

## Psychoanalysis and Religion: The Paradoxical God - a Response to Jung's *Answer to Job* -

Martin Lucas\*

### 精神分析と宗教： 逆説的な神ーユング著「ジョブへの回答」に対する私見ー

M. ルーカス\*

This paper presents an account of the portrayal of God in the Old Testament book of *Job*, together with a summary of Jung's application of his psychoanalytic theories to this text contained in his *Answer to Job*. I give my own tentative evaluation of Jung's efforts to resolve the paradox of the problem of evil.

#### Part One

I outline the dramatic roles of God and Satan in the book of *Job*, and show that God is regarded as the author of evil as well as good throughout the Old Testament. I emphasize the importance of understanding *Job* as a literary text, particularly, appreciating its satirical and ironic elements. Both Jung and Job challenge conventional images of God, whereas Jung's critics and Job's comforters play the role of apologist. I end the section with a brief formulation of the paradoxical nature of the problem of evil.

#### Part Two

I present Jung's arguments in *Answer to Job*, in which he contrasts the ambivalent and paradoxical God of the Old Testament with the wholly good God of the New Testament. I examine Jung's suggestion that recognition of the shadow side of God is necessary if the symbol is to reflect psychological balance. I compare Jung's approach to this question with that of his disciple von Franz in her study of moral structures in fairytales. Both Jung and von Franz recognise the complex and paradoxical features of both good and evil. I end by identifying an inconsistency in Jung's claim that the co-existence of love and fear is a further dimension of this paradox, by showing how New Testament passages offer a resolution.

#### Key Words (キーワード)

Jung (ユング), Psychoanalysis (精神分析), Religion (宗教), God (神), Shadow (影).

Let me start by being uncontroversial. In the space of the next 5000 words evil will not be eliminated. I will further assert that in the same space our understanding of the

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\*Department of Creative and Critical Writing, University of Wales, Cardiff  
(ウェールズ大学カーディフ校文文学科)

problem of evil will not be significantly advanced. I can only talk around the problem and make a few scattered remarks. However, I do hope to be able to suggest that in the relatively short space of *Answer to Job* Carl Jung did succeed in making a creative contribution to debate about this problem, challenging us to reject stock responses and re-examine our attitudes. It is perhaps rhetorically presumptuous as a claim to provide the answer, but as one possible answer which at least injects new life into the question his book is well worthwhile. I will begin by looking at the book of *Job* itself, and then proceed to attempt to defend Jung against two writers who are critical of his reading. My Part Two is more disconnected. I do not try to follow in any detail the track of Jung's thoughts in *Answer to Job* but I do try to keep in view what I take to be its central concern: the paradoxical God. (Biblical references are given in the body of the essay; all other references are in the notes.)

### Part One

Let us examine the figure of Satan in the book of *Job* and see, to begin with, what he is not. As the story is presented he is not, awkwardly for Jung's case, an aspect of the personality of God himself. God and Satan are in dialogue. Perhaps God is schizophrenic. Perhaps Satan is no more than God in his unpleasant aspect, and the dialogue takes place for purposes of dramatic presentation only. However, on a literal reading, God and Satan are separate. Yet, awkwardly for a traditional Christian interpretation, they are not particularly opposed. As far as Job's suffering is concerned, they collaborate. Satan's purposes would seem to be antagonistic to God, attempting to drive a wedge between the Creation and its Creator. There is a bond of loyalty between people (as represented by Job) and God, which Satan wishes to weaken. But to pursue his purposes he requires God's permission and his action against Job is authorized. This, in turn, is an indication that while Satan might be God's opponent he is not his equal. We are not dealing with a dualistic system where good and evil pull in opposite directions competing for human souls. God has, in effect, delegated Satan to test Job and therefore both Job and his wife see the responsibility for their misfortune as belonging to God. Their reactions differ. She says 'Curse God, and die.' [2:9] He says: 'If we take happiness from God's hand, must we not take sorrow too?' [2:10] They are clear that God is the author of their troubles and argue only about what constitutes an appropriate reaction. Satan is not the author, but an instrument. In 1:6 he is represented as a member of God's ruling council. He thus has an allotted role in the heavenly hierarchy, with a certain amount of autonomy with which to act as an adversary, testing God's creative design for cracks. Dramatically speaking, we have here a monarchical system. God is the ruler; Satan is an important member of the government. He is not in opposition. But philosophical or psychological language which would wish to incorporate Satan into the godhead itself involves a departure from the actual text of the book of *Job*.

