

midst of the myriad reactions that have been sparked off around him. It is difficult to think of any greater tribute being payable to someone in charge of a conference centre than that, in the appropriate spiritual and practical sense, he has laid down his life for his friends. For this reason, he has been one of the great, though unsung, peacemakers of our time.

## Victor White and C. G. Jung

### the fateful encounter of the White Raven and the Gnostic

Adrian Cunningham

Victor White's life and work are a fine demonstration of the combination of the Dominican commitment to truth and to contemplation and the handing on of the fruits of contemplation. They are also a demonstration of the very considerable cost which commitment can entail, especially when operating for twenty years on the frontiers of theology and Jungian psychology. That Jung and White had the highest regard for one another's work and that they disagreed strongly on the nature of evil, especially concerning Jung's *Answer to Job*, is well known. The publication of the greater part of Jung's side of their correspondence makes available to those who were not personally involved the real extent of their disagreement over a number of years and the estrangement between them which resulted. More than once White wondered what exactly it was they were arguing about, since at different times they each seemed to agree to some particular item of the argument. Their inability to synchronise such agreements between them is not to be explained by personal factors, though this plays an important part in any discussion involving psychoanalysis. The breaking point was the Catholic philosophical view of evil as a privation of good and parasitic upon it (*privatio boni*) and not as autonomous element opposed to it, and I shall return to this later.

Examination of the relationship between them casts light on the difficulties of making this philosophical position experientially convincing and indicates that the disagreement focussed upon this point drew upon wider areas of contention between theology and psychology.<sup>1</sup>

Victor White was born in 1902, he was a convert from Anglicanism, studied in Valladolid and was ordained in 1928. Apart from a year in Louvain, he was at Blackfriars, Oxford, from 1930-1954, teaching at various times dogmatic theology, moral theology, and ecclesiastical history. His contributions to *Blackfriars* in the middle thirties concerned ecumenism, marxism, and the social and political responsibilities of Catholics; his position showed the influence of McNabb and of Gill. In the late nineteen-thirties and early forties he was a member of a group of psychologists, clergy and others which met in Oxford under the chairmanship of John Layard, an anthropologist and Jungian psychotherapist. Part, at least, of White's own analytical training was with Layard. The first published sign of his interest in Jung's work seems to be a 1941 review of R. Scott Frayn's *Revelation and the Unconscious*. His paper to the Layard group 'The Frontiers of Theology and Psychology' was published in October 1942.

In 1945 he sent a copy of this paper and two subsequent ones, 'St Thomas and Jung's Psychology' and 'Psychotherapy and Ethics' to Jung and received a warmly encouraging response:

'Excuse the irreverential pun: 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.'<sup>2</sup>

The letter runs to five pages, ending,

'Well -- a long letter! Not my style at all. "It" has made an exception in your case, my dear Father, because "it" has appreciated your conscientious and far-sighted work.' (L. I 381-2, 383-7.)

White visited Jung at Bollingen in August 1946 and their friendship developed rapidly. Jung found in White what he felt he needed most, a man with whom he could discuss on equal terms matters of vital importance to him (Editor's note LI 450). Their letters are a sharing of both intellectual and personal concerns, discussing dreams and fantasies as well as points of history and doctrine.

In a short space of time White became an important figure in Jungian circles. The rapidity of his progress was not welcome to everyone and White himself over the years seems to have regretted that the Jungians cast him so wholly in the role of theologian rather than that of analyst. He was invited to the 1947 Eranos Conference and presented two papers, 'The Aristotelian Conception of Psyche' and 'St Thomas's Conception of Revelation'. Later that year he was invited to become a founder member of what became the C. G. Jung Institute in Zürich, and he tried to interest the Roman authorities in the setting up of the Institute. At the end of 1947 he went to America on a lecture tour on the Unconscious and God, addressing the New York Analytical Psychology

Club in February 1948 on Gnosticism and Faith, and publishing in *Commonweal* 'The Analyst and the Confessor'. On his return he stayed with Jung at Bollingen for the second week of September.

Three months later Jung wrote,  
'Dear Victor,

The spirit prompts me to write to you.

It is quite a long time since I heard of you and very much longer since I have heard you really. I may be all wrong, but I confess to have a feeling as if when you were in America a door had been shut, softly but firmly'.

