Freud Versus Jung: Analysis Versus Synthesis
Elizabeth Kaluaratchige

To cite this version:

HAL Id: hal-01504283
https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01504283
Submitted on 13 Jun 2017

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.
Freud Versus Jung: Analysis Versus Synthesis

Eastern religion and conflict in the history of the psychoanalytic movement

Freud versus Jung : Analyse versus Synthèse
Le début d’une conflictualité inspirée des religions occidentales et asiatiques dans l’histoire du mouvement psychanalytique.

Elizabeth Kaluaratchige

Abstract:
This article discusses the main causes of the disagreement between, on the one hand, Freud, who approaches psychical activity by analyzing its different components and develops a theory of the paternal law governing verbal thinking, and, on the other hand, Jung, who elaborates a notion of a psychical totality associated with “the maternal” and inspired by Eastern religious traditions.

Résumé :
Cet article traite de la cause majeure de la discorde entre Freud, le théoricien de l’analyse des activités psychiques dans ses diverses composantes, qui développe sa théorie de la loi paternelle de la pensée-parole, et Jung, qui développe la notion de totalité psychique associée au maternel inspiré des religions asiatiques.

Keywords: Buddhism, the paternal function, mother, mysticism, analysis, synthesis
Mots-clefs: Bouddhisme, fonction paternelle, mère, mysticisme, analyse, synthèse

Plan:
The mythical answer: the father of the horde and feminine jouissance
The Hero’s Dream
Resistance Against the Sexual
The “Unifying” Force Versus Otherness
The Self and the Collective Unconscious Versus the Ego and Collective Ideals
Atheism, Religiosity and Esotericism
Theory and Technique
The Challenge
In 1908, Freud writes to Karl Abraham about Carl Gustav Jung: “[...] it was only by his emergence on the scene that psychoanalysis was removed from the danger of becoming a Jewish national affair.”¹ Freud is convinced that Jung represents a new opportunity for psychoanalysis, its chance to spread beyond the Jewish context. How ironic it was when he discovered that Jung, the psychoanalyst most dear to his cause, was engaged in a kind of spiritual, mystical and occult quest. In 1911, Jung makes his intentions clear: “For a time I must get drunk on magic scents, to fully understand what secret the unconscious hides in its depths.” Freud sounds the alarm: “You will be accused of mysticism, but the reputation you won with the Dementia will hold up for quite some time against that. Just don’t stay in the tropical colonies too long; you must reign at home.”² In other words, Freud wants Jung to abandon his search for meaning in the Indian spiritual realm, which would lead him too far away from psychoanalysis. We should understand this inaugural moment of the conflict between Freud and Jung as a “theoretical and technical” war between two fundamentally opposing and/or complementary operations. This allows us to grasp the disagreements that drew Jung away from Freudian psychoanalysis due to his attraction to the idea of psychical “totality” “made up of consciousness and the infinite ocean of the soul on which it floats”³ and inspired by Christian and Indian religions, primarily by Tantric Buddhism. Jung marks the beginning of a chronic conflict with psychoanalysis, which we can locate in a particular current of the emerging Western modernity. This conflict has survived into the 21st century, in the form of bodily and spiritual Buddhist practices of Mahayana worship originating in Asia.⁴ Freud encounters these spiritual phenomena, foreign to the mysticism of Western monotheism, not only through Jung, his favorite disciple, but also through his friends, for example through Romain Rolland, a believer in the oceanic feeling.⁵ Seeing it as an isolated striving, only retrospectively integrated into the religious doctrine,⁶ Freud insists that the mystical and oceanic striving is the result of a movement towards the mother, associated with the impossible, and of the subject’s distancing from the collective illusion based upon speech and the love of the father.⁷