John A. Sanford has an interesting chapter on 'the Problem of Evil in the Old Testament' in which he shows how Yahweh is throughout regarded as the source of whatever

evil befalls his people, as well as good. God has a dangerous and potentially destructive aspect but

it is precisely this side of God that man may sometimes need to encounter in order to raise the level of his consciousness. (1)

In this sense, Satan, as a possible personification of the dark side of God, acts only to fulfil the divine plan. It is important, though, not to overlook the fact that, if only for dramatic purposes, Satan is presented as an independent character. Anthropomorphic analysis of God in *Job* may reduce Satan to the status of 'a kind of dark, doubting thought in God Himself' (2) but it looks to me as if this conclusion is reached with the benefit of psychological hindsight.

To some extent it seems as if it is just such rational conceptions of evil that Satan is out to test in *Job* and which the book itself explores. To begin with there is the suspicion that Job's faithfulness has effectively been bought by God, since he has showered Job with blessings. So the doubting thought is, what happens if these blessings are withdrawn? Rather than God earning Job's faithful response by his good treatment, or Job earning good treatment by his good conduct, the book examines what happens when the apparent connection between virtue and fortune is unplugged and evil appears to happen arbitrarily. What if evil serves no purpose at all, except perhaps to push a person's patient endurance to its limits? With dramatic irony Job's 'friends' ask Job to examine whether he hasn't brought this evil fate upon himself by his misdeeds. In their view evil has to make sense and be seen as the outward enactment of an inward fault. What the reader knows is that Job has attracted evil attention precisely by being virtuous. Insofar as evil is problematic this is, of course, where the problem lies. Unmerited suffering suggests that divine punishments are unjust or excessive. The literary brilliance of *Job* partly consists in its satirical presentation of religious platitudes. Eliphaz might not only be giving the response of a devout Jew, he might also be anticipating a glib psychotherapist or counsellor, when he attempts to reassure Job: 'Happy indeed the man whom God corrects!' [5:17] Naturally Job is far from happy. The speeches of Job's comforters could be read as wonderful passages of consoling religious poetry, if only we didn't know how off the point they are. Context is vital. Job is left looking for an answer because God's intervention, when it comes, brings no hint of an apology. In his majesty he holds it to be unnecessary to offer an explanation. God boasts of his own achievements and implies that his prowess gives him the right to conceal his purposes, act unpredictably and remain inscrutable. Job is forced to accept that he is in no position to argue ('I have been holding forth on matters I cannot understand' [42:3]) Almost equally arbitrarily he receives compensation, an improvement in his lot. In the conclusion there is no doubt again that it was God who caused Job's downfall: his family and friends 'comforted him for all the evils Yahweh had inflicted on him' [42:11]. The book of *Job* itself offers no satisfactory answer to the problem of evil, but it does provide a particularly clear articulation of the question: why should suffering occur so arbitrarily and be so extreme? The 42 chapters deepen our feeling for what is involved, and perhaps from Job's point of view

Yahweh's appearance and voice does provide some kind of satisfaction in terms of experience of the divine, but in the end the logic of the argument does not advance much beyond his pious acceptance in the first chapter: 'Yahweh gave, Yahweh has taken back,/Blessed be the name of Yahweh!' [1: 21]

There seems to me to be a certain analogy between Job and Jung himself on the one hand and between Job's friends and some critics of Jung on the other. The analogy centres on the question whether a man has any right to make demands of God. In *Answer to Job* Jung subjects Yahweh to a thorough criticism, asking, with an apparently naive sense of justice, whether Job did anything to deserve his callous treatment; and, if not, how can God's actions against Job be defended. Jung affirms that Job suffered a 'moral wrong' and convicts Yahweh of being 'an unconscious nature god' without the power (for all his power) of reflecting on the consequences of his own actions:

At one moment Yahweh behaves as irrationally as a cataclysm; the next moment he wants to be loved, honoured, worshipped, and praised as just. He reacts irritably to every word that has the faintest suggestion of criticism, while he himself does not care a straw for his own moral code if his actions happen to run counter to its statutes. (3)

Job himself has the courage not to use euphemistic language about his treatment at God's hands. He challenges God to acknowledge his excessive violence:

I cry to you, and you give me no answer;

I stand before you, but you take no notice.

