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160, Sept. 10, Intro to M, D, R: Jung's myth and Jung's science

2) Jung's myth and Christian theology
Jung's psych. is now,

15 yrs. after his death,
receiving the kind of treatment
that seems to await all comprehensive genius
at some time or other:

diverse
and even dialectically opposed
interpretations.

You have a dialectical opposition

when you have two positions
which are mutually exclusive
as they stand,

but which perhaps can be reconciled
if both of them are relativized
by being sublated
into a higher viewpoint.

example:

With Jung,

the diverse interpretations
have to do

w. the religious significance of his thought:

Jung is given quite Christian interpretations
by Morton Kelsey (Dreams: The Dark Speech of the Spirit)
and John Sanford (Dreams: God's Forgotten Language),

and quite a different interpretation
by James Hillman (Re-Visioning Psychology),
who speaks of a Polytheistic psychology, a new Shamanism.

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Dialectic:

genuine insights
expressed by both,

but also oversights --

Jung is not as unambiguously Christian
as Kelsey + Sanford would make him,
nor is he as much at variance
w. Christianity
as Hillman would maintain.

A higher viewpoint

both re: Jung

and re: human religious development

is needed to advance & develop the ^{genuine} insights of
both interpreters,

and to reverse their errors.

Ultimately, one committed to Christian faith

as the key and basic element

in the development of personality

must work out a new notion of personality development

from Jung's,

but relying on much that he has to offer.

That is what we must try to do in this course.

Jung's attitude to Christianity

is ambiguous, neither as straight as Sanford + Kelsey,
both positive (preserve all its values) nor as negative &
and negative (bec. of his rel'n to his father). Hillman -
ridiculing as

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The Christian interpretation of Jung
has been influenced by
the openness of Jungian psychology
to intense religious experience
as something valid in its own right;
and not reducible to something else, as w. Freud,
but in its enthusiasm
has perhaps overlooked
the ambiguity of Jung's interpretation
of the realm of being, the sphere of reality,
that is made available by cultivating attention
to the psychic depths.

even discovers a way to
religious experience;

For Jung's interpretation, ^{and evaluation} is not Christian
in any ordinary sense of this term,
and we will have to spend some time discussing this.

What is the difference?
Christianity speaks of a rebirth of the human ~~spirit~~ person, of the
self,
not by the flesh
but by the spirit (John 3),
and in faith in Jesus Christ
as God's final word
on the human situation, as grace, pure gift from

Christian symbols of rebirth
are not taken, then,

from the rhythms & processes of the natural, material world
but are symbols of a new creation
that is something other than this creation,
a transformation of this creation in its entirety, to the depths,

the transcendent, from
the beyond, as trans-
formation of the depths by
the overcoming & forgiveness of
sin, which affects us to
the depths

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that comes,

not from within this creation,
but from beyond it completely,

a transformation

that issues from the realm of absolute transcendence. Really a
resurrection as a
new creation i. th.
a rebirth.

This transformation

has particular relevance

for the problem of evil,

of sin,

of moral impotence :

i. e., of our inability to find

from w/ ourselves

or from w/ the order of the material universe

a way of redemption

from the cycle of decline

that is introduced into human affairs

by sin.

Sin, in Christian theology,

is our doing (or non-doing)

and our undoing,

unless something is introduced into human living

from beyond,

by grace,

something stronger than the power of sin,

something that undoes the power of sin,

that cancels out its victory,

that ^{ever} transforms evil into a greater good,
w/o making it a means to an end.

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This transformation begins
with the message & experience
of forgiveness.

It never calls the sin good,
but cancels its victory over us
by introducing into our ~~too~~ lives

the power of a self-sacrificing love of God & neighbor,
of a resilient hope for the Kingdom of God
where evil no longer holds sway,
and of a faith in an all-knowing, all-powerful,
and all good God

who wills only the good of the human person,
where the good consists in
an abiding relation of love
& growing intimacy

that reaches to ~~the~~ the depths of a person
between these depths and God,
and flows over

into love of neighbor
and works for the sake of building
a Kingdom of justice & peace
on the earth.