Certainly being in America had been disorientating for White and he felt himself isolated in England, but Jung had forgotten that he had recently received from White what he later recalled as 'a most helpful and comprehensive letter'. (LI 516-7) The forgetting of this letter and Jung's 'fantasy' of a door having shut may have a significance beyond the fallibility of an old man's memory. White's review later in 1949 of the Eranos meetings contains his first published disagreement on the question of evil and the next available letter of Jung takes him up at length on this *correctio fatuorum*. One might as a sheer matter of speculation recall that it was Jung's journey to America with Freud in 1909 that prepared the ground for a severance between an older and a younger man. Freud had seen in Jung his heir apparent, the Joshua who would enter the promised land after him. Replying to the Mother Prioress who had informed him in early 1960 of the fatal course of White's illness, Jung wrote,

'As there are so few men capable of understanding the deeper implications of our psychology, I had nursed the apparently vain hope that Fr Victor would carry on the magnum opus.'  
(L II 536)

By May 1950 White felt that their discussion of *privatio boni* had reached deadlock.

'What is so perplexing to me is that it is precisely your psychology which has enabled me to *experience* evil as *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!' (cit. L.I. 555)

On which Jung comments sharply,

'Your metaphysical thinking "posits", mine "doubts". . . You are moving in the universe of the known, I am in the world of the unknown. That is I suppose why the unconscious turns for you into a system of abstract concepts.' (ibid.)

In the published correspondence the topic lapses until 1952 and Jung's *Job* book. Jung wrote this in a matter of a few weeks

and it bears the signs of impetuosity as well as of long-pondered doubts on the nature of the Western image of God. In Jung's view Job represents a higher form of justice than God does and this challenge is met by the Incarnation, redeeming the injustice God has committed towards man. White's immediate response to the *Antwort auf Hiob* was that it was the most exciting and moving book he had read in years, '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.' (cit. LII 51) A fortnight later, however, on the specific issue of *privatio boni* he complained of a deadlock of assertion and counter-assertion in spite of good will on both sides. 'We move in different circles and our minds have been formed in different philosophical climates'. (cit. LII 58) The letters continued through April, June and July and when they met at Bollingen 17 to 27 July the main topic was the issue of evil. White was lecturing in Zürich in May 1953 and talked with Jung but apart from some long letters in November 1953 and March and April 1954 the correspondence almost ceased.

White's ecclesiastical difficulties had increased rather than lessened over the years and his progressive views led in 1954 to his not being appointed Regent of Studies at Blackfriars. He was sent to California 'without any special assignment' but once there he gave many lectures and talked on television about Jung's psychology. Returning in March 1955, being assigned to the Dominican house in Cambridge, he sent Jung a copy of his review of the English translation, *The Answer to Job*, fearing that Jung might find it unforgivable, but that he could not see what was to be gained by such an outburst.

'I can see only harm coming of it, not least to my own efforts to make analytical psychology acceptable to, respected by the Catholics and other Christians who need it so badly.' (cit. LII 238)

Although, as noted, White had continued his criticisms of Jung's views of *privatio boni*, the gap between his immediate welcome to the Job book and his review of it three years later is striking and it is not surprising that Jung took it badly. It might be worth noting that a penetrating review of the original by his Oxford confrere, Richard Kehoe, appeared in *Dominican Studies*, which White was editing, alongside his own reviews of other Jungian books in 1952. The version of the 1955 review published as appendix V to *Soul and Psyche* adds several points to the original and deletes some of the more caustic phrases. Whilst Jung's reaction to the Job story is still characterized as that of 'a spoiled child', White removes such passages as '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.' Again, in the original version he asked whether:

'Jung is pulling our leg or is duped by some satanic trickster into purposely torturing his friends and devotees? Or is he, more rationally, purposely putting them to the test to discover how much they will stand rather than admit the fallibility of their master – or how many, Job-like, will venture to observe that the Emperor has appeared in public without his clothes?'