You have grown cruel in your dealings with me,

your hand lies on me, heavy and hostile. [30:20-21]

and he protests his own innocence of any wrongdoing [Ch. 31].

By contrast his so-called friends take the strange step of seeking to defend God against Job's accusations. They assume God has a good case against Job and must be acting with justice. Eliphaz says:

Would he punish you for your piety,

and hale you off to judgement?

No, rather for your manifold wickednesses,

for your unending iniquities! [22:4-5]

As it happens, the reader knows that it is effectively his piety that he is being punished for. Zophar and Bildad give Job a long list of the horrors that befall the wicked, with the implication that he is one of them [Ch. 18&20]. It is left to Job to counter with the observation that all too often the wicked seem to get away with whatever they like [21: 11-14]. Eliphaz further attempts to make the point that the Almighty is beyond criticism and it is presumptuous of Job to question his fate:

Have you been a listener at God's council,

or established a monopoly of wisdom? [15:8]

Elihu, when he comes on the scene, is worse still, standing up for God against Job as if

God cannot stand up for himself:

He fumed with rage against Job for thinking that he was right and God was wrong; and was equally angry with the three friends for giving up the argument and thus admitting that God could be unjust. [32: 2-3]

Towards the end of his speech he says:

...I have more to say on God's behalf.

I will range far afield for my arguments  
to prove my Maker just. [36: 2-3]

What Elihu has not noticed is that action speaks louder than words and for all the neatness of his praise the evidence of God's injustice is sitting before him in the person of Job.

In a way which strikes me as similar, some of Jung's modern-day critics seem to want to defend God against the suggestion that he might be capable of evil as well as good.

Raymond Hostie accuses Jung, if not of being confused, then at least of being confusing. Yet this criticism is itself not presented with any great clarity. To begin with he describes *Answer to Job* as an outline of Jung's 'religious beliefs', which is somewhat provocative. Jung's ideas are not so much beliefs since they were deduced in the first place from his therapeutic work with his clients and are developed, as far as the book of *Job* is concerned, simply as a response to the text. Hostie writes as if it is Jung's thesis 'which sets up Job against Jahweh, man against God' (4) yet this opposition is there in the biblical text and plain for all to see. In a footnote Hostie complains of the 'absolute exercise in mental gymnastics' required to read Jung's book, since Jung apparently fails to draw sufficient distinction between God on one hand and men's ideas of God on the other. Yet surely what Jung is discussing is some third thing: God as presented in the text. Obviously God as he is in himself is beyond our ken. The Bible itself nowhere attempts to give a precise theological account of the ineffable. Instead what we have is a literary characterization. This characterization is accessible to all and Jung hardly needs to be forgiven for referring to Yahweh, as he appears in *Job*, as 'Yahweh', rather than the pointlessly cumbersome 'man's-idea-of-Yahweh'. Hostie, with his theological preoccupations, imports this dualistic difficulty. If we take *Job* as a species of myth we (including Jung) are fully entitled to take all its figures at their face value. Be that as it may, Hostie's paraphrase of Jung's description of this Yahweh is:

an oriental despot puffed up with his own omnipotence and intentionally blind to the injustices he inflicts on the just man, Job. (5)

Since Yahweh goes on for over 60 verses speaking in rhetorical questions, challenging Job with his magnificence, it is hardly an exaggeration to describe this as 'puffed up with his own omnipotence'. The difference, which Jung clearly recognises but Hostie appears to overlook, is that being God Yahweh can in fact do all these things. His power is not in question, only the appropriateness of his response to Job's request for a hearing. Hostie appears to know only either the sublime God of Christian theology or, at the other extreme, feeble mortal man. Jung is at ease with a concept somewhere in-between: the

mythological god who has a range of human attributes but is beyond human limitations. (see note (6)) The whole point of Jung's account of Yahweh is that he is a god who includes apparently contradictory opposites. His tyrannical thundering is only one aspect of a multifaceted character. He possesses which he isn't aware of himself, but which Job, with his greater consciousness, has confidence in. Hostie's persistent refrain that Jung is debating only 'man's-idea-of-God', whereas God Himself is altogether beyond Jung's reach, is, for me, reminiscent of Job's friends telling Job that Yahweh is just and blameless and insisting that Job has the wrong idea. Jung and Job 'attack' God. The others defend him. The paradox in *Job* is that, although he doesn't dwell on it, God does recognise his own conduct to be indefensible. It was Eliphaz and company who spoke untruthfully about God, and were forced to offer sacrifice as recompense [42: 7-9]. Perhaps Hostie's attempts to shield the Almighty from Jung's barbs are similarly misguided.

