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Unresolved Questions in the Freud/Jung Debate. On Psychosis, Sexual Identity and Religion

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Chapter I

The Allure of a More 'Religious' Psychology

It seems odd that an intellectual debate concerned with certain essential questions can come to a sudden halt, giving way to platitudes while remaining unresolved. Such a reflection comes to mind when one considers the impression people nowadays have of the discussion between Freud and Jung with regard to the issue of religion. In general, it is thought that Jung sympathized with religion more than Freud did. The latter reduced religion to a mere projection, so it is argued. Thus, anyone interested in religion is expected to opt for Jung's theories since he had an appreciation for the spiritual element. He would never have conceived of religious experiences as merely being fixations on infantile material. Freud, on the contrary, is often viewed as a 'pansexualist'. In the world of psychology and psychiatry, however, it is not the 'free-floating, vague and mystical' Jung who is preferred. Rather, one candidly opts for the more scientific approach of Freud insofar as the latest quest for providing solid quantitative data does not deprive him also of the adjective 'scientific'.

It is not very clear whether such choices are really decisive. They would have to be true choices which implies that, in the scientific analysis of the phenomenon of religion, one goes beyond the popular clichés of both authors' work and that one includes the particulars of their theoretical insights. This all too seldom occurs. A profound knowledge of the work of both authors is rarely encountered. How else could one explain the fact that Freud is accused of pansexualism while this criticism would be more appropriately directed to Jung? The same reflection is also valid with regard to the theory of projection. Jung developed this theory much further than Freud, who considered it to be such a complex and difficult notion that he tore up the article which he would have devoted to it and chose not to mention the concept again.

From the persistence of certain simplisms and a prioris present in the Freud-Jung alternative, one must conclude that something more than mere ignorance is involved. Moreover, it would be futile to offer, yet again, an exposition on "what Jung and Freud *really* said". It almost seems as if hidden questions and fears are awakened as soon as someone mentions the term 'psychology of religion'. This, more than likely, explains why the

participants of the debate concerning the Freud-Jung alternative can passionately discuss the topic without truly knowing what is at stake. A stereotypical reference to each author is employed in order to suppress the fear of a certain *type* of research which presents itself as being specific to the psychology of religion. In the background of this attitude, there stands the suspicion that, whenever the psychology of religion was applied, there could no longer be religion and that not even a 'second naiveté' could offer any consolation.

This study of the discussions between Freud and Jung not only intends to do justice to history and to correct certain misunderstandings but more importantly, its purpose is to investigate why, time and again, both men were misunderstood and thus, to trace those questions which are still being avoided today. What we hope to primarily deal with are the questions raised in the Freud-Jung debate and only secondarily, with the answers to these questions. Indeed, one must immediately admit that these answers were not always satisfactory. Yet is it not revealing that precisely those defective answers (religion is infantilism, religion is projection, religion is sex, ...) are remembered, as if that was the best way to cover up pertinent questions?

In light of the questions that were raised, the debate between Freud and Jung is an outstanding test case for the psychology of religion. As a conclusion to this study, we will attempt to systematically sketch the problematic. In order to be able to follow the debate, however, we need to make several distinctions right from the start. Indeed, the discussions between Freud and Jung were not the first with regard to religion. Prior to their discussions, lively debates were held concerning the essence of religion. There was also another discussion, dealing with the question of whether or not religion consisted of an illusion. The topic of this discussion was often confused with that of the former. In a theological context, several possible options with regard to both of these questions remain available. Yet, how does psychology deal with these options? Nowadays, in the wake of the period which we will examine during which psychology intended to explain religion, it is claimed that the psychologist's stance should be one of 'benevolent neutrality'. Perhaps this is only partially true. That psychologists renounce their intention to exhaustively explain the origin of religion does not necessarily mean that they fully respect the specificity of the theological questions. Here perhaps lies the still unresolved point of conflict.

The Theological Question Regarding the Essence of Religion

In the course of history, the question concerning the essence of religion has frequently been raised. It appears that religion is a phenomenon which is never encountered in its pure form. Rather, one first needs to strip it of all sorts of extensions and additions before its core can be touched upon.

Why this need for a religion *à l'état pur*? Can it be explained by a need to serve God "with a pure heart" and to fend off any form of superstition or perhaps by mere intellectual curiosity? These explanations may be valid for some people. However, what is at stake most of the time is the conviction that religion has become burdened by a number of social functions from which it should best be freed. If not, one would run the danger of rejecting religion along with the protests against these social functions.

This is especially valid for that theologian who has often been placed at the cradle of psychology of religion and who moreover had a special influence on Jung personally, namely, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Often, Schleiermacher is all too briefly referred to with the simple comment that he placed a religious sentiment at the origin of religion. The way in which he had described it, as a 'feeling of unconditional dependence', was sometimes ridiculed by a remark ascribed to Hegel: "Why, then my dog would be the most religious animal!" This is not completely fair since, in the *unconditional* aspect of dependence, Schleiermacher sought something which would establish individual freedom without a reliance on a limited or earthly resource. To hold Schleiermacher down to this one formula would be to overlook his prime concern. He intended to give religion its own place and to break through the confusion which often equated it with either metaphysics or morality.¹ According to him, religion had been incorrectly viewed as an explanation of the world and thus it tended to be put aside as soon as the scientific world no longer needed such an appeal to God in order to discover the laws of the universe.

The same reflection can be made with regard to morality. A religious person perhaps has specific reasons for acting morally but, according to Schleiermacher, religion should not be reduced to an instrument which merely supported morality. This, however, was precisely the function to which modern society intended to limit religion. A rather crude phrasing

1. F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *On Religion. Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, (1st edition: 1799) Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 97-100.

of this idea is ascribed to Napoleon: "In religion I do not admire the mystery of the Incarnation but rather the mystery of social order." In saying this, he voiced an insight which had already made its appearance during the Enlightenment. This insight was reflected in I. Kant's work. The modern ideal of science no longer allowed for the rational proof of God's existence starting from creation. Morality however, still provided a certain access to the religious sphere. For politicians, things were much simpler. As far as they were concerned, religion served morality. This was no longer voiced as harshly and boisterously during the period of restoration which dawned almost everywhere at the beginning of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the fundamental conviction was maintained, not in the least by those who had long forgotten about the issue of truth with regard to religion yet who still desired public order. In their view, religion should support morality and insofar as it fulfilled this function, its existence should be accepted. Moreover, the Churches seemed content to settle in such a role.²

In opposition to this tendency, Schleiermacher was convinced that religion was robbed of its essence when it was reduced to metaphysics and morality. He was aware of the fact that religion usually appeared in this hybrid form and that the theological task of leading people back to the core of religion time and again would prove to be very unrewarding. Therefore, when Schleiermacher spoke of a 'religious feeling', those two words by which he is often characterized in dictionaries, he did not offer a description of religion as he had encountered it as a neutral observer.³ He was searching for that core which must be protected whenever religion, according to him, was threatened at its essence. Schleiermacher did not intend to allow religion to dissolve into a number of accidental functions although he was well aware that it would be rather difficult for religion to fend these functions off.

