

# Of texts and contexts: reflections upon the publication of *The Jung-White Letters*

Murray Stein, Goldiwil, Thun, Switzerland

*Abstract:* In addition to his many other personae, Jung was a writer and an author, which means a creator, whose written works underlie and authorize a field of thought and clinical work, i.e., analytical psychology. Not widely recognized is that many of his authored texts were stimulated by important and intense personal relationships. Freud and Victor White loom large, the first standing behind major early analytical texts like *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* and *Psychological Types*, the second behind later texts on culture, religion, and Christian theology. The publication of *The Jung-White Letters* reveals the significance of his relationship with Victor White for the authoring of *Answer to Job*.

*Key words:* Christianity, evil, Freud, *privatio boni*, theology, transference, Victor White

---

## C. G. Jung, writer and author

In November, 1932, the City of Zurich surprisingly awarded Jung its Literature<sup>1</sup> Prize. About this he joked in a letter to a friend: ‘There are great news [sic] happening here. Last week I got the “Literaturepreis der Stadt Zurich”, which means that I’m no longer a prophet in my own country. A sad end to a hopeful young prophet’s career. It is always sad when one loses a perfectly good reason for grumbling’.<sup>2</sup> The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, the city’s leading newspaper, reported on the award, commenting that it was unprecedented to give this Literary Prize to someone who was not identified as primarily Belletristik, but also defending the award on the grounds that Jung’s writings had had great influence on important literary figures like Hermann Hesse. The *NZZ* article went on to mention Jung’s recent review of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* in its own pages, saying:

---

<sup>1</sup> For the occasion, he produced a talk titled ‘Ueber Psychologie’, which was published in May 1933 in *Neue Schweizer Rundschau*. Later expanded and revised, it got the title ‘Die Bedeutung der Psychologie für die Gegenwart’ and is translated as ‘The meaning of psychology for modern man’ in *CW* 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, I, p. 109.

The uninhibited way with which he imbues a work like *Ulysses* by Joyce with importance and value is so stimulating and fresh that we are forced to admire such critical prowess and fructifying energy even if its judgment misses the mark.<sup>3</sup>

Although Jung did receive this Literary Prize from the city of Zurich, he did not get it for his literary accomplishments *per se*. Jung has not been widely regarded as an accomplished stylist in the German language. His books tend to be heavy. Quotations are too many and too long, frequently in antique languages. For Jung, content was paramount and counted for more than showing a nice literary style. He was not a fussy writer; if anything, rather a bit rough and ready. This preference for sheer content partly explains the remarkable ease with which he wrote in foreign languages, like English and French. Subtle nuances and niceties of expression—the music of language—did not preoccupy him a great deal. From his letters, it is evident that he wrote mostly in a hurry and under severe time pressure, with many other professional duties clamouring for attention (this is especially vivid in his correspondence with Freud). He intended his writing primarily to communicate ideas, many of them fresh and audacious, and there was a sense of urgency to get them out to the public in a timely fashion. Often he wrote against deadlines. While his writing is not generally deemed elegant, it is almost invariably interesting. And rhetoric occupies a place there too. He could be eloquent. There are many moving passages in his work. Often his writing seems inspired, as an idea takes hold and words flow forth that can impregnate readers with new insights. As the *NZZ* writer said, he has prowess.

Some said he was charismatic as a lecturer. In an earlier age or a different cultural context, he could have been a brilliant preacher, like his grandfather Preiswerk who held forth notably from the big Cathedral pulpit in Basel. And he produced many memorable and pithy one-liners: ‘We must recognize that nothing is more difficult to bear than oneself’;<sup>4</sup> ‘Concepts are coined and negotiable values; images are life’;<sup>5</sup> ‘God can be loved but must be feared’.<sup>6</sup> In reading and rereading his work for nearly forty years, I have underlined countless sentences and passages and have often stopped in my tracks to marvel at the profundity of a phrase, or to feel the spiritual lift in a line of his prose. His writing can induce tedium for a time, but it is rarely boring for long. Typically, a tangled mass of amplifications and convoluted thoughts will resolve into a brilliant passage that stimulates dazzling ideas and perspectives.

Writing was an essential creative activity in Jung’s life, and through it he established himself as an author and an authority. The English word ‘author’ derives from the Latin *auctor*, meaning ‘enlarger, founder’ and ‘one who causes to grow’. An author is a writer who founds something, enlarges a field, and

---

<sup>3</sup> *NZZ*, 27 Nov. 1932, my translation

<sup>4</sup> *CW* 7, para. 373

<sup>5</sup> *CW* 14, para. 226

<sup>6</sup> *CW* 11, para. 732

causes it to grow. I contend that Jung belongs to a very small company of modern thinkers who have created a body of published texts that founded a field that consistently caused modern consciousness to grow. Authors in this sense of the word are usually figures whose writings include much more than technical matters pertaining to an academic speciality (in Jung's case, this would be psychiatry); they cover as well social and cultural criticism, and even, as in Jung's case, religious criticism and reflection. Freud, too, was such a figure. Authors get and hold on to authority. Their ideas and perspectives have force. Their writings inspire confidence and induce personal commitment. They change people. This is what makes authors, as distinct from ordinary writers, outstanding. For them, moreover, creating written work is non-negotiable. Jung spoke of the force that compelled him to author his works as his *daimon*.

This, then, is what makes Jung an author. Through the medium of writing, he authored. His writing can be expository, entertaining, or academic. Whether one likes it or not, agrees or not, practically everything Jung published bears the force of his personality stamped into it. It may be that he identified a little with his putative ancestor, Goethe, the archetypal author of German literature. Like Goethe's, Jung works continue to be read and used long after his death. Their generative effects do not diminish with time. They do not become outdated. Today the field of analytical psychology is authorized by his published work, and these texts provide the authoritative charter for its enterprises. This is not said out of idealization. It is simply factual.

It should not be misconstrued that writing was primarily a creative outlet for Jung, a kind of hobby carried on beside his other more urgent professional occupations. The publication of his work was critically important to him because in it he was creating something for the world. As an author, his work was not conceived primarily as a monument to himself. Nor did he write only to please himself (except perhaps in his journals and in the now famous Red Book where he took pains to script the texts and paint beautiful pictures). He wrote for an audience. At a rather early age, Jung already had a public in Europe and internationally. By his mid-thirties, he was writing for more than the small circle of medical specialists and psychological researchers who used his ideas in their practices and academic studies. Many people outside the fields of medicine and psychology read his books and articles. When he published in popular journals, magazines, and newspapers—which he did quite frequently—he was addressing a very broad range of readers indeed. Writing gave him a position in culture, a platform, a resounding voice that he could use to author further. It also induced in him a sense of social responsibility and obligation. If he had wanted this primarily for himself, it would have been rank narcissism and not genuine authorship. In the final analysis, his authoring, in all the variety of forms it took, stood in the service of a single overarching and impersonal cause: the growth of human consciousness. Authoring through writing was his way of paying back to society and humanity for what he had received and taken

for his own individuation,<sup>7</sup> and his work was meant to benefit and to help others on their own individual paths. Jung's close friend, Fowler McCormick, told the following story at the Memorial Service held for Jung in New York on December 1, 1961:

Two or three years ago, when Jung was attending an art exhibit in Zurich, a woman introduced herself to him and expressed her gratitude for what he had done for her. Dr. Jung asked her if this had come about through reading his books. Her reply was: 'Those are not books. That is bread'.<sup>8</sup>

She had grasped the point of Jung's authorship as a writer.

