

C. G. JUNG: AN ADLERIAN APPRECIATION

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With the death of C. G. Jung on June 6th, 1961, at the age of 85, one of the richest and most enriching lives of our century has come to a close. One can be for him or against him—that is a matter of scientific conviction no less than of personal temperament—but the range of his ideas and the force of his influence on the intellectual climate of our times should be beyond doubt.

This seems a rather strong statement considering that most psychological textbooks speak of Jung only as the originator of the association test, or the introversion-extraversion typology, and hardly ever mention the philosopher and creator of other highly original concepts. It is his “unconscious” influence on psychology which will come more and more to the foreground. As Hall and Lindzey have pointed out: “Many of Jung’s ideas are now in common circulation, whether he is responsible or not. . . . for example, the conception of self-actualization. . . or the idea of development as proceeding from a global to a differentiated to an integrated state . . . psychology owes more to him than is realized” (3, p. 109).

While Jung was seldom given full credit, and he had to fight for recognition in the professional world to the very end, his fame at large was boundless. He had become a legend many years ago, and innumerable popular articles were written about him. Although he published prolifically, Jung often claimed that his work could be understood only in personally experiencing a Jungian analysis (which in itself added to his difficulties in being recognized by the profession). Let us, nevertheless, try to come closer to his work. In my opinion it is very important to do so, especially for an Adlerian, because Jung and Adler, at one time were comrades-in-arms. They were rebels against the common background in one of the great moments of spiritual world history. By breaking away from the original psychoanalysis (Adler in 1911, Jung in 1913) they were, marching in different directions, opening up not only their own ways of holistic systems but also fertilizing the entire field of Freudian and post-Freudian depth psychology.

JUNG AND FREUD

When Jung contacted Freud and his Viennese circle in 1907, he had already won a high reputation at the Burghoelzli clinic in Zurich.

His association test had shown him that the psychic mechanism points with the precision of a clockwork to the complex-charged parts of the psyche, complexes being combinations of mental contents which "have been split off from consciousness and lead a separate existence in the unconscious, being at all times ready to hinder or to reinforce the conscious intentions" (7, p. 90). Jung speaks occasionally also of *Teilseelen* (part souls) instead of complexes.

Freud himself acknowledged that Jung had helped his new science in a decisive way. By his association test he had "built the first bridge between experimental psychology and psychoanalysis" (2, p. 98). Wundt had done association tests before Jung, but without considering the unconscious powers of the psyche. The term complex, also, was not completely new; Wernicke had introduced it originally. But now it was introduced in its modern Jungian meaning into the terminology of the growing psychoanalytic movement and became in no time the most fashionable term for scientists and laymen alike. Even Adler who later excluded all Freudian terminology from his own vocabulary was forced to speak of an inferiority complex in order to make his concepts acceptable to the all-powerful *Zeitgeist* (1, p. 186).

Jung's break with Freud, who loved Jung dearly, had a striking similarity with Adler's break two years earlier. Both attacked the libido theory, rejecting Freud's exclusively sexual-biological explanation of neurotic phenomena. But while Adler abandoned libido completely, and was on his way to create his concept of the style of life of the individual, Jung remained faithful to it, abandoning its sexual implication only. Jung's libido was no longer the somatic energy of the sex drive but the entire psychic energy of life. From here Jung started his journey to the bottom of depth psychology.

Consciousness, says Jung, is a tiny island in the infinite ocean of the unconscious. The personal unconscious is approximately what Freud understood by the repressed material of the psyche; it is a thin frontier line between the conscious life of the individual and the real unconscious, which is the collective unconscious. Just as the individual is part of society, so the individual mind is part of the collective psyche of mankind, present and past. Each one of us has not only memories of his own personal development, but he carries within himself the entire human evolution since time immemorial, and even that of the animal ancestry of man.