Another critic who leaps to Yahweh's defence is H.L.Philp. He makes a useful attempt to situate the God of Job in the context of God as he appears in the writings of other Hebrew prophets from Amos to Deutero-Isaiah. Yet it is no use allowing devotion to this God to over-ride a reading of the plain text of *Job*. Philp claims:

The God in whom the prophets believed was not capricious as you represent Him to be in your *Answer to Job* but inflexibly righteous. (7)

'Capricious' might not be quite the right word, but something similar is surely required to describe a God who colludes with Satan to test the patience of a devout follower by inflicting upon him almost unbearable suffering. (see note (8)) Again, Job's friends argue in favour of the 'inflexibly righteous' God, from which they infer that Job must have been so wicked as to have merited his mistreatment. Philp would be right to argue that Yahweh as he appears in *Job* cannot be taken as paradigmatic for the whole of the Old Testament. The book gives only one aspect of God; every other book of the Bible must be included to obtain the complete picture. But the peculiar strength of the argument of *Job* is its articulation of the problem of evil, which arises precisely when God appears to disregard his own standards and his righteousness suddenly looks flexible. There are weaknesses in two props of Philp's argument against Jung. Firstly, he claims that the God of the prophets was someone 'with whom they believed they could have personal relationships' (9) and 'He was not primarily a God of philosophy'. For precisely these reasons, he is occasionally unpredictable and inconsistent, as both Job and Jung are prepared to recognise. He is not a mathematically precise term whose position can always be successfully anticipated. Being a Person, you cannot tell what God will say until he speaks. Secondly, as Philp correctly observes,

There is no problem of evil, but only evil itself, unless we try to reconcile its existence with the loving providence of a good God. (10)

To this we can add that the problem equally depends on God being omnipotent, and one's religious system being monotheistic. Because of these factors the evil that takes place is apparently tolerated by the good God, which is precisely the situation in *Job*. Jung's ingenious solution, the 'totality of inner opposites', has the merit of preserving these

characteristics of omnipotence and oneness. This is at least an attempt at an answer to Job. The alternatives are either to despairingly conclude that there is a flaw in the grand design-God remains benevolent but becomes incompetent - or to postulate a dualistic rival to God-again he retains his benevolence but his rule is incomplete and partially ineffective. (see note (11))

## Part Two

From its beginnings as a response, from his 'emotional subjectivity', to the book of Job, Jung's *Answer to Job* proceeds on a rambling course through biblical and dogmatic history. He discusses a possible feminine component of the divine, through Sophia/Wisdom in the Old Testament to Mary in the New, ending with his approval of the dogma of the Assumption. He follows the changes in Satan's role between the Old and New Testaments and the apparent polarization between good and evil that takes place in the New where the emphasis on the wholly good quality of Christ, and the demands of the consequent ethic of love, are counter-balanced by the terrifying apocalyptic visions of *Revelation*. The argument is held together by this theme of balance. His analytic experience has taught that the psyche will resist one-sided development by producing a movement from the unconscious that counter-acts the direction of the conscious. The totality of the psyche, the self, contains all opposites. In Jung's view God, to be a meaningful symbol, must do the same, and balance both good and evil. (see note (12)) Three factors influence his consideration of evil: the evidence of the biblical text which, as we have seen, suggests in places that God is capable of evil; the evidence of 20th century history which he sees as a potential fulfilment of the visions of *Revelation*:

the dark God has slipped the atom bomb and chemical weapons into his hands and given him the power to empty out the apocalyptic vials of wrath on his fellow creatures. (13)

and the evidence of the human mind, which is motivated as much by fear as by love. These three themes are drawn together by Jung in some remarks in his 'Religion and Psychology: A Reply to Martin Buber'. These remarks effectively summarize the argument underpinning *Answer to Job*. Jung says:

Considering the fearful paradoxicality of human existence, it is quite understandable that the unconscious contains an equally paradoxical God-image which will not square at all with the beauty, sublimity, and purity of the dogmatic concept of God. The God of Job and of the 89th Psalm is clearly a bit closer to reality, and his behaviour does not fit in badly with the God-image in the unconscious ... I am essentially a physician, whose business is with the sickness of man and his times, and with remedies that are as real as the suffering. Not only Buber, but every theologian who balks at my odious psychology is at liberty to heal my patients with the word of God. I would welcome this experiment with open arms. But since the ecclesiastical cure of souls does not always produce the desired results, we doctors must do what we can ... (14)

Jung takes every opportunity to restate these concerns. In 1954 he was sent a booklet about the Holy Spirit by a priest, Pere Lachat. In his reply Jung discusses the Holy Spirit in these same terms:

Which God have you in mind: The New Testament God, or the Old? The latter is a paradox; good and demon-like, just and unjust at the same time, while the God of the New Testament is by definition perfect, good, the Summum Bonum even, without any element of the dark or demon in him. But if you identify these two Gods, different as they are, the fear and resistance one feels in entrusting oneself unconditionally to the Holy Spirit are easy to understand. The divine action is so unforeseeable that it may well be really disastrous. (15)

Later in this letter he spells out his position:

The unconscious is ambivalent; it can produce both good and evil effects. So the image of God also has two sides ...the right is Christ, the left Satan, and it is with these two hands that he rules the world. (16)

and again:

The soul is paradoxical like the Father; it is black and white, divine and demon-like, in its primitive and natural state. (17)

and finally: 'The data of the collective unconscious favour the hypothesis of a paradoxical creator ...' (18) At the end of the letter Jung asks to be excused the 'somewhat heretical character' of his thoughts. In all his writings on the subject he stresses that his psychological conclusions cannot necessarily translate into assertions about metaphysics.

Jung is unhappy with the doctrine of the Trinity because, whatever its metaphysical status, it does not seem to conform to the psychological facts. He would prefer to incorporate either evil or the feminine principle into our image of the godhead, thus providing a quaternity. His attachment to the idea of a quaternity goes back to his work on psychological types, where he identified four psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. Also, the symbolism of the number four seemed to continually recur in his studies of dreams, fantasies and myth. An image of God which contains no reference to evil or feminine elements seems to understate the reality of these two principles. Recurring motifs in dreams led Jung to identify the archetypes of the Shadow and the Anima. Perhaps, to be complete, God must also have his Shadow and his Anima. As far as evil is concerned the important thing is that its reality is not minimized. (see not (19)) John A. Sanford points out that one explanation of evil is that it is necessary to give good something to strive against. Thus justice, freedom, morality and faithfulness only come about in opposition to injustice, temptation, sin and destructiveness. Ultimately, then, evil seems to promote good. There is a difficulty, though, that such a view might lead to a complacent acceptance of evil. Also, good doesn't always win the struggle. In fact, it is futile to solve the problem of evil purely through thinking, as if, once it is correctly understood it will go away:

while evil may be necessary if God's spiritual plan is to be carried out and if



individuation is to take place, it still remains a fact that on the human level there are experiences of evil unmitigated by the hopeful attitude that all of this is somehow necessary. Unless this is kept in mind we are in danger of slipping into a sterile, intellectual solution to the problem that avoids the deep feeling response to evil which alone gives us an appreciation of its reality. (20)

Thus evil remains necessarily elusive. Jung's debate about the quaternity does not seem susceptible to a firm conclusion. Jung was impressed by the mandala patterns he discovered in dreams, which provided, in their symmetrical perfection, powerful symbols of psychic totality. Perhaps he was tempted to emulate this symmetry in constructing his own system, striving to give as complete an account as possible of the human mind. If his researches suggest that traditional Christian doctrine is not the final word some of us assume it to be, this is a constructive contribution. However, if there is a particular strength in the Jungian approach to the study of the psyche, it is perhaps in its flexibility, the recognition that dream and fantasy material resists regimented patterning. Dreams cannot simply be unlocked with a standard key; they require an interpretation sensitive to nuances and open to the possibility of contradiction. Jung's disciple, Marie-Louise von Franz, exemplifies some of the virtues of this approach in her study of representations of evil in fairytales. Seeing her generate some useful insights might give us more patience when we return to Jung himself grappling with the more controversial material of Christian dogma and biblical mythology.