While Jung would not have placed himself in a literary Guild among professional writers like Thomas Mann, for instance, his neighbour in Küsnacht for a time and then across Lake Zurich in Kilchberg, he was nevertheless busy with producing written texts for most of his adult life. Most of these were not about medical subjects *per se*, although he would always identify himself as a medical man. Medicine was his official Guild. He did bother, however, with publishers and contracts from early on in his career and took pains to make sure his rights and royalties were up to par. In this sense, he was also a professional writer. His work sold well, and publishers were eager to have more of it.

Until recently, students of Jung surprisingly did not pay much attention to this feature of his life, even though he himself devotes a whole chapter of his autobiography to giving an account of his written work and to how it came into being.<sup>9</sup> Susan Rowland (2005) has now largely remedied this deficit with her excellent book, *Jung as a Writer*. There she carefully analyses the ingenious strategies in his arguments, deftly using the techniques of modern literary criticism to elucidate several of his most important texts and to discuss a range of meanings for contemporary students. She has produced a fascinating postmodern reading of some of Jung's writings. What I am speaking of here, however, is more about the psychological issue of identity, the high value and purpose that writing and publishing held for Jung's conscious sense of himself. In his career, these were anything but marginal activities. This should be obvious given the sheer volume of his production. He published enough work in various forms—books, articles, lectures, forewords, prefaces—to amount to eighteen large volumes in the assembled *Collected Works (CW)*, and this does not include his autobiography (written with Aniela Jaffé), *Memories, Dreams, Reflections (MDR)*, or the five big volumes of now published letters

<sup>7</sup> In a lecture from 1916 given to the Psychological Club and entitled 'Adaptation, Individuation, Collectivity', Jung reveals this burden of responsibility. The individuating person, he says, 'must bring forth values which are an equivalent substitute for his absence in the collective personal sphere. Without this production of values, final individuation is immoral'(CW 18, para. 1095). This sense of obligation was deeply woven into Jung's many public activities.

<sup>8</sup> 'A Memorial Meeting', p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Chapter 7: 'The Work'.

(not to mention the many still unpublished letters). The Philemon Foundation estimates that there remain thirty volumes worth of still unpublished writings in the Jung archives. One can only conclude that Jung spent a good deal of his waking life engaged in writing. This activity doubtless held great meaning for him.

There have been many attempts by now to paint Jung's portrait and to capture the essential features of the man's life and work. Each one ends up highlighting specific attributes while discounting or ignoring others. This has been inevitable. As a personality and a looming cultural figure,<sup>10</sup> Jung presents a daunting kaleidoscope of complexity. He is not easy to capture in a single portrait. Some of the personae put forward to date have been Jung as scientist (Bennet 2006), as theoretical psychologist (Shamdasani 2003), as psychotherapist to individuals and to Christianity (Stein 1985), as artist (Gaillard 1998), as visionary mystic (Schlamm 2006), as haunted and misguided prophet (Stern 1976; Noll 1994), as creative personality (Jaffé 1989, von Franz 1975), as avatar (Edinger 1984), and as religious thinker (Dourley 1992). Phases of his life have been put on stage and film as well, mostly featuring him as a painfully conflicted lover of his former patient and student Sabina Spielrein. Novelists too have used him for their own ends. None of these depictions is definitive on the one hand or totally devoid of value on the other. Some of them are extremely one-sided and polemical (positively and negatively), while others are more balanced and objective. Each of the numerous images cast off by Jung in his lifetime, it seems, has persuaded somebody to use it to bring him into focus, whether in a glowing or harshly critical light. But none of them turns out to be totally convincing or exhaustive of his reality. The whole man has so far proven to be too complex, more even than the sum of his many parts, and so he continues to baffle and defeat his biographers<sup>11</sup> and likewise the novelists and playwrights who try to conjure him. While each of his personae adds something to the dramatization of a potentially full and rounded Jung the man, it seems there are always more characters in the wings clamouring for attention than can be put on a single stage. Until now, no one has, in my opinion, captured Jung in his full complexity on paper, stage, or film. Perhaps it is not possible to do so at this point in history. It seems wellnigh impossible to get the proportions and the spaces right in this complex personality.

---

<sup>10</sup> The Swiss reviewer of the recent German translation of D. Bair's (2003) biography of Jung claimed that he was the most famous Swiss physician since Paracelsus. See *NZZ*, 5 February 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Deirdre Bair's recent attempt is a case in point. While the work is filled with an incredible amount of detail about Jung's life, especially about his relationships and various comings-and-goings, it is remarkably thin on his ideas and on the significance of his thought. One wonders, at the conclusion of some thousand pages, why Jung would be worth such an effort if this be all there is to him. Somehow the beef is strangely missing from the sandwich she piles so high with incidentals. In my opinion, Barbara Hannah's memoir (1977), *Jung: His Life and Work*, is still the best over-all portrait we have of Jung to date.

Putting the image of Jung as author to the fore, I see him sitting at his desk in the study of his house in Küssnacht busily and intently putting his ideas down on paper, looking up passages in books from his library in the next room, checking details among the papers scattered across his desk, and pondering psychic life with his intellect and imagination. He mumbles under his breath, arguing with somebody not in the room but in the centre of his mind. His writing carries him forward and takes his thought beyond where it had gone before. He becomes gripped by the images and ideas that flow from his hand, and he follows his flight of intuition as his pen scrapes across the pages. He ends up writing things he did not know he was thinking, and he says them in a clearer or a more forceful way than he has spoken or thought them before. Authors surprise themselves as they push on. They discover what they are thinking by writing.<sup>12</sup> Writing is a means to thinking and to becoming conscious, as well as a creative act and a recognized cultural mode to express and to share one's thoughts with others. An author's writings are a link to the world and to some particular people in that world.

Assessing Jung's audience, though, is complicated. Who was he writing to? Often there was a concealed and more specific target for his writing than the general reading public or the professional world at large would have recognized or known about. In many works, he was arguing with someone in particular or answering a specific person's challenge. Reading him, it is always instructive to know the immediate context in which a text appeared and specifically to whom it was addressed. The critical fact of personal relationships is often not obvious in his written oeuvre. He does not often tell the reader outright that in a particular essay or passage he is speaking, for example, to Eugen Bleuler, to Freud, to Martin Buber, to Hans Trueb, to Esther Harding, to Victor White, to Erich Neumann, or to another of his conversation partners. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, where he provides detailed information about how his writings came into being, he mentions almost no names. One gets the impression from *MDR* that his authoring was almost hermitlike, profoundly introverted. In fact, this is not the complete picture. It leaves out his interlocutors. Jung needed and enjoyed specific audiences, such as the scholars who gathered annually at

---

<sup>12</sup> To Victor White, Jung writes: 'Not very long after I have written to you, I simply had to write a new essay I did not know about what. It occurred to me I could discuss some of the inferred points about Anima, Animus, Shadow and last not least the Self. I was against it, because I wanted to rest my head. Lately I had suffered from severe sleeplessness and I wanted to keep away from all mental exertions. In spite of all I felt forced to write on blindly, not seeing at all, what I was driving at. Only after I had written about 25 pages in folio, it began to dawn on me, that Christ – not the man but the divine being – was my secret goal. It came to me as a shock, as I felt utterly unequal to such a task' (*The Jung-White Letters*, eds. Lammers & Cunningham, 2007, p. 103).

the Eranos Tagungen in Ascona, for instance.<sup>13</sup> He was greatly stimulated by certain individuals, and his relationships with them engendered some of his most exciting and far-reaching reflections. The result is that his writings are, in addition to being publications of scientific or general cultural interest, also a continuation of private conversations, dialogues, arguments, or disputes. They are not abstract argumentation delivered into a void. Jung had someone in mind as he authored them. His texts have contexts.