When the Emperor replied he invited White to stay not at the Bollingen retreat, but at his official residence in Küsnacht. White was lecturing in Zürich in May but did not visit Jung. Instead he wrote with warm regards that he felt their ways now must part. He wrote occasionally to Jung after this but Jung did not reply. They met for the last time in June 1958, and there was a brief exchange of regrets and continued disagreements in the months preceding White's terminal illness in 1960. White had a serious motorbike accident in April 1959 but the illness was cancer and the ultimate cause of death a thrombosis. He had reviewed *Psychology and Religion* (volume 11 of the *Collected Works*) in January 1959 asking 'Can we legitimately transfer our personal splits and ills to our Gods and archetypes, and put the blame on them? . . . Or are the critics right who consider the Jungians have become so possessed by archetypes that they are in danger of abandoning elementary psychology altogether?' Jung replied to this 'aggressive critique' returning to the Job-Elihu motif, but 'Don't worry! I think of you in everlasting friendship.' (L II 546) There was a final brief exchange, White still trying to clear up 'some strange misunderstandings – or non-understandings – which have arisen between us'. 'I pray with all my heart for your well-being, whatever that may be in the eyes of God.' Victor White died on 22 May 1960. Jung had Mass offered on what would have been White's 58th birthday, 21 October. Jung himself died on 6 June 1961 in his 85th year.

In the opinion of one person who knew them both it was the disagreement with Jung that shortened White's life. This is indemonstrable, but the issues of this powerful and costly relationship deserve reconsideration. Jung's writings are more easily available than some of White's so this assessment will focus more on the latter's position on the main theological issues, leaving to one side many of their discussions of gnosticism, alchemy and other topics.

All of White's writings are marked by clarity of thought and an attractive, fluid, style of expression. It is not surprising that Jung found him a man he could talk with on equal terms. From first to last White's appreciation of Jung's work is marked by profound personal and intellectual gratitude and a frank recognition of points of difference. This is so from the 1942 article to his Cadbury lectures, *Soul and Psyche*, in 1958-9. It shows in his response to Ray-

mond Hostie's trenchant critique of Jung in 1955, the same year as his own attack on the Job book. Whilst Hostie scored many intellectual hits, his justifiable criticism, lacking any inwardness with the *materia* of psychotherapy resulted in a 'somewhat unhelpful confrontation of Catholic theology or traditional philosophy with Jungian scripta'. It was White's familiarity with the *materia* as well as the *scripta* which provoked such anguish over Jung's inability to understand traditional philosophy. At a time when writing about Jung from within the school tended to be even more uncritical than a good deal of it still is, White's attempt to avoid both smooth Jungian *nostra* and slick theological apologetics rendered his personal position an uncomfortable one.

Whilst the question of evil was the decisive one, grounds for disagreement lay scattered and less obviously in White's approach at an earlier date. Since some of these are hard to come by and I do not know of any discussion of them, I will devote some space to these less familiar items.

Three issues stood out in White's account of Jung in the 1942 paper. First, taking up the ancient claims for an *anima naturaliter christiana* he saw analytical psychology as a ground for this, an experiential and scientific resource for natural theology. As he later (1958) quoted from one of Jung's letters, 'What the theologian has to show is precisely that the dogma is the hitherto most perfect answer to, and formulation of, the most relevant items in the human psyche, and that God has worked all these things in man's soul'. According to Jung, in 1947 White thought that everything depended on whether the Church would go along with modern psychological developments or not. (L I 466) Secondly, he saw in Jung's earlier work a sharp conflict between an awareness that religion was not only psychologically valuable but irreplaceable, and a humanistic, optimistic view that religious beliefs could be dissolved by analytical investigation. He saw the latter as an attempt to resolve this conflict. Thirdly, he argued that in breaking with Freud's view of the sexual nature of libido and postulating it as undifferentiated energy Jung had implicitly given grounds for an innate aspiration for God, *naturale desiderium*.

' . . . in positing an undifferentiated libido he was, in spite of himself, asserting that the psychological data were unaccountable except on a postulate which was as metaphysical as could be. Yet the fact remains that formless energy is synonymous with *actus purus*, and *actus purus* (under one name or another) is, as natural theologians have pointed out, what men call God.'

This idea was the keystone in White's approach to analytical psychology.

