

their prejudices confirmed by these indications of limits on scope in the premier league.

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THE JUNG-WHITE LETTERS edited by Ann Conrad Lammers and Adrian Cunningham *Routledge*, London and New York, 2007, pp. xxxii + 384, £50 hbk

The exchange between Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) and Fr Victor White OP (1902–1960), published for the first time as a whole in this volume, exemplifies one of last century's brilliant dialogues of faith and science. It illustrates the hopes of interdisciplinary work between psychology and Christian thought. However, it also brings to the fore one striking failure in the process of theoretical bridge-making.

The conditions for the encounter were ripe on both sides. Jung's novel stance in the psychological establishment of the early 1900s had set the stage by rejecting Freud's depreciation of religion and culture. Moreover, in the field of empirical psychology, Jung was making one of the most important contributions to the recognition of religious experience as a potentially positive psychological phenomenon. From the late twenties, the Swiss psychologist and founder of Analytic Psychology published several notable articles that made overtures to Catholicism. Jung expressed an appreciation for its sensitivity to the feminine (especially its veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary), its respect for humanity and reason (in contradistinction to the *sola fide* vision that he received from his father, who was a Zwinglian Pastor), and its inclusiveness (integrating elements from diverse cultures and religions).

White had earnestly been engaging contemporary science from an orthodox Catholic perspective. His serious openness to the psychological sciences imitated the model of his mentor St Thomas Aquinas instead of the reified manuals that for centuries had tended toward legalistic and static views on ethics and philosophical psychology. However, as for Aquinas' dialogue with Aristotelian science and psychology, White ran the risk of incomprehension on two sides: both from those who did not understand the potential and place of contemporary psychological typologies, especially in the wake of Catholic resistance to reductionist trends in modern sciences (the Modernist crisis), and from those who misjudged the level at which insights from empirical psychology and world religions could be integrated into a Catholic metaphysical worldview and theological value-system.

White initiated the dialogue with Jung in 1945, at a time when the older man was open to finding a collaborator within the Catholic Church. White, one of the foremost English Dominicans of the time, boldly sent the Swiss psychologist several essays written between 1942 and 1945 that displayed his capacity to synthesize Jung's psychology with orthodox Catholic thought, cogently calling on Scriptural, Patristic, Medieval, and Magisterial sources. White expressed his understanding of and optimism concerning Jung's theories, for example, on individuation, collective unconscious, integration, agency, and the spiritual meaning of psychic energy and emotions.

Jung responded to the priest's letter and articles with surprising enthusiasm, reporting to White: '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. You have seen its enormous implications' (p. 6). From the start, nonetheless, Jung had to address questions that the English Dominican posed about the psychologist's notion of transcendence and Christianity. Jung was open and remarked, 'I would need some solid theological

help. I realise that it can come only from the catholic side, as the *sola fide* standpoint of the protestant has lost the Tradition of the doctrine too much to be useful in disentangling the knots in the empirical material' (p. 8). White immediately took up the invitation.

In addition to the carefully edited correspondence, Lammers and Cunningham include other unpublished or hard to find texts to complete the context. Murray Stein pens a helpful foreword and in her masterful introduction Ann Lammers outlines the protagonists' distinct philosophical backgrounds and belief systems. The first appendix provides further correspondence by Jung about White, which gives another side of the psychologist's consideration of the English Dominican as well as information about White's death. Appendix Two contains Adrian Cunningham's extensive memoir of Victor White's colourful life, including his existential crises and vocational hesitations. Other appendixes contain Jung's 'Gnoseological note' and White's 'Notes on *Psychologie und Alchemie*', 'Footnote on Good and Evil' and the stinging critique 'Jung on Job'. Moreover, the editors have adeptly translated the Latin, German, French and Greek expressions of the two erudite interlocutors.

The collection of letters between Jung and White reveals three things that are not blatantly evident in their articles and books. First, behind the academic writings and scholarly lectures was a deep and frank dialogue, a give and take of unexpected dimensions. Second, they were for each others' arguments a whetstone, sharpening their own thought while ultimately coming to divergent conclusions on important matters. Third, throughout the decade and a half of mostly intense correspondence there grew a tender friendship between the men. Both were able to express their dreams without complex. Both were able to articulate their affections in the midst of disagreement, even after they renounced their early hopes.