In the quest for the essence of religion, Schleiermacher was not alone. He was not the first man in the course of history to attempt to guard religion from impurities and abuses. Frequently, the following questions had arisen. What is at stake in religion? What constitutes its core? What are its historical expressions? In which ways does a society employ

2. This topic was investigated by P. VANDERMEERSCH (ed.) in *Psychiatrie, godsdienst en gezag. De onstaansgeschiedenis van de psychiatrie in België als paradigma* (Psychiatry, Religion and Authority. The Birth of Psychiatry in Belgium Considered as a Paradigm), Louvain/Amersfoort, Acco, 1984.

3. Actually, he stated: "Religion's essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling." F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *o.c.*, p. 102.

religion in order to fulfil its own needs? More than once, historical crises, especially the crisis caused by the Reformation, compelled religion to redefine itself if it did not want to be swept away together with the decay of a cultural period which had assimilated certain aspects of it.

One theological debate constantly resurfaced in these discussions on the essence of religion, namely, whether religion is of a completely different order than the human realm? From ancient times, two opposite opinions have been voiced concerning this question. On the one hand, one could posit that faith consisted of a radically different nature than human nature and that true religion precisely entailed a trusting turn to the 'Completely Other' who manifested himself. In this case, theology distinguished sacredness as being the 'Other'. On the other hand, one could also hold that the divine only allowed itself to be known through humanity which would mean that the study of these the human aspects also belonged to the realm of theology. This classical alternative, often expressed in the opposition between 'revelation theology' and 'creational theology' or 'verticalism' and 'horizontalism', *grosso modo* corresponds to certain accents specific to Protestantism, as compared to Catholicism.⁴

During the 19th century, the question concerning the essence of religion was raised within a new context which Schleiermacher had well comprehended, namely, secularization. For the first time, the supposition that perhaps religion was no longer needed, was voiced very sharply. Would it not be more valuable to replace it with something else? What was more, should it be replaced at all? Perhaps it had become superfluous... These reflections did not only question the essence of religion and how it should be 'defined' or 'limited'. Rather, a second question was added to this. Is religion not an illusion?

A Different Question: Is Religion an Illusion?

Viewed in itself, the question directed at the essence of religion did not coincide with the question of whether religion was based on an illusion. Wondering whether faith in God entails a certain view on the cosmos and the acceptance of a certain set of morals is different from ques-

4. There are, of course, also other, non-Christian religions with their distinct theological preferences. They as well attempt to salvage a well-defined aspect of the human experience as a *conditio sine qua non* for religious life or, precisely for this reason, eliminate it. Certain religious systems for example value meditative techniques as being essential, which subsequently presupposes the appreciation of separate stages of consciousness. Other religious convictions attempt to radically avoid every irrational element in the religious experience.

tioning whether this God, and everything else one is bound to believe in along with him, really exists. Questioning the possible illusory character of religion in fact entails fewer consequences for the debate on whether religion consists of metaphysics and ethics than for the theological debate directed at the issues of transcendence and immanence. For the person who believes in God as the 'completely other' and perhaps also in an ethical system and worldview as being revealed from another world, the possibility of religion being an illusion constitutes a direct, unequivocal but less complex problem than for the person who holds a more immanent opinion of the divine. The 19th century militant atheism as well as the religious apologetics of that time overlooked this theological problematic. They connected the issue of illusion to that of defining religion without paying much attention to the various theological distinctions. One immediately attacked faith in God in order to fight an unscientific naiveté, the subjugation of human authority to 'God's grace' and the morality imposed by the churches. Schleiermacher would have said : "Not all of this is religion!" but such a warning was not even considered. Because all these aspects were compounded and criticized as a whole, the issue of illusion was rather vaguely posited. What exactly is the illusion? Does it consist in the fact that divine reality exists or is it to be located in the fact that people connect certain convictions about the world and morality to that divine reality?

By the time psychology emerged as a separate discipline, militant anticlericalism had already caused certain essential theological distinctions to slowly disappear from the debate. However, a new fact was added. The concept of 'illusion', employed in the already vague articulation of the question, seemed now to be very complicated. It would further confuse the issue.

Marx's view of religion as being opium for the people is, in this context, very revealing. According to him, people believe in a God because it provides them with consolation in the face of their inhumane living conditions. Should this belief in God be disputed because it leads to resignation and also impedes social progress? Marxism was divided with regard to that question. Marx himself, on the one hand, held the opinion that religion would disappear on its own once the social alienation of the working class was overcome. On the other hand, religion was seen as more than a mere indicator of an underlying helplessness because, like opium, it seemed to offer a certain measure of consolation which was so desperately needed it became addictive. For these reasons, Marxism often directly opposed religion. To anyone who views religion as a beneficial

illusion, Marxism posed the question as to what degree that illusion was indeed truly effective.

How to Overcome Illusion?

What is illusion? At first sight, one could start with the following comparison. Let us suppose that a person is locked in a room and that he is convinced that behind the walls, someone is listening although no one responds to him. He keeps talking until finally, doubts start to arise. Is someone really there? How could one verify this? One tends to answer: by stepping out and looking. But what happens if this is not possible?

Presented in this manner, the debate concerning the truthfulness of religion seems to coincide with the debate on the limits and possibilities of human knowledge. Indeed, that is what it was called. The trend, which obstinately held that only those elements which could be verified in a strictly scientific manner could be accepted as truthful, was called 'scientism'. Faith became the opposite of strict knowledge. The person who possessed blind faith without any critical restraint was called a 'fideist' or was sometimes judged even more harshly and spoken of as an 'obscurantist'.

