

## TWO THEOLOGIANs ON JUNG'S PSYCHOLOGY

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

TWO more theologians have recently responded to Professor Jung's invitation to collaborate with his work. Both of them are priests. One belongs to the Belgian Province of the Society of Jesus. The other is a German Jewish convert to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Their respective books<sup>1</sup> contrast sharply. Father Hostie's book, despite its restricted (and rather baffling) title, is the more comprehensive and ambitious. It attempts a complete exposition and critique of the whole of Jung's work, at least to the extent that it impinges on religion and philosophy. Dr Zacharias's book is more limited in scope, and treats of some particular questions which arise from Jung's more recent work only; but what it loses in breadth it gains in depth. The contrast however lies mostly in their respective attitudes and manners of approach. Fr Hostie expressly restricts himself to a review of Jung's published writings. Although he is convinced that 'repeated personal contact with Professor Jung and his closest collaborators is absolutely necessary to grasp the exact meaning of the texts', he deliberately confines his study to Jung's 'official publications'.<sup>2</sup> This restriction is not without its value: it is, after all, from his writings, and without the benefit of personal contact and vocal interpretations, that Jung must be most widely known and judged. Moreover Fr Hostie has conducted his examination of these official writings, comparing

1 *Du Mythe à la Religion: La psychologie analytique de C. G. Jung*, by Raymond Hostie. (Desclée de Brouwer, for Études Carmélitaines; 120 Belgian francs.) *Psyche und Mysterium: Die Bedeutung der Psychologie C. G. Jung für die christliche Theologie und Liturgie*. (Studien aus der C. G. Jung-Institut, Zurich: Rascher.)

2 Occasionally Fr Hostie offers no citations for his interpretations. We know of no passage in his publications where Jung defines the 'psychologism' which he repudiates as merely 'toute théorie qui réduit la religion à n'être que la transformation d'un instinct'—on the contrary he frequently describes it as the position which maintains that religion (or indeed anything else) is 'nothing but' psychology, and he likens it to maintaining that Cologne Cathedral is 'nothing but' mineralogy. Similarly the assertion that 'Jung exclut à la légère toute intervention du prêtre pour ceux qui se sont libérés de leurs troubles psychiques' would be difficult to find in the *opera*, and is clean contrary to this writer's experience. Fr Hostie is on firmer ground when he maintains that for Jung the 'religious function' is 'irreducible' and unconnected with basic instincts, but it is difficult to understand why a Catholic critic should regard this as an 'enrichment'. This position seems to have more in common with gnosticism or nineteenth-century pietism than with traditional Catholic philosophy.

and collating the various editions, with scrupulous care; and has incidentally added the most complete bibliography yet made of them—it includes several early *opuscula* which even the editors of the *Collected Works* seem to have missed. But the result is inevitably a book about books, and despite his evident—thought not always sustained—efforts to be fair and sympathetic, Fr Hostie is always the external observer who seldom convinces us that he has experienced or shared the problems which have given birth to analytical psychology. Dr Zacharias on the contrary gives us the impression of being so deeply involved in it that detached criticism, or appreciation of the seriousness of the difficulties encountered by theological or other readers of Jung's books from outside the Jungian fold, are alike inhibited.

Fr Hostie brings to his task a scholastically trained mind and an eminently French attachment to clear and distinct ideas. Jung, with his suspicion of systematization, does not lend himself easily to successful treatment by such instruments. Fr Hostie of set purpose leaves the Jungian 'functions' out of account in his exposition, but Jung's writings are hardly intelligible unless it be understood that they are the product of sensation, intuition and feeling at least as much as of intellect. Despairing—but perhaps not quite enough—of expounding Jung's works as a logically coherent pattern, Fr Hostie concentrates on tracing the chronological development of some of his leading ideas—and often very profitably. Indeed, so neat and tidy is his presentation of the development of Jung's views about religion that it is doubtful if Jung himself would recognize it. This is not to say that it is inaccurate: it is, after all, a task of criticism to interpret an author's work. But Fr Hostie's own philosophical interests predominate; he is, for instance, far more interested in a few of Jung's admittedly speculative opinions on the origin of archetypes than he is in archetypes themselves. His keenly analytical mind detects contradictions (notably in the same chapter on archetypes) where a more phenomenological approach might see no more than amplifications and (in his own scholastic terminology) quite legitimate analogical predications. Although he professes to divide his book into two parts, the first expository and the second critical, he can never keep his critical temper long at bay, and the criticism is often conducted by trying to fit Jung's data and ideas into philosophical categories of doubtful appropriateness. He is particularly fond of the categories

'objective—subjective' and 'interior—exterior': sometimes he appears even to equate them. Unfortunately he never explains his understanding of these terms, though so much of his criticism depends upon them. But given that analytical psychology needs translation into thought-forms quite different from those in which it was born and nurtured, it may be said that Fr Hostie's translation is often both faithful and ingenious.