### Two relationships as context: Freud and Victor White

As prime examples of this point, I want to consider two instances where authoring and publishing grew out of the context of important relationships, affected them, and then contributed importantly to ending them. The first is the famous early one with Freud; the second is the less well-known and later one with Victor White, the Dominican priest and theologian.

The parallels in how these relationships unfolded and ran their course are striking. Both relationships stimulated a large correspondence, enough to fill a heavy volume with often long and thoughtful letters. In both instances, Jung formed a close and complex relationship with the other man after the other had read one or more of his published works.<sup>14</sup> Finally, and most importantly, both relationships and the respective correspondences culminated in the publication of a critical book by Jung that sparked a strong negative response from the other that proved to be a breaking point.

With Freud, the break came almost immediately after the founder of psychoanalysis read the second part of Jung's *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* in the *Jahrbuch*, of which Jung was editor, in 1912.<sup>15</sup> This book proved decisive in what had already become, for many reasons, a shaky relationship. In *Wandlungen*, Jung challenged several major tenets in standard psychoanalytic theory of the time, among them Freud's interpretation of the incest wish and his sexual theory of psychic energy. In this publication, Jung was showing his

<sup>13</sup> The 'Eranos Tagung' was a meeting of international scholars founded in the early 1930s by Olga Froebe-Kaptyń and held every August in Ascona, Switzerland, from 1933 into the 1990s. The original thematic focus of the Tagungen was the relation between East and West with respect to philosophy, religion, and psychology. Jung attended the conferences regularly from 1933 into the 1950s when his health no longer permitted. There he met and discoursed with such notable figures as Mircea Eliade, Paul Tillich, Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem, Karl Kerényi, and Giles Quispel, among many others. Many of these became his hidden interlocutors as he authored his late texts. I refer the reader to Hakl's excellent study for details about the history of Eranos.

<sup>14</sup> In the case of Freud, the book was *Über die Psychologie der Dementia praecox: Ein Versuch* – in English, *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox*. Jung sent Freud a complimentary copy. White had on his own read quite a number of Jung's writings that were available in German and English before the early 1940s when the outbreak of World War II isolated Switzerland from the Allied countries.

<sup>15</sup> Jung was the founding editor of this first psychoanalytic journal. In it he published *Wandlungen* in two parts, the first in 1911, the second and critical part in 1912. The complete work was first translated by Beatrice Hinkle, a student of his, as *Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1916 and later extensively revised and published in the *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, as *Symbols of Transformation*.

authorial flag and openly stating his differences with Freud in public. He had kept some of these disagreements to himself until then, but many of his points of difference had been made earlier and repeatedly in the letters he had written to Freud. Freud reacted dismissively to Jung's new contribution and made some disparaging comments about its meagre importance for psychoanalysis. Jung responded with a series of angry letters, provoking the actual break. He was wounded and deeply insulted by Freud's remarks and in a letter accused him of letting his 'neurosis' get the better of him and causing him to fail to recognize the value of Jung's new ideas.<sup>16</sup> Freud replied a short while later by pointing out a slip of the pen that Jung had committed, to which Jung retorted with fury.<sup>17</sup> After that, the curtain fell on their relationship quickly and decisively.

With Victor White, it was Jung's publication of *Answer to Job* that proved highly disruptive and finally terminal. White read this work originally in draft form and later in the German edition, and at first it seemed to create no friction at all. In fact, White seemed quite enthusiastic about it. The topic of 'evil' and the Catholic doctrine of '*privatio boni*' had been, and continued for some years longer to be, at the centre of their conversations. When the work was later translated and published in English and then read by White's fellow Roman Catholics in England and the United States, however, the negative effect of Jung's writing surged and overwhelmed White.<sup>18</sup> Still an active Dominican priest, White found himself in the awkward position of having to answer agitated questions from fellow Roman Catholics about Jung's position vis-à-vis Christian doctrine and faith, which appeared highly unorthodox (to say the least!) in this work. Finally, White reacted aggressively by writing a scathing review of *Job* in the Dominican publication, *Blackfriars*.<sup>19</sup> There he vigorously upheld the conventional Catholic position regarding Scripture and distanced himself decisively (and, one must say, defensively) from his mentor, whom he depicted

---

<sup>16</sup> The letter is dated 3 December 1912: 'My very best thanks for one passage in your letter, where you speak of a "bit of neurosis" you haven't got rid of. This "bit" should, in my opinion, be taken very seriously indeed because... I have suffered from this bit in my dealings with you, though you haven't seen it and didn't understand me properly when I tried to make my position clear. If these blinkers were removed you would, I am sure, see my work in a very different light. As evidence that you... *underestimate* my work by a very wide margin, I would cite your remark that "without intending it, I have solved the riddle of all mysticism, showing it to be based on the symbolic utilization of complexes that have outlived their function". My dear Professor, forgive me again, but this sentence shows me that you deprive yourself of the possibility of understanding my work by your underestimation of it... This insight has been self-evident to us for years... It is only occasionally that I am afflicted with the purely human desire to be understood *intellectually* and not be measured by the yardstick of neurosis' (*The Freud/Jung Letters*, pp. 525-6).

<sup>17</sup> Freud's short letter is dated 16 December 1912, and Jung's angry reply is dated 18 December 1912.

<sup>18</sup> For a full and detailed account of White's various reactions to *Answer to Job*, see Lammers 1994, pp. 89-113.

<sup>19</sup> *Blackfriars*, 36, 420 (March 1955).



as making a pitiable fool of himself in his dotage.<sup>20</sup> Although he offered a gesture of apology to Jung for his outburst,<sup>21</sup> severe damage was done to the relationship, and it ended not much later in painful silence.

In both of these cases, Jung's published work expressed out loud and in public what had mostly been discussed previously in private, either in the letters that passed between the men or in long conversations. In both cases, too, it was the other man's reaction to Jung's writing that paved the way for damaging the relationship beyond repair. Jung's publishing was the precipitating factor. Why did he do it?

For Jung, these writings would have represented a climax of the dialogue that had been generated within the respective personal relationships. The differences that had arisen in these private exchanges and conversations had come to a head and now became openly and decisively stated in a published work. Writing was for Jung a way of conducting an *Auseinandersetzung* (an essentially untranslatable word he favoured, meaning roughly, 'a differentiating or clarifying encounter' with an idea or a person). Publishing a book had the additional effect, however, of throwing down a gauntlet. This put the issues on the table in public view and constituted a challenge. In setting up this problematic, Jung's writings proved to be divisive. Differences that could perhaps have been managed in private became intolerable when ventilated in public. The relationships with Freud and White, which had stimulated Jung's thinking and brought his authorial creativity to a feverish pitch of intensity, fed directly into his writing. But then, the published works severely damaged relations with the very men who helped to instigate them, although this result was in no way Jung's conscious intention in writing these works.

The two relationships were different in many respects, but structurally they have notable parallels. With Freud, Jung was from the outset in the position of the younger man, a student and beginner in the art and science of Freud's psychoanalysis. Freud was clearly the author, Jung the apprentice. At first, he enjoyed an intense idealizing transference from Jung.<sup>22</sup> Freud appeared to Jung as a unique genius, an intellectual hero, and a cultural pioneer; his vivid personality made a deep and lasting impression on the young psychiatrist from Zurich. Freud for his part happily stepped into the role of mentor and

<sup>20</sup> He writes: 'It [i.e., *Answer to Job*] has – and this is the most distressing feature – the ingenuity and power, the plausibility and improbability, the clear-sightedness and blindness of the typical paranoid system which rationalizes and conceals an even more unbearable grief and resentment'.

