Depth-Psychology and the 'Homo Religiosus'

I

'All men by nature desire to know.'

However knowledge has been defined, whatever its achievements or its limitations, its vanities or its ironies, the desire to attain to it—epitomized in those opening words of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*—has largely been taken for granted in our western philosophical traditions. It is only in the last hundred years that a sustained effort has been made to question that basic presupposition. For with the rise and development of depth-psychology, another dictum has been advanced, as it were, to stand alongside Aristotle's: *All men by nature desire not to know.* At once the 'Search for Truth' takes on more familiar, but also somewhat more unsettling proportions. The commitment to the pure, detached, disinterested and unrestricted Eros of the mind runs up against the stark reality of the spontaneous instinct to escape from unpleasant or inconvenient knowledge. Hence the importance of this new standpoint struggling to establish itself as a science did not lie in what it told us about *epistēmē*, but rather in what it said about *epithumia*: namely, that the human psyche reveals a fundamental antinomy of opposing desires, one for enlightenment, the other for ignorance. As a new perspective on human cognition, depth-psychology did not inquire after the conditions for the *possibility* of knowledge, but after the conditions for its *desirability*. The wanderer had come face to face with his shadow; Reason in search of understanding had met with Passion blindly pursuing its own release.

In tracing the historical precedents of this insight into the relationship between knowledge and desire, we find that the idea owed its continued vitality, and probably its origins as well, to the perennial debate over the truth-value of religious beliefs. The critiques of Heraclitus and Herodotus against the current mythological theologies, the rejection of false idols in the prophetic and Wisdom literatures of the Hebrews, the *deos fecit timor* of Petronius and Lucretius, Augustine's *cor inquietum* and Aquinas' *desiderium naturale*, the so-called psychogenetic explanations of God in Feuerbach and Nietzsche—all these strains of thought share this conviction in common: that knowledge of the truth is dependent upon psychological states, temperaments, dispositions and attitudes which, in
DEPTH-PSYCHOLOGY AND THE 'HOMO RELIGIOSUS' turn, form part of the archaeology of personal history. In other words, the distinction between the desire to know and the desire not to know is operative in both theism and atheism in their attempts at self-justification and mutual repudiation. 'Religion is the opium of the people' . . . 'The fool says in his heart, "There is no God".' It is no surprise, therefore, that from the very start depth-psychology has given considerable attention to religious faith and experience, involving itself thereby in questions customarily apportioned to theology. The relations between the two disciplines have tended to be pendular, swinging now to an uncritical syncretism, now to a pessimistic intolerance. The belief that this malady of extremes is not incurable stands everywhere behind the arguments of this essay, although the major emphasis will be seen to lie elsewhere.

II

We begin by isolating those terms which at this point are in need of some provisional definition.

By depth-psychology I mean to include those branches of scientific psychology which, arising out of eighteenth century medicine, depend in their techniques, theory and therapy, upon the hypothesis of an unconscious mind.1 Mention of the clinical origins and methods of this psychology is meant to exclude from discussion those theories of philosophical anthropology which were contemporaneous with the beginnings of scientific psychology and contained some concept of the unconscious. It is not my intention to belittle the achievements and the not infrequent precociousness of such theories of mind as advanced, for instance, by Schopenhauer, Herbart, Carus, von Hartmann and Nietzsche.2 I simply wish to concentrate attention on the methods adopted by those who championed a practical, therapeutic science of the human personality that was based on the polarity of conscious and unconscious functions. That tradition itself is rich and varied. One need only mention the names of Mesmer, Puysegur, Charcot, Bernheim, Noizet, Bertrand, Janet, Freud, Adler and Jung—a list already too long to encompass intelligently in a short summary. For that reason I have tried to set out what appears to me the common background of the critique of religion associated with

1. I am following the historical analysis of Henri Ellenberger in his massive and impressive study, The Development of the Unconscious (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London 1970). The phrase 'depth-psychology', as far as I can gather, was first coined by Eugen Bleuler to describe Freud's preoccupations with the unconscious in his theoretical models of the psyche. See 'Die Psychoanalyse Freuds', Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen (Vienna 1910) 623-30.
2. A rather popularized but nonetheless valuable summary of this field can be had in I. L. Whyte's The Unconscious Before Freud (Tavistock Publications, London 1962).
the tradition which those names represent. At times it will be necessary to sacrifice the subtlety and sophistication of particular developments for what seems the preferable advantage of factoring out to the common denominators.