We wonder, however, whether presenting the faith issue as an epistemological issue is not misleading. We are left with the impression that the discussion is concerned with whether or not there is sufficient reason to consider the existence of the religious element as having been proven. If that be the case, then the problem is not new. It would simply indicate a 19th century revival of the quest to prove the existence of God, though now phrased in a very primitive manner. The Jewish and Christian traditions have frequently emphasized that the divine is not so easily detected, that the name by which it is known is unutterable and that it is part of the divine essence to only let its presence be felt through painful absence.⁵ Moreover, according to these traditions, the divine does not remain outside of the earthly existence. Rather, it is entwined with it to a certain degree as being the 'fundament of existence'. The already mentioned, centuries old debate concerning God's transcendence and immanence can correctly

5. C.A.J. VAN OUWERKERK, *In afwezigheid van God. Voorstudies tot een psychologie van het geloof* (In Gods Absence. Preliminary Studies for a Psychology of Faith), Den Haag, Boekencentrum, 1986. See also my exposition: P. VANDERMEERSCH, *Objective Knowledge and Methodological Neutrality: Hidden Ideological Choices on what Religion should be*. In: *Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium on the Psychology of Religion in Europe* (Nijmegen, 5-8 sept. 1988), Nijmegen, Department of Cultural Psychology and Psychology of Religion, 1989, 298-305.

be used as a criticism against the example we gave earlier, of a person's conversation with someone he believes is listening on the other side of the wall without being able to verify it. Alongside this argument, one could posit that the debate concerning the possibility of knowing God, which was quite heated in the 19th century, overlooked the distinction between 'believing that' and 'believing in'. The act of believing does not entail the mere acceptance of information which cannot be proven. It is also more than simply daring to draw conclusions from insufficiently tested information. Toward the end of the century, Kierkegaard passionately defended the following position. Faith is a leap, made not on the level of knowledge but on the level of trust.

That awareness, which Kierkegaard was able to articulate, had more than likely been intuitively felt in the time before him. Already during the 19th century, people must have been aware that the problem of faith did not consist of a question of possible gullibility and thus, of uncritically informing oneself. This becomes clear by the way in which one tried to warn people of the possible illusory character of religion. The importance of having something to believe in was stressed. Let us illustrate this by returning to the example of the possible listener behind the wall. The focus of attention did not concern methods of verifying whether someone was actually present. Rather, one simply stated: "Wouldn't it be nice if someone was actually listening!" This indicated that one no longer appealed to the senses for verification but that one called attention to the awareness of one's own wishes and even developed a special technique for this purpose.

Marx's labelling of religion as 'the opium for the people', before any of the psychological theories became popular, illustrates a shift that was taking place in the way in which people intended to verify religion's truthfulness. The anti-religious, militant discourse of the 19th century still boisterously utilized the older ideology of the Enlightenment which posited that knowledge led to freedom. But in fact, the development towards what is now known as a 'functional' concept of truth, was already taking place. The truth of a statement is situated in the fact that it is effective - it 'works' - and thus, by means of this expression, one succeeds in coming to grips with reality in an efficient manner. In the meantime, without much criticism, we have become accustomed to this new ideal of truth in a number of epistemological fields, especially as far as 'theories' are concerned. Nowadays, one starts from the principle that every science arranges data on the basis of a previously accepted model. It is claimed that the reliability of such a model cannot be directly proven. It cannot be

verified but it can be 'falsified'. The model proves its truth by its usefulness. It continues to be accepted as long as it is able to relate more and more facts to each other and it is abandoned as soon as a better model can take its place.

We do not intend here to elaborate on the debate held by contemporary philosophers of science. Moreover, with regard to our problematic, this debate is too strongly characterized by a reflection on positive sciences to be of immediate value for human sciences. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the concept of truth was shifting at the same time psychology was emerging as a separate discipline. Up until that point, the reflection concerning this concept focused on an immediately visible, social level. It answered the question of why people were so attached to certain ideas by stating that these ideas exercised a particular social function. Society needed these 'normative' ideas. The question of the truthfulness of a particular belief was not perceived as the question of whether that belief was based in reality. Rather, it was understood as the question of whether such a belief exercised a socially useful function.

With the emergence of psychology however, this all too simplistic concept of social usefulness was abandoned. Even before Freud, the investigations into hypnosis and hysteria had led to the awareness that quite a number of intrapsychic forces impeded rather than stimulated a true perception of reality. The question concerning usefulness was not completely disregarded since it appeared that the person involved derived some benefit from these forms of anaesthesia. Nevertheless, it was now more directly related to the question of truth. The debate between Freud and Jung immediately started with the following problem. What constituted the core of the psychotic delusion and what was the difference between such a patient's attachment to his delusional system and the way we interpret the reality around us as being 'real'? This brings us close to the topic of religion and the still different way in which a believer experiences the reality of the divine in which he believes.

The Reality of Theory

Did this problem merely reiterate the traditional question of truth as it had been expressed in the theology of old? Nothing can be stated with less certainty. Compelled by the observations within its field, psychoanalysis constructed its own theory. From the analysis of the formation of a delusion, psychoanalysis concluded that perception alone did not suffice to obtain the truth insofar as truth was viewed as allowing one to be

regulated by an outside world which one shared with others. A person suffering from paranoia cannot be convinced of the falseness of his system of delusion by being told "to go see for himself", since his own theory has a far greater impact on his inner world than his 'seeing'. In order to accept reality as being 'real', something else besides the senses is needed. In the Freud-Jung discussions, this something else was termed 'affective cathexis'. A correct affective cathexis was needed not only in order to perceive reality in a truthful manner but also in order not to be overwhelmed by 'theory'.

