

PHILOSOPHIC INQUIRY

RUNNING HEAD: Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

In this brief philosophic inquiry I begin with defining philosophy as the love of wisdom. I argue that the purpose of philosophic enquiry is to study archetypal ideas which define life and culture today along with its evolutionary impetus. Both Logos, or discernment and understanding and Eros and phenomenological relatedness, are equally important in the study of ideas. I indicate that love of ideas means love of the spiritual pole of the archetype. Since archetypes have an instinctual base, they have a dynamic component. To live the dynamic component means to incarnate the archetypal idea in life. To live it consciously brings wisdom and existential harmony between ideas per se and their dynamic expression in life.

PHILOSOPHIC INQUIRY

To be a philosopher means to be a lover of wisdom and that only comes through a long and arduous pursuit of self-knowledge. Etymologically the word philosophy is rooted in the Greek words philo, meaning “to love,” and Sophia, which means “wisdom.” Philosophy, in its deepest meaning, involves an erotic enquiry into the nature of wisdom. The goal of the ancient alchemist was to find the philosopher’s stone, where the stone refers to the most indestructible part of one’s being, the Self, and wholeness. To study philosophy is to study the path to the Self, our life’s goal.

In early Christian theological speculation, Sophia was considered to be the mind of God, wherein are contained all the archetypes. Archetypes can be defined as blueprints for action and the way we apprehend the word or an instinct’s self-perception, along with the instincts themselves. As such they are ideas with a dynamic component. To love ideas means to love the “spiritual” pole of the archetype. The archetype’s dynamic aspect is usually referred to as the instinct, which is to say that each archetype comes with an instinctual base. The instinctual component of the archetype can also be experienced directly inasmuch as ideas effectively mobilize individuals and groups into action, whether constructively or destructively. To live the dynamic pole of the archetype means to incarnate the idea in one’s life, whether consciously or unconsciously. To consciously incarnate the archetype in one’s life is a particularly difficult task, given the general hubris of the ego today and severance of consciousness from archetypal and instinctual sources. Wisdom is the result of finding harmony between ideas per se and their dynamic expression in life.

There are times where culture undergoes a transformation, when some archetypal ideas recede and others become dominant. Today, there is a major transformation taking place, a “metamorphosis of the Gods,” seemingly to an unparalleled extent. To become aware of the ideas that are propelling this transformation and fostering their realization would be the ultimate concern for a contemporary philosopher. This includes understanding the nature and role of the destructive aspect of the archetype as well as its constructive aspect.

The purpose of philosophic enquiry is to study archetypal ideas which define life and culture today along with its evolutionary impetus. Ideally, a phenomenological approach is taken which involves personal fascination with the idea in question while relating it back to one’s personal life and the life of society today. The archetypal idea can be related to and experienced in either an introverted or extroverted mode, as well as through each of the functions of consciousness (thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition, through the image). Both Logos, which brings discernment and understanding and Eros, which brings phenomenological relatedness, are equally important in the presentation of ideas. All of these subjective dimensions of the psyche can be brought to bear on the subject matter. Thus, in addition to philosophic thinking itself, poetry, music, painting, sculpting, dance, movies and the crafts can each be important ways of relating to archetypal ideas.

The purpose of philosophic enquiry is to encourage the search for wisdom which comes by way of experiencing relatedness and meaning through ideas. In essence

every world view and archetypal idea can be traced back to one of the following four primordial realities: pure existence [and non-existence], consciousness-force, bliss and truth. Ancient knowledge attests to the fact that wisdom is ultimately based on unity and diversity, wholeness and process. It includes not only a vertical dimension and a timeless-spaceless transcendent spirit, but depth and the horizontal dimension of life itself. Although the purpose of philosophic enquiry is to explore ideas untrammelled by any dogma, relating ideas to their archetypal essence would be illuminating.

The search for knowledge involves determining the place of “ancestral wisdom” in contemporary society and its evolution, both actual and potential. Spokespeople for ancestral wisdom would be not only philosophers and thinkers, but musicians, poets, artists, dancers and so on, along with past and contemporary culture heroes of various types. Their contributions to civilization are especially pertinent to the study of philosophy and the love of wisdom. It is not a question of sentimental attachment to the past, nor the maintenance of the destructive ways of the present, but of paving golden paths towards the future.