When Fr Hostie writes on his own account, neither expounding nor commenting on Jung, he is excellent. His chapter on 'Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction' is almost wholly admirable, and should be widely circulated among both psychotherapists and confessors. Many of his critical comments on Jung's works also require very serious attention. Of particular importance is his demonstration of the profound influence which the Kantian *Kritik* has exercised on Jung's interpretation of his empirical data. Indeed, Jung's Kantian epistemology seems to have itself become such an 'a-priori category' as to be itself unconscious, and to render any other position impossible even to consider, even as a 'psychological fact'. Fr Hostie remarks that the attribution of this or indeed any philosophy to Jung arouses 'vehement diatribes': 'cela est particulièrement le cas, quand Jung s'en prend à un adversaire réel ou fictif, qui veut minimiser ou anéantir les résultats de la psychologie analytique en se référant à la métaphysique ou à la théologie.'

If this is so, Fr Hostie himself will hardly hope to escape a similar reaction. His criticism, though often justifiable, is too often a somewhat unhelpful confrontation of Catholic theology or traditional philosophy with Jung's *scripta*, with indications of where they appear to coincide or to diverge. There results a somewhat academic treatise, in which the vital realities and needs of the human soul seem hardly to be considered. Jung himself has indicated, and we think rightly, that what he and other perplexed human beings expect of the theologian is to show 'how the dogma is the hitherto most perfect answer to, and formulation of, the most relevant items in the objective psyche' which psychology reveals, 'and that God has worked all these things in man's soul'. It is true that some of Jung's later speculations have vastly hindered rather than helped this sort of collaboration from the theologian; but Fr Hostie's comparison of mere alternatives is not very constructively helpful to the perplexed soul either. His treatment of

these speculations—notably on the nature of evil, on the trinity and quaternity, on the *Answer to Job*—is almost entirely negative. It makes no attempt to show how the Catholic position provides not only an equally satisfactory hypothesis to account for the phenomena, but answers still better than Jung's own 'ignorant and incompetent' musings the needs which his empirical research has here disclosed.

Towards the end of his book Fr Hostie draws an important distinction between what he calls Jung's 'theoretic' and his 'practical' assertions. The labels are not very well chosen, for they would seem to be all about equally theoretic and equally practical. But by the first he would have us to understand Jung's observations of fact and the hypotheses he has constructed to account for them; by the second his views and opinions which have been called forth from the practical exigencies of patients and others—and especially non-believers—in their hunger for orientation and *Weltanschauung*. These latter have multiplied during the past fifteen years, and Jung himself has stressed the incompatibility of many of them with Christian orthodoxy and the Western *philosophia perennis*. The matter is complicated by the fact that Jung is not always too well informed about what constitutes Christian orthodoxy (which he seems often to confuse with the uncriticized assumptions of uneducated Evangelical piety); sometimes he dubs manifest heresies as orthodox, and sentiments which would hardly turn the hair of an inquisitor as heretical. But in many instances the incompatibility is undeniable and radical. It is certain that since the late thirties he has (despite the bland assurances that Christ, Buddha, Krishna, etc., are, from the psychological standpoint, equally valid symbols of the unique *Selbst*) given increasing attention to the distinctive peculiarities of the Hebrew-Christian tradition—especially in its attitude to evil. Confronted as he is by patients who inherit this tradition, but lack the means of grace designed to deal with the tensions it arouses, it is understandable that, despite his sincere desire to found no religion, sect or philosophy, his efforts to meet the needs of his patients and readers, and to 'reduce the opposites', has produced opinions (notably about the *privatio boni*, the trinity and quaternity) which can hardly fail to harden into a new dogmatic orthodoxy in the hands of his devoted followers. A theologian may sympathize with the doctor's dilemma, and admire the 'distress for his brother' which has

elicited this departure from rigid scientific exactitude. Yet he must fear that the whole effort is doomed to failure: for problems and tensions which arise in the human psyche from a divine intervention beyond the *lumen naturae* cannot be overcome from within it. Meanwhile, whatever the therapeutic results among his non-believing patients (a matter on which we have found no grounds for optimism), the confusion among others is already devastating—as indeed is only to be expected if they are to be injected with views alien to their own conscious beliefs or assumptions and their own unconscious material. Fr Hostie's distinction of these two categories of Jung's pronouncements, his acceptance of the one and rejection of the other, is thus of capital importance. But is it inevitably very much easier to make the distinction than to apply it in the concrete?—especially so long as the author of the pronouncements himself makes no such distinction, and his disciples account the four functions of the psyche and the quaternity of the light-dark God to be equally part and parcel of 'Jungian psychology'.

