

## Night Sea Journeys - A journey into the psychology of CG Jung - Film from © Rüdiger Sünner ®

Eugen Drewermann - theologian and psychotherapist

What Freud wanted was, in mythology which he uses Greek, it was European, it was human. It was an incredible step, an immense human progress, to engage with the unconscious. It is a cultural revolution no longer to judge people but to enter in their criminal and perverse impulses, to heal through understanding, this is unheard. It was part of a universal humanization of the human emotional life.

A myth that we still believe in unconditionally, is the scheme of good and evil and the activation of force and violence in the fight against evil. The myth of the fighting with the dragon that plays a basic role in the fairy tales, myths and the Bible, Michael and the dragon (chapter 12 of the Apocalypse) in which the devil plays a fundamental role.

We still believe we can overcome evil by punitive violence. That is the case in our system of justice. That is even taken on by education: we have to impose norms through strictness and punishment on our children. And in international affairs we carry out war like a legal execution in which we extinguish the evil. For anyone who thinks about it, this idea is absurd.

It makes psychological sense. There's something in us that is waiting to be integrated. Integration is not annihilation, but acceptance, understanding and working through something. That is not what happens. We interpret the myth politically, in terms of a military strategy, in such a way that we have to become the strongest in order to defeat evil. Therefore we have to be even stronger and more evil than the evil beforehand because only then we can have the power to destroy the destructive forces of evil. We drive the devil out of hell, by being more devilish and make the world into a hell. This is the consequence of this kind of mythology, and we follow it unconditionally.

Film text

Jung saw in the Third Reich a prime example of how the power of myths and archetypes can be used for evil purposes. Therefore after 1945, Jung sought for a new form of rational spirituality that would be immune against such perversion. For Jung the horrors of the Third Reich were the result of a deep split in modern humanity, separating modern people from the unconscious and archaic selves.

After the disaster of the Third Reich Jung was suspicious against any spiritual approach that sought to exclude the shadow side of human being. The image world of Christianity knows many examples for how the darkness of the unconscious rather is feared and projected outwardly. The Knights and Christian Archangels hold away from themselves the dragon with long spears, instead of seeking him in her souls and transforming it. Madonnas and angels embody only the pure part of the feminine, from which everything that is sensual and animalistic has been removed. This dualism of good and evil, of pure and impure for Jung signifies a dubious ideology that has little to do with real people.

In searching for a way of thinking that can overcome the dualism of light and darkness, good and evil, Jung came across the medieval alchemy. In his opinion alchemical laboratories were not essentially about producing gold but were engaged in experiments to bring the contrary soul qualities into harmony. The domed shape of the oven and retorts embodied the mystical idea of wholeness that the alchemists sought through the passage through their experiments. They also embarked on a Night Sea Journey.

Instead of being released from all the darkness by Jesus Christ, they wanted to step down into the disturbance of the unconscious in order to lose their fear of it. In constant boiling and distilling of the elements the alchemists, according to Jung, experienced that even in chaos and impurity hidden forces of transformation are at work. In their experiments the dragon was no demonic opponent, but an inner force out of which, with careful handling a greening tree of life could sprout. For Jung this was a symbol of the path of becoming a whole human being, that only can be reached through the passage of our own dark zone's.

Sonu Shamdasani

It is his view from the historical angle, the imagery of alchemy is not purely personal, but represents a counter world, a contrast with Christianity, concerned with matter, with fantasy, with evil. Everything what Christianity left out continued as a subconscious undercurrent in alchemy. So what Jung saw was his historical significance.

Film text

In searching for forms of Western spirituality, Jung took up once more, the study of Asian religion. He admired the Indian and Tibetan Mandalas as focus for meditation to experience the wholeness of the cosmos. Nevertheless he encouraged his patients to experience their darkness and contradictory experiences in their own mandala work. He knew that Western people cannot loosen themselves from the tangles of their feeling lives through meditation alone but rather have to work through this with consciousness.

to/ 21.08.2011