For a working definition of the unconscious, I cannot improve upon Professor Flew's description of it as the extension of such notions as wish, intention, motive, desire and purpose, and the behaviour resulting therefrom, in so far as they are not under the immediate control of the person who harbours them. While this statement clearly sidesteps such questions as whether the unconscious is a function, a faculty or merely a classifying model, and whether its contents are acquired or inherited, it is most suitable for our purposes here.

Finally, I have chosen the phrase homo religiosus not in order to imply a particular definition of religion, but precisely because of its delightful classical ambiguity. For the unassailable primacy of one's individual experience must be preserved, whether his faith in God is adjudged by one viewpoint to be true piety or by another to be a form of obsessional religiosity. Furthermore, by the words homo religiosus I mean to insist that what depth-psychology is dealing with is not a universal philosophy of religion, but the concrete phenomenon of a man and his God. All metaphysical questions about the nature and existence of gods, devils, angels, spirits and the like as they might be in themselves and apart from their appearance in the individual psyche are considered irrelevant to depth-psychology. The scientist may believe such things or disbelieve them, but qua scientist he is committed to a different frame of discourse.

With these boundaries suggested by the historical phenomenon called depth-psychology, the commitment to the hypothesis of the unconscious mind, and the subject matter of the homo religiosus, we can proceed via three questions of increasing complexity.

First, some attempt must be made to capture the essence of the approach of unconscious psychology to the homo religiosus, as well as to sketch the horizons within which its theories function. It will occasionally be necessary to include refinements on the general theme, but only in so far as they clarify the fundamental common ground. The interesting but rather specialized controversies surrounding these issues will, as mentioned above, have to be foregone.

Secondly, we shall try to locate the observational and theoretical procedures of depth-psychology within science and philosophy and at the same time call into question the claims to objectivity.

Thirdly and finally, I wish to conclude with a brief statement concerning the confrontation of depth-psychology with theology by suggesting three areas of common concern which each approaches with a different outlook.

III

Faced with actual accounts of religious experience and belief in God, depth-psychology begins its investigations with the hypothesis that such accounts reveal projections of unconscious desires. It is a mistake to suppose that such a theory is the crowning conclusion to a tortuous, involved and perhaps also somewhat suspicious process of argumentation. It is rather the very starting point for all observation and interpretation of the *homo religiosus*. It determines what data are to be considered relevant and by what sort of concepts they are to be explained. Between the idea of God a man discloses and his unconscious wishes a paradigmatic connection is pre-ordained. What remains to be discovered, and therefore constitutes depth-psychology’s claim to science, is the hinterland of intervening variables—that complex series of events and processes which are conveniently gathered together under the umbrella of ‘projection’. It follows that the God who is the object of faith and experience is not considered as a metaphysical being whose nature and existence is open to question for the depth-psychologist. Rather, he accepts the reality of God in the one minimal sense in which it appears beyond reasonable doubt—the sense presumed by theistic and atheistic standpoints alike—namely, that it is an actual existant idea, a product of the human psyche. In considering the *imago Dei* as it appears in human discourse, the psychologist is not concerned to compare it with a transcendent *Deus* which it may mirror or distort, but to see the sense in which, like every image, it bears the scars of its genesis in personal *imaginatio*.

To set this procedure within a broader context, we may note that for depth-psychology all human behaviour is in fact potentially explainable as parapraxis, i.e. it is seen to be a language of double meanings where surface or conscious significance points to or conceals a realm of unconscious drives seeking fulfilment. Thus *homo religious*, no less than *homo amans*, *homo ludens*, *homo faber* and *homo loquens*, is viewed as internally conditioned by the past occurrences and memories that have slipped below the level of self-awareness. The aim of analysis is to render this invisible realm apparent by means of the interpretation of the visible as double-entendre. Clearly some forms of behaviour lend themselves to such deciphering more easily than others. Dreams, visions, hallucinations, obsessions, psychosomatic disorders and the like betray their unconscious
origins much more readily than normal discourse and activity, notwithstanding the occasional 'slip'. Similarly God-concepts (whether consciously held or spontaneously produced) are virtually rich with layers of meaning for the depth-psychologist. Because of their discontinuity with publicly verifiable knowledge, their transcendent and highly symbolic contents, their association with moral prohibitions and ultimate values, and above all because of their constant reformation and transformation throughout life, images of God can be most suitable psychopomps for the journey into the lower world of hidden and frustrated desires. They are illusions which, if carefully interpreted, can reveal what is unknown and repressed. That they might ultimately be delusions as well is a tempting conclusion, but in no way permissible from the premises of psychological science, according to which unconscious desire can project itself upon chimeras, goblins or gods just as easily as upon parents, siblings or lovers.