<sup>21</sup> He wrote a letter to Jung from aboard the Queen Mary en route back to Europe and before the review was published: 'there are some passages I would now wish to have kept to myself'. In a later version of this review, he dropped the more offensive passages.

<sup>22</sup> In a letter (dated 28 October 1907), Jung confesses to Freud: 'I have a boundless admiration for you both as a man and a researcher, and I bear you no conscious grudge. So the self-preservation complex does not come from there; it is rather that my veneration for you has something of the character of a "religious" crush. Though it does not really bother me, I still feel it is disgusting and ridiculous because of its undeniable erotic undertone. This abominable feeling comes from the fact that as a boy I was the victim of a sexual assault by a man I once worshipped' (*The Freud/Jung Letters*, p. 95).

father figure to Jung. As the creator of a new movement in the treatment of mental illness, he adopted Jung as a son and quickly came to favour him as his 'crown prince'—to the consternation of his other 'sons' in Vienna who immediately became envious of Jung's exalted position. This quasi-Biblical (think of Joseph and his brothers with father Jacob showing favouritism toward the youngest son) dynamic complicated their relationship beyond their capacities to manage and work through the subsequent emotional entanglements. Jung proved on his side to be a difficult and rebellious son (as he had been also to his biological father, Paul Jung), seeking his own intellectual path and claiming procreative and authorial energies for himself. Freud detected in Jung a death wish toward himself. As the younger man increasingly and somewhat secretively requisitioned space for autonomy and freedom in his thinking, he began also stubbornly to refuse to knuckle under to what he perceived to be Freud's anxious need to stay on top.<sup>23</sup> *Wandlungen* was both a testament to his gifts as a psychoanalytic theorist and a declaration of independence. Authoring and publishing it was an act of individuation, which always proves to be a risky business and often puts important relationships to the test, if not to the knife. Moreover, the field of psychoanalysis was too small at the time to contain two such authors. Perhaps it still is.

In the relationship with Victor White, Jung held the contrary interpersonal position vis-à-vis the younger (b. 1902) man. Shortly after celebrating his seventieth birthday in 1945 Jung received the first item in what would become an extensive correspondence with the then forty-two year old English Dominican priest living in Oxford. At seventy, he was the elder mentor figure. Their contact began just at the conclusion of WW II as Jung was beginning to feel released from the confinement of the war years, like Noah finally free to exit the ark at the end of the Flood. White was busy, if not happy, in his career as theologian and teacher at Blackfriars, the Dominican house in Oxford, when he first contacted Jung with a packet of his writings and a slightly belated birthday greeting. He was familiar with the Jungians in England and had studied and been in analysis with John Layard, Toni Sussman, and Gerhard Adler. It was at Adler's suggestion that he made bold to contact Jung personally. While highly regarded and far advanced in theological and Thomistic studies, White thought of himself as a relative beginner in psychology and readily of course accepted Jung's authority in this area.<sup>24</sup> Though not lacking a critical intellectual attitude,

<sup>23</sup> 'You go around sniffing out all the symptomatic actions in your vicinity, thus reducing everyone to the level of sons and daughters who blushing admit the existence of their faults. Meanwhile you remain on top as the father, sitting pretty', Jung screamed at Freud in one of the last letters (18 December 1912).

<sup>24</sup> See White's letter to Jung on 23 October 1945: 'For some time past I have found myself ploughing a rather lonely furrow, painfully aware of the inadequacy of my experience on the psychological side, and of my need for expert and understanding guidance – at least to the extent of some reassurance that I was not positively on the *wrong* lines from the psychological standpoint' (*The Jung-White Letters*, 2007, p. 15).

a strong emotional transference now ran the other way, with Jung as recipient of White's idealization. Jung responded with a warm reply to White's initiative (similarly to how Freud had responded to Jung's initial contact), embracing him with enthusiasm<sup>25</sup> and commenting positively on his writings and saying he wished White were 'at my elbow'<sup>26</sup> so conversation would be easier. When White indicated an interest in visiting Switzerland, Jung invited him to be his guest at his retreat in Bollingen.<sup>27</sup> In White, Jung hoped he had come into contact with an ideal conversation partner for deepening his longstanding psychological dialogue with Christian theology and tradition.<sup>28</sup> White's keen interest in 'psychology and religion' and his surprisingly extensive knowledge of Jung's theories could facilitate a genuine intellectual encounter, Jung thought. He was eager to try. If Freud had hoped that Jung would help him break out of his restrictive Jewish circle of medical colleagues and students in Vienna into the wider European medical world of psychiatry, Jung now may have thought that White might help him similarly to break out of his sense of alienation and separation from his religious tradition, Christianity.

White's agenda from the outset was stated in his letters and writings. It was to build a bridge between Catholic theology and modern psychology for theological purposes. This project was modelled on the Thomistic idea of theology, a divine science, having a working relationship with human science (human science as a 'handmaiden' to theology). For Aquinas, that working partnership meant the philosophy of Aristotle, while for White it would be analytical psychology. In contemporary times, White foresaw, theology could use the empirical science of depth psychology to make it more relevant and intelligible to people in the modern world. Theology needed some updating to come into the Twentieth Century in a fresh and convincing way, White felt. That theology would retain the senior position in this partnership was an unspoken assumption left in the shadows.

For Jung, the agenda at the outset of this venture in dialogue could have been stated in quite similar seductive terms, up to a point. He also thought that Christian theology was badly in need of revision, particularly in the areas of its teachings on 'evil' and 'the feminine'. Here the similarity ended, however. Jung was quite aware that his worldview was shaped fundamentally by

---

<sup>25</sup> In his letter to White of 5 October 1945, Jung wrote: 'You are to me a white raven inasmuch as you are the only theologian I know of who has really understood something of what the problem of psychology in our present world means' (*The Jung-White Letters*, 2007, p. 6).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> In a letter dated April 13, 1946, Jung writes: 'I should like you to consider yourself as my guest during your stay here. I shall be in the country, on the upper part of the lake of Zurich, where I have a little country place. If you are a friend of the simple life you will have all the comfort you need. If your tastes should be too fastidious you would find it a bit rough' (*The Jung-White Letters*, 2007, p. 32).

<sup>28</sup> I discuss this theme of Jung's lifelong relationship to his Protestant tradition at length in my book, *Jung's Treatment of Christianity* (Stein 1985).

Kantian and post-Kantian philosophy and modern psychology, whereas he saw classical Christian theologians, not without reason, as people who are bound to continue making metaphysical assertions and who typically assume a stance of faith in unproven doctrines based on revelation. Jung therefore regarded theologians as belonging to another historical era, the Middle Ages. Theologians are essentially pre-modern. They continue to live in a world controlled spiritually and intellectually by myth, not by science or reason. As Jung would have known at the outset, the dialogue between himself as a psychologist and White as a theologian was bound, at least to a degree, to be an exchange between a contemporary person and an historical anachronism. But in White's case, because this unusual theologian had taken psychology seriously, Jung foresaw a possible chance to reform the other and to connect, through him, to many more people who needed to enter the modern world without completely losing contact with the tradition of soul and spirituality that Christianity has represented. If White could make this transition, then his theology would change significantly, and this was a risk well worth taking. Jung was excited by the challenge. In this perspective, Jung might have intuitively anticipated the kind of theology created later by figures like the Protestant Paul Tillich (whom he met and heard in 1936 at the Eranos Tagung) and by Roman Catholic theologians like Bernard Lonergan, David Tracy, and John Dourley. This is a very different kind of theology from that commonly known and practised in the Catholic Church in the middle of the Twentieth Century. It is open, questioning, psychologically astute, and fully cognizant of the implications of modernity for the contemporary person.