Thus, there is not only the simple alternative between delusion and reality, conceived of as the distinction between a successful and failed perception. There is the 'theory' as well as the correct disposition needed to accept that theory as being real. What determines our faith in a theory? Moreover, are there not different types of theories which, each in its own way, demand to be accepted as 'real'? B. Bettelheim for example demonstrated how important it was for a child's development to be engrossed with fairy tales. This sort of faith however, is not the same as a scientist's faith in the theory of relativity nor is it identical to an adult's belief in horoscopes.⁶ It is clear that this problematic is of crucial importance for an interpretation of religious faith, if only to trace the relationship between the attachment to a theory and the attachment to religious beliefs.⁷

The affective cathexis of 'reality' will be amply discussed throughout this study. We will discover that it is related to several other aspects of the human psyche such as narcissism, difference in gender, identification, the positioning of aggression and so forth. In light of this, the question concerning truth will be related to much more than the mere notion of perception. Concerning the problematic of truth therefore, psychoanalysis induces us to reconsider philosophical anthropology since the older opinion, that the belief in truth was initiated by perception, appears to be untenable.

Yet it would be all too easy if psychoanalysis produced a ready-made theory which could be smoothly integrated into an anthropological

6. B. BETTELHEIM, *The Uses of Enchantment. The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, London, Thames, 1976.

7. One should keep in mind that this problematic refers back to psychoanalysis as well. In its practice, healing is expected to be achieved by an interpretation. In other words, it depends on the establishment of a 'certain' connection between what a patient is actually saying and something else he could have said. Yet what is the basis for this interpretation and what is the cathexis which guarantees that it is taken for 'real'?

view and which could then be confronted by the various theological options. We will further observe how both Freud and Jung, in their analyses of the affective cathexis, made use of the similarities and differences between perception, delusion and fantasy. In their analyses, the reflection on the phenomenon of religion will prove to be very important. Yet what did Freud and Jung understand by religion? That precisely will be our question. The unclear phrasing of the questions, which earlier on had confused the issue, reappeared in full force in their discussions. That is why we must consider their reflections once again in order to verify both the scope of their observations and their conclusions with regard to religion.

Psychology and Secularization

One wonders whether the classical theological distinctions should continue to function as norms in every type of analysis of the religious phenomenon. Perhaps theology can glean something from the approach of other disciplines to the phenomenon of religion; from their ways of determining what does or does not belong to this phenomenon and from the connections that are established between those aspects of the phenomenon which are retained. When one views religion as an invariable and timeless entity and holds a strictly verticalist opinion concerning religion, one can perhaps denounce these alternative approaches as annoying pedantry. Yet when secularization is considered as a phenomenon which deploys itself within faith and which also should be interpreted within the historical logic of the faith tradition, the perspective is quite different.

Secularization indeed implies much more than the disappearance of the 'sacred canopy'.⁸ More than religion's mere 'loss of function' is at stake. Secularization primarily consists in the emergence of new ways of coming to grips with reality and changing it. In this context, one often speaks of the emergence of sciences and technology. This statement however overlooks the core of the contemporary secularization process. What has occurred during the past century can be viewed as follows. Independently, new conceptual models and specific methods have developed which, each in its particular way, attempted to amass knowledge and to alter reality. These models and practices were no longer concerned with the coherence of overall 'knowledge' nor with the general result of their

8. P. BERGER, *The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York, Doubleday, 1967.

independent interventions.⁹ In this context, the stance of the old scientific materialism, which in light of its notion of reality labelled religious beliefs as nonsense, differs greatly from the more recent opinions which deal with religion insofar as it is a psychological or sociological reality. But what is a psychological or sociological 'reality'? Proponents of these disciplines usually candidly admit that 'reality' is the mere interpretation of a number of facts within a certain conceptual model. This, however, does not exclude other disciplines from studying the same facts from within their respective conceptual models.

Contrary to the stringent statements which were often made with regard to religion during the time of the Jung-Freud debate, today's scientists, at first sight, seem to take a more cautious stance than their predecessors. Yet the process of secularization now taking place is much more radical than when one intentionally attempted to 'reduce' religion. When, for example, it was stated that religion was 'only' sex or 'only' a futile ambition for power or 'only' the opium for the people, it was still dependent on something else which indubitably existed in reality and which one was convinced exercised an important function in the coherence of that reality. The fact that these questions are no longer raised does not imply that one has rejected them. Quite the contrary. The process of secularization deployed itself without having to justify itself. Religion was left at the side. Its language was not disputed. Rather, one merely placed another language next to it. Today, this frequently happens in the practice of psychology. When confronted with the glorification of religious celibacy, a psychologist does not discuss religion nor does he contest someone's belief in religious phenomena. He investigates the personality structure of the individual involved and he raises questions with regard to the level of anxiety, sexual identity and feelings of guilt that are unresolved. When, in doing so, he appears to be attacking the person's religious convictions all too directly, the psychologist will divert his attention to other, more profane aspects of life. He trusts that the insights gained in these areas will be used by the person in question, in the specifically religious area as well. The psychologist himself, in any case, does not enter this area.

Once again, for the person who views the religious phenomenon as being the 'Other', based on his theological choice, this procedure poses few problems. However, someone who considers religion as the founda-

9. P. VANDERMEERSCH, *Ethiek tussen wetenschap en ideologie* (Ethics between Science and Ideology), Louvain, Peeters, 1987.

tion of everything that is human is confronted with a more serious problem. Concerning the practice of psychological counselling and its distinction from pastoral counselling, this procedure can probably still be accepted as a practical rule of thumb. Yet, with regard to an insight into the relationship between psychological truth and religious truth, all questions still remain open. It is quite possible that, in our multiform world, the psychological 'practice' best leaves the religious questions up to the individual. On a theoretical level however, it seems that the previously heated debate about the relationship between psychology and religion has not been resolved. Rather, it is being masked over.

This concealment of the existing problems more than likely explains why the psychology of religion appears so threatening to a religious person. The mere existence of psychology as a separate, autonomous discipline did not appear to the former, non-secularized worldview as an innocent coincidence. That is why the essential, though unspoken point of conflict should be articulated as follows. Is not the psychologist of religion driven by a motivation which is diametrically opposed to that of the theologian who, starting from his commitment to faith, searches for the core of religion, raises questions concerning the truth of religion and attempts to interpret secularization as a cultural phenomenon within the history of Christianity? Is it not inherent to the practice of psychology to no longer recognize the coherence of this questioning as the domain of a specific discipline? Rather, does not the psychologist of religion omit using militant, anti-religious language because he is convinced that he has won? The social functions, previously fulfilled by religion, are now being assumed by other disciplines. But is the remnant indeed religion *à l'état pur*?