At this point two questions arise concerning the clinical application of these ideas: (1) How does one recognize the God-concept? and (2) How can one distinguish the contribution which unconscious wishes have made to it? The answer to both questions lies in three of the intervening variables involved in the adoption of the viewpoint of projection-analysis to any particular case.

First of all, and most obviously, one has the patient's own account of himself, in which mention of religious beliefs, and specifically belief in a God, may occur. Whatever form this belief may take, the doctor is concerned with it only as a fragment of a narrated personal history, so that it may or may not prove to be rooted in a discoverable neurosis. Frequently there will be some noticeable discrepancy between the consciously professed notion of God and other images of God which the individual has recognized as such in his dreams and fantasies or expressed in literary or artistic creations. When this inconsistency is discovered in the actual language of the patient when speaking about himself, the psychologist has his strongest clue that it may be considered symptomatic of a conflict of conscious and unconscious desires and may therefore be seen as a projection.

Secondly, in addition to those images which the analysand himself recognizes as pertaining to God, it may also be necessary to refer to those of current religious tradition with which he would readily acknowledge acquaintance. Education and memory differ from person to person, but the relative objectivity of the analyst in auditing the patient's narration may enable him to suggest correlations between so-called unconscious phenomena and consciously entertained God-concepts—correlations of which the individual might otherwise be unaware. Here again, however, it is the patient who is the final court of appeal, although the doctor's role
is more active. In such cases of apparent opacity to an insight until it is suggested, as well as in situations where traditional images are transformed, disfigured or otherwise adorned with personal touches, the analyst is led to an initial hypothetical diagnosis of meaningful unconscious projection.

Thirdly and finally, there is the possibility of a diagnosis of a God-concept with unconscious roots whose recognition depends entirely on the doctor's judgment. In other words, either consciously affirmed attitudes or unconsciously produced imagery which appear in the analyst's discourse may lead the therapist to suspect that someone or something not usually viewed as a God, and not so acknowledged by the individual to be his God, may have been divinized by the fact that it is granted a centrality and ultimacy of concern or value usually reserved for God. It is in this third area that the doctor's quest for the unconscious causes of disorders carries him farthest beyond the patient's own admitted reasons and self-appraisal.

This quick glance at the diagnostic canons forces us to return to the question of why the depth-psychologist concerns himself with God-talk at all, and why it is given special consideration as a form of behaviour. We have already mentioned the fact that the mythlike quality of such language and its detachment from the public sphere make it similar to the dream and other properly unconscious phenomena. For the same reason, artistic and literary creation has become both a technique for the discovery of the unconscious and an object of analysis itself, apart from the clinical setting—more successfully in the former, I should judge, than in the latter.

A second reason lies in the fact that, whether they are aware of it or not, the mentally disturbed tend to associate their religious beliefs, fears and doubts with their problems. Case-studies have been multiplied almost beyond number to demonstrate that *de facto* psychic disturbances have a marked influence on one's attitudes towards God and religion in general. Thus, *ex hypothesi*, the image of God a man professes or otherwise produces becomes a helpful gauge to the presence of unconscious conflict. Were it not for the fact that religious belief is present to offer readily available hooks for unknown or repressed frustrations, such conflicts would have expressed themselves in other forms, obsessional, fantastical or somatic.

Finally, one cannot fail to add that a less noble, but historically inescapable reason lies in the anti-religious sentiments of certain pioneers of depth-psychology who carried their prejudices into their work in order to be able to dismiss, *a priori*, all claims to theistic belief as symptomatic of psychic maladjustment or neurosis. It was precisely this 'nothing but' attitude which William James attacked so vigorously in his now classic
Gifford Lectures of 1901-2. For while God may indeed be a projected dramatization of unconscious wishes and support the desire not to know, he need not only be that.