Some of Jung's most thoughtful and passionate letters on record were written to Victor White.<sup>29</sup> In them, he continued and sharpened the discussions that took place during the weeks spent together in Bollingen and at the Eranos Tagungen. Many of the letters addressed theological topics, especially the reality of 'evil' and what Jung found to be the most irritating Roman Catholic doctrine of '*privatio boni*' (evil defined as 'the absence of good'). Try as they might, the two men could never get past their contrary views on this teaching of the church. For Jung, a religious notion or image did not make sense psychologically unless it was backed by empirical evidence showing that it was archetypal. The metaphysical was for him an unavailable domain; it looked arbitrary to him, controlled by institutional authority and not by reason. If a doctrine were based on archetypal psychological foundations, however, he could assess and consider its merits. This was a limiting condition to the dialogue between psychology and theology laid down by psychology. If a doctrine met this criterion, he would consider its psychological merits on the same level as other archetypal images.

---

<sup>29</sup> While the complete correspondence (Lammers & Cunningham 2007) contains some letters by Jung that were not published before, the majority of the important ones are contained in the two volumes of *Letters* edited by Gerhard Adler (1975).

For *privatio boni*, however, he could find no evidence of archetypal backing.<sup>30</sup> This doctrine could more reasonably be considered under the psychological category of denial, a defence mechanism of the ego. As a psychologist, Jung considered *privatio boni* nothing but a dodge from accepting the responsibility for immoral behaviour.<sup>31</sup> Evil is not the absence of something or a space empty of Being, Jung argued, but the active and indeed often dramatically impressive *presence* of something psychologically substantial in its own right, like an impulse or an instinct.

In Jung's reflections, evil at the level of medieval psychology was personified and named the Devil. In modern times, however, evil is not imaged. It is a moral judgment that one applies to certain types of behaviour and attitude, and this judgment is based upon current ethical understanding and consciousness.<sup>32</sup> Immoral behaviour and attitude (i.e., evil) are understood today as rooted in psychological reality, for example in childhood trauma and in emotions like hatred, envy, or lust. To say that evil in the form of envy, for example, is a *privatio boni* (namely the absence of something good like gratitude, for instance) is specious because it denies the psychological reality of envy as a force in its own right. This is the psychological, not a metaphysical, argument put forward by Jung in his critique of the *privatio boni* doctrine.

Jung could find no archetypal backing for the notion of evil as *privatio boni*, but he certainly could find plenty of it for evil. Mythologems universally tell of devils, demons, and sundry other shadowy characters. Evil should therefore be

---

<sup>30</sup> In his Foreword to White's book, *God and the Unconscious*, Jung wrote: 'It seems to me, however, that the existing empirical material, at least so far as I am acquainted with it, permits of no definite conclusion as to the archetypal background of the *privatio boni*. Subject to correction, I would say that clear-cut moral distinctions are the most recent acquisition of civilized man. That is why such distinctions are often so hazy and uncertain, unlike other antithetical constructions which undoubtedly have an archetypal nature and are the prerequisites for any act of cognition' (CW 11, para. 459).

<sup>31</sup> On this point, Jung comments: 'I was called upon to treat a patient, a scholarly man with an academic training, who had got involved in all manner of dubious and morally reprehensible practices. He turned out to be a fervent adherent of the *privatio boni*, because it fitted in admirably with his scheme: evil in itself is nothing, a mere shadow, a trifling and fleeting diminution of good, like a cloud passing over the sun' (ibid., para. 457). In a letter to White dated 31 December 1949, more than a year before he wrote *Answer to Job*, Jung wrote fiercely: 'As long as Evil is "non-being", nobody will take his own shadow seriously. Hitler and Stalin go on representing a mere "accidental lack of perfection". *The future of mankind very much depends upon the recognition of the shadow*. Evil is—psychologically speaking—*terribly real*' (Jung's emphases). What Jung was objecting to here is akin to what the Protestant theologian and WWII martyr, Dieterich Bonhoeffer, called 'cheap grace'.

<sup>32</sup> For Jung, making moral judgments was an essential human duty and right, though context-bound and relative in particular cases. One's judgment about evil usually depends on which side of a conflict one is standing. To avoid making the moral judgment altogether because it is not absolutely certain, however, would be tantamount to renegeing on ethical responsibility. For a more complete discussion of this, see my Introduction to *Jung on Evil* (Stein 1995).

considered a real force in the world and in the archetypal levels of the human soul,<sup>33</sup> not be written off as a mere absence of its opposite. The psychological dynamics and motivations that one can group under the heading of 'evil' actively and energetically oppose those that would be named 'good', and the two groups are locked in a protracted competition of opposites struggling for life and expression. The urge to destroy is powerful and rooted in nature, as is the urge to create. They are a pair of opposites in the human soul and in the world. If they were to be projected into the transcendent realm spoken of by theology and brought together within the image of a single unifying and all encompassing ultimate God figure, then this would be a monotheism that would conceive of God as containing the tension of these opposites within a single Being. This was Jung's preference, although he was not a theologian and shied away from mythological statements. The alternative, in his view, would be a radical Dualism, with an all good God locked in eternal struggle with a contrary all Evil God.

White, steeped in classical Catholic theology and Thomistic thought and deeply formed by Catholic habits of belief, could not comfortably follow Jung to such conclusions. And in his theologically trained mind, he saw no particular need to do so. In his view, analytical psychology was a human science and limited to the empirical dimension of psychological existence, where evil is certainly a verifiable factor, but it had nothing to say about the Divine (the privileged territory of theology, a science based on revelation) where evil has no essential reality. He wanted to use the basic tenets and findings of analytical psychology in a way that met his own need for building a bridge between theology and psychology, faith and reason, and he certainly had no interest in dissolving what is probably the keystone of Christian theology, i.e., the doctrine that God is the *Summum Bonum* in Whom there is no darkness. Psychology could thus serve theology if it stayed on the ground at the human level and did not challenge theology in its own higher domain of expertise. For Jung this separation between psychology and theology was unacceptable. Theology had no reality for him apart from psychology. By itself and without backing from the archetypes, it was nothing but empty and arbitrary speculation without any grounding.

This was the intellectual and cultural nub of the problem between Jung and White, and it turned out to be the grain of sand in the oyster that yielded what some people judge to be the greatest pearl of wisdom literature Jung ever authored, *Answer to Job*. I would argue that we owe Jung's authorship of *Job*

---

<sup>33</sup> This link between psyche and world is a centrepiece of Jung's late theory. He found the archetypes of the psyche showing 'transgressivity' with matter such that psyche and world reflect each other and are two aspects of a single reality.

in great part at least to his relationship with Victor White.<sup>34</sup> White was the immediate catalyst for this incandescent piece of writing, just as Freud provided the stimuli for Jung's earlier ventures in authorhood, *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (the English title of *Wandlungen*) and, even more importantly for analytical psychology in the long run, the massive tome, *Psychological Types*, which is, in a more complete sense than the former work, Jung's answer to Freud.<sup>35</sup>

### Jung's authorship of *Answer to Job*

As a piece of writing, *Answer to Job* occupies a unique place in Jung's published oeuvre.<sup>36</sup> Typically, in his writings Jung assumes the persona of the empirical scientist or the medical doctor. These were his professional calling cards. He held a degree in medicine from the University of Basel and was trained as a psychiatrist and scientific researcher by Eugen Bleuler at the Burghölzli Klinik, a branch of the University of Zurich. These were top-drawer professional credentials. But as an author, Jung can often be seen bursting at the seams of this tightly woven professional suit of clothing, and frequently he could not keep his passions and enthusiasms within such narrow confinements. This is because he was an author, not merely a writer or a reporter of scientific results. In much of his writing one feels both the firm intellectual commitment to scientific method and the barely checked sounds of another kind of writer in the background, sometimes a poet or a preacher, certainly a passionate and a creative personality. The latter comes through resoundingly in many of his letters.

