

# THE JUNG-WHITE DIALOGUE AND WHY IT COULDN'T WORK AND WON'T GO AWAY

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*Abstract.* White's Thomism and its Aristotelian foundation were at the heart of his differences with Jung over the fifteen years of their dialogue. The paper examines the precedents and consequences of the imposition of Thomism on the Catholic Church in 1879 in order to clarify the presuppositions White carried into his dialogue with Jung. It then selects two of Jung's major letters to White to show how their dialogue influenced Jung's later substantial work, especially his *Answer to Job*. The dialogue with White contributed to foundational elements in the senior Jung's development of his myth which simply outstripped White's theological imagination and continue to challenge the worlds of contemporary monotheistic orthodoxy in all their variants.

*Key Words:* Aristotelianism, Thomism, supernaturalism, Catholic nineteenth century, Assumption, symbolism, literalism, relativity of God, future spirituality, monotheism.

## 1. The Historical Background of Modern Thomism.

Victor White and Carl Jung dialogued for over fifteen years on the possibility of a deeper rapport between White's Christian and Catholic theology and Jung's psychology. In the end the dialogue failed. As a Dominican priest and a mid-twentieth century theologian associated with a Catholic college at Oxford University, White's theology was deeply indebted to his famous Dominican thirteenth century predecessor, Thomas Aquinas. In that century Aquinas had distinguished himself by working a theological synthesis of a more fully recovered Aristotle with mediaeval Christianity. In a letter to a mutual acquaintance after White's death Jung wrote of White's theology. "I saw that his arguments were valid for him and allowed of no other development." In this same letter Jung admits his own failure to "...pierce through to his understanding." (Jung 1960a: 563) From Jung's perspective, then, White's Aristotelian/Thomistic mindset was the determining factor in the ultimate failure of their dialogue. The history of the modern revival of Thomism and its continuing impact on the Catholic environment at the time of Jung's dialogue with White, 1945-1960 are therefore worthy of review in understanding the philosophical and theological background and burden White would carry into this conversation.

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To go immediately to the heart of the matter and to work backward and forward from there, Aquinas was effectively imposed on the Catholic Church as its preferred theologian by Pope Leo XIII in 1879 (Denziger 1965a: 612). Modern Thomism was thus not a natural outgrowth of what might be called the organic development of the Western philosophical mind. Rather the Thomism promulgated in 1879 was a deliberate rejection of this development. The reason for the promulgation can only be thoroughly understood in terms of the political impact of the French Revolution on the papacy and on Catholic Europe. The French revolution, 1789, and the following Napoleonic era had initially and, as history unfolded, permanently disrupted the previous alliances between the Vatican, the European national episcopacies and the royal houses of Europe. At the heart of the tension was the question of the compatibility of the values of the Revolution with institutional Roman Catholicism. The tension peaked in the Napoleonic period. Napoleon had effectively forced Pius VII (1800-1823) to play a symbolic and demeaning role in his coronation in Paris on December 2, 1804. In a very non-symbolic manner French forces under Napoleon's authority subsequently kidnapped the Pope first to Savona, near Genoa in 1809, and then to Fontainebleau near Paris in 1812. Napoleon's intent was to submit Papal power and territories and that of the French and other national episcopates to his empire and will (Hales 1966: 164 - 226).

When Pope Pius VII returned from his exile to Rome on May 24, 1814, he was understandably but cautiously sympathetic to the reactionary restoration of the ancien regime by the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). He worked toward a stronger Vatican aligned with the restored European powers especially to the extent that they would uphold his possession and governance of the papal territories. The growing sentiment within the European Catholic world for a independent and centralizing papacy took on the form of that nineteenth century Catholic theological and political movement called "ultramontanism" (Hales 1966: 227-230). The movement sought a central and eventually an absolute concentration of ecclesial Catholic power in the office of the papacy beyond the mountains - hence the name - on the south side of the Alps in the eternal city, Rome. As the century developed this force was to culminate in the declaration of papal infallibility in 1870. However, earlier ultramontanism was itself divided between two camps. One was liberal and sought the reconciliation of the republican or democratic principles of the Revolution with institutional Catholicism and the Vatican. This party, led by Felicite de Lamennais, championed a free church in a free state. In 1832 Gregory XVI rejected any kind of papacy which could accommodate the new republican spirit (Vidler, 1961: 69-72). Consequently the more conservative and absolutist side of ultramontanism championed by Joseph de Maistre was to prevail but not before Pius IX (1846-1878) made a last and significant effort early in his papacy to reconcile the Vatican and its territorial possessions, the Papal States, with parliamentary republicanism by granting it a constitution. These efforts were to fail in large part over the pope's reticence to throw his army fully into the war with Austrian imperial powers. His reluctance cost him support from forces seeking the unification of Italy. Increasing political turmoil and the assassination of the constitutional premier of Rome forced Pius IX to flee Rome to Gaeta in the kingdom of Naples in 1848 (Hales 1962: 87-106).

