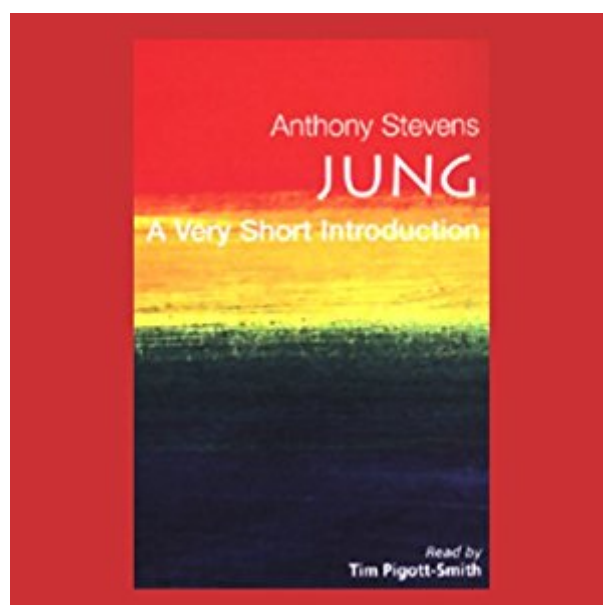


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Jung: A Very Short Introduction



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.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 3 hours and 52 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Abridged

Publisher: Naxos AudioBooks

Audible.com Release Date: February 10, 2005

Language: English

ASIN: B0007RWWYI

Best Sellers Rank: #20 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Movements > Jungian #24 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Social Scientists & Psychologists #38 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Law

Customer Reviews

The original works of Jung are vast, magmatic, extremely creative, and rather confusing. A lot of the confusion comes from Jung's poor choice of terminology and definitions. This introduction, on the other hand, is simple, decently precise and sufficiently complete. While the number of pages is less than 200, the reader should be cautioned that they are quite densely typed. Therefore the book is only short if compared with the enormity of the Jungian corpus. The author does a good job in depicting the complex, omnivorous personality of Jung, as well as the richness of his thought. Some quite interesting parts, like the metaphysical implications of his theories are only treated en passant. There is then a certain effort in putting down somehow precisely and schematically the most technical parts, as the archetypes, the shadow, the personae and so on. In popular culture the departure of Jung from Freud is generally viewed as a (quite reasonable) rejection of the

overwhelming importance Freud attributes to sexuality. I think Dr. Stevens makes a good job in showing that Jungian thought is not just an evolution of the Freudian one, or a sort of reasonable correction of Freud's extreme positions: it documents well the complete difference in approach of the two. To Freud man is deeply negative at his core, being driven by unmentionable pulsions, incompatible with religion, morals, society; its psychology depicts man as the result of a strain between a horrific unconscious and the persona needed in everyday life. Jung's approach is much more positive, and proposes the human being as driven toward happiness as the full realization of the Self, of which he is just a particular manifestation.

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