---

<sup>34</sup> Several views have been put forward to account for Jung's remarkable late work, *Answer to Job*. James Kirsch discounts the frequently asserted explanation that *Job* was an answer to, or attack upon, Freud, while putting forward his own (in my view) more persuasive claim: 'It is not, as Slochower emphasized a number of times in his article "Freud as Yahweh" in Jung's *Answer to Job*, that in writing "Yahweh" Jung meant "Freud". It is very definitely the opposite. The unconscious Yahweh archetype was activated in Jung's psyche from the moment he met Fred [sic]. It remained strong, but unconscious, in Jung for many years. It was only in 1951, during an illness, that the theme of *Answer to Job* finally broke through in him. With irrepressible intensity, it took him approximately only two weeks to write the greater and essential part of the book. And, by the way, his writing cured him of his tonsillitis in about two days' (Kirsch 1960, p. 21). Kirsch did not have the benefit of the Jung-White correspondence, as we have now, to put the work into this other context. My own view is that *Job* was both Jung's response to Jewish students of his like Kirsch and Erich Neumann, and his reply to White, especially regarding the problem of evil and *privatio boni*.

<sup>35</sup> In a sense, Jung never finished answering Freud, and he continued his argument with him to the end of his life. For Jung, Freud represented 'modern man', and his reservations about modernity and his argument with its mechanistic, reductionistic, and scientific assumptions are all stated in his objections to Freud's theory of the psyche. White, on the other hand, represented pre-modern man who still lives in a world of metaphysical and mythical thought forms. Jung was searching for something different, a third way, and in his writings he created it.

<sup>36</sup> I do not consider pieces like *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* and the Red Book as belonging to this category of published work, although they are part of Jung's written legacy. They were not published for public consumption, but were rather kept private and shared with only a few close acquaintances.

In *Job*, these authorial markings, normally kept under wraps, break out in full display. In tone, this work is closer to his letters—personal, impassioned, and human. *Job* could be read as a letter addressed to the public in post-WWII Western societies, or better yet as a sermon. In it, Jung consciously puts aside his professional inhibitions and lets fly a dazzling display of authorial virtuosity and rhetorical fireworks. The voice of this author is no longer dominated by the persona of the professional medical man, although that remains in the background. We know that he wrote this small work in a short period of time when he was recovering from an illness.<sup>37</sup> *Job* possesses a kind of musicality often absent in his more scientific writings. In a letter to Henry Corbin, dated May 4, 1953, he writes (in response to Corbin's comments on *Answer to Job*): 'You say you read my book as an "oratorio". The book "came to me" during the fever of an illness. It was as if accompanied by the great music of a Bach or a Handel. I don't belong to the auditory type. So I did not hear anything, I just had the feeling of listening to a great composition, or rather of being at a concert'.<sup>38</sup> The work had been incubating for a long time, and its birth into written language as a coherent text was fast and furious. Here finally Jung allowed himself the freedom to express his feelings openly, even recklessly. He is highly emotional, by turns angry, intemperate, aggressive, didactic, and prophetic. His passion in *Job* picks up on his father's unfulfilled vocation as a specialist in Old Testament languages and literature. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1961) recounts a dream in which he hears his father interpreting the Bible with great intensity ('his mind was flooded with profound ideas'<sup>39</sup>), and links this directly to the composition of *Job*. Another point of reference would be Goethe, whose *Faust* echoes the Biblical Book of Job.

At the beginning of *Job*, Jung apologizes that in this work,

I shall not give a cool and carefully considered exegesis that tries to be fair to every detail, but a purely subjective reaction. In this way I hope to act as a voice for many who feel the same way as I do, and to give expression to the shattering emotion which the unvarnished spectacle of divine savagery and ruthlessness produces in us . . . I shall express my affect fearlessly and ruthlessly in what follows, and I shall answer injustice with injustice, that I may learn to know why and to what purpose Job was wounded, and what consequences have grown out of this for Yahweh as well as for man.<sup>40</sup>

This is the hermeneutical approach he had used with Joyce's *Ulysses* some twenty years earlier, for which he was complimented in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*.<sup>41</sup> He lets the text work on him emotionally, and then he interprets it using his powerful, frequently confused, and highly charged transference feelings and reactions. The net result is a combination of hermeneutics and sermonics,

<sup>37</sup> Wehr 1987, p. 382.

<sup>38</sup> *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> *MDR*, p. 218.

<sup>40</sup> *CW* 11, paras. 561-3.

<sup>41</sup> See footnote 3.



and an *Auseindersetzung* with the Biblical God. In this writing, Jung achieves mythographic authorship. He retells the Biblical story and in this creates a new mythic version of who God is and what He is doing and becoming.

Much of *Job's* argument Jung had advanced in various forms before in other places—in published papers, in lectures and off-the-cuff remarks recorded by his followers, in various letters, and in his many (until recently) unpublished seminars. It is not the content *per se* that is brand new and different for his published work so much as the authorial voice. Since other scholars have adequately recounted the general background of the ideas in the work,<sup>42</sup> I will not dwell on this matter here. It is necessary to know, however, that as a youth Jung had read Goethe's *Faust* deeply and had been indelibly marked by it. *Faust* and The Book of Job are based on the same premise: God and Satan/Mephistopheles make a bargain to put a human being to the test, and God allows the shadowy Trickster to have his way with him up to a point. At the last minute God intervenes with a rescue. While the narratives are otherwise vastly different in content and tone, the parallel is evident and important. *Answer to Job*, like these, is a reflection on God's ways with humankind. Going very much further, however, it is also a sharp and direct critique of God's ways and methods, and it images God as developing dramatically as the story unfolds into New Testament times. It was this critique and remythologization that White found so problematical in the work.

Jung's *Job* represents his personal answer to White and to the religious tradition in which the Dominican stood and with which he remained strongly identified, i.e., Christianity. The discussions with White, as placed on record in the correspondence, roused the authorial daimon in Jung from his slumbers and prepared the way for the creation of this text at this particular moment in Jung's life.

Throughout his long life, Jung was engaged with Christianity in one way or another. In the same letter to Henry Corbin cited above, he wrote: 'Schleiermacher . . . is one of my spiritual ancestors. He even baptized my grandfather—born a Catholic—who by then was a doctor. This grandfather became a great friend of the theologian de Wette, who had connections of his own with Schleiermacher. The vast, esoteric, and individual spirit of Schleiermacher was a part of the intellectual atmosphere of my father's family. I never studied him, but unconsciously he was for me a *spiritus rector*'.<sup>43</sup> (Significantly, de Wette, a professor of theology at the University of Basel, was one of the giants of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Old Testament scholarship. He too must have given The Book of Job a great deal of thought.) In *Jung's Treatment of Christianity*, I detailed much of this background and the reasons for Jung's long dialogue with Christian doctrine and its theological representatives (Stein 1985). Briefly stated, I argued that Jung

---

<sup>42</sup> See for instance, Wehr 1987, chapter 24, and Paul Bishop's (2002) fine book on this work.