Freud came very close to these same ideas when, in connection with dream interpretation, he claimed that an individual reliving his

own personal childhood was also reliving mankind's childhood. The dream symbols seemed to him to belong to the "phylogenetic heritage" (2, p. 177).¹ "Unfortunately," he wrote to Jung in 1911, "phylogenetic memory will soon prove to be so" (6, p. 451). Why unfortunately? Freud, the materialistic positivistic thinker, was frightened by the consequences; he knew exactly where this might lead. And here we find the decisive difference between Freud and Jung. Jung had, what I call, the "transcendental courage." He stepped "beyond"; and these are some of the results:

There is another level of the psyche, deeper even than the collective unconscious: *der unerguendliche Grund*, one of Jung's untranslatable poetic terms which means, approximately, the unexplorable bottomless bottom, the trans-psyche basis which is completely out of reach, like the nature of God. From this unknown abyss the individual souls have ascended into the reality of our world. Symbols are realities; and the great symbols, the underlying patterns of life, repeated in all religions, myths, fairy tales, dreams of all peoples throughout the ages, are the archetypes. To name a few: the dragon, the magician, the slave girl, the Amazon, the fairy, the hero, and paradise and hell—they all are mankind's universal psychic material. If I understand Jung correctly, the relationship between archetypes and individual life is one between theme and variations. The theme is given and unchangeable. But there are as many variations as there are individuals, and the creative manifoldness of the living melody is inexhaustible.

JUNG AND ADLER

It is hard to believe, in the light of the preceding, that any similarities could be found between the "sober" Adlerian school of thought and "mystical" Jungianism. But there are similarities. Both systems are finalistic, teleologic, optimistic, and see personality as a holistic phenomenon—although Adler never could have accepted Jung's compartmentalized individual and even less the overwhelming role heredity plays in his system (not only biological heredity but the psychological collective unconscious experiences) and Jung could never have accepted Adler's unity of the individual's style of life.

Furthermore, we find full agreement in very important questions of psychotherapy. The past of a patient is much less important to

¹The quotation actually reads "racial heritage"; but the German original is "phylogenetisches Erbe."

both Jung and Adler than are his present and future. The active participation of the therapist is a decisive factor in the relationship. The phenomenon of transference was attacked by Jung, especially in his later years, almost as violently as by Adler. Jung said: Transference is not "a regular phenomenon indispensable to the success of the treatment. Transference is projection, and projection is either there or not there. But it is not *necessary*. . . . [Its absence] may in fact considerably facilitate the treatment because the real personal values can then come more clearly to the forefront" (10, p. 312).

Could Adler have accepted Jung's concept of the self? In a way, yes, because the Jungian self is not only a highly abstract, almost theological idea, it is an immanent guiding line of life also, along which individuation takes place. Individuation, according to Jung, "is a process by which a man becomes the definite, unique being he in fact is" (10, p. 183). "We could translate individuation as . . . 'self-realization'" (10, p. 182).

As we have seen historically, Jung and Adler are at times very close; and frequently they are worlds apart. We can give only a few examples: Jung's exploration of Yoga, of the tribal rites of the Pueblo Indians, his research into alchemy and astrology, Zen Buddhism and parapsychology, his interest and even belief in apparitions and occult phenomena—all this is very alien to Adler's philosophy and his approach to the problems of our life. Also, Adler would, of course, not have subscribed to the idea of a "positive neurosis." Jung postulated neurosis as a stimulative process, very often developed in order to overcome lethargy (5, pp. 134-135; also 10, p. 193). For Adler, neurosis was always "on the useless side of life" (1, pp. 254-255). Neither could Adler have accepted Jung's metaphysical interpretation of dreams, "beyond space and time." "We are the sufferers of a dream," says Jung, ("wir erleiden den Traum"), "we are the objects. One does not dream; one is being dreamt" (9, see also 5).

Nevertheless, there are certain dreams Jung called "big dreams," dreams with prophetic messages as in the Bible, or dreams which can happen once in a while to an individual changing the whole course of his life. Such a dream was told by J. B. Priestly, the writer:

I was standing at the top of a very high tower, alone, looking down upon myriads of birds all flying in one direction. It was a noble sight, this vast aerial river of birds. But now in some mysterious fashion the gear was changed, and time speeded up, so that I saw generations of birds, watched them break their shells, flutter into life, mate, weaken, falter, and die. Wings grew only to crumble; bodies

were sleek and then, in a flash, bled and shrivelled; and death everywhere at every second. As I stared down, seeing every creature's ignoble little history, I felt desperately unhappy. But now the gear was changed again and time was rushing by at such a rate that the birds could not show any movement, but were like an enormous plain sown with feathers. But along this plain, flickering through the bodies themselves, there now passed a sort of white flame, trembling, dancing, then hurrying on (11, p. 304).