The whole approach of von Franz is to allow for individual variation between people on the psychological level. To begin with, in discussing whether the psyche has an ethical structure, she differentiates between the 'collective ethical code' and the 'personal moral individual reaction'. Of the latter she says

one generally has a strange feeling of certainty as to what is the right thing to do, no matter what the collective code may say about it ... (21)

This 'inner voice' may approve what society disapproves, or disapprove what society approves. No generalizations can be made as to what it might dictate. Von Franz goes on to say that 'each individual has his own ethical level and form of reaction'; (22) so some are 'thick-skinned', others 'ethically sensitive'.

Similarly, fairytales, although they present collective material, do not present a 'standard basic rule' for human behaviour:

I can tell you stories which say that if you meet evil you must fight it, but there are just as many which say that you must run away and not try to fight it ... There are stories which say that if you are confronted with evil the only thing to do is to lie your way out of it; others say no, be honest, even towards the devil, don't become involved with lying. (23)

The only consistent rule that she discovered is that the 'helpful animal' in fairytales must never be harmed. What the animals advise is again 'completely contradictory', but their

advice is always to be heeded. The meaning is that

obedience to one's most basic inner being, one's instinctual inner being, is the one thing which is more essential than anything else. (24)

Her discussion of evil begins with the primitive kind, an 'overpowering nature phenomenon' which presents no ethical dilemmas but simply the practical difficulty of 'how to either overcome or successfully escape it'. Examples are evil nature spirits, possession, or demons associated with suicide or untimely death. Like avalanches, floods or earthquakes these evils are simply facts of nature to be dealt with or avoided.

A more complex character is the Russian Baba-Yaga, a witch with enough goodness in her to make her ashamed of her dark side. It is important, in the tale, that this darkness is not probed but left unexplored. Von Franz sees a parallel with a situation that occurred in one of Jung's analyses, which went on for many years with Jung choosing to allow his client to keep his secrets. Although what took place was kind of pseudo-analysis it gave the client enough space and confidence to deal with his secret successfully. Thus an analyst must employ intuition like a character in a fairytale, or an interpreter of a tale.

In another tale Baba-Yaga is treated very sternly by the hero and responds by becoming helpful and protective. She has potential for good or evil, and her good side is brought out by something as subtle as hero's tone of voice.

Von Franz points out the difference between the natural wisdom employed in fairytales and ethics of Christianity. The former tends to be relativistic whereas the latter attempts a sharp differentiation between good and evil. She suggests a way of living which combines the best of the two approaches:

treat evil outside oneself according to the nature wisdom rules of fairy tales, and ... apply the sharpened conscience only to oneself. (25)

The consistent theme of applying the lessons of fairytales to analysis is to use intuition to negotiate inconsistencies. In the case of some people with a latent psychosis, says von Franz, the best approach might be to reinforce the persona, and send them away from analysis to prevent the psychosis becoming manifest. (26)

At another point she observes the difficulty of knowing when to intervene:

there are times in inner and outer life where it is right to do nothing but wait and watch, while at other times one has to interfere; but to know when to act and when to let things happen, when to wait till they mature and move towards a possible turning point, is a wisdom about which fairy tales can teach us a lot. (27)

The ethic of the fairytales is one of 'creative, instinctual spontaneity' which is immune to possible abuse, unlike 'traditional codified knowledge' (28)

I have given an all too brief account of von Franz's book but it is useful to emphasize a vitally important aspect in this discussion of evil. Like the characters in the fairytales we have to be alert to subtleties. Good and evil can be misleading terms, giving the impression that it is possible to slice the world down the middle and throw the bad half

away, whereas in reality (as some Gospel parables might suggest) they tend to be intertwined. A more paradoxical image of God might at least have the merit of encouraging us to look out for the complexities of problematic situations, allowing us to deal with them (ideally) patiently and intelligently. A simplistic supernatural division between goodies and baddies might be partly responsible for the evident tendency for people on earth to similarly divide themselves from their neighbours. Personally, I am never quite sure how much practical effect something so abstruse as religious dogma might have, but Jung's passionate engagement with the topic indicates that in his opinion the effects are profound.

