

## THE MISDEEDS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

XXXIV chapter of *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*

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IN PASSING FROM PHILOSOPHY TO PSYCHOLOGY it will be found that identical tendencies appear once again in the latter, and in the most recent schools of psychology they assume a far more dangerous aspect, for instead of taking the form of mere theoretical postulates they are given practical applications of a very disturbing character; the most 'representative' of these new methods, from the point of view of the present study, are those grouped under the general heading of 'psychoanalysis'. It may be noted that, by a curious inconsistency, their handling of elements indubitably belonging to the subtle order continues to be accompanied in many psychologists by a materialistic attitude, no doubt because of their earlier training, as well as because of their present ignorance of the true nature of the elements they are bringing into play (1); is it not one of the strangest characteristics of modern science that it never knows exactly what the object of its studies really is, even when only the forces of the corporeal domain are in question? It goes without saying too that there is a kind of 'laboratory psychology', the endpoint of the process of limitation and of materialization of which the 'philosophico-literary' psychology of university teaching was but a less advanced stage, and now no more than a sort of accessory branch of psychology, which still continues to coexist with the new theories and methods; to this branch apply the preceding observations on the attempts that have been made to reduce psychology itself to a quantitative science.

There is certainly something more than a mere question of vocabulary in the fact, very significant in itself, that present-day psychology considers nothing but the 'subconscious', and never the 'superconscious', which ought logically to be its correlative; there is no doubt that this usage expresses the idea of an extension operating only in a downward direction, that is, toward the aspect of things that corresponds, both here in the human being and elsewhere in the cosmic environment,

to the 'fissures' through which the most 'malefic' influences of the subtle world penetrate, influences having a character than can truthfully and literally be described as 'infernal' (2). There are also some who adopt the term 'unconscious' as a synonym or equivalent of 'subconscious', and this term, taken literally, would seem to refer to an even lower level, but as a matter of fact it only corresponds less closely to reality; if the object of study were really unconscious it is difficult to see how it could be spoken of at all, especially in psychological terms; and besides, what good reason is there, other than mere materialistic and mechanistic prejudice, for assuming that anything unconscious really exists? However that may be, there is another thing worthy of note, and that is the strange illusion which leads psychologists to regard states as being more 'profound' when they are quite simply more inferior; is not this already an indication of the tendency to run counter to spirituality, which alone can be truly profound since it alone touches the principle and the very center of the being? Correspondingly, since the domain of psychology is not extended upward, the 'superconscious' naturally remains as strange to it and as cut off from it as ever; and when psychology happens to meet anything related to the 'superconscious', it tries to annex it merely by assimilating it to the 'superconscious'. This particular procedure is almost invariably characteristic of its so-called explanations of such things as religion and mysticism, together with certain aspects of Eastern doctrine such as Yoga; there are therefore features in this confusion of the superior with the inferior that can properly be regarded as constituting a real subversion.

It should also be noted that psychology, as well as the 'new philosophy', tends in its appeal to the subconscious to approach more and more closely to 'metapsychics' (3); and in the same way it cannot avoid making an approach, though perhaps unwittingly (at least in the case of those of its representatives who are determined to remain materialists in spite of everything), to spiritualism and to other more or less similar things, all of which rely without doubt on the same obscure elements of a debased psychism. These same things, of which the origin and the character are more than suspect, thus appear in the guise of 'precursory' movements and as the allies of recent psychology, which introduces the elements in question into the contemporary purview of what is admitted to be 'official' science, and although it

introduces them in a roundabout way (nonetheless by an easier way than that of 'metapsychics', the latter being still disputed in some quarters), it is very difficult to think that the part psychology is called upon to play in the present state of the world is other than one of active participation in the second phase of anti-traditional action. In this connection, the recently mentioned pretensions of ordinary psychology to annex, by forcible assimilation to the 'subconscious', certain things that by their very nature elude it, only belong to what may be called the 'childish' side of the affair, though they are fairly clearly subversive in tendency; for explanations of that sort, just like the 'sociological' explanations of the same things, are really of a 'simplistic' ingenuousness that sometimes reaches buffoonery; but in any case, that sort of thing is far less serious, so far as its real consequences are concerned, than the truly 'satanic' side now to be examined more closely in relation to the new psychology.

