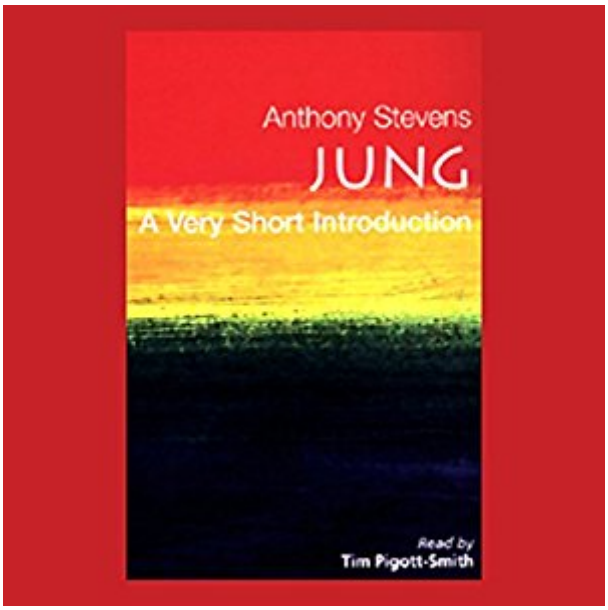
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Jung: A Very Short Introduction



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Synopsis

Anthony Stevens argues that Jung’s visionary powers and profound spirituality have helped many to find an alternative set of values to the arid materialism prevailing Western society.This concise introduction explains clearly the basic concepts of Jungian psychology: The collective unconscious, complex, archetype, shadow, persona, anima, animus, and the individuation of the Self. Anthony Stevens examines Jung’s views on such disparate subjects as myth, religion, alchemy, "synchronicity", and the psychology of gender differences. He devotes separate chapters to the stages of life, Jung’s theory of psychological types, the interpretation of dreams, the practice of Jungian analysis, and to the unjust allegation that Jung was a Nazi sympathiser.

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Customer Reviews

I have enjoyed a dozen books in the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœVery Short IntroductionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ series but I must say this one on Jung is the best IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve come across. You will not find a clearer presentation of the life and psychology of Carl Jung. Quite an accomplishment since JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s approach to the psyche and therapy is revolutionary and multifaceted. Since the subjects covered in this short introduction are so rich in content, for the purposes of this review here are a few quotes along with my comments, starting with JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s break with his teacher and mentor in the world of psychoanalysis ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ Sigmund Freud.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“As time passed, JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s differences with Freud became harder to conceal. Two of FreudÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s basic assumptions were unacceptable to him: (1) that human motivation is exclusively sexual and (2) that the unconscious mind is entirely

personal and peculiar to the individual.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• ---------- Turns out, this is the difference for Jung that made all the difference. In JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s view, we humans have many reasons for doing what we do well beyond the boundaries of sexuality. And also, the human unconscious taps into the entire range of experiences we have developed as a species over millions of yearsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Moreover, beneath the personal unconscious of repressed wishes and traumatic memories, posited by Freud, Jung believed there lay a deeper and more important layer that he was to call the collective unconscious, which contained in potenitia the entire psychic heritage of mankind. . . . The existence of this ancient basis of the mind had first been hinted to him as a child when he realized that there were things in his dreams that came from somewhere beyond himself. Its existence was confirmed when he studied the delusions and hallucinations of schizophrenic patients and found them to contain symbols and images which also occurred in myths and fairy-tales all over the world. --------- Again, Jung acknowledged there is a personal component to the unconscious realm we encounter in our dreams, but this is only the start: there is an ocean of unconscious energy deeper and wider than the personal ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ the collective unconscious. Thus, JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s lifelong fascination with symbols, such as mandalas, numbers, mythic animals, light-infused and shadowy superhuman presences.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“What distinguishes the Jungian approach to developmental psychology from virtually all others is the idea that even in old age we are growing toward realization of or full potential. . . . aging was not a process of inexorable decline but a time for the progressive refinement of what is essential. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœThe decisive question for a man is: is he related to something infinite or not?ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ ---------- A critical difference from Freud: what happens in our psyche isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t always about working out our relationship with our mother and father buried in our personal past; rather, every stage in the human cycle, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, old age, has its own powerful psychic energies and challenges. It is our task to accept the challenges at each stage of our life to reach the full flowering of our humanity. Thus, for Jung, psychotherapy isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t so much about curing illness as it is about personal growth.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Jung held it to be the business of the psychologist to investigate the collective unconscious and the functional units of which it is composed ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ the archetypes, as he eventually called them. Archetypes are ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœidentical psychic structures common to allÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢, which together constitute ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœthe archaic heritage of humanityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢. ---------- The author devotes two entire chapters to JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s archetypes: the Self, the ego, the shadow, the persona, the anima/amimus. And, what is an archetype? By way of example, we read: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“One example which Jung