Disillusioned by this turn of events, upon his return to Rome in 1850, Pius IX was a different man. His personality was so changed that it earned him the name of "Pio Nono Secondo", "Pius IX, the Second" (Livingston 1997: 331). This was the Pius IX who unilaterally promulgated the

doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 proclaiming that Mary had been born free of original sin (Denzinger 1965b: 560-562). One obvious consequence of the doctrine was clearly to exclude Italian and European nationalists, democrats and their philosophical supporters in any shade of then current romanticism and idealism from such privileged sinless status. In 1864 Pius IX issued the infamous syllabus of errors rejecting all forms of liberal and modern thought, religious, political and secular (Denzinger 1965c: 576-584). Finally in 1870 he had himself declared infallible at the first Vatican Council (Denzinger 1965d: 601). The fifty-five bishops who left the council rather than vote for the declaration were later to give their unanimous assent (Jedin 1961: 168; Butler 1962: 408-412; Kung 1971: 83-84). In the debates running up to the declaration of infallibility when it was pointed out to Pius IX that papal infallibility to be exercised by the papacy alone and not in continuity with the wider Church had questionable grounding in Catholic tradition he replied, "Tradition, I am the Tradition." (Livingston 1997: 340) It was in reference to this kind of power that Lord Acton, a Catholic lay historian and leader of the opposition to the declaration of infallibility at Rome, later to become the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, coined the famous statement, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." (Livingston, 1997: 337) He was also of the opinion that the doctrine would be expurgated from the corporate body of the Church as the natural body removes toxins foreign to it (Trevor-Roper 1961:12). The detoxification has been slow in coming.

Even though his territory was soon reduced to a few city blocks in Rome, with the declaration of papal infallibility Pius IX became the first of Europe's modern absolutist rulers, a questionable distinction in the light of consequent twentieth century history. More to the point of this discussion the declaration of papal infallibility marked the triumph of the absolutist side of the ultramontane movement. Current scholarship acknowledges that, "Both Ultramontanism and Neo-Thomism were well considered efforts on the part of the Church to stem the tide of modernity and 'liberalism' in the spheres of politics, ecclesiology, and thought." (Livingston 1997: 328)

It was within this repressive atmosphere that the modern revival of Aquinas' thought began rather humbly in the 1840's fostered by Jesuits in Rome (Livingston 1997: 342) but grew quickly to influence the major documents of Vatican I, especially on the relation of reason to faith and revelation. As stated the council is rightly and ruefully remembered as proclaiming the doctrine of papal infallibility. However, the second lesser known document of the first Vatican Council was deeply influenced by Thomism and its dualistic split between the natural and supernatural and proved equally pathologizing. In this document natural reason was split off from faith and revelation. Reason could prove the existence of God but revelation, found primarily in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, added to reason truths beyond reason's power to which reason could assent only through the infusion of the supernatural gift of faith. Revelation thus understood as a super addition to natural knowledge of God became a deposit of faith under the magisterial authority of the church lodged ultimately in the office of the papacy which could then determine what was and was not a legitimate object of infused faith (Denzinger 1965e: 586-595).

The position seems reasonable and innocuous enough until what it denies is made clear. For its target was the modern emergence of a deeper human subjectivity and the relation of this subjectivity to humanity's innate sense of God. Nineteenth century Catholic orthodoxy branded this unmediated

sense of God with different names such as fideism, ontologism, pantheism or an exaggerated immanentism to name but a few. Kant had denied the ability of the mind to deal responsibly with questions of God, soul and cosmos but had pointed to a subjective dimension of humanity in which the voice of the ought resounded unabatedly in the human soul as the basis of human morality (Kant 1960: 40). Schleiermacher had sought to ground the universal experience of faith on a psychological reflection on humanity's finitude revealing a universal feeling of absolute dependence on an immanent divinity (Schleiermacher 1958: 26-119). In Schleiermacher's footsteps, Tillich continued this psychological approach into the twentieth century in his description of humanity's universal faith as ultimate concern or concern for the recovery of the ultimate (Tillich 1957: 1-4). Hegel had described divinity as an absolute creating history as the theatre in which divinity overcame its split with humanity in the unification of its opposites in human history, a position close to Jung's in his Answer to Job (Dourley 1999: 62-66). All of these positions rest in one form or another on the experience of the divine as proceeding from the depths of human subjectivity.

But for a religious institution losing its political power and credibility, not to mention its territory, and out of touch with or profoundly distrustful of the world of contemporary philosophy and theology, these positions too closely united the divine and the human, the secular and the sacred, the natural and the supernatural, the light of reason and the light of faith. And so the synthetic vision of the nineteenth century had to be torn apart, reason and nature separated from the immediate sphere of divinity, and the dichotomized world of faith and revelation put under the absolute magisterial power of the Vatican. So called neo-scholasticism which soon was reduced to neo-Thomism thus provided the philosophy and theology for a church fleeing to the thirteenth century from a nineteenth century it could neither accept politically nor appreciate philosophically. It is a tribute to Reformed Christianity that it did not reject the modern world till the end of the first world war when it too fled to its favoured century, the sixteenth, under the banner of neo-Orthodoxy and Karl Barth's sophisticated fundamentalism.

But the pall of Thomism continued, after its imposition in 1879, into the twentieth century. Its spirit informed Pius X's condemnation of Modernism in 1907. (Denzinger 1965f: 669-674; 675-682). Alfred Loisy, a leading Catholic scripture scholar was condemned for, among other things, suggesting that what the early Christians expected was the return of Christ. What came instead was the Church. Few to-day would contest his point but his rejection and eventual excommunication stultified responsible Catholic scriptural scholarship until 1943 when the Vatican again permitted it (Denzinger 1965g: 754-757). Closer to the concerns of this discussion a far more significant condemnation as a modernist was that of George Tyrell, a Jesuit priest, who was to argue that scriptural and dogmatic discourse should be understood primarily as symbolic and as expressive of a deeper human sensitivity, one sounding amazingly like that power which Jung ascribes to the collective unconscious. To the literalism and lust for objectivity attaching to the Vatican theology of the day, Tyrell's early attempt to unite religious experience and its symbolic expression with the immanent depths of human subjectivity was squashed. In their correspondence Jung and White discussed the following condemnation of Tyrell's position which both knew could just as well be aimed at Jung's psychology. "Thus the religious sense which, through a vital immanence, erupts from the lurking places of the subconscious is the germ of all religion and the explanation as well