Priestly then continued by giving himself a Jungian interpretation:

As soon as I saw it, I knew that this white flame was life itself, and then it came to me, in a rocket-burst of ecstasy, that nothing mattered, because nothing else was real, but this quivering and hurrying lambency of being. Birds, men or creatures, all were of no account except so far as this flame of life travelled through them. What I had thought was tragedy was mere emptiness or a shadow show . . . I had never felt before such deep happiness (11, p. 304).

How would Adler have interpreted this dream? More or less the same way. How can this be possible? Because Adler was also a transcendentalist (although many Adlerians are not). He spoke again and again of mankind's common fate, and emphasized that its entire history, its motives and its goals can be understood only from the standpoint of eternity, *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Here we come, in my opinion, to the decisive difference between Jung and Adler. Jung was a metaphysician from the very beginning. The whole range of his work is permeated by transcendental experience. Mankind rests by its very existence in the cosmos, and the common symbols of mankind, the archetypes, are mirrored through the collective unconscious in the individual psyche. Adler went the reversed way. He starts with the human being. His final transcendental approach is the consequence, the result of his realistic clinical work. For him a human being is first and wholly a member of the society in which he lives, connected with all other members of his community. But as mankind in its entirety is part of our planet, man by his practical effort to improve the life of mankind is connected in space and time with the cosmic existence.

Both standpoints contain their dangers. In Adlerianism there is a temptation to overestimate the potentialities of practical human brotherhood. In Jungianism the temptation is to overdo the spiritual, to enlarge the horizon so far that one loses sight entirely of the sufferings before one's very eyes. That is why Adler could have agreed wholeheartedly with the cosmic point of view, but never with a sentence like the one in the interpretation of Priestley's dream "all creatures, . . . nothing mattered . . . all were of no account except so far as the flame of life travelled through them . . ." For Adler would never have

lost sight of individual human sufferings; what counted primarily for him was social feeling, and rather would he have taken the risk to appear "naive" than to give up his fight for it. Adler would have clearly seen the danger signals, the threatening connections between Priestley's conclusions — in spite of their philosophical beauty — and some of the Nazi doctrines which often enough sound like parodies, sometimes even like imitations, of Jung.

THE OPEN QUESTION

We are speaking now of the problematic role Jung played during the Hitler years. If anyone at all, surely it must have been Jung who looked through the iron (patho)logic and the collective insanity of the Nazi movement! Unfortunately, this was not quite so. Shortly after Hitler's ascent to power, Jung accepted the editorship of the *Zentralblatt fuer Psychotherapie*. There he wrote in his first paper in his new capacity: "The Jew never had, and in all probability never will have a culture of his own The Aryan unconscious has a higher potential than the Jewish one Freud did not know the Germanic soul any more than did all his Germanic imitators. Has the mighty apparition of National Socialism, which the whole world watches with astonished eyes, taught them something better" (8)?

Ernest Harms, in defense of Jung, emphasizes that "Not one action can be found which could be interpreted in any way as showing that Jung had any part in National Socialist acts and plans" (4, p. 222). This may be so in the narrower sense of the wording, not in its broader sense. Jung, a Swiss, was acceptable to the German government as president of the international medical organization of psychotherapy for seven years, from 1933 to 1940, and, in view of his worldwide reputation and his official position, statements like those quoted above have to be considered as acts of far-reaching importance and influence.

I believe the explanation for Jung's attitude must be that he fell victim to the dangers of Jungianism, at least temporarily. Perhaps he could not resist participating in the historic apparition of a transpsychic event of astronomical dimensions, in this manifestation of a "saviour archetype" embracing all mankind. Here finally one was to experience the fiery breath of a doomsday, of a world's beginning which might happen once in thousands of years, and he was chosen by fate to have it happen in his own lifetime — proving his theories, confirming his work! But did really nothing count any longer for Jung

except the explosion of life, the process of evolution as an abstraction? Could he really forget all about concrete human consequences? These are heartbreaking and saddening questions for the many who admired him and had to live through Hitler's inferno.

I am well aware that the grave problems involved here are merely touched upon; but at least this much should be done in our short survey. Too much was and is at stake. Perhaps some day Jung's own students and co-workers, in exploring his life, will find a solution to this open question.

Presently, the Jungians are in the same situation as the Adlerians were in 1937, and the Freudians in 1939: their "wise old man" has left them. Only they are worse off on account of the specific spiritualistic character of Jungianism. Spiritualistic movements depend even more on their "father" than others. Having highly gifted men and women in their ranks, however, the Jungians give great hope for important original work in the future.

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