<sup>43</sup> *Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 115.

in his mature years took it upon himself to offer Christianity psychotherapeutic treatment for its deeply ingrained tendency to split: good and evil on the one hand, and the physical and the spiritual aspects of the human psyche on the other. Jung diagnosed a classic neurotic disassociation in Christianity. And as it turned out, the Dominican priest who was so aptly named White, represented the very malaise Jung was struggling to correct. Jung's encounter with White, poignantly and richly detailed in the many letters that passed between them, engaged him profoundly. White's bitter and ultimately unsuccessful struggle for individuation came to matter deeply to him. By entering into such an intense relationship with White, he gained a further emotional purchase on the essential conflicts raging within the traditional Christian soul generally. *Job*, addressed specifically to White in part, is also meant for all of Christendom. Its audience includes everyone who lives within the context of Christian culture and tradition.

What is the message that the author of *Job* is trying to communicate? Basically it is a radical notion: that the burden of the drama depicted as taking place on the level of the transcendent Divine in the Bible and in Christian theology has now shifted from the metaphysical and mythical to the psychological, and that human beings are now responsible for the reconciliation of the opposites, not an objective God or any other metaphysical entity. Salvation is no longer from above. The age of the psychological is now upon us. This is the burden of modernity as Jung understood it.

*Job* is anything but objective scholarship regarding the Biblical text. As Biblical interpretation and commentary, it stands outside of any particular religious tradition on the one side and is similarly unfettered by conventions of historical inquiry and scholarship on the other. It is neither religious nor academic. It is psychological. A particular reading of history and a theory of the development of human consciousness, which sees humankind as having emerged from the mythical and the metaphysical era of pre-modern consciousness and as now having entered into the psychological, govern its conclusions. The psyche replaces heaven and hell and all such mythological beings as gods and goddesses, angels and devils, as the field of action on which the essential conflicts rage and must be won, lost, or endured. And with this comes the ethical responsibility for ordinary humans to take on the challenge of what Jung calls 'incarnation'.

Incarnation is reinterpreted as a here-and-now psychological process, basically as the individuation process as described by Jung in many places, not as a mythic or unique historical event as Christian doctrine has it. For modern men and women, incarnation means entering actively and consciously into the battle of the opposites (good vs. evil, masculine vs. feminine, etc.), submitting to the extreme suffering of this cross as Jesus Christ suffered on his, and enduring this agony until a *unio oppositorum* is born in their individual souls. Each person is called upon to incarnate the full complexity of God, in other words. This means that individuals must now bear the conflict of opposites inherent in God's nature. And this also means that modern people cannot

dodge such fundamental conflicts by embracing a comforting notion like ‘evil is the absence of goodness’ and ‘if I just let God take care of it, things will be OK’. That would be to shrink from the essential task. The shadow cannot any longer be swept under the carpet but must be taken on board consciously. Evil must be faced within each individual soul. This is the book’s deepest argument.

As Jung lays out his psychological interpretation of the Book of Job and the rest of the Christian Bible, he creates an astonishing story. In this writing he achieves his supreme act of authorship. In my opinion, he surpasses even Thomas Mann and Goethe himself, both of whom took up the Faustian theme in their respective authorings. In effect, he rewrites the supreme fiction of Christendom, the Bible. In Jung’s *Job*, we find what Harold Bloom would call a ‘strong misreading’ of the Bible, which creates the possibility of a great poem. Here is a summary of Jung’s misreading. He tells us that God, after recognizing his embarrassing display of unconsciousness in front of his servant Job, came to feel morally inferior to humankind and had to take a dramatic decision that would advance his level of consciousness to that demonstrated by his creature. In his servant Job, God recognizes human consciousness as superior to His own. The human had suddenly outstripped the divine and shifted the balance. This marks a new level of consciousness in the human and an equivalent diminution of consciousness for God. So in compensation and to answer Job for the purpose of regaining his standing, God incarnates himself and experiences, in the life and death of Himself as Jesus Christ, a degree and quality of suffering equal to that which He inflicted upon Job. On the assumption that suffering tests and increases consciousness, this act of empathic mirroring will upgrade God’s standing and bring Him to a position of equality with the human. The critical issue is shadow awareness. God’s action culminates in the crucifixion, when Jesus utters, ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’. At this moment, the myth that Jesus had trusted in his identification with an image of God as a wholly good Father figure is shattered, and he (and God himself, of course, in and through him) suffers the same betrayal that servant Job had suffered at the hands of Yahweh. The shattering of the Good God myth is the critical piece in this narrative. *This* is God’s response, his ‘answer to Job’.<sup>44</sup> God shatters the God-is-only-good myth about Himself, ironically confirming it at the same time. In this fashion, God advances and brings His moral and conscious standing up to the standard set by the human figure, Job. God is reborn from this ordeal as a more integrated consciousness.

According to Jung’s understanding of modernity, humans have now arrived at the stage of post-mythic consciousness. Bereft of comforting myths to live

---

<sup>44</sup> CW 11, para. 647. It should be noted that the German title of the work, *Antwort auf Hiob*, might more accurately, but less satisfactorily from a literary point of view, be translated as *Response to Job*. An ‘*Antwort*’ here is a response to a challenge or demand.

by, humankind is now at the place where Job stood, and where Jesus hanging on the cross found himself: alone and abandoned, with myths shattered and evil starkly revealed. How can individuals cope with this horror? To return to myth and religious belief is impossible for modern consciousness because it has advanced beyond that stage into a new territory, and there is no way back. The way forward must be psychological, which means a new kind of conscious attitude toward individual life and responsibility must come into being that does not depend on the backing or comfort of myth.

For the traditional Christian (White was on the fence for a time and then retreated to orthodoxy in his blistering response to Jung's *Job*), the Church offers protection from such anguishing dilemmas. The essential battle between good and evil has either already been won through the victory of Christ over Satan and by his resurrection, or it will be won by God in the end times when Satan will be defeated and locked away forever. The major opus of salvation is completed on the mythic level. The believer must only have faith that God has done (or will do) the job, get on board the collective vessel of the Church, passively accept the gift of grace, and cling to the assurance that all will be well.

What Jung announces in his *Job* is the bad news that this is not good enough any more. Today everything decisive hangs on the balance of the human psyche. Will the human psyche endure the conflict and resolve the tension of the opposites, or will it split and violently unleash the awesome powers delivered by science to destroy the earth?

Everything now depends on man: immense power of destruction is given into his hand, and the question is whether he can resist the will to use it, and can temper his will with the spirit of love and wisdom.<sup>45</sup>

Jung's powerful sermon invites people who are no longer secured in the big vessel of Church to get into their small individual boats and deal with the high seas on their own. But is the frail and vulnerable human individual capable of surviving the crashing waves of the warring opposites? This is the giant dilemma that faces humankind today. What can deliver us?

The major book to follow *Answer to Job* was *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, subtitled 'An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy' (Jung 1954). This can be read as Jung's answer to the anguished question raised by *Job*. This is a work that shows faith in the capacity of the human psyche to transcend the conflict between the warring opposites paired off in the self. Coming out toward the end of Jung's long career as an author, *Mysterium* is the culmination of the alchemical studies he began in the late 1920's. The first piece of it was published separately as the clinical essay, 'On the psychology of the transference'. *Mysterium* completed the line of thought begun there. It is all about the inner resolution that takes place when psychological

---

<sup>45</sup> CW 11, para. 745.

conflicts are honestly suffered and a new consciousness is born from their union. This is tantamount to the process of Christification and incarnation that he wrote about in *Job*. It is what God achieved through the life of Jesus.