of all that has appeared in religion's past or will appear in religion's future." (Denzinger 1965f: 676, 677) This condemned proposition is faithful to Jung's understanding of the psychic origin of all religions past and future and a tribute to the acuity of the inquisitor giving to modernism's recognition of the role of the psyche in religious experience a precision that often evaded the modernists themselves. In his dialogue with White, Jung steps around the problem by conceding that ecclesiastical faith is not an eruption from the unconscious because in its current creedal form it has severed itself from its origin in the archetypal unconscious. (Jung 1954d: 171) Later in his papacy on July 27, 1914, Pius X approved twenty-four Thomistic theses as the basis of sound philosophical and theological doctrine (Denzinger 1965h: 697-700). Still later in his reign the new code of Canon law in 1917 stated in canon 1366, 2, that Aquinas' doctrine was to be held holy by professors of philosophy and theology in Catholic institutions. (Kung, 1971: 134).

The sad story continued in the period after the second World War. This was the period when White opened the discussion with Jung. It also was the period which saw briefly between 1946 and 1950 the advent of the "nouvelle theologie". The new theology was the work of French and German theologians, many themselves influenced by Thomism. They clearly saw the schizoid dichotomy that the scholastic and Thomistic splitting of the natural from the supernatural had worked between the human and divine and tried to mitigate the split usually with an appeal to an understanding of the experience of faith which outstripped its rational and propositional formulation (Schoof 1970: 201-210; Livingston 2000: 197-232). However, Pius the XII in an encyclical *Humani Generis*, in 1950, dismissed the spirit and much of the substance of this effort and again condemned an immanentism that would establish a too intimate relation between the worlds of the natural and the supernatural (Denzinger 1965i: 772-780). Probably in response to Teilhard de Chardin and his effort to synthesize Christianity and evolution, this encyclical reveals the historical literalism that pervaded the mind of its authors at this time. For it argues that all of humanity must have descended from a single pair of humans. Otherwise, not all would have fallen and the universal need for baptism would be undermined (Denzinger 1965i: 780). This literalism probably extended to the papal declaration later in 1950 of the bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven (Denzinger 1965j: 781-782). As will be seen, his correspondence with Jung reveals that White himself was at least partially a victim of such literalism, so foreign to Jung's understanding of religious discourse, in respect to the doctrine of the Assumption.

The foregoing is a brief and far from exhaustive history of the modern revival of Thomism that so influenced the views Victor White was to bring into his extended dialogue with Jung from 1945 to 1960. It was a theology that grew in the service of a conservative if not repressive Church still uneasy with a Western culture, a culture whose political foundations now came to rest on the principles first surfaced in the French revolution and whose religious and moral values rested either on the wholly autonomous reason of the Enlightenment or on the remnants of an immanent sense of divinity foreign to the intrusion of heteronomous and supernatural forces into the world of nature and human nature.

## 2. The Discussion with White. General Reflections.

Long before his conversation with White Jung had already expressed his dismay that the Aristotelian mind had so taken over the West. In a letter dated June 8, 1942, he identifies Paracelsus as an exponent of a spiritual movement which "...sought to reverse this turning away from our psychic origins as a result of Scholasticism and Aristotelianism." Later in the same letter he admits that the spiritual or psychological side of Paracelsus' endeavour failed in Paracelsus' own time which "...had as little a conception of psychology as Catholic philosophy has to-day." (Jung 1942: 317, 318) Consequently it was up to psychopathology rather than theology to first notice and then address the severance from the unconscious worked by the Aristotelian mind with such devastating consequences on the latter Western development. Even earlier in 1932 Jung accused the Catholic Church of setting "...the Summa of Thomas Aquinas above the whole of science." (Jung 1933: 125) In his Collected Works Jung twice explicitly denies the epistemological foundations of what Paul Tillich termed Aquinas' "...sense-bound..." epistemology (Tillich 1964: 18). This epistemology rests on the epistemic position that "nothing (is) in the mind which was not previously in the senses. ( Jung 1954a: 492; 1943: 559) For Jung to limit the human cognitive and experiential capacity to what can be initially derived from the senses would constitute a debilitating truncation of the full range of human perception by excluding those realms of experience only the archetypes can generate. In fact for Jung to limit human cognition to what originates in the five senses would be to deny or remain insensitive to what he calls "...an authentic religious function..." native to the psyche as the source of all religious experience and so of the religions (Jung 1940: 6). No doubt the senses can be the occasion of the activation of archetypal energies but never replace them nor generate their power. The Aristotelian and Thomistic immunity to the totality of human experience which the senses can never convey reduces religious experience and expression to the level of literal facts. In so doing it severs the mind from its sense of the more profound mystery and power of being never apparent nor accessible to the senses. In so doing it divests its victim of the symbolic sense, always a major personal and social loss.