What properly distinguishes depth-psychology’s approach to the homo religiosus, however, is not merely its views on the illusory nature of religious beliefs—for this it shares with any number of philosophical positions—but rather its expressed intention to resolve those projections by bringing to light the unconscious drives which are in conflict with consciousness. Its aim is to anthropomorphize once again what has been divinized, in order to understand ever deeper layers of the psyche and bring it about that the beliefs of the homo religiosus may eventually be introjected into self-awareness as far as it is deemed necessary and possible. The techniques for resolving projections (catharsis, abreaction, transference, etc.) depend on the view any particular variety of psychology assumes towards the genesis and function of the God-image in the psyche, i.e., what sorts of variables and processes intervene between the unconscious desire and the production of a religious belief or image which either aids or inhibits sanity. Therapeutic concerns often make the distinction between genesis and function significant, since it does happen that notions deriving from an unconscious source—whether linked to actual traumatic events or only to one’s distorted perceptual memory—may end up serving a quite important function in maintaining psychic equilibrium. None of us is entirely free of our projections, and perhaps life would become unbearably tense and introspective if we were to attempt such a feat. Thus, in the absence of any diagnosed abnormality, the psychologist is not interested in projection analysis, unless of course he is given to more philosophical speculation.

IV

The foregoing, in the somewhat loose-limbed parlance of résumé, indicates what I believe to be the general structure of the various approaches of depth-psychology to the religious believer. It is now time to lay out more carefully the limitations of the claim to scientific objectivity which such psychologies have continued to make.

To begin with, one can hardly accuse any of the leading figures of the movement I have characterized from Mesmer to Charcot to Jung of being over-anxious about seeking out the tacit presuppositions of their procedures, or indeed of establishing a solid methodological basis at all. At the same time, it is only fair to note that their work has suffered intensely at the hands of over-zealous disciples who have tended to harden the

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genius of unconscious psychology into a faculty-psychology that divides
the psyche into parts and makes it run and halt like a material machine.
But I shall not spend time trying to locate the blame for the overall lack
of epistemological finesse. Instead I will outline what I feel are the major
areas into which an appropriate critique of the psychology of the homo
religiosus would have to be directed. (Were it not for the rather unfor-
tunate use of the term which Freud introduced and made current, I should
like to call this project a 'metapsychology'.)

In examining the objectivity of the procedures and theories of depth-
psychology's standpoint on religious statements, it becomes clear at once
that we are involved in a critique of a critique. Logically this leads to an
infinite regress—for our own critical perspective is no less open to
question than what it presumes to evaluate, just like the sceptic who must
ultimately be sceptical of his own scepticism. Nevertheless a step must
be taken lest panic of error result in an invincible inertia. Indeed, we
seem to have no other option than to admit that 'objectivity' is a relative
and asymptotic notion—dependent on the material it is studying and
graduated according to the success of the available and always perfectible
techniques.

For this reason we can begin by insisting that it is unreasonable to
demand of any study of human desire the precision of data and laws
that we find, for instance, in nuclear physics,5 and just as unreasonable
to permit the purely parochial sort of interpretation found in theological
exegesis. Yet the difficult via media must needs be sought with rigour.
While we may counsel a considerable tolerance towards the pioneering
spirit of a young science with its bold and at times thoughtless conquests,
with its occasional insensitivity to what has been left behind, there comes
a period of settlement as well. The psychological caravan must soon begin
to rediscover itself as a colony of a vaster empire, not a free-floating
nomadic dictatorship of truth.

We begin with the demands urged upon depth-psychology by its own
aspirations to 'scientific' objectivity.

In the first place, there is needed a far greater clarity in the description
of what will count as 'facts' for the viewpoint of depth-psychology. To
this end, a more precise separation of theory from observation is indis-
penensible. This is not to ignore the debate over the theory-ladenness of all
observation—that all data are in some important sense concept—nor to
join ranks with the attempt to canonize a common set of criteria for the
observational language of all science. It rather announces that in so far
as depth-psychology begs these questions by the use of heuristic categories

5. This is the crux of Skinner's critique of psychoanalysis. Cf. his 'Critique of Psycho­
analytic Concepts and Theories', TEAL AND SCRIVEN, OP. CIT. 77-87.
which are so intimately bound up with consequent theory as to be incapable of falsifying the latter, it is unscientific. As we have shown above, the 'evidence' for the theory of God as a projection of unconscious wishes is selected on the basis of the theory itself, and would indeed be unthinkable, in the present state of psychological research, without a prior commitment to that theory.