The healing comes from above downward:

Jung also speaks of transformation,
but it is something ultimately quite different
from the transformation proclaimed
by the Christian message --

and yet it does not take much to convert Jung's discoveries
into instruments of Christian transformation.

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The transformation of wh. Jung speaks, however,
is one that comes
from within nature, from below upward.

It is a rebirth of the person ~~from below~~ from below, fr. w/i, not fr. beyond,
and not as redeemed,
but as still under the power of sin.

Jungian symbols of transformation, the archetypal symbols,
are taken from & imitate
the rhythms & processes of the natural, material world,
are not symbols of resurrection as a new creation

but of rebirth

in the manner of the cyclical rebirth of nature
in the seasons of the year:

a rebirth that comes fr. w/i nature,

fr. the natural life-force,

fr. the energy of the universe,

an immanent

r. th. transcendent

happening.

Such symbols are archetypal symbols:

they are profoundly important for the human psyche --

but they are not the same

as the anagogic symbols

of a new creation,

wh. speak of absolute transcendence;

and the central question

in the religious interpretation of Jungian psychology

is whether the transformations
 that can come upon us
 from within nature,
 by the force of material energy
 can provide total human redemption -- is natural creativity
 the claim that they can the same as healing --
 is implied by Jung
 and is taken up by some of his followers;
 or if they cannot,

is there a total human redemption,
 a redemption from sin,
 or can we be reborn
 only under the power of sin,
 reborn as sinners,
 through some kind of
integration of sin and good --
 never redeemed,

but nonetheless integrated as sinners,
 remaining in our sin,
 but finding wholeness in it?

The latter position is where the Jungian myth
 seems to lead us,

and as such it conflicts with Christianity,
 for which: a) there is ^{final} no integration w/o redemption from sin
 and b) redemption comes only from the absolute beyond, it

Authentic Christianity has never neglected or despised nature, affects us 1st as conscious
 but it has also never found in nature the source of redemption if there is then
to the us.

Jung finds the
 source of natural
 creativity and inter-
 prets it also as the
 source of ultimate
 healing -- but not
 such as to free us
 from sin. Is there
 a more radical healing?
 One that moves from
 above down ward,
 and that reaches
 even to the
 psychic depths
 or changes there?
 Or does all transforma-
 tion come only from
 below & move
 upwards?

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in fact, it has even spoken

of nature's need for redemption
(Romans 8: 19-23:

For the creation waits with eager longing
for the revealing of the sons of God;
for the creation was subject to futility,
not of its own will
but by the will of him
who subjected it in hope;

because the creation itself will be set free
from its bondage to decay
and obtain the glorious liberty
of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation
has been groaning in travail together
until now;

and not only the creation,
but we ourselves,
who have the first fruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly
as we wait for adoption as sons,
the redemption of our bodies).

The Christian model or "myth"

is, then,

one of the redemption of the person
and of the creation
by God;

The Jungian model
is one of redeeming

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the life-force
from matter,
by men and women,
and this life-force
is treated at times by Jung
as though it were God,
so that God needs to be redeemed by men
rather than men by God.

My own position will be the following:

- 1) we need to be redeemed by God, from the absolute beyond,
in ~~a~~ ^{the} sense that Christianity understands this --
redemption, ^{esp.} from sin, fr. the power of evil;
- 2) this redemption begins with conversion, wh. is conscious & free,
and deepens as conversion takes hold more & more
within us;
- 3) converted subjectivity
can "redeem" from matter
the power of life and creativity, and channel ^{it} in building a
frankly good & humane & just world;
- 4) but this life force or power of creativity inherent w/ matter
is not God, ~~and~~
but energy,
and energy is pure potentiality
for form, structure, intelligibility.

To call energy God,
as Jung would lead us to do,
is an eg. of what A. N. Whitehead calls
the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.

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But Jung, when reinterpreted in this way,
and so when reconstructed
and in places quite radically changed,
does provide, perhaps
in a way, no other figure in modern thought does,
the key to
releasing from the material universe
the creative potentiality
of the forces of cosmic energy,
and of putting these forces to work
in the human construction
of a world that is fit
for human beings to live in.