To put forth a preliminary overview of the Jung/White dialogue, four characteristics of White's thought were from the outset incompatible with archetypal theory. The first was the distinction which White drew between nature and grace. With Aquinas White would understand grace to build on nature and so originate in a power beyond nature. Jung would respond that grace was nature or at least was a natural experience generated by the unifying and whole making power of the self becoming conscious which then "...constitutes the most immediate experience of the Divine which it is psychologically possible to imagine." (Jung 1954b: 261). Secondly White clung to a certain literalism regarding religious expression which prevented him from fully assimilating Jung's solely symbolic and mythic understanding of these same statements. Aligned with his literalism were White's extrinsicism and historicism. White's extrinsicism would rest on the dualism of his world view split as it was between the natural and the supernatural. The supernatural would invade the natural from beyond in its various salvific endeavours and would confer on humanity what humanity could not confer on itself. It is against such supernaturalism, shared by all main stream monotheistic traditions, that Jung rails when he protests that the connection he sought to establish between the

psyche and God led to his being "...accused of 'psychologism' or suspected of morbid 'mysticism'." (Jung 1954a: 482) Grace and salvation had to be imported from without not generated from within through what he once described as the "...self-liberating power of the introverted mind. (Italics Jung's)" (Jung, 1954a: 484) Finally White's historicism, a variant of literalism, led him to understand the reality of religion as historical in the sense of describing historical events which happened once upon a time and could be captured in living color by CNN cameras if they were there. This was in evidence in White's interpretation of the Assumption.

### **3. The key letters of November, 1953 and April, 1954.**

In fact the dialogue on these issues did escalate after the proclamation of the Assumption on November 1, 1950. Jung responded to a piece White had written on the occasion of the proclamation. In this piece White had apparently tried to combine a literal, particular and historical with a universal archetypal understanding of the event (White 1950). In this letter Jung's point is that the truth of the Assumption is wholly symbolic or what he terms "spiritual", that is, an expression of "...the living archetype forcing its way into consciousness". (Jung, 1950b: 568). To take it literally has nothing to do with its spiritual meaning and reduces its spiritual truth to "...a parapsychological stunt." which would appeal to "...a coarse and primitive mind unable to grasp the psychic reality of an idea, a mind needing miracles as evidence of a spiritual presence." (Jung 1950b: 567) The psychic reality of the doctrine of the Assumption was for Jung, "...the integration of the female principle into the Christian conception of the Godhead." (Jung 1950b: 567) In this letter and in his *Collected Works* Jung makes of the proclamation of the Assumption as an archetypal compensation of an exclusively male and paternal conception of God "...the most important religious development for 400 years." (Jung 1950b: 567; 1954c: 464) Elsewhere he writes that the symbol of the Assumption signals at least the beginning of the end of a "patriarchal supremacy" within Christianity (Jung 1954c: 399) and expresses the current movement of the archetypal psyche to "the equality of women." (Jung 1954c: 465) For this reason he speculates in 1952 that Western culture "has not heard the last of it." (Jung 1954c: 399) In contrast to this interpretation of the dogma and its wider implications, White's literalism would remain almost wholly insensitive .

In 1952 Jung wrote a Foreword to a collection of White's essays under the title of *God and the Unconscious* (White, 1952). In it Jung makes the point that the culture in which he lived was made up of different strata of historical consciousness. He identifies the prevalence of a still living barbarian consciousness which could date to 5000 BC. Without identifying them as "barbarian" Jung refers in the same sentence to the fact that his contemporary culture included, "...a great number of mediaeval Christians." For Jung both barbarians and mediaeval Christians have failed to attain "...the degree of consciousness which is possible in our time." (Jung, 1952a: 23) Whether Jung would include White in the company of contemporary medieval Christians is left unstated though could be implied. In any event Jung would hope that such historically retarded consciousness would be

surpassed by the "psychological standpoint" in the modern age and assures his reader that his own psychology is divested of any supernatural content (Jung 1952a: 21).

White was to enjoy his final visit with Jung at Bollingen, Jung's retreat on the south shores of Lake Zurich to whom only the privileged were invited, from July 17th to the 27th, 1952. The extended meeting marks the point in their relationship where both came to see the incompatibility of their viewpoints leading to a progressive estrangement, never resolved intellectually or spiritually, even though they attained personal reconciliation shortly before White's death. The drawing apart did not mean an abrupt end of their dialogue or correspondence. In fact two letters written nearly a year and a half and two years after their parting in Switzerland in the summer of 1952 serve almost as a compendium both of Jung's differences with White and of the distinctive shape Jung's mature thought on the relation of psyche to divinity was to take in his senior and most substantial writings. Jung's extended dialogue with White may well have been a formative influence on Jung's Answer to Job and on portions of his late alchemical work. These crucial letters are the letters of November 24, 1953 and April 10, 1954.

Prior to the letter of November, 1953, Jung and White had come to a serious impasse over the nature of evil first raised in a letter of December 31, 1949. White clung to the scholastic idea that evil was the privation of the good, a lacking or nothingness consequent to a distancing from that point where being and good coincided in God. Jung was suspicious of the position. He had become familiar with it clinically working with a client who was using the equation of evil with nothingness to justify immoral activity in his personal life (Jung 1952a: 18-19). Defending evil as privation led White further to the scholastic position that being and good at some point were convertible. This position probably dates back to Augustine's essentialism which held that being and good coincided in God so that the further the remove from God the further the remove from the point of coincidence of being and good. In this logic the conclusion would follow that evil was non-being or a privation understood as removal from God. Jung felt there was no psychological or empirical evidence whatsoever for a point of coincidence of good and evil which would justify the understanding of evil as a removal from such a point (Jung 1952b: 73). Rather Jung came to take the position that good and evil were opposites and were grounded in the archetypal dimension of the psyche. As this debate continued Jung upped the ante by describing good and evil as *ousiae* (Jung, 1950a: 555; 1952c: 60). The Greek term can be translated as "substance" or better as "essence". What Jung came to mean by the term was that the polar opposites of good and evil were essences in the creator as the source of a creation where good and evil are all too evident. Thus good and evil would exist as archetypal essences or polarities in the unconscious as the creative basis of all that was evident in existence. The position Jung formulates here on essential evil in the divine is probably the basis of his single reference to "...absolute evil..." throughout his *Collected Works* (Jung, 1950c :10).