Secondly, to achieve greater objectivity it has been suggested from some quarters that the concepts of depth-psychology be translated into operational definitions tied to specific, public observables. Without this step, it would appear that verification would have to be forsaken in favour of the *circulum vitiosum* of the self-fulfilling prophecy. It follows naturally that objectivity would be greatly enhanced if the topographical and economic models of the psyche on which depth-psychologies are based were so clarified. Such notions as instinct, desire, unconscious, repression and fantasy, if operationally defined, might render the diagnosis of behaviour in their terms more intelligible. No matter how sophisticated the theoretical mechanism of intervening variables in the projection process becomes, unless the vocabulary is defined in this manner, it is argued, nothing significant is being said about the objective, scientific universe.

Thirdly, and closely aligned to the previous points, there is the demand from philosophers of science for some statement of the prediction of observable consequences grounded in the theoretical explanation and designed to verify or falsify them. Without this, the theory can be qualified *ex post facto* indefinitely and thereby risks becoming a mere clever abstract arrangement of selected bits of human behaviour, rather like astrology or graphology. There are two ways in which predictions might be expected concerning the *homo religiosus*. In the first, epimethean sense, the doctor might be able to predict—given the God-images that appear in the analysand’s speech—what sort of case-history had led to particular distortions and projections located in the image of God. This type of prediction is highly tenuous, however, and readily susceptible to manipulation. In fact, the analyst must constantly extrapolate intelligent guesses of this nature, but the errors he makes on his way to a satisfactory reconstruction of the past will never be seen by him to count against the theory itself. A second promethean means of prediction is to view the eventual outcome, the 'cure' effected by the resolution of the projection

6. Such an attempt has actually been made by Albert Ellis in his essay, ‘An Operational Reformulation of Some of the Basic Principles of Psychoanalysis’, *ibid.* 131-54.

and the encounter with hidden wishes. But here as well there are too many available ruses. If a cure fails, the doctor can always refer to an obstinacy on the patient’s part to face the truth about himself, to the fact that a symptom was over-determined or perhaps, if he is more humble, to his own misunderstanding of the theory. And if treatment does succeed, one is still never sure if it was a result of the theory and its method or the mere passage of time, the depletion of financial resources or other conditions quite external to the clinical setting. Furthermore, data on the effectiveness of psychotherapy is both scarce and unflattering. Whether the demand for prediction is to be met by more highly developed techniques of experimentation or by a comparative study of primitive peoples, it remains a challenge to the objectivity of a science which claims to understand forms of theism as a key to forms of unconscious motivation.

In the fourth place, a more precise demarcation of psychic health from psychic sickness is needed, lest the mistaken attempts to cure people of their individuality and encourage the expression of reasonable inhibitions continue to multiply without control. It may very well prove to be the case that the very origins of depth-psychology as a branch of medicine were one of the most immoral, premature ventures of human civilization. For while it is a truism that an individual’s judgments about himself may be malignantly misguided, the appalling failure of mental institutions to do much more than give sanctuary to the outcaste and condition them irreparably to a psychosis they may never have entered with, demands of psychology that its theory keep pace with its therapy. The issue is no less acute in the case of the homo religiosus, for moral sanctity and severe brain damage, mysticism and immorality, firm religious conviction and outright insanity are not infrequently correlative. On the one hand, we have a man such as Benvenuto Cellini who combines mystical experience, profligacy and cold-blooded murder without regret; and on the other, someone like Catherine of Genoa whose miraculous anaesthesia looks to us suspiciously like a form of hysteria. The Cellinis and the Catherines, the John Bunyans, the Francis of Assisies, the Torquemadas and the Augustines all serve to remind us of the salience that a precise model of mental health with which to approach the homo religiosus must enjoy.

In the fifth and final place, there must be a more accurate description of the passage from the interpretation of individual case-histories to a general theory, if psychology is to claim scientific status. This demand is further pressed by the over-anxious venture of many depth-psychologists into the question of the psychological effects of a religious tradition. Whether it is seen to be oppressively antiseptic or creatively productive,
the ground of such general statements must be based on something more than a generalizing intuition drawn from personal clinical experience. Objectivity here is, admittedly, less concrete, but not unthinkable if psychological science is to avoid the restrictions of the doctor’s office and confinement to those who can afford treatment.