Jung simultaneously trailed his coat and covered his tracks on



metaphysical issues, but he could not be pleased with this view of his work. This key claim of White's for a rapprochement of psychology and natural theology also provided the basis for what could be seen as an outflanking of Jung and one that he would, in one way or another, resist. In many ways Jung's work is an attempt to resolve the issue that White noted, a commitment to the irreplaceability of religion and an awareness of the insuperable block, as he saw it, to metaphysical speculation offered by Kant. Jung's career as a commentator on religion can, I think, be seen as a response to the post-Enlightenment 'aesthetic', 'as if' nature of the Liberal Protestant tradition of Christianity in which he had grown up. His response, given the irreducibility of religious data and his belief that metaphysical speculation was curtailed, was to turn to empirical research in religion, in the first instance fairly naively understood spiritualistic phenomena. Aware of the need for a science to gain a point of vantage outside the field of the phenomena it studied, he sought this, non-transcendentally, by correlating the data of contemporary psychoanalytic investigations with the amassing of data from remote and ancient cultures: an historicist strategy. As a Catholic, White takes up the two positions which are a characteristic strength of that tradition and have yet to be brought into a convincing modern synthesis — an appeal to philosophical first principles and an appeal to the universal experience of mankind. Correlation of material from the Christian tradition, from the history of religions, and from the findings of analytical psychology was just the kind of collaboration Jung desired. The appeal to thomistic philosophy, however, was the origin of the parting of their ways. In the search for a point of vantage outside the psychological data White could bring his philosophical training to bear to supplement the comparative method, indeed to go beyond it, and this Jung was not disposed to permit. As we have seen White thought that the concept of undifferentiated energy was 'as metaphysical as anything' and part of his effort in the nineteen forties was to start to spell out a thomistic basis for Jungian psychology. Writing in June 1944 an elaborately sympathetic review of a very slight book and stressing that in his dispute with Freud Jung had seen that instinctuality was not only transformable but *meant* to be transformed, he notes that the

'substitution of "undifferentiated libido" for "sexuality" was, however unwittingly, a return to the conviction of the *philosophia perennis* that no particularized science can establish its own first principles, but must accept them from a higher and more general science.' 1944 (My emphasis)

If the *privatio boni* was the occasion of the dispute this more general claim was the underlying cause.

White's commitment to the complementary nature of the ex-

periential and philosophical weight of the Catholic tradition and Jung's psychology took, as I see it, two lines in the nineteen forties which may not be obvious if one looks only at his major books, *God and the Unconscious* and *Soul and Psyche* (there is useful material in his other book, *The Unknown God*, but not directly pertinent enough to the present discussion to pursue here). On the one hand there was an attempt at a comprehensive treatise on God and the unconscious, ranging over the early history of religions and the nineteenth-century precursors of depth psychology, the introductory sections of which survive as the first two chapters of *God and the Unconscious*. White felt that between the conception and the completion of the scheme his learning of the works of Beguin, Schaer, Goldbrunner and others had rendered it redundant. The style of the portions that were completed suggests that his decision was an unfortunate one. There might not have been much to add in the way of scholarly detail on these topics for an international academic audience but as a serious and readable study in English at this time the abandonment of the project is a great pity. The other line on which he was working in the nineteen forties was an approach to the frontiers of psychology and theology from a different angle, that of thomistic philosophy. As well as the work on the Aristotelian view of psyche and on St Thomas's view of revelation, versions of which can be found in *God and the Unconscious*, he was also arguing for the importance of 'affective' as well as 'intellectual' knowledge in Thomas's philosophy, thus suggesting an important link with Jung's work. He was attempting to counter the opinion that the most serious obstacle to a rapprochement of thomism and modern thought was the idea that thomism ignores or rejects terms like 'experience', 'instinct', 'intuition', 'value-perception'. His main point is that the very perfection of things as they are in their multitudinous separateness is in itself an occasion of imperfection. Following Thomas, he sees the remedy for this in the existence of knowledge 'whereby the distinctive perfection of *one* thing is found in *another* thing, without loss of identity in either'. Knowledge is thus, essentially, self-transcendence: 'we know, we have knowledge – but we are not knowledge.' *In knowing we are or become another*. As he says, and the theme is picked up in his later notes on buddhist writings:

'Knowledge is essentially an identity of knower and known, a transcendence of the limitations inherent in each creature as such. The more perfect is knowledge, the more complete is the non-otherness of thought and thing. All knowledge as knowledge tends to assimilate to the Archetype of all knowledge, which is God's knowledge of God, in which there is absolute identity of Knower and Known, Thinker, Thought and Thing'. Knowledge is that kind of reality in which creatures remain and



transcend themselves in becoming another. White's development of this line of thought in terms of affective knowledge remains only as a sketch, but the thomist view of knowledge as a substantial relation between knower and known and the sense of becoming other than oneself offered an important contribution to Jungian thoughts of projection and fantasy, the glimmers of an epistemological basis for analytical psychology.

