

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND CATHOLICISM

A point that frequently strikes the outsider about psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts is its inaccessibility to logical argument. This is not said by way of reproach, but as a statement of fact. Whenever a person raises a difficulty about psychoanalysis he is countered with the remark 'you are putting up a resistance,' and treated as the analyst treats the patient (making difficulties).

Now, it struck me, that something similar occurs in regard to Catholicism, by which I mean, not only or merely the official teaching of the Church, but also all those currents of thought, feeling, and emotion which go to make up the life of Catholicism, a life which at times becomes so exuberant as to be considered detrimental to the truth and unity of the Church, and so has to be pruned. (As, for instance, in the outbursts of religious enthusiasm, devotions, cults, etc., which, only after careful examination are tolerated or permitted, and finally perhaps incorporated officially others get suppressed, but often linger on).

The objection to Catholicism, or such aspects of it as I have mentioned, is often countered, not by argument, so much as by saying 'He has not the faith, or sufficient faith.' Again, there is no counter argument to this, for the presence of faith in an individual is not susceptible of logical proof; it rests on moral certainty like that of 'State of grace,' as all instructed Catholics know.

This 'faith attitude' in Catholicism has its counterpart in the sense of security which the adept in psychoanalysis experiences, and further, to be a psychoanalyst (in the strict sense) you must be a 'believer.' Psychoanalysts do not recognise as such practitioners of psychotherapy who do not conform to the principles of psychoanalysis.

Now, as from Catholicism, groups have separated, retaining to a greater or lesser extent Catholic doctrines, so from psychoanalysis other systems of psychotherapy have detached themselves, incorporating to a greater or lesser de-

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gree the principles of psychoanalysis. To the orthodox psychoanalyst they are schismatics and heretics, *e.g.* Adler, Jung, and their followers.

The more liberal psychoanalyst may admit some good and some value in these systems. Freud, for instance, is very generous in his estimation of both Adler's and Jung's contributions: so, too, Catholics, or at least the more liberal-minded amongst them, will admit some good in systems which are outside the pale. Every heresy is half a truth, and often an exaggeration of a truth or part truth to the detriment of the remainder.

Considered in juxtaposition, both psychoanalysis and Catholicism represent closed circles (or spheres)—one is in the fold or out of it, as the case may be. (And damnation in Catholicism if you are not in it). It is useless to try and pit Catholicism against psychoanalysis, or vice versa. Either you must reject the one or the other, or, if you find that each system is a complete one in itself, each with a truth to proclaim, one may try to incorporate them, but not in the sense of trying to reconcile Catholicism with psychoanalysis after the manner of efforts to reconcile religion and science—which are usually futile. It may be possible to incorporate them as different spheres, each valid in their own context and related in a way to each other.

I find, therefore, that psychoanalysis is valid in the sphere of human nature (in the natural order as it is called), and that Catholicism is valid also in the natural order, but more specially in the supernatural order which rests on Faith and Charity. The values of Catholicism are supernatural values.

Let us then diagrammatically imagine the psychoanalysis circle within the Catholic circle. (It cannot be placed outside it.) Thus since every circle has a centre, radius and circumference, the circumference of the former may be conceived as finite; the radius, indefinite or infinite.

The radius so to speak is infinite, so the circumference of the Catholic circle must be placed (diagrammatically)

outside or beyond that of the circumference representing the sphere of psychoanalysis.

The circles are not to be thought of as superimposed, but concentric, in which case the centres will coincide.

Now the centre of the psycho-analysis circle I take as being Eros (or natural love) with its symbol, the Phallus.

The centre of the Catholic circle or sphere I take to be Caritas (or supernatural love) and its symbol is the Cross.

And so—Eros : Caritas : Phallus : Cross.

Eros is, or has to be transformed by grace, and the triumph of the Cross is the triumph of Caritas, as the triumph of the Phallus is that of Eros. Grace perfects nature but does not destroy it, grace effects the perfect sublimation and release of repression. Psychoanalysis strives for sublimation also. Only in and through Catholicism can the perfect sublimation be attained.

As a digression, I would put forward the view that the Saint is he in whom Caritas has entirely absorbed and transformed Eros. His 'Id' which he retains as part of the ego, is no longer Eros, but Caritas.

The Ego, as Freud says, following an observation of G. Grodeck, is *lived* by the Id (*The Ego and the Id*) and St. Paul said 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Here the symbolism is perfect, the Phallus being the concrete symbol of Eros, Christ the concrete symbol of Caritas. As Eros has to obey the Phallus, so Caritas has to obey Christ 'If any one love me, he will keep my word and my father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our abode with him.' (St. John xiv, 23). Few achieve this degree of sublimation. and as the Church teaches, it is the effect of grace, and to a lesser degree our own efforts (co-operation with grace), but there remains for the majority—and even for the Saints in the beginning—the conflict between Caritas and Eros—the Cross and the Phallus. Hence the Church's attitude to sex. She preaches the crucifixion of the flesh, i.e., the substitution through grace of the Cross of Christ, for the Phallus of the Ego Eros. This sublimated Ego is identical personally with the unsubli-

BLACKFRIARS

mated Ego, but the former is dominated by the 'Id' of Caritas, the latter by the 'Id' of Eros.