In Jung's letter of November 24, 1953, it becomes obvious that White had been pondering Jung's position on essential evil and good in the source of what is. If good and evil coexisted in the unconscious as the ground of what is what did this make of the figure of Christ as the alleged fullest expression of this ground and as an adequate symbol of the self? Jung answered that Christ is still a valid symbol of the self but with qualifications that would likely further disturb White. For



Jung here relates Christ as a symbol of the self to the "devil" as the other side of this symbol needed for its completion. In his work *Aion*, Jung is quite explicit that the demonic must be assimilated by the figure of Christ if that figure is to adequately represent the totality of the self (Jung, 1950c: 42, 44). As he continues in this letter Jung takes up the position he makes clear in his *Answer to Job*. The religious imagination prior to the imagery surrounding the incarnation of Christ had yet to make conscious the absolute split between Christ and Satan as the light and dark sons of a common father. After the figure of Christ differentiates itself from Satan the absolute split between good and evil grounded in the creator can no longer be denied in the creature (Jung 1953: 134-135). Consequent to the split, and in a decidedly preliminary sense, Jung insists that the light of Christ as the incarnation of the good in God must be culturally preserved in the face of the oncoming power of darkness which, at the time, he may have closely associated with Communist collectivism.

However, almost immediately after making this first point, Jung introduces a second pillar of his psychology, namely, that all differentiation requires the reunification of the differentiated opposites at a more inclusive level. This is one way of stating what he means by the transcendent function. Here Jung applies this dynamic to the reunion of Christ and Satan "...as the far-away goal of the unity of the Self in God." (Jung 1953: 135) This distant embrace of Christ and Satan is to take place in "...the Oneness of the Holy Spirit." (Jung 1953, 135) Effectively this age or aeon is destined to supersede Christianity in uniting archetypally based opposites that Christianity could constellate but not resolve. This is the age, Jung continues, described by Joachim di Fiore (1132-1202) as the age of the Spirit. In it the diabolic will be assimilated as the completing complement of the symbol of Christ. Writes Jung, "The *adventus diaboli* does not invalidate the Christian symbol of the self, on the contrary: it complements it. It is the mysterious transformation of both." (Jung 1953, 136) In this extended context the symbol of Christ and the Church as the Christian community are to be "...maintained until it is clearly understood what the assimilation of the shadow means." (Jung 1953: 136)

In 1953 Jung obviously did not know what form this assimilation was to take. His position is nuanced and profoundly dialectic. He clearly affirms that the Christian aeon is indeed to be superseded and at the insistence of the same Spirit which created it. In the meantime he and White must stay behind their vision of Christianity's supersession and defend its one-sidedness till a newer age would dawn. Jung describes this situation, "Nobody will be so foolish as to destroy the foundations when he is adding an upper story to his house, and how can he build it really if the foundations are not yet properly laid?" (Jung 1953: 137, 138)

Toward the end of this substantial letter Jung comes close to identifying his personal situation and that of his psychology with Joachim di Fiore as his thirteenth century predecessor. Jung is to continue Joachim's "anticipation" of a future in which the self or Paraclete would unite the opposites it splits in creating the Christian aeon and so work the "...invalidation of Christ." (Jung 1953:138) But this invalidation is to be worked only by the power of the Spirit or Paraclete, the same Spirit that gave birth to Christianity and to its central antinomy of Christ and Satan. What Jung is revealing here is the philosophy of history that runs throughout his work. The unconscious creates the epochs and so history in its effort to become conscious in history. This is done through the

differentiation and reunification of archetypal polarities in human consciousness. In 1953 Jung could say that the unconscious was ushering in a new myth in the west and that his psychology would contribute to it. His psychology would do so by anticipating and fostering a fuller manifestation and synthesis of the God grounded opposites Christianity had served to differentiate but could not resolve in the evolution of humanity's historical religious consciousness. Till this age emerged the symbol of Christ and the good side of God would preside awaiting the birth of a symbol of Christ's embrace of Satan as a third beyond the consciousness of the split. In 1953 and probably throughout his lifetime Jung could give little content or form to this reconciling symbol.

White expressed a qualified agreement with the thrust of this letter but evidenced again his inability fully to assimilate a symbolic or mythic approach to religious expression when he wrote to Jung the next year on March 3, 1954 (White 1954: 163 fn 1). White was concerned that if Satan were Christ's split off shadow this would compromise Christ's omniscience, a position upheld by the Holy Office on June 5, 1918. (Denzinger 1965k: 704) The imaginal presupposition behind the question is that of a human figure of Christ who would somehow know everything that God knew. On April 10, 1954, Jung answered with the second most substantial letter in his correspondence with White. In the first part of the letter he repeats his position that he sees the figure of Christ as a "mythological being", (Jung 1954d: 164, 165) an archetypal concretion of the self (Jung 1954d: 164, 165), which wholly and immediately immersed his biographical life in the myth that surrounded him and gave to his personal story whatever lasting value it has (Jung 1964d: 164). As an archetypal constellation of one side of the self Jung would grant to such a mythic figure a certain all knowing quality, the same omniscience that resides in the collective unconscious but defies full realization in the consciousness of any historical individual.