If one holds a more vertical view on religion, this does not really pose a problem. Yet, if one thinks differently about religion, along the lines of the horizontal perspective, the matter is more difficult. For the latter, secularization signals the decomposition of a worldview which, as a whole, bore religious significance, even though this was expressed in a specific language. Does the religious expression retain its significance when the worldview upon which it is based falls apart? Previously, 'being religious' implied: that one accepted authority without questioning; that it was presupposed that one act humbly and did not assert oneself; that it was considered extremely immoral to ask for interest or to be paid for any assistance; that, without any visible advantage for oneself, one appreciated good workmanship and one agreed when the community's money was spent on a castle for the king or a cathedral for God; that one's sexual

behaviour carefully followed certain regulations; that for the most part, one suppressed all other erotic fantasies or one compensated for them on the side or in a confused manner in the mysteriousness of the Church. There, one became acquainted with the deeper reality of 'something' in the Latin chants which one did not understand and in the incense one inhaled without ever thinking of the word 'drug'. Suddenly, things changed. Authorities are to be elected and must justify themselves; one must learn to appreciate oneself and achieve self realization; one learns to take into account interest rates and to save money; one must organize social security papers and pay one's therapist; production processes should be efficient; when and where the city needs embellishment is to be determined by the budget and the specialists of urban development. In the meantime, there are specialists for every possible field. From their efforts, one learns to cultivate a 'relationship' according to the contemporary manners and one also makes love as it is prescribed by contemporary comparative research. How then could one possibly go to church and sing texts which, unfortunately, one does understand but which no longer possess the quality of a concealed sensuality caressing a secret spot.

One can easily understand the nostalgia provoked by secularization. Many people inadvertently turn to another theological choice because they hope to retain certain articulations of the religious dimension although the worldview which supported it, has vanished. Due to their attachment to the previous horizontalism, these people become verticalists. Yet the question can be raised as to what is left of religion after such a change. In order to answer this question, one is obliged to investigate the structure of the previous religious world. Only an accurate analysis of the manner in which the - let us anachronistically employ a contemporary term - 'functions' of religion were assumed by other disciplines, can clarify which connections were essential for the religious articulation and which were of lesser importance. If one states, for example, that "religion is merely sex", this probably indicates that one intends to view sexuality within a new context. This, however, does not necessarily imply that one suddenly becomes aware of a connection between sex and religion. Perhaps a direct link between 'sex viewed in itself' and 'religion viewed in itself' did not exist. There was, however, a broader context, which viewed sex as related to certain types of family relationships, to specific attitudes with regard to possession and to people of the same sex, to a specific experience of one's body as the representation of one's identity etc. The belief in the meaningfulness of this structured *whole* gave meaning to the religious discourse. The effect of secularization can be

recognized retrospectively, for example, in the fact that sexuality gradually became a medical concern. Thus, interpreting secularization is not so much indicating that fields which previously belonged to the realm of religion, now fall within the 'sphere' of medicine. Rather, it is tracing the process by which sexuality obtained a new significance in a restructured philosophy of life. Moreover, it raises the question as to how an awareness of profound meaningfulness presents itself in this new context.

Here then lies the relevance of a study of the outspoken attempts at reducing the impact of religion which took place at the turn of this century and which are so characteristically typified in the Freud-Jung debate. These attempts reveal the tensions which appeared in the previously coherent religious contemplation of the world and which, in the meantime, brought about a reorganization of all kinds of aspects of life within a new context.

The Elusive Object of Psychology of Religion

Before we review the debate itself, it would be worthwhile to consider how the problems which one had become aware of were being covered up. That is exactly what Freud and Jung had done near the end of their collaboration. When the core problem concerning the experience of reality in religion not only appeared to be extremely complex but also challenged aspects of the psychoanalytical theory itself, these unresolved problems were avoided by simply raising other questions. Both authors, each in his own way, investigated other aspects of the phenomenon of religion. Moreover, they defined religion differently. They thus strived after a quick evaluation of those other aspects in order to be able to easily classify the religious phenomenon 'religion'. Neither one of them succeeded and, until the end of their lives, the question of religion imposed itself on them.

Actually, this problem is also valid for psychology in general. In this regard, there is a constant uneasiness. The psychologist feels most secure when he can juxtapose his own discourse to the religious discourse. As mentioned above, this is perhaps the most radical form of secularization, namely, secularization which presents itself as a fact which no longer requires reflection. The psychologist still directly studies the religious phenomenon or, at least, that which looks like religion or even that which he feels should be considered as such. The hesitations and the troubled conscience which he displays witness to the unresolved nature of questions which have been masked over since the Freud-Jung debate. The

remarkable aspect however, is that a psychologist employs certain distinctions which correspond to the classical theological distinctions, though only partially. These distinctions are very revealing when placed within the context of our research insofar as they also offer latent indications of how secularization consists in a restructuring of a general philosophy of life.

Recalling the older debate, the psychologist usually assumes that, in assessing his position, a 'fear of reduction' is active. He could be inclined to reduce religion and thus claim that it is actually superfluous. The classical answer of the psychologist is that he will consider the phenomenon with 'benevolent neutrality'. He will only investigate the determining factors of the phenomenon on a mere human level. For example, he will study whether a mystic's love for God bears the characteristics to which normal, human love should correspond.¹⁰ The question as to whether or not this divine object exists, is left untouched. It is considered to be a matter of 'faith'.

Yet one wonders whether a psychologist with such an attitude responds to theological questions. We are left with the impression that he especially confuses the two classical theological questions. Is he suggesting that, for psychology as well, the religious life is of a completely different dimension than earthly life? If this is the case, then he is proclaiming, from the psychological point of view, that verticalism is the correct theological choice. Or, is he stating that the religious dimension should be limited to the problem of God? In this case, he would be in agreement with those who wish to liberate the core of faith from all unessential elements. This is a second theological choice.