In looking to St Thomas for a rational justification of what for the post-Kantian Jung can never be more than a postulate, White also thought that the foundation of the Jungian edifice, the theory of types, could be philosophically underpinned. Jung tried to demonstrate that human beings have capacities for thinking, feeling, intuiting, and sensing which occur in a regular way – such that one may be dominant, others being auxiliary, and some necessarily undifferentiated and unadaptable by the individual; the inferior function. White thought that philosophical backing, and more than that, an independent source, for this conception could be found in Thomas's demonstration that 'cognition *must* be either perception or judgment and that each of them *must* be *per modum cognitionis* or *per modum inclinationis*. It would thus be possible to establish that Jung's division of functions 'is intrinsically necessary and irreducible', and in terms more precise, perhaps, than those of Jung himself. (1944 a)

White's commitment to thomist philosophy included giving attention to the kind of material that bulks large in works like the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and is not given so much attention these days. Thus he had a carefully pondered belief in demonic powers that are not explicable solely in terms of psychological projections. Commenting on the *Satan* volume in that extraordinary series *Études Carmelitaines* he remarked that there were grounds for suspecting that 'assent to the reality of demons has too long been purely notional among many Christians, and for saying that nothing could more effectively render Christianity itself irrelevant and meaningless'. Contemporary Catholic sensibility might sympathize with White's experiments with astrology, the *I Ching* and other forms of divination, but draw the line somewhere short of a belief in demons. In other contexts, he offers rather more accommodating possibilities:

'That St Thomas attributes [certain phenomena] to projections by angels and heavenly bodies upon the human psyche, while Jung regards them as projections upon angels and heavenly bodies, is relatively unimportant so long as both confess, as they do confess, that they are unable to provide any adequate definition of their terms.' (1944 a)

Neither of these lines of approach to the frontier, a development of the thomist theory of knowledge, and a comprehensive

study of homo religiosus/psychologous, were to be developed to their originator's satisfaction. We should be thankful for the works we do have. Attention to the breadth of White's engagement with Jung, the similarities and latent differences, points up the closeness between their thinking which made their later relations so fraught. Perhaps people only seriously fight and with any hope of fruitful consequences when there is both all and nothing between them.

On the question of evil, there were four main areas of discussion: the concept of God as *Summum Bonum*, and of evil as *privatio boni*; the character of God in the Old Testament; the sinlessness of Christ; the relation between the idea of the Trinity and 'the missing fourth' – whether the female, or the devil.

On these latter three topics there are many differences of detail and of argument of a stimulating kind, but there is not the unbridgeable gap that there was on the definition of evil. Whilst he thought that Jung had wilfully misread the story of Job, White is in no way in principle averse to the psychoanalytic investigation of the personality of Jahweh presented in scripture. And there is a substantial measure of agreement between them on Christ as an image of the self for westerners, whether they believe it or not. The image is one of a God who is all light, and whilst this brings an enormous advance in the differentiation of psyche it also sets unprecedented problems. Psychologically, Christ is an embodiment of the self which is only one half of the archetype; the dark and unacceptable sides of the human totality are in danger of lacking representation and thus becoming the more irrational and uncontrollable. Whether the Antichrist is the other half of the archetype and what we are to make of the shadow side of Christ's personality are issues frequently raised in the correspondence. It is a pity that this issue of the figure of Christ is not more fully developed in *Soul and Psyche*, White was uniquely qualified to speak on these difficult questions. Lastly, he had important observations to make on the familiar Jungian query about trinitarian symbolism in Christianity, 'where is the fourth?' Jung's psychology of the four functions of personality and his studies of mandalas led him to see quaternary symbols as *the* symbols of wholeness. White deals well with the issue of the feminine in Christianity (*Soul and Psyche*, ch. 8) and goes into basic issues in his discussion of 'Trinity and Quaternity'. This is an important chapter revealing his developed thoughts on the matter. He proposes that the missing fourth may be an irrelevant issue, arguing for the psychological importance of the distinction between the *imago Trinitatis (secundum mentum tantum)* and the *imago Christi* which pertains to the whole person, body and soul. He suggests that ternary symbols are archetypal symbols in their own right, presenting a content distinct from

that of the quaternity. Whilst there is warrant in Augustine and Thomas for taking the Trinity as the prototype for human processes of consciousness, he claims that the Trinity has never been presented as a pattern of human or cosmic wholeness.