The men concurred on the relevance of the religious side of psychological 'facts' (experience) and on the potential for healing that psychology and Christianity shared. They both even had a surprising attraction to the I Ching and alchemy. White however could not follow some of Jung's psychological conjectures. For instance, Jung paired psychic mysticism with subatomic phenomena. He explained that: 'Psyche being an *energetic* phenomenon possesses *mass*, presumably a very small amount of it, but obviously enough to establish a reflex of subatomic conditions, which needs must be explained by a 4-dimensional continuum. That is also the reason, why you discover synchronistic phenomena when you begin to integrate the unconscious' (pp. 71–72; see also p. 167). White calls this suggestion 'appallingly difficult' and humbly admits that he has the Thomist habit of thinking non-dimensionally (p. 72). White's allegiance to Thomist concepts and constructs did not disable the conversation with Jung. Rather it was part of what attracted the psychologist, who repeatedly expressed fascination at the insights and arguments of Aquinas and who even invited White to present his Thomist (what White had described as a specifically non-Kantian) view of the human person to the annual gathering of Jung's close associates, the Eranos lectures in 1947 (pp. 39–40, 84). Jung for his part pressed White on aspects of his theory and its application. For example, Jung called White to square better his understanding of the 'transformability of instincts' with current biological findings (pp. 27–28) and his understanding of good and evil with psychological 'facts'.

At the end of 1949, the intensity of the Jung-White exchange increased over their construals of good and evil: Jungian shadow theory and White's *privatio boni* (privation of good) approach. White thought the two theories were compatible. Jung did not. Their discussions on this issue often involved a deaf ear, inasmuch as the diverse foundational presuppositions rendered competing arguments incomprehensible and attempts at reconciliation un-receivable. At the end of 1949, Jung

mused: 'As long as Evil is a *mu on* [non-being] nobody will take his own shadow seriously. [...] it is a fatal mistake to diminish its power and reality even merely metaphysically. I am sorry, this goes to the very root of Christianity. Evil verily does not decrease by being hushed up as a non-reality or a mere negligence of Man.' (p. 143). White accepted Jung's position to a point. However, a standoff became evident as early as May 1950, when White said to Jung: 'For the moment I do feel that *that* discussion has reached deadlock. What is so perplexing to me is the fact that it is precisely your psychology which has enabled me to *experience* evil as a 'privatio boni'! For my part I can give no meaning at all to psychological terms like 'positive-negative', 'integration-disintegration' if evil is not 'privatio boni'. Nor can I see any motive for 'integrating the shadow' – or any meaning in it either – if the shadow is not a good deprived of good!' (p. 148).

Jung and White's miscommunications at the deepest level concerned the fundamental or ontological goodness of creation and the Creator. Jung stayed on an epistemological level accessed by his empirical psychology alone (a psychological epistemology). His approach, while admitting archetypal and symbolic transcendence, was naturalistic instead of properly theological. Jung recognized that: 'The difference [between White and myself] lies between theological thinking and psychological nominalism' (p. 151). White attempted building a non-exclusive bridge between his own theological and philosophical position and Jung's psychology. He tried to convince Jung, saying: 'your empirical psychology is not necessarily bound up with *any* particular philosophical system of interpretation, & that the facts & aims of your psychology are at least as amenable of statement in terms of the philosophia perennis as of Kant or any kind of positivism & religious irrationalism' (p. 189). However, Jung's facility with Christian concepts hid (from White at least for a while) his naturalistic approach to religion. With time, Jung's approach came to manifest more decidedly philosophical presuppositions and commitments to neo-Kantian subjectivism, Nietzschean amorality and oriental dualism. On several occasions and not always in jest, White even came to call Jung's work Manichean or Gnostic dualism. He openly wondered if Jung's other 'theologian informants [were] Marcionists or polytheists' (p. 268).