Had Dr Zacharias recognized this distinction, his book would have been much more valuable. It is nevertheless a thoughtful and thought-provoking book, more subtle and supple than Fr Hostie's. But where Fr Hostie is perhaps hypercritical of Jung, Dr Zacharias is not critical at all. His theology is patristic and liturgical rather than scholastic, his approach synthetic rather than analytic, even to the point of disregarding distinctions and precisions which seem essential to his theme and for a valid synthesis to be achieved. It is pardonable in the secular psychologist to confuse the unconscious process of projection with the conscious act of faith, or to evaluate the individual's religious *Urerfahrung* above the common faith of the believing community; but it might be expected that a theologian's contribution to the psychologist will be precisely his observance of such distinctions and evaluations. Although the point may not have been developed so clearly in the Eastern as in the Western Church, a theologian might be expected to be able to distinguish the *imago Trinitatis*, which is *secundum mentem tantum*, from the *imago Christi* which pertains to the whole man, body and soul. These are just the things that the Jungian psychologist needs to know from the theologian; but too often Dr Zacharias seems to share Jung's own inevitably inexpert handling of such subjects. This is not to collaborate, but rather to deny to

the psychologist those theological resources which he needs. Dr Zacharias seems too often ready to surrender theological positions rather than disagree with Jung, even in theological and dogmatic fields where Jung confesses himself to be incompetent. He even quotes with evident approval Jung's statement that '(since) theology characterizes Christ as only good and spiritual, so there is bound to arise on the other side something evil, material or "natural" which is represented by the Antichrist'. A theologian should surely know that theology says nothing of the sort: on the contrary it must pronounce such a view as rank heresy. Not only must it reject the implied manichaeism of equating the good and the spiritual, the evil and the material, but it must also affirm its basic faith that Christ is precisely *not* purely spiritual but the Word made flesh, while Antichrist is precisely the '*spirit* that confesseth *not* that Jesus Christ is come in the *flesh*'. But Dr Zacharias has already sold the pass by allowing that evil is no *privatio boni* but an integral part of whole reality instead of (as Western and Christian thought has hitherto supposed) a defect in wholeness itself. Logically enough this leads him to the alarming suggestion that the Jungian way of integration and the baptismal renunciation of Satan and all his works are incompatible—and that it is the latter which must be itself renounced.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the solution of the controversy set off by Jung's onslaught on the *privatio boni*, it is surely illegitimate (and highly confusing for analysts and their patients) to read into Christian liturgical texts a meaning they do not have in Christian tradition, and then to reject them on account of a meaning one has oneself superimposed.

So far is Dr Zacharias prepared to go along with what Fr Hostie calls Jung's 'practical' pronouncements, that he even suggests that Eastern theology, unembarrassed by the *Filioque* and the Western elaborations of *oppositiones relativae*, might be prepared to grant a Fourth (and presumably feminine, dark and evil) Person to the Holy Trinity. He does not, however, explain how this is to be done; and curiously he makes no allusion to the 'sophiological' speculations of Bulgakov and others of his co-religionists in this direction—it can hardly be on account of their suspect Orthodoxy. He is well informed on Western liturgy; less so on Western Catho-

3 It would surely have been more to the point had Dr Zacharias distinguished between a 'union of opposites' in consciousness and *cognition*—which the baptismal ceremonies positively emphasize—and such a union in *conation*—which Jungians themselves can hardly advocate.

lic theology and practice. He has evidently misunderstood *ex opere operato* and *ex opere operantis*, and his comparison of Eastern with Western theory and practice regarding the sacrament of penance is, to say the least, biased.

The defects of the book are serious; but it has many excellencies and is always stimulating. Its treatment of the crucial subject of the relationship of Jung's 'Selbst' to Christ: the distinctions it makes between the historical, eschatological and glorified Christ, and of all these from our own more or less partial and often one-sided 'reception' of Christ, is most valuable, and should answer many of the difficulties raised for Christians and would-be Christians by Jung's *Aion* and other recent writings. But it is not everybody's book. It consists of the lectures which the author delivered in 1953 at the Jung-Institut in Zurich, it presupposes that background and language, and may not be altogether intelligible—either in its language or in the problems with which it treats—to the uninitiate.

Although there is much to be learned from both these books, they leave much to be done by theologians. The task should, we suggest, be seen less one of defending or attacking established positions with Fr Hostie, or of too easily surrendering them with Dr Zacharias, but of direct encounter with the raw material and crying need of perplexed human souls. Only so can theology appear in its true role as primarily concerned with the *Verbum salutis* and the *salus animarum*.