'Christian doctrine thus ensures that the symbol of the triune God in no way functions as a substitute for, or evasion of, the demands of the quaternity: and that no confusion need arise between them. On the contrary, it ensures that they be kept utterly distinct, although . . . the doctrine of the Incarnation ensures that they be kept not utterly apart. *The one is Creator, the other its creature*'. (109, my emphasis.)

On the definition of evil both men feared that the views of the other underestimated its reality. This was a part of White's criticism of the Eranos paper, 'On the Self'. (Revised version CW 9 ii chs iv-v). It offers too easy an escape from the struggle between Light and Darkness which Christianity brings into the world. Jung is burdening his work with an irrelevant association with gnostic dualism (a charge Jung vigorously rejects), and the infelicitous excursion of a great scientist outside his own field issues in naive philosophizing, wholly misunderstanding the *privatio boni*. It is precisely the Catholic's doctrine of the *privatio boni* which puts him on his guard against these grey shadows. Good and evil are opposites indeed, but they are not equivalent contraries. (1949 a) On his side, Jung held that whilst his view relativizes good and evil, it does not minimize them in the least. (CW 18 p 717). For him it is the illogical, irrational nonsense of *privatio boni* which is 'morally dangerous because it belittles and unrealizes Evil and thereby weakens the Good, because it deprives it of its necessary opposite . . . If Evil is an illusion, Good is necessarily illusory too' (II 61). The kind of thing which he bridles at can be instanced by White's 'Since the great Greek philosophers, it has been generally understood that evil as such does not and cannot exist.' (*Soul and Psyche* p 152)

The idea of evil as having no existence in itself whilst being perfectly real is not one that always seems obvious and convincing. And Jung's inability to understand it and White's frustration in trying to persuade him are not helped by Jung's claim that he is concerned not with theology as such but with the general condition of the Christian mind, with the effect of such beliefs in the lay people he is treating. White acknowledged this; 'though theologically misinformed, Jung is all too often clinically correct'. (1958.439). The matter is further complicated by the running together at many points in the discussion of two distinct issues: Whether evil is best described as a privation or lack and not as something in itself, and the question whether this lack is God's 'fault' and indicates a dark aspect within the Godhead itself. More

neutrally, the question is in what way Cusa's sense of God as 'complexio oppositorum' may be understood?<sup>3</sup>

The arguments on these issues are many and complex and I shall comment only on some of those that arose in the Jung-White relationship. A useful outline of the traditional view was given in *New Blackfriars* January 1981 and may be fresh in readers' minds. The author located the *problem* of evil in the question why moral evil occurs: why God who could have made a world in which nobody ever sinned and everyone was perfect, did not do so. There is not such a problem about evil in the world, for even in a perfect natural and historical world there would still be evil *suffered* as the obverse of the good of material things. Life involves interaction and the multiplicity of things and beings in the world means that this includes damage and destruction. 'But every occasion of destruction is, of itself, an occasion for the good of the thing that is doing the destroying . . .' We need to consider the lion as well as the lamb, the bacteria as well as the body they are destroying.

It is at this point that something often seems to go wrong, not so much with the argument itself but with the way in which it meets the difficulties people do in fact have with it and with its place in the range of discourse we engage in in thinking of God, which is liturgical, experiential and psychological, for instance, as well as philosophical. The view of a diverse world ticking over efficiently, eating and being eaten, has to fit with a view of it as condemned to frustration, groaning and travailing, *seeking* liberation. Whilst the philosopher can question what kind of 'should' can govern expectations about the divine activity of creation his respondent may have problems fitting this with the fact that human expectation of what should be the case is used as a criterion of why something is bad, and a belief that human expectation is part of the perfection of mankind intended in creation. Somewhere between the concept of the *Summum Bonum* and our images of God, which do contain oppositive aspects, there seems at times a crashing of gears, at times a sleight of hand.<sup>4</sup>

The question of human expectation played its part in the Jung-White controversy. When White urged that 'I call an egg "bad" because it *lacks* what I think an egg ought to have', Jung responded that a bad egg is not merely a matter of decreased goodness since it produces qualities of its own that did not belong to the good egg — H<sub>2</sub>S for instance, a particularly unpleasant substance in its own right. (L II 59). The theologian can answer that for H<sub>2</sub>S itself it is perfectly unobnoxious, it is doing exactly what is required of it. Jung will repeat that since the goodness of the egg is defined by what I expect of it, then the presence of H<sub>2</sub>S just is bad. Darkness is a decrease of light, as light is a decrease of darkness; that dark-

ness can be seen as a privation of light, and thus inferior can only come from *us*. (cf L II 72).