On the occasion of the psychologist's sustained attack on the *privatio boni* theory in *Aion: Untersuchungen zur Symbolgeschichte* (1951; English translation, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of Self*, 1958), White redoubled his attempts to convince Jung that a Catholic understanding of good and evil was compatible with Jung's psychology. However, Jung continued to push his own theory further. In 1952, he published *Antwort auf Hiob*, which projected the light and shadow metaphor on to God. The English translation, *Answer to Job* (1954), brought open pressure on White, because of Jung's representation of God as evil and amoral. In response, the English theologian published an untypically scathing and personal critique. His 'Jung and Job' (in *Blackfriars*, March 1955) called the book childish, ignorant, and an expression of bad faith and paranoia (p. 254). White intended his critique for a Catholic audience, including colleagues who had high hopes for Jungian psychology. White quickly came to regret however the hurtful parts of the attack.

In 1955, both men admitted a stalemate. Jung held strong: 'I shall stick to my conviction that my 'Answer to Job' is a straight forth application of my psychological principles to certain central problems of our religion' (p. 264). White responded: 'I certainly appreciate 'Antwort' as a stimulant to consciousness. [...] But now I find myself quite definitely in painful agreement, not only with your theological & philosophical, but also with your scientific critics. For the clarification of my own position, I am truly grateful; but finding myself in opposition to your views, & indeed to your own 'union of opposites' (or its transposition to the Divine sphere) is naturally painful' (p. 267). White's conclusion was that

'any would-be Christian' must make 'an 'agonizing reappraisal' of his position vis-à-vis analytical psychology' (p. 272).

One of the notable lessons found in this exchange involves the failure to forge an adequate foundation for the interdisciplinary project. On the one hand, Jung's approach manifested the limits of naturalist and dualist presuppositions for a Catholic interlocutor. On the other, White's Thomist philosophical and theological foundation could not conform to significant applications of Jung's psychological theory to Christianity. These differences, stemming from their diverse presuppositions, barred the way to integrating Jungian psychology and Catholic faith. The situation put the two men's friendship to the test, but it did not end it. *The Jung-White Letters* illustrate the give and take, the break, and the reconciliation *in fine*. It is a moving exchange. In the face of stark differences at the end of their lives, especially concerning the construal of good and evil, the Swiss psychologist and the English theologian each greatly benefited not only from reciprocal friendship and intellectual challenge, but also from each one's own critical appropriation of the other's work.

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LIVING FORMS OF THE IMAGINATION by Douglas Hedley T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 2008, pp. 308, £24.99 pbk

If you are a famous atheist in Britain today, you probably explain the phenomenon of theism solely in terms of 'imagination'. God is an illusion, or delusion, something believers 'make up', like a lying child. In debates, you can belittle believers in God by telling them that they have 'an imaginary friend'. And you are sure that this is where the moral evil of theism resides: like children, believers are not willing to admit to their over-active imagination. They stick to their lie; and religious violence is always, at the root, a strop about being found out. So, with more relish than regret, you have to upgrade Occam's Razor to a combine-harvester, getting rid of not just unnecessary explanation, but all of what Mr Gradgrind calls 'fancy'. You might quote your departed friend, Douglas Adams: 'Isn't it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?' And if God is a fairy-tale, why not put all theology in that section of the library? A.C. Grayling once listed a number of beings in the same category as God: Little Red Riding Hood, Rumpelstiltskin, Santa Claus, Betty Boop, Saint Veronica (who 'allegedly started out as sweat on a cloth and became a person'), Aphrodite, Wotan, Batman...

One course of defence theologians might usefully adopt would be to say (very quietly) that yes, the imagination is what tells us about God; and what it tells us is true. This is Douglas Hedley's position in this book: 'neither the inspired symbols of revelation nor the great conjectures about God are mere fantasies, since the imagination of the human soul mirrors, however darkly, the fecundity of the divine mind' (p. 8). As that quotation suggests, this is an up-front and unashamed contemporary version of the sort of Platonism that inspired John Smith, Henry More and Ralph Cudworth. It could hardly be more unfashionable if it tried. When Richard Dawkins is openly attacked, Hedley's champion against him is *Benjamin Jowett* (p. 44).

But then Hedley is not really defending the God that Dawkins, Grayling and others attack. He is defending something even more unfashionable: the concept of imagination itself; and in this sense, the defence is as much Romantic as it is Platonist. The *Prelude* is as important as the *Phaedrus*: Wordsworth's definitions in the *Prelude* of imagination as 'clearest insight', 'amplitude of mind' and 'Reason in her exalted mood' guide Hedley's thinking throughout. He argues that