By the time Jung published *Mysterium*, White was no longer in regular communication with him. Their relationship foundered over White's violent reaction to *Job*. Clearly he opted for the security of tradition and the Church. For some reason still unknown (perhaps due to a wishful thought), White started to believe that Jung had told him he would not publish *Answer to Job* but would rather share it with only a chosen few, similar to what he did with the Red Book and the *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*.<sup>46</sup> He must have sensed that it was addressed to him personally, as it was in part, but failed to recognize that Jung the author also had a larger readership in mind. This was a fateful misunderstanding. Jung felt compelled to share his burning *Job* thoughts with a much wider public. It was an important piece of the edifice he was building through his authoring. It was also in line with his vocation as a therapist to Christianity to offer the patient the results of his reflections. Beyond that, the work is addressed to all who claim modernity as their level of consciousness. This was not therefore something to be kept hidden away in a drawer and brought out only for the select few. In fact, one of the main thrusts of the message in *Answer to Job* is the notion of the 'Christification of many'.<sup>47</sup> '*God wanted to become man, and still wants to*',<sup>48</sup> Jung writes in italics for emphasis. For him this was not something to keep quiet.

In authoring and publishing *Answer to Job*, Jung was delivering himself of a work that had been growing in him for decades. It was the culmination of the energy he had devoted specifically to interpreting Christian doctrine and history, which included the two essays, 'A psychological approach to the dogma of the Trinity' (1942) and 'Transformation symbolism in the mass' (1942), and the major book, *Aion* (1951). Consistently, throughout all of these writings, Jung argued that Christian doctrine and practice do not sufficiently deal with the problem of evil or with the split between body and spirit. What the stimulating relationship with Victor White contributed was the spark that ignited the passion so hotly expressed in *Job*. It is as though Victor White brought the author in Jung up to a state of high excitement. What Jung initially greeted as a paradoxical white raven when White appeared on the scene turned out to be *un homme inspireur!*

---

<sup>46</sup> This is what he says in the letter to Jung dated March 17, 1955, though he had earlier said (23 April 1951) that he was excited to hear of the book's publication in German and eagerly waited to have it to read again. When he did receive a complimentary copy from Jung, he wrote excitedly: 'Thank you a million for "Hiob". Though I have countless things to do, I can hardly put it down. It is the most exciting and moving book I have read in years: and somehow it arouses tremendous bonds of sympathy between us, and lights up all sorts of dark places both in the scriptures and in my own psyche' (letter dated 5 April 1952).

<sup>47</sup> CW 11, para. 758.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 739.

---

 TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT
 

---

En sus de ses nombreuses autres *personas*, Jung fut un écrivain et un auteur, c'est-à-dire un créateur dont les oeuvres écrites sous-tendent et autorisent le déploiement d'un champ de pensée, celui de la psychologie analytique. Le fait que nombre de ses écrits d'auteur aient été stimulés par d'importantes et intenses relations personnelles n'est pas largement reconnu. Freud et Victor White figurent au premier plan; c'est à la première de ces deux figures que se rattachent des textes analytiques majeurs des débuts comme *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* et les *Types Psychologiques* et à la seconde, des textes tardifs sur la culture, la religion et la théologie chrétienne. La publication de la correspondance Jung-White révèle l'importance de la relation de Jung avec White dans l'écriture de *Réponse à Job*.

---

Zusätzlich zu seinen vielen anderen Personae war Jung Schriftsteller und Autor, er war ein Schöpfer, dessen Schriften einen Bereich von Gedanken und klinischer Arbeit begründen und bestimmen, den wir als Analytische Psychologie bezeichnen. Dabei wird häufig außer Acht gelassen, dass viele der von ihm verfassten Texte durch wichtige und intensive persönliche Beziehungen angeregt wurden, insbesondere zu Freud und Victor White. Freud steht hinter frühen großen analytischen Texten wie *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* und *Psychologische Typen*, White hinter späten Texten über Kultur, Religion und christliche Theologie. Die Publikation der Jung-White-Briefe enthüllt, welche Bedeutung die Beziehung zu Victor White für das Schreiben der *Antwort auf Hiob* hatte.

---

Oltre alle sue varie altre 'persone', Jung era uno scrittore e un autore, cioè un creativo, i cui lavori scritti sottolineano e autorizzano un campo di pensiero e di lavoro clinico, e cioè la Psicologia Analitica. Non è sufficientemente riconosciuto è il fatto che molti dei suoi testi furono stimolati da importanti e intense relazioni personali. Freud e Victor White in modo particolare, il primo sta dietro i primi e più importanti testi come Simboli della trasformazione e Tipi psicologici. Il secondo dietro testi più tardi di cultura, religione e teologia Cristiana. La pubblicazione dell'epistolario Jung-White mostra l'importanza della relazione con Victor White per la costruzione di Risposta a Giobbe.

---

Ademas de sus muchas personalidades, Jung fue un escritor y un autor, que quiere decir un creador, cuyos escritos soportan y autorizan un campo de pensamiento y trabajo clínico, es decir la Psicología Analítica. No es extensamente reconocido que muchos de los textos de su autoría fueron estimulados por importantes e intensas relaciones personales. Freud y Victor White aparecen largamente, el primero estando detrás de los mas importantes textos analíticos como Símbolos de Transformación de la Libido y Tipos Psicológicos, el segundo detrás de los posteriores textos sobre cultura, religión y teología Cristiana. La publicación de las Cartas de Jung y White revelan la importancia de su relación con Victor White para la autoría de Respuesta a Job.

## References

- Bair, D. (2003). *Jung: A Biography*. Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown.
- Bennet, E. A. (2006). *C. G. Jung*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- Bishop, P. (2002). *Jung's Answer to Job: A Commentary*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Dourley, J. (1992). *A Strategy for a Loss of Faith: Jung's Proposal*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- Edinger, E. (1984). *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- Gaillard, C. (1998). *Le Musée Imaginaire de Carl Gustav Jung*. Paris: Éditions Stock.
- Hakl, H. T. (2001). *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*. Bretten: Verlag Neue Wissenschaft.
- Hannah, B. (1977). *Jung. His Life and Work. A Biographical Memoir*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- Jaffé, A. (1989). 'The creative phases in Jung's life'. In *From the Life and Work of C. G. Jung*. Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag.
- Jung, C. G. (1954). *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. CW 14.
- (1961). *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. New York: Random House.
- (1974). *The Freud/Jung Letters*. Edited by W. McGuire. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- (1975). *Letters*. Vols. 1 & 2, ed. G. Adler. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- (1991). *The Psychology of the Unconscious*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kirsch, J. (1960). 'Reconsidering Jung's so-called Anti-Semitism'. In *The Arms of the Windmill: Essays in Analytical Psychology in Honor of Werner H. Engel*, ed. Daniel Young 5–27.
- Lammers, A. (1994). *In God's Shadow: The Collaboration of Victor White and C.G. Jung*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Lammers, A. & Cunningham, A. (Eds.) (2007). *The Jung-White Letters*. London & New York: Routledge.
- McCormick, F. (1962). In *Carl Gustav Jung – 1975-1961: A Memorial Meeting*. New York: The Analytical Psychology Club of New York, 10–16.
- Noll, R. (1994). *The Jung Cult*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rowland, S. (2005). *Jung as a Writer*. New York & Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Schlamm, L. (2006). 'C. G. Jung's visionary mysticism'. *Harvest*, 52, 1, 7–37.
- Shamdasani, S. (2003). *Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stein, M. (1985). *Jung's Treatment of Christianity*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications.
- (1995). 'Introduction', *Jung on Evil*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Stern, P. (1976). *C. G. Jung: The Haunted Prophet*. New York: Dell.
- The Jung-White Letters* (2007). Eds. Ann Lammers & Adrian Cunningham. London & New York: Routledge.
- von Franz, M.-L. (1975). *C. G. Jung: His Myth in our Time*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- Wehr, G. (1987). *Jung: A Biography*. Boston & London: Shambhala.

Copyright of *Journal of Analytical Psychology* is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.



Copyright of *Journal of Analytical Psychology* is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.