But this rather gloomy picture of depth-psychology’s pretences to science presupposes that, mutatis mutandis, it is to be modelled exclusively after the example of the natural sciences. A quite different sort of epistemological critique follows, however, if one sees it fundamentally as a work of philosophical interpretation. According to this view, scientific standards tend to rid psychology of its genius and simply absorb it slowly into the stream of behaviourism or learning theory. While this second approach is less widely adhered to, it provides a healthy contrapuntal strain to the occasionally incommensurable requirements of scientific objectivity.

In his reading of Freudian psychoanalysis as a hermeneutic, Paul Ricoeur has aptly coined the phrase for this approach ‘the semantics of desire’. This view sees depth-psychology as an interpretation of human speech as symbolic—not a mere semiotics for an underlying causality susceptible to deterministic laws, but a true semantics of unconscious wishes inexhaustibly intelligible to hermeneutical consciousness. Para-praxis is a sort of para-language of primordial desires; the psyche is a sort of palimpsest that has to be decoded. The God-image is thus a key to the ineffable depths of self-understanding, and the whole conceptual framework of projection analysis is seen to be a priori inasmuch as it spells out the conditions for the possibility of an interpretation according to human desire.

Now the demand for objectivity will be quite different in such a perspective from what we would demand of depth-psychology from a more positivistic outlook. I believe we can best approach this question by turning to a comparison with historiography. Thus in asking what makes a psychological interpretation objective let us adapt the norms which Collingwood presents to distinguish history from fiction:10 (1) The interpretation must be localized in space and time, in the actual case-history of the patient. This is not to assert, of course, that autobiographical discourse is always itself tied to actual events, for apperception may disfigure commonsense objectivity. What is being said is simply that no

9. Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation (Yale University Press, New Haven 1970). I am everywhere indebted to Ricoeur for his thoroughgoing and highly intelligent hermeneutical exposition of psychoanalysis. I differ from him only in insisting that, at least observationally, depth-psychology can attain scientific status.

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hermeneutic can be constructed purely by the fictional imagination. It must explain the individual case-history or nothing has been accomplished. (2) The story must be coherent and consistent both with itself and eventually with the mass of similar case-histories. Otherwise one becomes trapped in a complete subjectivism that is beyond criticism. And (3) the interpretation must correspond to something called evidence, to the language of human behaviour and its distortions, to actual unconscious phenomena and visible symptoms classified as proof for the interpretation.

It would be comforting to be able to locate depth-psychology either within the scientific or the hermeneutic field and reconcile ourselves to the consequences. At least we might hope for two different accounts developed along parallel lines. But the unavoidable fact seems to be that depth-psychology is necessarily a hybrid study, a blend of science and hermeneutics, bound by these two distinct horizons which touch one another in many of the other human sciences as well: history, sociology and anthropology in particular. As an observational discipline, depth-psychology enables us to gather, select, describe and classify significant and interpretable facts from human activity. And as an explanatory venture, it offers an actual interpretation of those facts, not as causal and law-regulated but as symbolically representative of a process of growth. Psychological explanation is hermeneutical because it tries to arrive at the goal-orientation of human instinct as it discloses itself in speech about behaviour. Therefore, the demands for a separation of facts from theory, for operational definitions, for predictable consequences, for standards of mental health and for general laws are only commensurable with the observational functions of depth-psychology, while the explanatory nature of its conceptual scheme must respond to the quite different criteria of historical (and perhaps metaphysical) interpretation and the clinical demands of therapeutic practice. Thus the manifestations of desire within the homo religiosus must be sought and isolated by scientific techniques and yet interpreted as an opening up to the mysterious nature of homo volens which ever eludes us except as some form of idolatry.

What I mean to suggest by this approach is merely a way to accept the sort of thing which depth-psychology is actually doing, while at the same time asking it to pay more attention to its facts and abandon its futile quest to become an explanatory science. Whether in fact the data of depth-psychology will someday be adequately absorbed into chemistry, genetics and neurology is of no concern. At present they cannot be.

