

The Psychological Imposture

by

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What we term “psychologism” is the tendency to reduce everything to psychological factors and to call into question not only what is intellectual or spiritual — the first being related to truth and the second to life in and by truth-- but also the human spirit as such, and therewith its capacity of adequation and, still more evidently, its inward illimitation and transcendence. The same belittling and truly subversive tendency has invaded all the domains that “scientism” claims to embrace, but its most acute expression is beyond all doubt to be found in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is at once an endpoint and a cause, as is always the case with profane ideologies, like materialism and evolutionism, of which it is really a logical and fatal ramification and a natural ally.

Psychoanalysis doubly deserves to be classed as an imposture, firstly because it pretends to have discovered facts which have always been known and could never have been otherwise than known, and secondly — and chiefly — because it arrogates to itself functions that in reality are spiritual, and thus assumes practically the role of a religion. What is called “examination of conscience” or, by the Moslems, “the science of humors” (*‘ilm al-khawātir*), or “investigation” (*vichara*) by the Hindus — with a rather different slant in each case — is nothing other than an objective analysis of the near and distant causes of our ways of acting and reacting that we repeat automatically without being aware of their real motives, or without discerning the real character of those motives. It may happen that a man habitually, and blindly, commits the same errors in the same circumstances, because he carries within himself, in his subconscious, traumas, or

errors founded on self-esteem. To be healed, he must detect these complexes and translate them into clear formulas; he must therefore become conscious of subconscious errors and neutralize them by means of contrary affirmations; if he succeeds, his virtues will be all the more lucid. It is in this sense that Lao Tsu said: “To feel an illness is to have it no longer”; and the Law of Manu says: “There is no lustral water that compares with knowledge,” that is, with objectification by the intelligence.

What is new in psychoanalysis, and what gives it its sinister originality, is its determination to attribute every reflex and every disposition of the soul to trivial causes and to exclude spiritual factors, hence its notorious tendency to see health in what is commonplace and vulgar, and neurosis in what is noble and profound. Man cannot escape in this world from trials and temptations; his soul is therefore inevitably stamped with some sort of turmoil, unless it be of an angelic serenity — which occurs in highly religious surroundings — or, on the contrary, unless it be of an unshakable inertia, which occurs everywhere. But psychoanalysis, instead of allowing man to make the best of his natural, and in a sense providential, disequilibrium — and the best is whatever is profitable to his ultimate destiny — tends on the contrary to bring him back to an amorphous equilibrium, rather as if one wished to spare a young bird the agonies of apprenticeship by clipping its wings. Analogically speaking: if a man is distressed by a flood and seeks a way to escape from it, psychoanalysis would remove the distress and let the patient drown; or again, instead of abolishing sin, it abolishes the sense of guilt, thus allowing the patient to go serenely to hell. This is not to say that it never happens that a psychoanalyst discovers and dissolves a dangerous complex without at the same time ruining the patient; but we are here concerned with the principle, in which the perils and errors involved infinitely outweigh the contingent advantages and fragmentary truths.

As a result, for an average psychoanalyst a complex is bad because it is a complex; he refuses to see that there are complexes which do honor to man or are natural to him by virtue of his deformity, and consequently that there are disequilibriums that are necessary, and that must be resolved from above ourselves and not from beneath.¹ There is another error that is fundamentally the same: it is to regard an equilibrium as good because it is an equilibrium, as if there were no equilibriums made of insensibility or of perversion. Our human state itself is a disequilibrium, since we are existentially suspended between earthly contingencies and the inborn summons of the Absolute; to get rid of a psychic knot is not the whole question, one must also know how and why it should be gotten rid of. We are not amorphous substances, we are movements which are in principle ascensional; our happiness must be proportioned to our total nature, on pain of lowering us to animality, for a happiness without God is precisely what man cannot withstand without becoming lost. And that is why a physician of the soul must be a

¹ “...for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” (*Matthew*, V, 29).

pontifex, and thus a spiritual master in the proper and traditional sense of the word a profane professional has neither the capacity nor, consequently, the right to interfere with the soul beyond such elementary difficulties as simple common sense can resolve.