But then Jung returns to the theme he had raised in his previous letter. The split between Christ and Satan was in the service of their eventual synthesis and this synthesis could only be worked by "...a symbol expressing either side in such a way that they can function together." (Jung 1954d: 166) And here he introduces a profound theme he elaborates with slight differences in his Answer to Job. In his treatment of this theme in that work Christ's crucifixion between figures of acceptance and rejection symbolizes humanity suffering toward the resolution in historical consciousness of the antinomy at the heart of divine life (Jung 1954c 461). In this letter also the symbol he proposes as uniting Christ and Satan is that of the crucified on the cross. But in this letter Christ symbolizes the light son crucified to the tree which is symbolic of the mother and darkness. The demonic compensation completing the one-sidedly spiritual Christ is described simply as "nature". Writes Jung, "The tree brings back all that has been lost through Christ's extreme spiritualization, namely the elements of nature." (Jung 1954d: 166) Here the mother and darkness refer to the power of the unconscious itself. The obvious conclusion from these words is that redemptive suffering is to take the form of the suffering humanity is destined to undergo in uniting the unconscious, understood as raw nature, with human consciousness where alone the absolute competing claims of spirit and nature can unite in a state inclusive of but beyond both in their current dichotomized state.

Jung goes on to describe both the contemporary cultural situation and that of the aeon of Pisces as caught between absolutes which bear no easy current resolution. He comments that in its traditional form the crucifixion brings about the death of the human on a tree that is itself dead. The

resolution of opposites in this specifically Christian sense, takes place beyond the grave. But in the age of Aquarius the union of opposites can take place in the here and now. The unconscious will come to pervade consciousness or to put it in religious language "...man will be essentially God and God man." (Jung 1954d: 167) Though he does not seem to think such atonement possible in the Christian aeon Jung does see the suffering union of opposites, consciousness with the unconscious, here described as humanity's vegetative life, as both the archetypal meaning of the Christ event and by extension as a description of the movement of history itself

In this passage in this letter Jung is simply repeating what he understood to be the content or substance of his work on Job. There Jung sees the figure of Christ crucified between two thieves, one recognizing, the other denying his validity, as symbolic of humanity's suffering the polarities of the unconscious into their unification in a wealthier consciousness. The figure of Christ dying in despair is a prelude to the risen Christ. The risen Christ then is a symbol of the union of opposites in human consciousness in the redemption both of the unconscious or the divine and of human consciousness in which alone the divine self-contradictions can be resolved. More importantly Jung describes the imagery of Christ dying between the opposites as both "psychological" and "eschatological" (Jung 1954c: 408). In his letter of 1954 to White he uses the phrase "essential teleological tendency" (Jung 1954d: 167). This term changes to "eschatological" in his work on Job. By it Jung means that in the symbol of the crucified Christ the psychological and the religious come to coincide and the form of their coincidence is the movement of history to the resolution in consciousness of that divinely based antinomy that divinity could neither perceive nor resolve in eternity. On this point more research needs to be done on Jung's dependence on the mystic, Jacob Boehme, whose experience convinced him that only in humanity and not in the Trinity were the divinely based opposites capable of reunion (Dourley 1995).

As an aside it should be noted that in both of these major letters of 1953 and 1954 Jung encouraged White to stay in the Church to ease its passage into a myth which would eventually surpass it by completing it. In his wider work Jung makes it clear that this completion would take the form of the sacralization of the feminine, the embodied and the demonic all excluded from Christianity's presiding symbol, the Trinity. The implication of Jung's exhortations may well be that White was seriously thinking of leaving the Dominican order. In the letter of November, 1953, Jung writes, "Those that foresee, must - as it were - stay behind their vision in order to help and to teach, particularly so if they belong to the church as her appointed servants." (Jung 1953:136) In the April 30, 1954, follow up letter Jung continues this theme. He assures White that his gift as an introverted thinker actually changes traditional doctrine as it is personally assimilated and that this personal transformation has an effect on those in one's psychological vicinity (Jung 1954d: 169). More, he encourages White not to look on his present role as a monk as a "...fundamental mistake." but to see the difficult situation he is in as an occasion to carry the "meaning and not the words" of the Church into the future, a role that the Church herself unconsciously supports in people of White's caliber (Jung 1954d: 169, 170). Nor should White be bothered with his doubts. "Doubt and insecurity are indispensable components of a complete life." (Jung 1954d: 171) White should also accept evil in the church since it is everywhere and in all professions. The list of ecclesial evils Jung draws up reads "...Pharisaism, law consciousness, power drive, sex obsession, and the wrong

kind of formalism..." to which he adds later in the letter, "...ambiguity, deception, 'doublecrossing...'" and other unspecified "...damnable things...". (Jung 1954d: 168, 172) Jung advises White that by maintaining his consciousness and vision for the good of those surrounding him White is adopting an "...analytic attitude..." which would "...take the Church as your ailing employer and your colleagues as the unconscious inmates of a hospital." (Jung 1954d: 172)