This centrality of human experience is important for Jung in a way that falls between the evil we do and the evil we suffer. The latter is too exclusively described with regard to the non-human world, and the former is too adult in the sense of our making conscious choices. There is obviously the mystery of the self-destructiveness of the will, but there need be no dispute between theologian and psychologist here, it provides subject matter for them both. Jung's concern is rather that the evil is always *already* there, the serpent was not invented by Adam and Eve. (It is surprising that the topic of original sin did not feature overtly in the Jung-White discussions). 'Man is afflicted with darkness'. (CW 18 p 717) The human desire for completion, the instinctuality that is *meant* to be transformed, finds the shadow (a technical term of Jung's: note that a shadow is not a lack) already there as a constituent part of its desire.

The ordinary difficulties of making the *privatio boni* case carry experiential conviction are made more difficult by the particular stance of Jung's psychology. White's being in basic agreement with this makes his own position a peculiarly awkward one. Life is movement, flow, and thus for Jung, tension between opposites. (White later tried to spell out the different kinds of issues involved in talk of opposites, clarifying the opposition between good and evil as well, in his 1955 paper 'Kinds of Opposites'). Despite the solution of change without conflict enshrined in trinitarian doctrine, problems always remained for him in moving from notions of the *Summum Bonum* or Unmoved Mover to the sense of God as personal, polarity being indistinguishable from the sense of personality.

Perhaps the nearest they came to agreement – though neither of them seem to have spotted it – was in April 1952; when Jung argued that within the empirical world good and evil represent the indispensable parts of logical judgment, equivalent opposites.

'Yet we are moved by archetypal motifs' to make statements about what is absolutely the case. In this sense the *Summum Bonum*, the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, are metaphysical claims we may be driven to make. "I only deny that the *privatio boni* is a logical statement, but I admit the obvious truth that it is a 'metaphysical' truth based upon an archetypal 'motif'." (L II 52).<sup>5</sup>

As he wrote to another correspondent, he would accept the *Summum Bonum* formula as the highest good for man, regardless of what God is in himself. 'Whatever God is, that is Good'. (CW 18 726). At the same time God ultimately transcends good and evil. We must try to hold on to both conceptions. The difficulty concerns what we *can* say. Jung's view is that we can only make sense

of our experience as best we can, in the light of the ineffable. What he suspects in White, 'bound hand and foot to the doctrine of his church defending every syllogism, (CW 18 710), is the claim that we can have reliable knowledge of the ineffable such as to regulate our lives.

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I cannot myself, at present at least, take the argument beyond the points at which the participants failed to agree. I leave the last, but not conclusive, word to Victor White. Tucked away in an article of 1955 is the apparently simple remark that Jung is confronted with patients who inherit the Christian tradition 'but lack the means of grace designed to deal with the tensions it arouses'. (1955 c.) If that is so, then the responsibility of both psychologist and theologian is weighty, for the tensions *have* indeed become acute.

- 1 Examination of the relationship is also desirable because it has on occasion been badly misunderstood. Laurens van der Post, for instance, (*Jung and the Story of Our Time*, 1976 pp 221-2) gives a generally hostile picture of White, and gets his views of the feminine in Christianity and the doctrine of Mary's Assumption quite wrong. Either he has not read White's writings he alludes to on this or he has read them perversely. Whichever, he attributes to White views which are simply the opposite of those he held.
- 2 C. G. Jung, *Letters* ed. Gerhard Adler, vol. I 1906-1950, vol. II 1951-1961 (published in 1973 and 1976 respectively), hereafter referred to as 'L'. Other references are to materials in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, hereafter cited as 'CW'. References to White's writings can be traced in the list given at the end of these notes.
- 3 Jung was fond of citing Cusa in this connexion. As White pointed out, Cusa did not say that God was a coincidence of opposites but that God was 'beyond' and 'beheld in the door of' the coincidence of opposites.
- 4 An excellent account of these difficulties is given by David B. Burrell, in 'A Psychological Objection: Jung and Privatio Boni', in his *Aquinas, God and Action* (1979). He brings out both Jung's shortcomings in philosophical thinking and the intractability of the human experience he is trying to understand, such that one result of Jung's polemic may be to persuade us to restore the powers of evil to their proper place. Burrell stresses Jung's opposition to the liberal ethos dominated by the idea of rational control, in which evil might appear as a lacuna or a mere by-product of psychological oversight. White touched on this in his final comments on the Job book, "I am profoundly moved by its emotional power, its passionate sincerity, its compassion for the spiritual plight of post-Christian man, its brilliant flashes of insight" but felt he was wrestling with problems of a past era, memories of cosy Victorian liberal optimism masquerading as Christianity. (1959 a).
- 5 This is rather different from his view given in the foreword to *God and the Unconscious*, '... apparently the existing empirical material – at least as far as I am concerned with it – permits no decisive conclusion which would point to an archetypal conditioning of the privatio boni'.