The unspoken assumption of *Answer to Job* and, indeed, of all Jung's writings on the social aspects of psychology, is that imagery and symbolism can be in a causal relationship to human behaviour. Therefore you can encourage changes on a social level by tinkering with collective symbols. This is a widely held theory, particularly convenient for intellectuals who wish to exert some influence on the public, or at least entertain an audience. Feminists blame our social ills on the patriarchal system. Atheistic humanists accuse Christianity (in this connection I'm fond of Thomas Hardy's 'After two thousand years of Mass/we've got as far as poison gas'). Christians are more inclined to blame the scientific enlightenment. Conservative politicians pretend we lived in paradise until the arrival of the 'permissive society' in the 'swinging sixties', the evil decade when it all went wrong. Religious traditionalists warn against Eastern thinking and New Age movements with their seductive pantheism. People who write books on mysticism and modern physics seek to redress the damage done by Cartesian dualism. I am not convinced that badges like the cross, the crescent, the star of David, the swastika and the hammer and sickle have had such a controlling effect on history as is popularly assumed. Philosophically speaking, it seems to me every bit as likely that action determines thought as that thought determines action. Rather than conditioning our approach to life, might not our image of God simply be a symptom of the way we live? In which case, as we live more authentically our image of God will self-correct and develop.

At any rate, there seems to be some confusion on this issue in *Answer to Job*. In Chapter XVII Jung says:

We have experienced things so unheard of and so staggering that the question of whether such things are in any way reconcilable with the idea of a good God has become burningly topical. It is no longer a problem for experts in theological seminaries, but a universal religious nightmare, to the solution of which even a layman in theology like myself can, or perhaps must, make a contribution. (29)

This 'universal religious nightmare' is a strange phrase. We might be living through a technological nightmare, with no reduction in our propensity for warfare and mutual hatred, and with the means to wage war in a more damaging and terrifying manner than ever before. But Jung's case that the connection with religion is obvious seems to involve some sleight of hand. It might be a matter of some regret that religion no longer speaks as powerfully as it once did and that the idea of God, good or otherwise, is, far from

being 'burningly topical', seen by many as boringly irrelevant. The virtue of Jung's book is in his desire to address this issue and suggest a way in which God might recapture more meaning. But the process has to be organic; a revitalized divinity will not appear simply at the suggestion of Jung or in response to a declaration by the Pope. (30)

According to Jung's reading the paradoxical god of the Old Testament who spoke to Job from the tempest reappears at the end of the New Testament in *Revelation*. This occurs as a reaction to the God of the Gospels, 'the epitome of good'. He analyses the author as likely to have been under pressure to 'live an exemplary life and demonstrate to his flock the Christian virtues'. Jung quotes *1 John*, with its ethic of perfect love, as an example of the high standards expected by the author of *Revelation*. Jungian psychology suggests that the unconscious of this author would produce violent imagery to compensate for the 'one-sided attitude' of his consciousness. Yet the imagery of *Revelation* is too 'brutal' and at the same time too 'consistent' for this to be a sufficient explanation. Jung's answer is that John's great love of God gave him access to knowing the truth about God:

The purpose of the apocalyptic visions is not to tell John, as an ordinary human being, how much shadow he hides beneath his luminous nature, but to open the seer's eye to the immensity of God, for he who loves God will know God. We can say that just because John loved God and did his best to love his fellows, this "gnosis", this knowledge of God, struck him. Like Job, he saw the fierce and terrible side of Yahweh. For this reason he felt his gospel of love to be one-sided, and he supplemented it with the gospel of fear: God can be loved but must be feared. (31)

If we think about this for a moment we realise that Jung is entirely correct, except for one slight qualification. Throughout the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, the words 'Do not be afraid!' run like a refrain. Inconveniently for the tidiness of Jung's case, this saying occurs prominently in the Gospels, for instance at the Transfiguration [Matt. 17: 8] and the Resurrection [Matt. 28: 10]. No one reading Rev. 1: 17 with any attention can fail to make the connection with these moments in the Gospels. Jung, in Chapter XIII of *Answer to Job* assumes love and fear to be mutually exclusive. So, ultimately, they may be. But precisely at the moment of vision they come together. 'Fear not!' is, as Jung observes, meaningless unless it is addressed to a person in a state of fear; but if the words are heard and understood they surely have an effect. In Matt. 17: 8 we read: 'Jesus came up and touched them'; and in Rev. 1: 17: 'he touched me with his right hand'. The fear of God is potentially overwhelming ...until the touch of God.