Christ on the Cross, is a perfect symbol of the crucifixion of the flesh; indeed it is a crucifixion of real flesh, mystically it is the subjugation or transformation of Eros in the ego, by Caritas (the redemptive power of the Cross).

Catholicism has to be brought into a sphere of reality; it cannot be content with phantasy. I mean here, it is not a doctrine of faith which proceeds from, or rests upon subjective experience . . . we need some positive evidence.

Hence, Faith, though intrinsically independent of external props or evidence, being supernatural and supernaturally infused, yet from the standpoint of the believer (or non-believer) some external props or evidence are necessary, lest it should appear as a sheer creation of phantasy, or a myth.

So, we come to the 'motives of credibility.' Evidence from history for the existence of Christ, His crucifixion, resurrection, etc.

Metaphysical proof, too, is required for the reality of the existence of God, though this is also an article of Faith.

So too, we bring forward arguments for the existence of spirit as well as matter, and finally, lest in the course of ages historical events should lose their compelling effect, there is the visible Church . . . the Holy Father as vicar of Christ and consequently infallible in his official utterances . . . again we seek for positive evidence whereby to corroborate our faith, but our faith does not rest on this evidence.

Infallibility is a psychological necessity.

Now, just as psychoanalysis rests on a reality basis—of a percept conscious—it rejects the doctrine of innate ideas, all the phantasies and symbols it discovers have had an origin by some contact of the Ego with the system Percept-Conscious (*cf. Ego and the Id*) otherwise there would be no criterion to separate the symbols and phantasies of psychoanalysis from the delusions of psychotics. This helps us to understand the Church's attitude to mystics and mysti-

cism—to personal religion—individual experience. She realises the power of phantasy, and brings all such experiences to the bar of reality where she is supreme judge. Thus she seeks to preserve the unity of Caritas under the leadership of Christ. The faithful are all members one of another in Charity (Love) and one with Christ through the Cross and Passion—at-one-ment or atonement.

We see now why schismatic bodies cease to have any vitality, and finally come down (for the most part) to a primitive form of religion, more or less identified with social welfare. (Anglo-Catholicism is an attempt to restore the Catholic principle, but has lost its power, through separation from the centre—The Pope.) These are compromise formations—defence reactions against the authority of the supernatural Ego ideal.

Hence it is that in Protestantism, Jansenism, Puritanism, God is the terrible Father (the hostile Phallus); in Catholicism, on the contrary, God is the loved Father. He is Caritas. Mercy rather than Justice—symbolically the sublimated, loved, Phallus.

The resurrection of the body—The resurrection of Christ.

This is the resurrection of the Ego—‘The Ego is a body Ego,’ said Freud ‘it is lived by the Id (Eros), sublimated through Ego ideals.’

In the resurrection, as St. Paul teaches, and as Christ gave witness, the body (or Ego) is the same, but glorified, i.e., it acquires certain special properties, it is dematerialised—a spiritual body conformed to the new spiritual Ego in which the Id and Super Ego are now all one in Christ (providing the sublimation has taken place before death)—yet not merged into complete identity of person. Man will still be man—created—and therefore essentially distinct from the creator, but united in a bond, not of love only, but of intellectual vision. (We shall see God face to face). Knowledge comes before love, though love animates and inspires knowledge.

BLACKFRIARS

A FINAL THOUGHT—EROS AND CARITAS.

Eros or natural created love proceeds originally from Caritas.

God created the world for love and created man to love Him. The Spirit of God (Caritas, Holy Ghost) moved over the face of the earth.

The Eros proceeding from Caritas must return by way of the Cross to Caritas.

The 'many' must be reabsorbed as it were in the 'One.'

In the beginning, Eros and Caritas were united. The Original Sin was the sundering of them, from which humanity has ever since suffered.

Through this sundering of Eros and Caritas, affect is displaced on Eros and the Phallus, but there remains an interior longing for the return to the one—but through the domination of Eros, phallic cults issue or arise, symbolic though of this desire for the one.

Christ becomes the figure of Sin and is crucified to pave the way for the reuniting of Eros and Caritas. (Here Sacraments and the sacramentals are visible symbols as well as instrumental causes).

Moses was commanded to make a Serpent of brass and exalt it before the Israelites who had sinned, who, by gazing thereon would be purified. The Serpent, St. Thomas Aquinas tells us, is a figure or symbol of sin, especially the poison of sin—venom—it is a Phallic symbol, but the Bible incident is interpreted always by the Fathers as foreshadowing prototype or pre-figure of Christ (Snake) on the Cross.

By gazing with love and sorrow on the Crucified Christ Caritas returns to the soul, and Eros is sublimated. *Cum me pulsat aliqua turpis cogitato recurro ad vulnera Christi.*¹

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¹ *Manuale S. Augustini*, c. xxii.