Which solution should a psychologist resort to if he wishes to stay objective and neutral? Many directions have been taken, though all in vain. Initially, one resorted to the concept of religious experience in order to find a way out of this dilemma. The newly formed discipline of the psychology of religion, at the end of the previous century, searched for this experience in paranormal phenomena which seemed to refute the existing anti-religious, materialistic determinism. When this extremely relative criticism of religion faded, the psychology of religion nevertheless continued to go in the same direction, searching for specific experiences of meaningfulness. Thus, religious awareness was not so much experi-

10. A. VERGOTE, *Guilt and Desire. Religious Attitudes and their Pathological Derivatives*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988. Original: *Dette et désir: deus axes chrétiens et la dérive pathologique*, Paris, Seuil, 1978.

enced as a repudiation of determinism but more as an experience of intrinsic meaningfulness. Gradually, attention was also given to less extreme forms of religious experiences. One did not always have to deal with R. Otto's experience of the sacred as *tremendum et fascinosum* nor with A.T. Boisen's experience of schizophrenia as the most revealing abyss of human existence.¹¹ Experiences of 'basic trust' or of some 'whole-ness' could also be considered.

This approach was criticized from two perspectives. The criticism raised from a theological point of view was the following. Did the psychology of religion not isolate or privilege a particular aspect of religion, thus following some sort of hidden theological agenda? Experience plays a significant role in a number of Christian Churches, especially in those influenced by pietism. Yet there are also movements within Christianity which place faith in revelation, the acceptance of a doctrine and the adherence to a particular Church in the foreground and which, precisely for these reasons, have often contested the direct religious experience. When one conceives of religious experience in such a broad way that it constitutes the core of both revealed and non-revealed religions by, for example, placing the mystical experiences of Christianity and the non-Christian religions under one common denominator, one is making unmistakable and important theological choices.

This focal positioning of the religious experience was also criticized from the perspective of human sciences. Under the influence of such currents as structuralism, one questioned the possibility of universal human experiences which could be isolated from their concrete context, compared to other such experiences and categorized into separate types. Independent from this trend, the interest within the theological field shifted from a clinical approach to a more empirical approach, in which the interview of a representative group and the quantitative processing of the obtained results became the most prominent method of research.

At first sight, one would expect that this process would give a new incentive to the ideal of methodical neutrality proclaimed by psychologists. The consequence however, was that the question concerning the definition of the religious dimension became even more pressing. Should this dimension be regarded in the same way as the majority of people conceived of it? This appeared to be the most objective solution in the sense

11. A.T. Boisen (1876-1965) has been considered as the founder of pastoral psychology. See H. STROEKEN, *Psychoanalyse, godsdiensdienst en Boisen* (Psychoanalysis, Religion and Boisen), Kampen, Kok, 1983, and D. STOLLBERG, *Therapeutische Seelsorge. Die amerikanische Seelsorgebewegung*, Munich, Kaiser, 1972.

that it corresponded to a quantitative criterion. However, it immediately implied that the questioning of those qualified in the field of religion, namely, the theologians, was irrelevant. In the multitude of opinions concerning religion, the viewpoint of the theologian was very unique since precisely that which he considered to be religion was not at all the same as that which the majority of people called religion.

From his perspective, the theologian could reproach the psychologist of religion for actually being partial to politicians and Churches when he employed his questionnaires. These latter groups agreed that one best fulfil the expectations which were placed under the denominator 'religion' without questioning whether or not these expectations were genuinely religious. Implicitly, this indicates that one holds the following position. "The Enlightenment was really a mistake. Time has passed between then and now and many areas, which formerly belonged to religion, are now governed by other disciplines. Consequently, that which is now called 'religion' no longer corresponds to what was understood by that term earlier. Should one question this? The majority of people do not in any case and they are the ones who supply the quantitative material...".

Was it ultimately because the psychologist himself originated in the Enlightenment that he gradually introduced a few distinctions in the notion of religion? The problems which he became aware of were the same ones theologians had been struggling with all along. The psychologist however, faced these problems more cautiously and intended to further verify in visible reality the distinctions which he introduced. Thus, G.W. Allport proposed the classical distinction between 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' religiosity.¹² A person who was extrinsically religious adhered to religion for some other reason, for example, because it offered comfort and security in this life or because one achieved a certain status by belonging to a certain church community. 'Intrinsic' religiosity, on the other hand, implied adherence to religion for its own sake. As could be expected, opinions were immediately divided as to which components 'intrinsically'

12. In G.W. ALLPORT, *The Individual and His Religion*, New York, MacMillan, 1950, a distinction between immature and matured religiosity is initially at stake. In establishing this distinction, the author explicitly defended an 'existential' opinion of religion. The terms 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' religiosity reiterate this distinction. One even developed a test to measure these dispositions, G.W. ALLPORT and J.M. ROSS, *Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice*. In: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 5 (1967) 432-443. The criticism which this test elicited from Batson, as we will discuss later, does not do justice to the whole of Allport's thoughts.

belonged to religion.¹³ It would have come as a surprise if the question which had been of such great concern to theologians had not presented itself to psychologists as well. Moreover, a new problem was added onto that question. In his description of intrinsic religiosity, Allport had spontaneously assumed that religion and devotion coincided. Authors such as Batson and Ventis therefore accused him of actually measuring orthodoxy and rigidity according to his category 'intrinsic religiosity'. That is why they introduced, alongside Allport's types of religion, the dimension 'religion as a quest' by which they characterized the attitude which steadily and maturely continued to search for the meaning of life without spasmodically clinging to standard answers.¹⁴

Most likely, this description was still aimed at the all too elitist group of people who were genuinely concerned with religion. However, it also witnesses to the fact that the psychologist had become aware of a new insight, namely, that more and more, people started making a distinction between devotion and religiosity. Was this not hypocritical? Yet if one frequently hears the statement: "I do not go to church but that does not mean that I am not religious!", one ultimately has to accept the distinction. Remarkably enough, statements such as this were not given by conscientious atheists who, in a premeditated and explicit manner, had distanced themselves from the religious system to which they previously adhered but who had nevertheless remained dependent on it in a negative way. Instead, it seemed to be the expression of a spontaneous and unmediated awareness. Should such statements be interpreted as the experimental and quantifiable proof of the existence of a more autonomous religious experience which does not coincide with belonging to a Church?