#### **4. The Denouement**

From the point of these two letters the relationship between the two men deteriorated, largely over Jung's publication of his Answer to Job with an English publisher in 1954. In a letter of January 1955 Jung foresaw that the publication of this work would be problematic for White but even at this late date still looked forward to seeing White when White was to lecture that coming April at the Jung Institute in Zurich (Jung 1955a: 213). Jung's apprehension was justified. After the appearance of his work on Job for an English readership White wrote a negative review of the work in Blackfriars in March, 1955 (White: 1960a: 233-240). In a letter to Jung on March 17, 1955, after the publication of the corrosive review, White wonders why Jung had to publish "...such an outburst..." because of the damage it would do to analytical psychology for "...Catholics and Christians who need it so badly." (White 1955: 238 fn 1). These words seem to sum up the dilemma the work caused for White. On the one hand it was an unacceptable outburst. On the other hand Catholics and Christians badly needed such an outburst or at least the psychology that lay behind it. Why? White seems to have realized, however dimly, that Jung's psychology was needed to help his Christian and Catholic constituency out of the suffering imposed upon them by the sterile state of the Christian myth at the time. Jung's psychology would do this by leading them into an immediate engagement with the unconscious energies that had initially given rise to Christianity and to its symbols, even though these same energies currently worked for the appreciative surpassing of the myth itself. White had yet to understand or fully acknowledge that Christianity could not easily encompass the breadth or depth of Jung's vision. Nor could White accept Jung's insight that Christianity's then barren spiritual resources could not be restored through spiritual energies endemic or easily accessible to the mainstream Catholic or Christian tradition especially in its Aristotelian/Thomistic expression. Jung into Christianity simply did not go. Jung's shift to the Spirit of the quaternary embraced and divinized more of reality than the Christian Spirit could (Dourley 1994). Christianity had defined and, in so doing, pathologized itself through the exclusion of the gnostics, the alchemists, the seekers of the grail and many of its own mystics. Its future health lay in the recovery of its heresy and this was an unlikely prospect in the mid-twentieth century and probably still is. White may well have been forced toward the question, "Could Christianity reflect the totality of God as creator and remain itself."

For a person allegedly given to outbursts Jung's response to White on April 2, 1955, was relatively moderate though in this letter he does launch his own form of personal counter attack for the first time in their correspondence. But before he does so Jung surfaces a theme that runs

throughout his psychology and that continues to evade serious scholarly examination within the Jungian field. This theme centers on the social and political implications of his psychology. Jung's first response to White takes the form of his having had to write on Job to parry the contemporary "...drift towards the impending world catastrophe." (Jung 1955b: 239) Jung was probably referring to the Cold War in which archetypally bonded communities then threatened a common human future. The Cold War is over but archetypally based faith in its blatantly religious form, in its more disguised secular and political form and in combinations of both continues to-day to threaten the future of the species. The conflicting archetypally possessed communities may differ but the archetypally grounded opposites incarnate in them continue to fund a mutual hatred with little promise of realistic resolution. Following Jung's lead should all these conflicting faiths be traced to their common origin in the human psyche they would be relativized as expression of a common unconscious provenance. Such relativization would make a serious contribution to the emergence of a consciousness that would deprive faith communities of their still lethal force in relationship to each other (Dourley, 2003).

To return, then to the more personal lines of the letter, Jung expresses sympathy for the suffering that White is going through caught between the contemporary currents of the unconscious and the theological tradition these currents were currently appreciatively corroding. For Jung this was the form of the suffering that White was destined to undergo as his participation in the suffering that God suffers "in His own creation." (Jung 1955b: 241). After these compassionate remarks Jung moves to a serious personal charge when read in terms of his own psychology. He departs from his earlier exhortations that White remain in the Church and contribute to it, however indirectly, through his fidelity to a consciousness of a future more encompassing religious spirit. Now he indicts White of being caught in a puerile dependency pattern which compromises his honesty and forces him to take public positions in order to preserve his status in a Church on which he is dependent. This compromising position is "...the hard rule for everybody fed by an institution for services rendered."(Jung 1955b: 242) Effectively Jung is saying, "If you take their money, you adopt their line at least in public."

At the end of the letter Jung asks White to reread his work on Job and to see if he cannot agree that only in the human soul can God work the unity of his opposites. Again he invites White to stay with him in Zurich that spring but at Kusnacht not at the much more exclusive Bollingen. When White came to lecture at the Institute that April they did not meet. During this time in Zurich White wrote three letters to Jung (Jung 1955c: 251, fn. 1). In a letter of May 6, 1955, while White was in Zurich Jung effectively declined a meeting and so ended his part in the dialogue only to take it up again over four years later in 1960 when White was nearing death. They were in each others' presence one more time in June, 1958, but there is no record of any interchange on that occasion. During this time White had written to Jung but there had been no replies (Jung 1955c: 251, fn. 1).

In April, 1959, White had had a serious motorcycle accident. Jung had been told of it and in a letter of September, 1959, to a mutual acquaintance, a Prioress of a Contemplative Order, he asked after White's current health. In prior correspondence with Jung, the Prioress apparently had made the point that Jung's thought mediated through White had had a positive influence on her and on her community (Jung, 1959a: 516). Jung took this to mean that White did not fully disapprove of his

work, an indicator that even at this late date he was not quite sure of White's private mind. On October 18, 1959, White wrote to Jung, thanked him for this message conveyed to him by the prioress, and confessed that due to his allegiance to Jung "...his future had become uncertain." (Jung 1959b: 518, fn. 1) White was probably referring to his status on a Catholic theology faculty at Oxford. On October 21, Jung replied to White that he did not really know what Whites' attitude was implying again that White's negative public writings might not reveal White's full mind (Jung 1959b: 518). Early in the next year in a letter of February 6, 1960, Jung confesses to the Prioress that at one time he thought White might carry on his work (Jung 1960b: 536). Shades of Freud's early expectations of Jung himself!