Similarly, this distinction forces us to return to the unique characteristic of depth-psychology: the wedding of theoria and praxis in analysis. The

interpretative models are not merely intended to offer a plausible explanation, but to bring about a change in human behaviour. Thus, for example, where there is a striking correlation between religious beliefs and obsessions, dreams and generally neurotic symptoms, the conceptual scheme must serve to 'better' the condition of the analysand, by resolving this correlation in a projection analysis. For better or for worse, the theory becomes the focal point for self-understanding. In this process, the doctor poses as a sort of philosopher-king endowed with an oracular judgment to direct proceedings. Occasional changes and even contradictions in his judgment do not alter the basic framework within which interpretation occurs. Admitted into the intimacy of a human psyche, the analyst's relative detachment gives him a paternalistic, almost gnostic function as therapist. The problem is not a new one: reflective priests and politicians have long known it. Dostoyevsky dealt with it in the figure of the Grand Inquisitor. Unamuno's famous portrayal of Don Manuel mirrors the same dilemma. Plato's Socrates in the seventh book of the Republic expresses similar concerns for the philosopher. What we have here then is a moral problem of the first magnitude, as serious as any that haunts medical science as a whole today. It is here, if nowhere else, that the claim to objectivity stands on its weakest legs. It is here that psychology is least a science and seems fated to remain an *ars interpretationis*. We are in a realm where there are no external Archimedean points of reference, wherein we must rely on what William James once called so aptly 'the sentiment of rationality'.

It is perhaps obvious now that a host of methodological problems have yet to be faced before depth-psychology's viewpoint on the *homo religiosus* can achieve any disciplinary unity. At the same time, its interdisciplinary confrontation with theology may serve to sharpen that task. To this end, I wish to conclude by sketching briefly three areas wherein such discussion might centre—a discussion which unfortunately still shows the strained relations it did back in 1775 when Mesmer's victory over the exorcist Gassner issued in the first invasion of psychological science into theology.

The first area is basic, and all other questions are in some sense a mere elaboration of it. Theology has viewed faith as the co-operation of two independent factors: divine revelation and the freely-willed belief of individual man. Depth-psychology, by substituting the realm of the unconscious for revelation has offered an explanation which appears to exhaust the meaning of faith without reference to divine transcendence but only to a sort of immanent tension of desires that express themselves...
symbolically in language and behaviour. For theology, free will and revelation are mediated by grace; for psychology, consciousness and the unconscious are mediated by the techniques of analysis. Now even if the serious consideration of the viewpoint of depth-psychology does not serve to alter the theological commitment to the transcendent origins of revealed truth, it will at least undermine the persistent simplicity of free-will theory which grounds so much theological literature. And again, the fact that Hindus have visions of Shiva and Catholics of the Blessed Virgin and not vice versa (which is not significantly different from Stekel’s well-known observation that patients dream in the dialect of whatever doctor happens to be treating them) is hardly rendered intelligible by simple reference to the gift of grace and the insufficiency of mere human nature.

Secondly, new grounds might be found for the vague theological notion of the soul—long tied to a pre-psychological metaphysics—in depth-psychology’s notion of the psyche which embraces both conscious and unconscious mind. If an equivalence is accepted, the traditional forensic models governing the concepts of sin, salvation and eschatology would clearly have to be abandoned. On the other hand, if we are unwilling to concede at least the possibility of such an identification, let us freely admit a return to the sharp demarcation between theology and science which Siger de Brabant proposed in his attack on Aquinas.

Finally, the fact that God-images differ from person to person, from time to time within a single person’s life, and even from consciously held notions to unconscious phenomena, brings us to the question of whether this inevitable ‘heresy’ against established dogma is significant or not. Certainly it relates to the ambivalence of religious beliefs vis-a-vis psychic health and illness. Depth-psychology cannot afford to ignore the fact that Lourdes has been the scene of countless physical and mental cures, just as the theologian for his part must recognize that psychotics often have visions no less marvellous and sublime than do the revered mystics.

A good deal more courage and sympathy will have to be demanded of the theologian and not a little humility of the psychologist in facing the limitations of their respective standpoints, if such contact on these and other issues is to prove fruitful for either discipline. Perhaps then, someday, we may come to understand what George Bernard Shaw only intuited in his portrayal of St Joan of Arc:

Joan: I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God.
Robert: They come from your imagination.
Joan: Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us.

(Scene 1)