The unravelling of this question, which implies that one attempts to verify the true meaning of such a statement as well as whether or not it holds its own when there is no longer a link to religious traditions or Church institutes perceived as autonomous elements, presents a burning issue for the contemporary psychology of religion which has a social-psy-

13. For a discussion of this problematic, see also J. WEIMA, *Reiken naar oneindigheid. Inleiding tot de psychologie van de religieuze ervaring* (Reaching towards Infinity. An Introduction into the Psychology of Religious Experience), Baarn, Ambo, 1981, p. 45-63.

14. C.D. BATSON and W.L. VENTIS, *The Religious Experience. A Social Psychological Experience*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1982. This subject was extensively discussed during the Congress for the Psychology of Religion at Nijmegen in 1985. Several contributions can be found in the journal of this congress: J.A. VAN BELZEN and J.M. VAN DER LANS, *Current Issues in the Psychology of Religion. Proceedings of the Third Symposium on the Psychology of Religion in Europe*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1986.

chological interest. In the meantime, the problem as to how the notion of 'religion' could be delineated emerges once again. Precisely this new experience which people have of a 'broader' form of religiosity threatens to make it possible that everything can be called 'religion' while nothing can be taken as the specific object of the psychology of religion. On the one hand, there are reasons to speak about 'invisible' religion, as Th. Luckmann did, since many forms of attachment to higher values indeed stem from previous, explicitly religious attitudes.¹⁵ On the other hand, one ultimately loses track of what exactly constitutes 'religion' when traditional pilgrimages as well as the idolization of a political ideology and emotional outbursts during a pop concert are placed under the same category.¹⁶

In an attempt to solve this difficulty, one often points to the fact that both history and anthropology teach that, in all cultures, a specific and recognizable dimension of life can be encountered which can be isolated and identified as the religious dimension. Moreover, did not the Latin word *sacer* (sacred) initially mean that which is separated from the other? However, importing definitions which originate in cultures not influenced by the phenomenon of secularization, cannot answer the specific questions raised by that phenomenon in the western world. On the contrary, the relevance of the questions would be neglected. It would seem very odd if psychology, of all disciplines, were to do this since it originated in secularization.

The Importance of the Freud-Jung Debate

Contrary to the contemporary psychology of religion, psychoanalysis in its nascent period did not hesitate to search for an 'explanation' for religion. In the debates between Freud and Jung, they often unscrupulously attempted to reduce religion to something other. Not only the notion of 'projection' but several other categories of explanation as well were verified by means of a process which nowadays is often considered to be old fashioned. However, we have just proposed the hypothesis that the present 'neutral' attitude, by which psychology juxtaposes its own discourse to the religious discourse in order to compete with it without having to confront it, can be just as totalitarian. How did we arrive at this

15. TH. LUCKMANN, *The Invisible Religion*, New York, MacMillan, 1967.

16. A. VERGOTE, *Religie, geloof and ongeloof. Psychologische studie* (Religion, Belief and Unbelief. A Psychological Study), Antwerp, De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1984, p. 14-20.

situation? Were these attempts at reduction ultimately successful in practice, although not in an explicit exposition? Or were other elements involved? This already gives us one reason to reconsider the attempts at reduction in light of the present problematic.

In this study, we will not only raise the question as to whether religion is reduced to something other but also as to *what* religion is to be reduced to and what this attempt reveals concerning the religious phenomenon both in its essential and relative appearance. In doing this, we will come across a surprising observation. By the notion of 'reduction' of religion, one would expect that the element to which religion is reduced is somewhat solid and consistent. It appears that this is not the case. Is religion a veiled expression of erotic desires? Both Freud and Jung raised this question but subsequently, they were confronted with the question of what sexuality actually was. The initial question was thus transformed into further questions concerning the essence of the libido and what caused its arousal.... The same occurred concerning the hypothesis that religion had a function in the constitution of one's identity. Again, one can pose the question: what is identity? Further, religion can be interpreted as an illusion when it is measured according to the norms of the reality principle. But what is a true experience of reality if the existence of psychosis clearly indicates that perception alone does not suffice as a criterion for 'reality'?

Only when one follows the debate between Freud and Jung in detail, does it become clear that psychoanalysis opened the discussion concerning a number of concepts which were considered self-evident and that it seriously questioned notions which were formerly perceived as unequivocal. The way in which psychoanalysis shed new light on religion is not detached from this approach. Actually, psychoanalysis never reduced religion to anything more well-defined, though it often clearly intended to do so. Instead, every element to which religion could be reduced in a first instance was stripped of its obviousness. Because of this, the questions raised by psychoanalysis were much more fundamental than those it had expected to raise when it set out to reduce religion. It could be very tempting to suggest that psychoanalysis probably left religion undisturbed. One would be inclined to state that, when Freud and Jung were discussing the religious contents of Schreber's psychotic delusion, the problem of the relationship between psychosis and an awareness of reality was at stake and not the problem of religion. Further, when Freud examined the religious obsessions of the Wolf Man, concerning the figure of Christ and the mystery of the Trinity, he was studying the problem of

the Wolf Man's identity but not religion. When Jung in turn dealt with the psychological significance of transubstantiation in the Eucharist, he was discussing an inner transformation which was supported by the archetype of the 'Self' but again, not religion...

When the issue is presented in this manner, any concern is unfounded. The fear sometimes expressed regarding psychology, is based on a mistake. In order to present the issue as such, however, religion must again be conceived of as a fixed, timeless entity; as the 'Other'. At the same time, the presupposition for this argumentation remained the a priori that the opposition between psychology and religion could only imply a fight to the death. Either psychology was able to reduce religion leaving nothing of it intact or psychology was not able to reduce religion which would mean one had to acknowledge religion as an autonomous entity. In the latter case, it was still possible to approach religion from a psychological perspective but one could only discuss the subjective way in which people, both as individuals and as groups, appropriated an autonomous religious object.

The issue looks quite different when religion is conceived of as a way to experience the whole of reality as it actually exists, sustained by absolute meaningfulness. In this case, religion requires a total view on the world. This does not imply that it is necessarily tied to a certain worldview. Moreover, if, because of one's beliefs, one holds that history is steeped in meaningfulness, the emergence of a new religious view on the world does not necessarily cause a religious crisis. Quite the contrary. Religious convictions compel one to question the logic to which the emergence of a new worldview corresponds. The disappearance of an existing religious discourse, by which the world was interpreted as a whole, should not pose any fundamental problems. One is concerned, however, by the fact that, because of the divergence of scientific disciplines, the world as a whole is no longer the subject of discussion. This essential religious question subsequently becomes: is our belief in a coherent world an illusion and thus, is our religion also an illusion? Or, is there just something wrong with the way in which we formulate our belief in this coherence? In a second moment, one should question whether this new awareness of the meaningfulness of reality as a whole - perhaps one should indeed relinquish the old panoramic term 'worldview' - can be connected to the former religious discourse. Should this discourse be preserved? Should it be adapted? Or should a new discourse be developed?

