

"death is not the end" / interview with Carl Gustav Jung

Interviewer: I know that you say death is psychologically just as important as birth and like it is an integral part of life, but surely, it can't be like birth if it is an end. Can it?

Jung: Yes. If it is an end and there we are not quite certain about this end because we know that there are these peculiar faculties of the psyche- that isn't entirely confined to space and time. You can have dreams or visions of the future. You can see around corners and such things. Only ignorant deny these facts (ja - German). It's quite evident that they do exist and have existed always. Now these facts show that the psyche- in part, at least- is not dependent on these confinements. And then what? When the psyche is not under that obligation to....live in time and space alone- and obviously, it doesn't. Then, in .. to that extent, the psyche is not submitted to those laws and that means a..a practical continuation of life of a sort of psychical existence beyond time and space.

Interviewer: Do you - yourself believe that death is probably the end or do you believe....

Jung: Well, I can't say - wissen Sie ? (German translated would be: you see ?) - the word "believe" is a difficult thing for me. I don't "believe"; I must have a reason for a certain hypothesis. Either I know a thing; and when I KNOW it, I don't need to believe it. If I - I don't allow myself, for instance, to believe a thing just for the sake of believing it. I can't believe it! But when there are sufficient reasons for a certain hypothesis, I shall accept these reasons naturally. And to say "We have to reckon with the possibility of [so and so]." You know?

Interviewer: Well...now you told us that we should regard death as being a goal and to stray away from it is to evade life and life's purpose. What advice would you give to people in their later life to enable them to do this when most of them must, in fact, believe that death is the end of everything?

Jung: Well...you see I have treated many old people and it's quite interesting to watch what their conscious doing with the fact that it is apparently threatened with the complete end. It disregards it. Life behaves as if it were going on and so I think it is better for old people to live on...to look forward to the next day; as if he had to spend centuries and then he lives properly, but when he is afraid and he doesn't look forward; he looks back. He petrifies. He gets stiff and he dies before his time, but when he is living on, looking forward to the great adventure that is ahead, then he lives. And that is about what your conscious is intending to do. Of course it is quite obvious that we're all going to die and this is the sad finale of everything, but never-the-less, there is something in us that doesn't believe it, apparently, but this is merely a fact, a psychological fact. Doesn't mean to me that it proves something. It is simply so. For instance, I may not know why we need salt, but we prefer to eat salt too because we feel better. And so when you think in a certain way, you may feel considerably better. And I think if you think along the lines of nature, then you think properly

Thank you very much, Kierah16: This dialogue was written down by Kierah16. She has her own channel here on YouTube.

BBC 'Face to Face' interviews Carl Gustav Jung, October 22, 1959

Face To Face was a 35 episode BBC television series broadcast between 1959 and 1962, created and produced by Hugh Burnett. The insightful and often probing style of the interviewer, former politician John Freeman, distinguished it from other programmes of its genre at the time.

Late Years of Carl Gustav Jung

In an effort to 'popularize' his work, and with the firm conviction that it would be the ordinary people who would carry on his psychology, Jung decided (in his early 80s) to write and get published his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, as well as a collaborative work entitled *Man and His Symbols*. Explaining his psychology in a most fundamental way was an appeal for the public to realise the reality of the unconscious and, above all, to take their own souls seriously. To this end he needed to reach a wider public and, in 1959, he agreed to be interviewed by John Freeman for a BBC series about famous living people, called *Face to Face*. The interview was a success, with his much quoted remark about the existence of God - 'I don't believe, I know' - arousing a storm of comment at the time. Jung had many premonitions of approaching death, and he took these as both a preparation and a reassurance. In one impressive dream he saw the 'other Bollingen' bathed in a glow of light, and a voice told him that it was completed and ready for habitation. The golden tower (as vessel of the Self) on 'the other shore of the lake' was now ready for him to move into.'

Jung died in Küsnacht, near Zürich, at a quarter to four on Tuesday afternoon, 6 June, 1961. It was synchronistic that about an hour or so afterwards, lightning struck a tall popular tree in his garden at the lake's edge.

Jung himself saw death as paradoxical, an event that had elicited contrasting emotions of grief and joy. He further said that death was 'a fearful piece of brutality... not only as a physical event, but far more so psychically: a human being is torn away from us, and what remains is the icy stillness of death'.

C.G. Jung His Life / Late Years: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A653410>

Videos: <http://www.cosmolearning.com/documentaries/bbc-face-to-face-carl-gustav-jung/1/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-Ab3tlpvYA&feature=related>