A 'satanic' character is revealed with particular clarity in the psychoanalytic interpretations of symbolism, or of what is held rightly or wrongly to be symbolism, this last proviso being inserted because on this point as on many others, if the details were gone into, there would be many distinctions to make and many confusions to dissipate: thus, to take only one typical example, a vision in which is expressed some 'supra-human' inspiration is truly symbolic, whereas an ordinary dream is not so, whatever the outward appearances may be. Psychologists of earlier schools had of course themselves often tried to explain symbolism in their own way and to bring it within the range of their own conceptions; in any such case, if symbolism is really in question at all, explanations in terms of purely human elements fail to recognize anything that is essential, as indeed they do whenever affairs of a traditional order are concerned; if on the other hand human affairs alone are really in question, then it must be a case of false symbolism, but then the very fact of calling it by that name reveals once more the same mistake about the nature of true symbolism. This applies equally to the matters to which the psychoanalysts devote their attention, but with the difference that in their case the things to be taken into consideration are not simply human, but also to a great extent 'infra-human'; it is then that we come into the presence, not only of a debasement, but of a complete subversion; and every subversion, even if it only arises, at least in the first place, from incomprehension and

ignorance (than which nothing is better adapted for exploitation to such ends), is always inherently 'satanic' in the true sense of the word. Besides this, the generally ignoble and repulsive character of psychoanalytical interpretations is an entirely reliable 'mark' in this connection; and it is particularly significant from our point of view, as has been shown elsewhere (4), that this very same 'mark' appears again in certain spiritualist manifestations-anyone who sees in this no more than a mere 'coincidence' must surely have much good will, if indeed he is not completely blind. In most cases the psychoanalysts may well be quite as unconscious as are the spiritualists of what is really involved in these matters; but the former no less than the latter appear to be 'guided' by a subversive will making use in each case of elements that are of the same order, if not precisely identical. This subversive will, whatever may be the beings in which it is incarnated, is certainly conscious enough, at least in those beings, and it is related to intentions that are doubtless very different from any that can be suspected by people who are only the unconscious instruments whereby those intentions are translated into action.

Under such conditions, it is all too clear that resort to psychoanalysis for purposes of therapy, this being the usual reason for its employment, cannot but be extremely dangerous for those who undergo it, and even to those who apply it, for they are concerned with things that can never be handled with impunity; it would not be taking an exaggerated view to see in this one of the means specially brought into play in order to increase to the greatest possible extent the disequilibrium of the modern world and to lead it on toward final dissolution (5). Those who practice such methods are on the other hand without doubt convinced of the benefits afforded by the results they obtain; theirs is however the very delusion that makes the diffusion of these methods possible, and it marks the real difference subsisting between the intentions of the 'practitioners' and the intentions of the will that presides over the work in which the practitioners only collaborate blindly. In fact, the only effect of psychoanalysis must be to bring to the surface, by making it fully conscious, the whole content of those lower depths of the being that can properly be called the 'sub-conscious'; moreover, the individual concerned is already psychologically weak by hypothesis, for if he were otherwise he would experience no need to resort to treatment of this description; he is

by so much the less able to resist 'subversion', and he is in grave danger of foundering irremediably in the chaos of dark forces thus imprudently let loose; even if he manages in spite of everything to escape, he will at least retain throughout the rest of his life an imprint like an ineradicable 'stain' within himself.

Someone may raise an objection here, based on a supposed analogy with the 'descent into hell' as is met with in the preliminary phases of the initiatic journey; but any such assimilation is completely false, for the two aims have nothing in common, nor have the conditions of the 'subject' in the two cases; there can be no question of anything other than a profane parody, and that idea alone is enough to impart to the whole affair a somewhat disturbing suggestion of 'counterfeit'. The truth is that this supposed 'descent into hell', which is not followed by any 're-ascent', is quite simply a 'fall into the mire', as it is called according to the symbolism of some of the ancient Mysteries. It is known that this 'mire' was figuratively represented as the road leading to Eleusis, and that those who fell into it were profane people who claimed initiation without being qualified to receive it, and so were only the victims of their own imprudence. It may be mentioned that such 'mires' really exist in the macrocosmic as well as in the microcosmic order; this is directly connected with the question of the 'outer darkness' (6) and certain relevant Gospel texts could be recalled, the meaning of which agrees exactly with what has just been explained. In the 'descent into hell' the being finally exhausts certain inferior possibilities in order to be able to rise thereafter to superior states; in the 'fall into the mire' on the other hand, the inferior possibilities take possession of him, dominate him, and end by submerging him completely.