There is, in the end, room for both Jung and his Christian critics to be right. When we look at God we are faced with our own terror and may be blinded by our imaginations. (see note (32)) Jung's psychology treats the human imagination and confirms that this is our experience. Theology is slightly different and at least attempts to treat matters more from God's point of view. When he looks at us He looks with love. As I warned when I began, this leaves evil unexplained. In the course of this essay I have tried

to give some reasons why we might have to be patient with this conclusion. Jung's analytic psychology is designed to be of more practical benefit than theology; if it is to be so it is necessary for him to grapple with these problems. He has drawn attention to a paradox which is difficult but perhaps not without the potential for resolution.

#### Note

- ( 1 ) Sanford, p. 33
- ( 2 ) *ibid.* p. 26
- ( 3 ) Campbell, p. 549
- ( 4 ) Hostie, p. 214
- ( 5 ) *ibid.* p. 215
- ( 6 ) cf. 'Yahweh is a phenomenon and, as Job says, "not a man"' (Campbell, p. 547)
- ( 7 ) Philp, p. 166
- ( 8 ) cf. Dourley, p. 55
- ( 9 ) Philp, p. 167
- (10) *ibid.* p. 204
- (11) An antidote to these criticisms of Jung might be to read the attempt of John P. Dourley to present Christianity in Jungian terms. One interesting aspect of his approach is its affirmation of the meaningfulness of our individual existence. It is not as if redemption were achieved conclusively 2000 years ago and all that remains is to sit back and applaud:  
     Only through the individual's lonely wrestling with the divine contradiction as it manifests in his or her own life can God, the individual and history be redeemed.  
     (Dourley, p. 58)
- (12) cf. Since man is both good and evil, saint and sinner, resolution of his conflicts must include coming to terms with his 'evil' side. But if God represents a union of opposites, then God must also have His evil or dark side. (Storr, p. 98)
- (13) Campbell, p. 639
- (14) Jung, p. 669
- (15) *ibid.* p. 679
- (16) *ibid.* p. 682
- (17) *ibid.* p. 689
- (18) *ibid.* p. 690
- (19) Wayne G. Rollins quotes an epigrammatic remark from 'a Boston psychiatrist' which, in my opinion, Jung would have whole-heartedly affirmed:  
     "On the basis of my experience in the psychiatric wards, I am often more inclined to believe in the reality of the devil than in the reality of God" (Rollins, p. 69)
- (20) Stanford, pp. 41-2
- (21) von Franz, p. 115
- (22) *ibid.* p. 118
- (23) *ibid.* p. 119

- (24) *ibid.* p. 120
- (25) *ibid.* p. 174
- (26) *ibid.* p. 233
- (27) *ibid.* p. 235
- (28) *ibid.* p. 247
- (29) Campbell, p. 629
- (30) I realise that in these paragraphs I am being somewhat obtuse and missing the complexities of the Jungian position. But, at least on a superficial reading, it does sometimes look as if Jung is suggesting that we only need to modify our symbols to begin the rescue of humanity from apocalypse. The relation between the reality of God, our image of God, the collective imagination and social realities is difficult to comprehend; and so is Jung's understanding of it. A fairly clear account is given by Anthony Stevens, though even this stretches my intellectual grasp uncomfortably: Only the living symbol has the power to unite opposites so that they no longer clash but mutually supplement one another. In this transcendent power lies the meaning of the Christian myth of the necessary incarnation of God in man. For God Himself can become whole only through man's creative confrontation with the opposites and through their synthesis in the Self - the wholeness of the individual human personality...
- This is the one purpose that fits humanity meaningfully into the cosmic scheme of things, for it confers meaning on human life and, through humanity, on creation. (Stevens, p. 252)
- (31) Campbell, p. 626
- (32) My conclusion can be taken as a re-phrasing of these words of Victor White, who is himself paraphrasing St Thomas Aquinas:
  - It is not God who is wrapped in veils; the veils are the ignorance and darkness, the unconsciousness, which normally envelops our own minds; and it is these precisely which the very fact of the prophetic vision removes. (White, pp. 116-7)

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