On March 18th, 1960, White was to write to Jung that he had undergone an operation for what turned out to be intestinal cancer (Jung 1960c: 544, fn. 1). Yet even at this very late date the dispute was not over. In a strange letter to be written to someone so sick, Jung responded on March 25, 1960 to White's negative review in the *Journal of Analytical Psychology* of his Terry Foundation lecture "Psychology and Religion" (Jung 1960c: 545, fn. 3). In the review White contended that Jungian psychology effectively used archetypal theory to elude personal moral and psychological responsibility. In his reply Jung charges White with the inability to go beyond a personalistic psychology to an archetypal perspective, one that would place the reality of evil so evident in creation in the source of creation itself (Jung 1960c: 545, 546). Coming so late in the relationship this was indeed a serious charge implying that White had either not grasped or remained unconvinced by the rudiments of Jung's psychology. But even here Jung refers to his "everlasting friendship" with White and asks for his forgiveness for the distress his thought has caused him (Jung 1960c: 546). In letters of April 29, 1960, (Jung 1960b: 552) and, after White's death, of October 19, 1960, (Jung 1960e: 604), both to the Prioress, and in a second letter written after White's death to a Mrs. Ginsberg, (Jung 1960a: 563) it becomes evident that Jung did not fully realize the gravity of White's situation at the time of his late abrasive challenge. He describes the letter as a "...sin against my better insight." (Jung 1960a: 563) In the letter of that final April to the Prioress Jung states unequivocally that he is at peace with White and convinced of White's "...sincere and human loyalty." (Jung 1960b: 552) He concludes by asking the Prioress to convey these sentiments to White. In this letter to the Prioress and in his final letter to White on April 30, 1960 Jung states that he would go to England if his age, then eighty-five, and health did not forbid it. He thanks White for all White has given him and confesses that the positions that came between them in his psychology were forced upon him by his fate (Jung 1960d: 555).

In White's response on May 8, 1960, he thanks Jung for this "...wonderful and comforting letter." He adds, "And such are our several conditions that it seems unlikely that we shall be able to meet and talk again in this world." He concludes, "May I add that I pray with all my heart for your well-being, whatever that may be in the eyes of God. Ever yours cordially and affectionately, Victor White." (White 1960b: p. 555 fn 4.) White died two weeks after this letter on May 22, 1960 from a sudden thrombosis. And so might it be said, "The rest is silence?"

## 5. Why It Won't Go Away.

The rest is by no means silence. In a letter written after White's death on October 19, 1960 to the Prioress of previous communications, Jung forcefully suggests that their conversation was not only between a psychologist whose psychology had profound religious implications and a theologian looking for the link between his religion and psyche. Rather Jung elevates the issues between them to the major spiritual issue of our present epoch whose implications would address the survival of humanity itself. He does this when he writes, "I have now seen quite a number of people die in the time of a great transition, reaching as it were the end of their pilgrimage in the sight of the Gates, where the way bifurcates to the land of Hereafter and to the future of mankind and its spiritual adventure." (Jung 1960e: 604) It is difficult to read this passage without concluding that White's death meant for Jung that when faced with the choice White was unable to participate in what Jung describes as "...the future of mankind and its spiritual adventure."

What, then, is at the heart of mankind's future spiritual adventure. First look at what this adventure must overcome and victory here is by no means assured. Certain passages from Jung's Answer to Job wring out the death knell for monotheism and for the monotheistic Gods. These Gods are wholly transcendent to humanity, in whom no darkness is to be found and whose self-sufficiency reduces creation and humanity to an omnipotent creator's afterthought in which the creator has no personal investment in terms of gain or loss. The following passage from his work on Job was provoked by the discussion with White on evil. It is wholly incompatible with any form of supernaturalism still held, if not by that name, by the mainstream traditions in all three monotheistic variants. The passage reads, "The naive assumption that the creator of the world is a conscious being must be regarded as a disastrous prejudice which later gave rise to the most incredible dislocations of logic." (Jung 1954c: 383, fn. 13) For Jung, Job's consciousness marks a definitive stage in the evolution of humanity's religious evolution. After it, "...nobody was ready with a saving formula which would rescue the monotheistic conception of God from disaster." (Jung 1954c: 385)

If the monotheisms must be outgrown what then would replace them. In certain passages with a discernible resonance with the spirit of Teilhard de Chardin, Jung seems to equate divinity with the powers of nature working through processes of evolution with all the brutality and wastage apparently needed for the emergence of human self-consciousness. (Jung 1954c: 385) In this sense God as the personified drive of evolution toward human self-consciousness is, "...too unconscious to be moral." (Jung 1954c: 372) But reflective consciousness once gained is then to usher its creator into the realms of human ethical responsibility and a broader compassion this power lacks in itself. This is what Jung means by the relativity of God and by his understanding of divinity and humanity as "functions of each other." (Jung 1923: 243) The eternally unresolved divine self-contradictions, the polarities between which Yaweh and the unconscious swing, can only be perceived and resolved in humanity and its history. Such progressive resolution in history becomes the only meaning of incarnation for Jung (Jung 1954c: 406). Incarnation thus revisioned means that the divine and the human are engaged from the outset in processes of mutual maturation as historical humanity works the redemption of God in human consciousness at the insistence of and with the help of God itself.

These foundational elements in Jung's understanding of humanity's future spiritual adventure were simply beyond White's theological imagination. Their acceptance would have meant the loss of his faith. Jung links their rejection to his early death (Dourley 1991: 309). If the discussion between White and Jung is elevated to its archetypal dimension the identical dilemma faces contemporary individuals and cultures. Can we transcend our monotheisms, religious and political, to save individual and collective life or is death, first of the spirit, then of the body, the only alternative? In dialogue with another theologian Jung warned that humanity's failure to unite the divinely grounded opposites in itself could only lead to "...universal genocide...". (Jung 1957: 735) The loss of lesser faiths in the interest of a more inclusive compassion remains the problem of our age. In 1952 Jung was to write, "Everything now depends on man." (Jung 1954c: 459) It still does. In 2006 the time to grow or die may be shorter than when Jung and White saw the problem so clearly now more than fifty years ago.



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