Still, within the same religious context, one should not limit these questions to the religious discourse *sensu stricto* since, like religion, it does not constitute a separate realm. A person who, based on his religious inspiration, experiences the existing reality as being meaningful, naturally pays extra attention to those aspects within reality which, according to him, occupy the central position in the coherence of this reality. That is why it is important to trace those elements to which one thought one could reduce religion. These elements will indicate where the cohesion was situated up until that moment and which crisis was feared if the intrinsic coherence of reality was suddenly conceived of in a different manner.

Key Questions in the Freud-Jung Debate

To this religious point of view, psychoanalysis presented a far more important challenge than to the verticalist point of view. The latter perspective might be suspicious that psychoanalysis would reduce the 'Other' of the religious dimension to something worldly. Moreover, more than any other discipline, psychoanalysis had stripped several core notions of the classical western philosophy of life of their self-evidence. This is true especially for the concept of sexuality which, in the history of Christianity, has proved remarkably problematic. After initially having posed that sexuality should no longer be mistaken as one of the essential elements characterizing human life - a first shock - sexuality was further stripped of its self-evidence by psychoanalysis. The discussions between Freud and Jung concerning the notion of the 'libido' were thus accompanied by a profound shift in the western view on humanity.

This is also true for the classical opinion concerning the essence of the human person. The psychoanalytical notions of 'identification' and 'transference', which originated in clinical practice, force us to radically reconsider which elements compose the individual's identity. This not only challenges the Cartesian tradition but also the older Aristotelian and Scholastic traditions and their respective views on the essence of a human being.

Both sexuality and the concept of the human person were of particular importance to the classical western worldview to which the religious discourse corresponded. This is also true for a third problem, namely, the experience of an object's 'reality'. It was this problematic which Freud and Jung first discussed. The psychotic's experience proves that perception is not the capacity by which we distinguish delusion from reality. Rather,

'libidinous cathexis' makes this possible. Because of this clinical data, we are forced to radically reconsider our concept of 'experience' as well as the related concept of 'theory'. Here, we touch upon the theme which has most often been fearfully avoided by the psychology of religion, namely, the specific religious experience of reality and the status of religious faith. A believer is convinced that the divine truly exists yet he also knows that its existence cannot be conceived of as the spatial presence of an object among objects. Without necessarily employing the corresponding philosophical concepts, he realizes that 'transcendence' is involved and that he only experiences the presence of the divine through its absence. The theme of the experience of an object's 'reality', which is of crucial importance for our worldview in general, directly affects the way in which the specific religious discourse expresses the experience of reality's meaningfulness.

When considering what has been said thus far, a question with regard to the practical field poses itself. What sort of task division should we adopt between psychological counselling and the guidance which might be given concerning one's philosophy of life? Can the tasks of the pastor and spiritual director be distinguished from the task of the psychologist without having to maintain the myth that this division stems from the fact that there are actually different fields? In the discussion between Freud and Jung, this issue as well was dealt with more candidly than what we are now used to. Moreover, a reflection on this exposition teaches us how secularization is active in the psychoanalytical practice and how a cultural institution, which psychoanalysis has indeed become in the meantime, is sustained by historical processes (I deliberately wish to avoid the term 'collective unconscious') of which it is not aware.

Our Methodology

In this study, we intend to follow the Freud-Jung debate chronologically. Approaching it differently, for example by discussing it theme by theme, would introduce the *a priori* that each theme exists independently and can be compared to the others. It is our intention to trace how the different themes of their research are interconnected and how changing an aspect of one theme immediately brings about a shift within another theme.

We will therefore devote our attention to all aspects of the work of both authors. This includes Jung's association experiments. At first sight, questions could arise as to whether we are not moving too far from the

religious problematic. Jung's association experiments, however, constitute an excellent test case for investigating the effect of the definition of the notion 'religion'. We will discover that Jung, from his student days onward, held a certain preference for natural philosophy, which we will synthesize by the term 'Romantic concept of the unconscious'. Jung himself explicitly, and in the most classical sense, related this preference to religion. He did not distinguish between his philosophical perspectives and his reflection on Christianity. Moreover, Jung made conscious theological choices. In his fascination with paranormal phenomena, he relied both on a faith in the gradual self-development of the spirit in nature as posited by E. von Hartmann and on a revaluation of the mystical element in religion, contrary to Ritchl's thought.

With this set of 'convictions' or better, with this conceptual model, Jung attempted to interpret the results of his association tests. This conceptual model was so strongly engrained in him that it initially impeded him from correctly understanding the Freudian theory. Without giving it much thought, he interpreted what he read in Freud's works, as well as his own research data, in light of his own *a priori*s. What was the status of these convictions or this conceptual model? Does it concern faith, in the religious meaning of the word? If we had not noticed that Jung had previously related these convictions to immediately recognizable religious terminology, it probably would not have occurred to us to designate these convictions as 'religious' on the basis of Jung's association tests. Moreover, in the wake of the association tests, Jung himself did not relate his conceptual model to a religious discourse for a long period of time. The conceptual model in the meantime remained operative. After his break with Freud, he developed it even more explicitly in the theory of the archetypes. From that point on, Jung once again incorporated into his discourse a reference to religion or at least to 'spirituality'. He was indeed well aware of the difficulty of in defining the notion of religion.

What can be properly called 'religion' and what should not be included within the concept? This in fact is the central question in the Freud-Jung debate. Is it merely a matter of language? Does it depend on the fact that the images which are employed are at first sight somewhat similar to those images by means of which people throughout the centuries thought they could recognize the 'religious' dimension? Or is the problem concerning the definition of religion much more complex? Does it perhaps concern the conclusions which people draw from their view on the world and thus, primarily, the question of how far human conclusions may reach?