

Christianity of Sunday school, but something more mysterious, disturbing, combining harmony and incomprehensible depths, along with the smells of 'man, of curds, and of wet stone floors'. The Christian religion is fully incarnate: dance, darkness, physicality; and the 'revelation' continues as the child runs home through the orchard trees. The light from the windows throws shadows through the branches, and Nature itself participates in a revelation of suffering: 'the yellow light/sent shadows shifting through the orchard trees,/their bitter, arthritic limbs, boned/fingers, armpits, the writhing/creatures of the drowned ark'. He is glad to return to 'familial warmth, of the oil lamp/softening the eyes of Jesus on the kitchen wall', a more domesticated Saviour. Neither image of Christ is truer or more meaningful than the other. Deane gives both as part of his younger self's experience of the Christian faith.

Much of the poetry expresses longing, in a beautiful devotional tone. He returns in 'Before the Crib' to childhood memories of country life and Christianity, herds in the field until Advent, and then their 'cumbersome flesh confined' in the cowshed. Kneeling before the crib at Christmas and seeing the ox watching over the newly born child beside Joseph, he marvels at how God has 'crawled into restricted times and places'. It is an image that encapsulates Deane's vision of the divine presence in the local and apparently insignificant things of life. The child's longing for everything to change, without the words to express it, has become, in the final lines, the adult's prayer for a redeemed world.

There is never any judgment in John Deane's all-inclusive verse. He expresses the universal longing for deeper meaning, but if we cannot take too much of its mystery at once, or struggle to connect, that is how we are, and what we can manage. And through his own figures of his younger self, and family, Achill Island's people and its magnificent scenery, he gives us redemptive glimpses of a higher order of reality, not detached from but part of a day to day experience, to find what he calls 'eternity in the bones of time'.

ANDREW JOHNSTON

Catafalque: Carl Jung and the End of Humanity by Peter Kingsley. 2 vols. Catafalque Press, 2018. 848 pp. £59.95; \$75.00.

Peter Kingsley's latest publication is a work on the role of prophecy and mysticism in the writings of Carl Jung and, to a lesser extent, Henry Corbin. He takes us on a journey into the inner worlds and minds of two of the greatest psychological and spiritual thinkers of contemporary times. Kingsley states that his book is about 'the hubris, the inflation, and the insanity of separating ourselves from the Sacred'. Can there be a more urgent subject?

I think it important to say at the outset, not least because he says it himself, that there is probably much as you read these pages that you may, at first pass, have some difficulty in accepting. The journey Jung and Corbin invite us to make and, most importantly, that Peter Kingsley personally makes in writing this book, is one that is unique to the individual, has no signposts and seeks no praises. The writer can only say 'this I did, this I saw, this I know' and one either believes him or not. This is the experiential dimension of Kingsley's writing and it is honest, passionate and sometimes quite wild. He knows this, makes no apology for it and I salute him for that, for one can sense he wishes to convey a deeply held truth. Kingsley also brings to his story the necessary scholarship required to research his sources. The second volume, containing notes on his research, is an outstanding piece of scholarship and well worth the attention it demands.

In this book, Kingsley examines the nature of prophecy and the way of the mystic in the work of C. G. Jung to which he has been personally drawn from his earliest days. In addition, he brings into his story, towards the end of the book, the Sufi scholar Henry Corbin. The fact that these two great figures knew and admired each other is significant. Kingsley traces the common root of their way of thought back to the Greek philosopher prophets, Empedocles and Parmenides in particular, who lived some 150 years before Plato.

One of the key themes of this book is Kingsley's observation of how the reasoning and logical faculties of the ancient philosopher sages, a faculty given to them, as they conceived it, directly by the Gods, deteriorated over time into 'a dry discipline to tire our brains out and make us lose our ways in endless thinking'. Kingsley sees the original form of logic and reason as a gift 'given through visions and dreams, a gift to plunge ourselves into the depths of ourselves and strip us of all our thoughts so it can train us to become conscious of the sacred reality at the heart of everything!' Yet, he continues, 'in our progressive sophistication and evolving civilisation we have wiped out any trace of the truth that logic, along with everything else, had its sacred place and purpose. Once that goes wrong, everything else goes wrong.'

Kingsley passionately wants us to see what reason and logic have become in the present time and how they, in the exclusive way we tend to use them, have made access to anything we might conceive of as Sacred impossible. In the *Corpus Hermeticum* we find the writer saying in his treatise 'The Greatest Human Evil is Un-acquaintance with God': 'People, where are you rushing, so intoxicated and so fully having drunk the strong wine of reasoning unaccompanied by Acquaintance?'. It is from our lack of Acquaintance that, Kingsley makes clear, most of our ills stem. The absence of this dimension has allowed an overly rationalising stance to develop in our way of perceiving the

world, from which only a return to an inner more contemplative reflection may redeem us. He writes:

we too may have some brilliant theoretical knowledge lodged away in some drawer of our theoretical brain. But the only thing that counts is what each of us does in every moment with each thought of ours, each breath. All that matters is whether we can consciously stay with the mystery of the unconscious, helping it in its wisdom to arrange and order things, or whether we use our own accumulated wisdom to interfere.

Kingsley makes the point that our culture is supremely good at *thinking about* our world, rationalising our world, observing, weighing and measuring our world and less good at entering deeply into it and being with it. For him, it is this split between reason, and its original harmonising metaphysical principle, that leaves us without any spiritual direction or restraint.

