

DO 143<sup>4</sup>

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Ch. 10 follows up these questions and once again shows mental illness to be a matter of failed heroics. It is a way of talking about people who have lost courage, who have lost a way to deal w. the truth of their own creatureliness, who have bogged down in doubt about the abiding value of their lives.

From this perspective, B. again takes up depression, schizophrenia, perversion, fetishism, and sado-masochism. Depression is "the natural bogging-down of an unheroic human life" (214). Frequently overcomes one in the transition to 2<sup>nd</sup> half of life. Menopause -- but also in male, the easier to ignore. F.H. on p. 215: "one of the crucial projects of a person's life, of true maturity, is to resign oneself to the process of aging." The mid-life crisis, where one must work oneself out of one's own system. Cultural forces are against this: the premium on youth, the new religion of sports, stadia as the new cathedrals. The importance of cultural role. Women are coming to see this, are developing a social ideology to deal with it.

Schizophrenia is falling apart as a result of seeing things as they are, and of fabricating a fantastic ideational system to react to. → Splitting of self from body, complete non-integration, no programming into life, relying on thoughts alone. Characteristics: losing everything except one's reason, no ego w. wh. to control experience & give it a creative form.

Various forms of <sup>alternative</sup> sexual expression are a protest agst. the submergence of individuality by species standardization & arbitrariness -- agst. the determinism of the body. Individualizing a collective phenomenon. Bodily procreation is a standardized species form of sexuality. Only w. a secure sense of one's body & dependable interpersonal skills can one "do the species role" w/o being threatened by the possible submergence of individuality by a collective phenomenon.

All mental illness for B. refers <sup>to</sup> the terror of the human condition in people who can't bear up under it. And this brings us again to the basic question: in what cosmology am I to perform my heroics? What kind of heroism is called for, given the facts of the human condition? Everyone is submissive to something beyond. Will I be submissive to humans, to lovers, leaders, and nation-states, or to the highest powers, the infinite & absolute? (251) "Private religions" or idolatries are not false. They are natural. But they are less expansive, less humanly noble & responsible than the religion of which Kierkegaard writes.  
(and less faithful)

April 9, 1934

The que. thus becomes: "What is the best illusion or myth under which to live? What is the most legitimate foolishness?"

B's criteria: how much freedom, dignity, & hope does a given myth provide?

My criteria: What → attentiveness  
intelligence  
reasonableness  
responsibility?

What are the arguments for religion in this context?

- 1) It expands terror & awe to the cosmos where they belong.
- 2) It takes the prob. of self-justification & removes it from the objects near at hand. Stretches one as far as possible. Crucifixion.
- 3) It is thus a less constricting form of transference.
- 4) It provides an answer to the problem of death.
- 5) It meets the 2 ontological motives:
  - the need to surrender oneself in full to the rest of nature by laying down one's whole existence to some higher meaning
  - the need to expand oneself as an individual heroic personality
- 6) It alone gives hope, i.e., holds open the dimension of the unknown & the unknowable

The ideal for mental health, B. concludes, is a kind of illusion that does not lie about life, death, & reality, and that is honest enough to follow its own commandments. (For R., Christianity as an ideal. Cf. Chesterton: it's never been tried). Cf. B's statement (201) -- not an apologetic for trad'l religion

The final question B. raises: when one denies absolute transcendence, what is the cost to oneself & to those around him?

207: There have become questions for the empirical science of psychology itself. "At its ultimate point the science of psychology meets again the forever questioning figure of Kierkegaard. What world view? What power? For what heroism?" Cf. Jung's diabolism.