The following is a list of Victor White's writings relevant to the issues discussed here; there are also passing references in his other papers and reviews of books on psychol-



- ogy and comparative religion which I have not listed.
- 1941 review: R. Scott Frayn, *Revelation and the Unconscious*, (Blackfriars, June).
- 1942 'Frontiers of Theology and Psychology', Guild of Pastoral Psychology pamphlet 19; revised version in chs 4-5 of *God and the Unconscious* (hereafter *G & U*).
- 1943 review: books by Jolande Jacobi and Rudolf Allers, *Blackfriars*, January.  
Thomism and Affective Knowledge, *Blackfriars*, January and April.
- 1944 a Tasks for Thomists *Blackfriars*, March.  
b St Thomas and Jung's Psychology *Blackfriars*, June.  
c Thomism and Affective Knowledge III *Blackfriars*, September.  
d Walter Hilton, an English Spiritual Guide.  
Guild of Pastoral Psychology, pamphlet 31.  
e Contribution to H. E. Brierley and others, *What the Cross Means to Me, a Theological Symposium*.
- 1945 Psychotherapy and Ethics *Blackfriars* August 1945. *G & U* ch 8
- 1947 Anthropologia Rationalis: The Aristotelian-Thomist Conception of Man. *Eranos Jahrbüch* XV. This comprises the papers 'The Aristotelian Conception of Psyche' (*G & U* ch 6) and St Thomas's Conception of Revelation', a different version appears in *Dominican Studies* I i (*G & U* 7).
- 1948 Analyst and Confessor *Commonweal*, (*G & U* 9).  
Notes on Gnosticism (Analytical Psychology Club, New York), Guild of Pastoral Psychology pamphlet 59 (*G & U* 11).  
The Unconscious and God (American lectures) *G & U* 3.  
Modern Psychology and the Function of Symbolism *Orate Fratres* April, and *The Life of the Spirit*, June 1949.
- 1949 a *Eranos* 1947, 1948 *Dominican Studies* II  
b Satan *ibid*  
c The Supernatural *ibid*
- 1950 Devils and Complexes (Aquinas Society Oxford) *G & U* 10  
The Scandal of the Assumption, *Life of the Spirit*, November (and in *Selection I* 1953 ed. Donald Nicholl & Cecily Hastings).
- 1951 The Dying God BBC *G & U* 12
- 1952 review: Jung *Aion Dominican Studies* V  
The Unknown God *Life of the Spirit* August, and (*God the Unknown* ch. 2).  
*God and the Unconscious*.
- 1955 Kinds of Opposites, *Studien zur Analytischen Psychologie C. G. Jung*  
Jung on Job *Blackfriars*, March and *La Vie Spirituelle*, Supplement 9, 1956, revised, *Soul and Psyche*, appendix 5).  
Two Theologians on Jung's Psychology *Blackfriars* October.
- 1956 Guilt, Theological and Psychological in Philip Mairet ed. *Christian Essays in Psychiatry*.  
*God the Unknown*
- 1957 The All Sufficient Sacrifice *Life of the Spirit*, June (*Soul and Psyche* appendix 7).  
Dogma and Mental Health, 7th Catholic International Congress of Psychotherapy and Clinical Psychology, Madrid. *Life of the Spirit* April 1958.
- 1958 review: Raymond Hostie, *Religion and the Psychology of Jung*. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* January.
- 1959 review: Jung. *Psychology and Religion, West and East* (CW 11).  
*Journal of Analytical Psychology*, January.  
Some Recent Studies in Archetypology *Blackfriars*, May.
- 1960 *Soul and Psyche*.