nourish himself in." (189)

Rank saw the whole of history as a series of myths or illusions or immortality ideologies, making it possible for people to be confident in the mg of their lives. (Psychology and the Soul traces these). Jung agrees. They also agree that our problem today is the failure of these myths to absorb, inspire, quicken us. 190: "Neurosis is today a widespread problem because of the disappearance of convincing dramas of heroic apotheosis of man. The subject is summed up succinctly in Pinel's famous observation on how the Salpêtrière mental hospital got cleared out at the time of the French Revolution. All the neurotics found a ready-made drama of self-transcending fiction & heroic identity. It was as simple as that." Revolution & wars & eclipse of absolute

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transcendence, man thrown back on his own resources. "Psychological man," having to justify himself from within himself. But psych. cannot lay a total claim on the problem of human unhappiness, only a part-claim. (Frank saw this more clearly than Jung, Jung more clearly than the Jungians). "All the analysis in the world doesn't allow the person to find out who he is and why he is here on earth, why he has to die, and how he can make his life a triumph." For ~~to pretend~~ to do this is a fraud. It can even make a person worse off than he was before by closing him off from the larger view that he needs, closing him in on the personal history of his own life. Refer to 194 f.

^{appt} R. & K. thus join. What R. calls neurosis, K. calls sin: "the complete isolation of the individual, his disharmony w. the rest of nature, his hyperindividualism, his attempt to create his own world from within himself." (196) His refusal to recognize his cosmic dependence, his attempt to force nature, to justify his own heroism.

Neurosis & sin both oscillate between "I am everything" and "I am nothing." Between these is "I am something," but (197): "if one is going to be something he has to be a secure part of something else. There is no way to avoid paying the debt of dependency & yielding to the larger meaning of the rest of nature, to the toll of suffering & the death that it demands; and there is no way to justify this payment from w/i oneself, no matter how mightily one tries."

But: in religion, the consciousness and admission of sin was condition of salvation. "Do you want to be healed?" w/o God, the neurotic ends up in a tortured sense of nothingness. He is a sinner with no word for it, no belief in the notion of sin.

The "cure" for neurosis is so difficult in our time precisely because there is no self-transcending drama, no embracing world-view, no myths, for one to participate in. Even religion becomes purely personal when there is no collective drama that makes myths seem real because it is lived & shared, no "legitimate foolishness" to play at.

Cf. Kierkegaard on humor: moving fr. ethical to religious