The spiritual and social crime of psychoanalysis is therefore its usurpation of the place of religion or of the wisdom that is the wisdom of God, and the elimination from its procedures of all consideration of our ultimate destiny; it is as if, being unable to fight against God, one were to attack the human soul which belongs to Him and is destined for Him, by debasing the divine image instead of its Prototype. Like every solution that evades the supernatural, psychoanalysis replaces in its own way what it abolishes: the void it produces by its intentional or unintentional destructions expands it, and condemns it to postulate a false infinite or to function as a pseudo-religion.

In order to develop, psychoanalysis needed a favorable soil, not only from the point of view of ideas, but also from that of psychological phenomena: this means that the Europeans, who have always been of a cerebral type, have become infinitely more so in the last two centuries approximately; now, this concentration of the whole intelligence in the head is something excessive and abnormal, and the hypertrophies to which it gives rise do not constitute a superiority, despite their efficacy in certain domains.

Normally the intelligence ought to reside, not in the mind alone, but also in the heart, and it should also be spread throughout the body, as is especially the case with men who are called “primitive” but who are undeniably superior in certain respects to the ultra-civilized; be that as it may, the point we wish to make is that psychoanalysis is to a great extent the result of a mental disequilibrium more or less generally prevalent in a world in which the machine dictates to man the rhythm of his life, and, what is more serious still, even what his soul and his spirit are to be.

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Psychoanalysis has effected a more or less official entry into the world of “believers,” which is indeed a sign of the times; this has led to the introduction into so-called “spirituality” of a method totally incompatible with human dignity, and at the same time strangely contradicting the pretension of being “adult” and “emancipated.” People play at being demigods and at the same time consider themselves to be irresponsible; for the slightest depression, caused either by too hectic an ambience, or by a manner of life far too contrary to good sense, people rush off to the psychiatrist, whose work will consist in instilling in them some false optimism or in recommending some “liberating” sin. Nobody seems to have even an inkling of the fact that there is but one equilibrium, namely that which fixes us in our real center and in God.

One of the most odious effects of the adoption of the psychoanalytical approach by “believers” is how the cult of the Holy Virgin has fallen into disfavor; only a barbarous mentality that wants to be “adult” at all costs and no longer believes in anything but the trivial could be embarrassed by this cult. The answer to the reproach of “gynecolatry” or of “Oedipus complex” is

that, like every other psychoanalytical argument, it by-passes the problem; for the real question is not what the psychological conditioning of an attitude may be, but on the contrary, what its results are. When for instance one is told that someone has chosen metaphysics as an “escape” or a “sublimation” and because of an “inferiority complex” or a “repression,” all this is of no importance whatever, for blessed be the complex that is the occasional cause of an acceptance of the true and the good! But there is also this: the moderns, tired as they are of the artificial softness with which their culture and their religiosity is laden since the baroque period, extend their aversion — as is their habit — to all legitimate sweetness and delicacy, and thus shut themselves off, either from an entire spiritual dimension, if they are “believers,” or even from all genuine humanity, as is shown by a certain infantile cult of coarseness and noise.

And besides, it is not enough to ask what a particular devotion is worth in particular souls, one must also ask what is to replace it; for the place of a suppressed devotion never remains empty.

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“Know thyself” (Hellenism) says Tradition, and also “He who knows his own soul knows his Lord” (Islam). The traditional model of what psychoanalysis ought to be, or claims to be, is the science of virtues and vices; the fundamental virtue is sincerity and it coincides with humility; one who plunges the probe of truth and rectitude into his soul ends by detecting the subtlest knots of the unconscious. It is useless to seek to heal the soul without healing the spirit: what matters in the first place is to clear the intelligence of the errors perverting it, and thus create a foundation in view of the soul’s return to equilibrium; not to just any equilibrium, but to the equilibrium whose principle the soul bears within itself.

St. Bernard said that the passionate soul is a “contemptible thing,” and Meister Eckhart enjoins us to “hate” it. This means that the great remedy for all our inward miseries is objectivity towards ourselves; now the source, or starting point, of this objectivity is situated above ourselves, in God. That which is in God is for that reason mirrored in our own transpersonal center which is the pure Intellect; that is, the Truth that saves us is part of our most intimate and most real substance. Error, or impiety, is the refusal to be what one is.