frequently quoted was that of a schizophrenic patient who told him that if he stared at the sun with half-closed eyes he would see that the sun had a phallus and that this organ was the origin of the wind. Years later Jung came across a Greek text describing an almost identical vision.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ In other words, the archetype images we encounter in dreams belong to a common dream language we share will all humans, including our prehistoric ancestors and peoples of all world cultures and societies. And, according to Jung, these archetypical images can be understood as promptings to encourage our growth.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In working on a dream the starting-point for Jung was not interpretation but ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœamplification ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ that is, to enter into the atmosphere of the dream to establish its mood as well as the detail of its images and symbols, in such a way as to amplify the experience of the dream itself. Then its impact on consciousness is enhanced. ---------- Dreams are central to Jungian analysis. And if you are interested in pursuing JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s vision of what it means to live a full human life, reading this small book would be a great place to start.

Stevens fails to present JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s notoriously disorganized work in a coherent fashion. Instead, this VSI is content with being a maximally shortened summary of JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s clinical autobiography ("Memories, Dreams, Reflections"). Quite frankly, the later chapters dedicated to the character types are cursory and so lacking in detail that they could be Wikipedia entries. ReadÃ Â Jung's Map of the Soul: An IntroductionÃ Â by Murray Stein instead for a better concise introduction.

Anyone not familiar with Jungian psychology should read this very short introduction. Not only are JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ideas interesting in themselves, but are crucial to a modern understanding of the complexities of the human psyche (the mind/soul). Religious apologists should take particular note.JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ideas are very well presented. It is as if the author (Anthony Stevens) has immersed himself in JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s writings to such a degree that he is able to present the key ideas better than Jung was able to do himself.The book starts with biographical notes that are crucial to understanding the development of JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ideas throughout his lifetime. Not only are the early years described, especially JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s relationship with his parents, but due weight is given to the importance of the interactions that occurred between Jung and his contemporary colleagues most notably Sigmund Freud.This short introduction is not only a delight to read, it makes JungÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ideas particularly accessible. I strongly recommend it.John AthertonSamoa.

Having become suddenly intrigued in the relationship between Freud and Jung, but having been more interested in Freud's work, I went with Stevens' "A Very Short Introduction" to Jung in order to cover that side of the relationship. This book ended up illuminating much more of the relationship than Freud's own papers, and it even contextualized Freud's work to a degree that would be impossible if one read only Freud. Alas, that statement alone highlights the effect that this book is having on me...I'm impressed that such a short book can capture so much of this man. Scholars of the subject might criticize short works for their cursory analysis of important topics, but reviews of this book that I have seen indicate otherwise. I will be reading more Jung now, as I have realized Freud was rather dull compared to him.

It is a joy to understand the complexities of Jung's thoughts and theories. Receiving the information in a concise and well organized expression has enabled me to begin the exploration of the relationships of Quantum Physics, Jungian psychology and, yes, astrology. I have moved on to Neil DeGrasse Tyson's Astrophysics for people in a hurry. Great reads although getting 50% of the meaning I treat as a win!

It is a VERY SMALL book, which I am finding hard to get interested in! There is a lot of time spent on Jung's background, and getting the reader involved in details. Perhaps the details and background serve to make Jung's works more understandable....but, if so, I haven't gotten that far! I haven't read a book quite like this one before, and I've read others along this line. But, it was inexpensive, and again, as I read further - someday - I may find it to be a good book. I sure hope so! Others enjoyed it.

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