His story shows how Jung set out to re-make that essential Acquaintance with the metaphysical principle in himself. He rightly identifies how essential it is, when reading Jung, to know *which* particular Jung is speaking, for Jung *himself* is a perfect example of this difficult tension between a rationalising and mystical personality. Kingsley points out that Jung had identified two clear and wholly differing personalities within his own nature. His No. 1 personality, the ardent rational empirical psychologist, lived in accord with the 'Spirit of the Times' as he called it. His No. 2 personality, which he referred to as the 'Spirit of the Depths', was the alchemist, the mystic and prophet. There is a strong sense that Kingsley favours Jung's No. 2 personality and rather identifies with it. This leads him to be somewhat dismissive of reason itself, so clearly evident in Jung's No. 1 personality. However, that strong reasoning faculty also had to be present as Kingsley's outstanding research featured in Volume 2 of this book shows; all of which leaves his bias against rationalism looking a bit thin. While Kingsley shows that Jung himself felt his mystical vocation was his dominant and perhaps most important faculty, the true drama of Jung's life lies surely in the powerful creative tension between both sides of his nature. Jung's monumental published works would surely never have been written without a very strong rational side and would never command the respect they do without a deep intuitive sense of his own original truth.

Kingsley considers, most emphatically, that Carl Jung is *the* Mystic and Prophet of our age and puts him alongside some of the greatest figures of that calling—his definition of prophet being 'one who is a mouthpiece for the Divine'. Jung's own work is peppered with strong rejections of this title for himself, and with his insistence on the primacy and importance of the

empirical faculties in his work. However, Kingsley shows, I think convincingly, that this is more of an artifice to keep the pure rationalists and dogmatists of his field at bay, for whom the title 'mystic' would be a form of denigration. Behind this necessary scientific smoke screen, Jung continued to pursue the deep truth and vocation of his own alchemical and spiritual calling. His Red Book is his personal testimony of that journey and it is indeed most strange and sad that many Jungians seem to find this work incomprehensible.

Kingsley's chapters on Jung as Gnostic, Alchemist and Prophet are passionate and moving. He reminds us just what the journey of a Gnostic entails and the personal cost and danger of such a calling. Kingsley is however forthright in his belief that many of Jung's inheritors have failed him. His principal charge against the Jungians is that many of them have made the great mistake of trying to imitate Jung, by rationalising his unique experience in an attempt to turn it into a tidy and eminently repeatable rational system of psychological practice that everyone can use. It is clearly his belief that the practitioners of his psychology would have done better to concentrate on the fruit of their own inner journeys rather than endlessly learning 'about Jung'. I think there is some truth in this, not only amongst the Jungians, but certainly in the wider psychological, psychotherapeutic and spiritual communities where the rational, concrete and literal have often yet to include the metaphorical and imaginal. However, I think Kingsley underestimates the way that Jung's influence is spreading and the profoundly useful work many Jungians are doing to introduce the troubled souls of today to the informing truth of their own inner worlds. In addition, I would suggest that many of these practitioners have indeed, with considerable courage, made their own inner journey and faced themselves in order to honour the first of all healing injunctions: 'Physician, heal Thyself'.

The great interpreter and scholar of mystical Islam Henry Corbin makes his appearance late in the book. Corbin, a giant in his field, did as much to re-validate the use of imagination as the essential mystical tool for spiritual enquiry as Jung had done. It was he who reminded the West of the notion of the Intermediate world, the *Alam al-Mithal*, the world of vision and prophecy of Sufi cosmology. This is an imaginal world, a world of encounter with inner figures, of spiritual vision and miracles that can only be entered by the imagination, and the imagination alone (I have no doubt that the miracles of our own Christian tradition took place on such a plane). Intellectual rationalising about this plane of consciousness, knowing *about* it, simply cannot lead to a direct experience of it. Here we come up against the limitations of a purely rationalising consciousness which can know about such things but is not directly affected or indeed changed by an immediate encounter with them.

Perhaps Kingsley's main reason for including Corbin in this book was that Corbin alone saw almost immediately who and what Jung really was. For this recognition Jung was profoundly grateful, for few really understood him and his deeply complex nature. Prophecy and the mystical way had always been an integral part of esoteric Islam and Corbin recognised and validated Jung immediately as being one of those great figures, a true mystical Shaykh.

It is from Jung's own visions and prophecies that the book draws its title. Many will be familiar with Jung's visions just before the outbreak of the First World War in which he 'saw' prophetically 'a great tide of blood, full of limbs and destruction washing up against the Alps' and knew a time of destruction and violence was about to be unleashed upon the world. His other visions, just before his death, of the destruction of a substantial portion of the planet, give rise to the subtitle of this book: 'The End of Humanity'. Reflecting on this, Kingsley is unreservedly pessimistic and suggests that the worldwide culture of material manipulation has gone as far as it can and must collapse and destroy itself in order to return to the sacred root we have so carelessly abandoned. Whether this is to be an imaginal collapse, a collapse of our central civilising idea of man as a spiritual creature, or a literal material collapse—or both—remains to be seen. In this sense, the book is as bleak as its title but Kingsley leaves us in no doubt in which direction he believes our gaze must fall for our personal redemption.

Peter Kingsley tells his story well and with an urgency and intensity appropriate to our time. However much you may agree with him, Jung's life and experience and Kingsley's exposition of it hold for us a profound message. We live in an increasingly de-sacralised world, a world that has almost totally lost touch with the Unseen dimension that shapes it to a far greater extent than we understand. Kingsley shows us how Jung's life and work point us clearly back towards the deep dynamic nature of the psychical and spiritual ground within. We need most urgently, either through established spiritual structures, where they still exist, or through our own unique contemplative and visionary capacities, to make our own direct experiment with Acquaintance. Peter Kingsley's book is a story of how Jung did just that and is a personal, passionate and most welcome call to that endeavour.

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