There was occasion in the previous paragraph again to use the word 'counterfeit'; the impression it conveys is greatly strengthened by some other considerations, such as the denaturing of symbolism previously mentioned, and the same kind of denaturing tends to spread to everything that contains any element of a 'supra-human' order, as is shown by the attitude adopted toward religion (7) and toward doctrines of a metaphysical and initiatic order such as Yoga. Even these last do not escape this new kind of interpretation, which is carried to such a point that some proceed to assimilate the methods of spiritual 'realization' to the therapeutical procedures of psychoanalysis. This is something even worse than the cruder deformations also

current in the West, such as those in which the methods of Yoga are seen as a sort of 'physical culture or as therapeutic methods of a purely physiological kind, for their very crudity makes such deformations less dangerous than those that appear in a more subtle guise. The subtler kind are the more dangerous not simply because they are liable to lead astray minds on which the less subtle could obtain no hold; they are certainly dangerous for that reason, but there is another reason affecting a much wider field, identical with that which has been described as making the materialistic conception less dangerous than conceptions involving recourse to an inferior psychism. Of course the purely spiritual aim, which alone constitutes the essentiality of Yoga as such, and without which the very use of the word becomes a mere absurdity, is no less completely unrecognized in the one case than in the other. Yoga is in fact no more a kind of psychic therapy than it is a kind of physiological therapy, and its methods are in no way and in no degree a treatment for people who are in any way ill or unbalanced; very far from that, they are on the contrary intended exclusively for those who must from the start and in their own natural dispositions be as perfectly balanced as possible if they are to realize the spiritual development which is the only object of the methods; but all these matters, as will readily be understood, are strictly linked up with the whole question of initiatic qualification (8).

But this is not yet all, for one other thing under the heading of 'counterfeit' is perhaps even more worthy of note than anything mentioned so far, and that is the requirement imposed on anyone who wants to practise psychoanalysis as a profession of being first 'psychoanalyzed' himself. This implies above all a recognition of the fact that the being who has undergone this operation is never again the same as he was before, in other words, to repeat an expression already used above, it leaves in him an ineradicable imprint, as does initiation, but as it were in an opposite sense, for what is here in question is not a spiritual development, but the development of an inferior psychism. In addition, there is an evident imitation of the initiatic transmission; but, bearing in mind the difference in the nature of the influences that intervene, and in view of the fact that the production of an effective result does not allow the practice to be regarded as nothing but a mere pretence without real significance, the psycho-

analytic transmission is really more comparable to the transmission effected in a domain such as that of magic, or even more accurately that of sorcery. And there remains yet another very obscure point concerning the actual origin of the transmission: it is obviously impossible to give to anyone else what one does not possess oneself, and moreover the invention of psychoanalysis is quite recent; so from what source did the first psychoanalysts obtain the 'powers' that they communicate to their disciples, and by whom were they themselves 'psychoanalyzed' in the first place? To ask this question is only logical, at least for anyone capable of a little reflection, though it is probably highly indiscreet, and it is more than doubtful whether a satisfactory answer will ever be obtained; but even without any such answer this kind of psychic transmission reveals a truly sinister 'mark' in the resemblances it calls to mind: from this point of view psychoanalysis presents a rather terrifying likeness to certain 'sacraments of the devil'.

## Notes

(1) The case of Freud himself, founder of 'psychoanalysis', is quite typical in this respect, for he never ceased to declare himself a materialist. One further remark: why is it that the principal representatives of the new tendencies, like Einstein in physics, Bergson in philosophy, Freud in psychology, and many others of less importance, are almost all of Jewish origin, unless it be because there is something involved that is closely hound up with the 'malefic' and dissolving aspect of nomadism when it is deviated, and because that aspect must inevitably predominate in Jews detached from their tradition?

(2) It may be noted in this connection that Freud put at the head of his *The Interpretation of Dreams* the following very significant epigram: *Flectere si nequea superos, Acheronta movebo* (Virgil, *Aeneid*, VII, 312).

(3) Incidentally it was the 'psychist' Myers who invented the expression 'subliminal consciousness', which was later replaced in the psychological vocabulary for the sake of brevity by the word 'subconscious').

(4) See *The Spiritist Fallacy*, pt. 2, chap. 10.

(5) Another example of such means is furnished by the comparable employment of 'radioaesthesia', for in this case also psychic elements of the same quality very often come into play, though it must be admitted that they do not appear under the 'hideous' aspect that is so conspicuous in psychoanalysis.

(6) The reader may be referred her~ to what has been said earlier about the symbolism of the 'Great Wall' and of the mountain Lokaloku.

(7) Freud devoted a book specially to the psychoanalytical interpretation of religion, in which his own conceptions are combined with the 'totemism' of the 'sociological school'.

(8) On an attempt to apply psychoanalytical theories to the Taoist doctrine, which is of the same order as Yoga, see the study by Andre Preau, *La Fleur d'or et le Taoisme sans Tao* [Paris: Bibliotheque Chacornac, 1931], which contains an excellent refutation of the attempted application.

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