The mythical answer: the father of the horde and feminine jouissance

As he begins work on Totem and Taboo, Freud feels that his relationship with Jung is growing cold due to the latter’s resistance to Oedipus and the father complex;⁸ against his will, Freud’s own work also hastens their separation.⁹ Freud argues that Oedipus was originally a phallic daemon, like the Dactyls of Mount Ida, whose name means “erection.” He incites Jung to become interested in the Dactyls, then in Oedipus, Hamlet and Leonardo da Vinci, and to distance himself from self-castration, the punishment of the attachment to the maternal, which is in fact a denial of symbolic castration by the father. As Sophie de Mijolla-Mellor points out, questions of “the relations between fathers and sons” are a recurring theme in Freud and Jung’s relationship.¹⁰ Freud hopes to respond to Jung via the scientific myth of the primal horde, from which he deduces that the dead father remains concealed in the totem and in the plurality of gods, and foregrounded in monotheism through the concept of the single God.¹¹ The primal father, Urvater, is transformed into the glorified dead father or the inner father, from whom Oedipus must break away in order to gain independence and freedom. This is how we should understand the Freudian hypothesis. The fantasy of totality and completeness is therefore an infantile one: becoming the “mother’s penis” in order to “make her complete”.¹² The primitive instinct, such as the one argued for by Jung, can only be a fantasy of satisfying a primitive desire - to abandon one’s organ, the mark of symbolic castration – and a hope for a possible existence “outside sex.” Freud also speaks about the subjection of “castrated” sons to the power restored to the females during the
transitional period between the murder of the father and the symbolic pact between the brothers. Freud’s argument suggests that in terms of phylogenesis, the castrating primal father is relayed by the castrating females (the Great Mothers), who then return as the instigators of the fantasy of self-castration in the ontogenesis of a subject unable to resolve his Oedipal complex. The Freudian argument is based on self-castration and self-punishment practiced among the monastic Vestals, where castrated priests lived alongside virgins, “keepers of the sacred fire” referred to in the New Testament and represented by the “terrible virgin” Saint Agatha of Sicily. When Freud speaks about Diana of Ephesians, he does not exclude the existence of a cult of the Great Goddess, “unassailable and out of reach,” which was later reintroduced by its cultural descendants. He also shows that, like Athens, Rome too has left behind a few traces of this greatly desired virgin mother, for example in the form of the Temple of Minerva in the city of Rome. The Indian cult of self-castration is attested to by the tradition of the eunuchs Hijra and by the worship of the goddess Durga or Bahuchara Mata. Based on the idea of a dialogue between Shiva and the power known as Shakti and represented as a divinity, Tantra calls for the spiritual search for unity. The word Tantra, through its Sanskrit roots of tanta or tanntr, means “to engage in an activity” and designates “weaving” or “a tool used for weaving.” Tantra develops a regime of bodily and spiritual discipline such as yoga or the union with the conscious power Shakti, the Divine Mother, which inspires Jung’s concept of Anima, the feminine essence. Tantric Buddhism directs the divine aspect of Tantra towards an esoteric and spiritual power. The Jungian technique refers to Buddhist concepts such as Nirvāṇa, “the Awakening,” or the sub-conscious, yatihita. Jung studies the personal experience of the disciples of Tantric Buddhism, as distinct from group practices. A person who conquers the female essence, anima, is able to acquire mana, a collective male figure. The latter is only a preliminary condition for the formation of the idea of God, instead of being an essential cultural characteristic, as Freud would have it. Jung sees the power of the male essence in the God-man and heroic figures in the mana personality, simultaneously conscious and unconscious, or rather neither conscious nor unconscious. To end this confusion, yet to avoid spiritualizing the masculine and feminine principles, Freud explains that in his singularity, the God-man is situated by a type of relationship to the individual and the collectivity, based on the vicissitudes of the paternal complex.

The Hero’s Dream

Freud studies the human desire for completeness by examining the first possible human myth, the heroic legend. The hero separates himself from the group and only returns to it in the form of the peerless member of the culture. He is perhaps the youngest son, the mother’s favorite and chosen one. The hero in turn becomes the father of the horde. He claims to have alone killed the father, which only the horde as a whole would have ventured upon. In the Freudian theorization of the hero figure, the Jungian concept of the union resembles an Oedipus dream, before the end of his journey. The myth of the Superman, for example the Nietzschean Übermensch, also supports this. As early as 1900, Freud writes: “The oracle given to the Tarquins is equally well known, which prophesied that the conquest of Rome would fall to that one of them who should first kiss his mother.” Freud analyzes Bachofen’s theory of the human utopia of matriarchy in terms of the unconscious. The logos is masculine, paternal, and stands on the side of reason, while the sensual is more feminine and maternal. When a human being separates himself from logos, he favors the sensuality of the transitional period of the primal feminine power. Freud implies that faced with the failure of his emancipation, and
the impossibility of returning to the indiscriminate mass of sensations or to the maternal womb, Oedipus can become arrested in a passive attitude towards his unparalleled father. We see the outlines of the close connection Freud will later make between the longing for maternal power and the primary identification with the dead father, before the latter is revived as a symbolic father. Jung, on the other hand, by distancing himself from the Freudian concept of the Ur, as the archaic dimension which points to the “impossible” in the primal function, tries to develop the concept of the archaic as a heroic act, in order to move towards the obscurity of the soul, against otherness and Eros.

Resistance Against the Sexual

From the beginning, Freud is aware of the reservations Jung has expressed about the key concept of psychoanalysis: sex. Freud’s use of the term “sexuality” provokes accusations not only from Jung, but also from Bleuler. Jung accuses Freud of “pan-sexualism,” of having sexuality include not only physiological sexual facts but also all the stages and categories of feelings and desires. In 1912, Jung writes: “I found that my version of ΨA won over many people who until then had been put off by the problem of sexuality in neurosis.” In 1914, Freud comments on these words: “[...] the more he sacrificed of the hard-won truths of psychoanalysis the more would he see resistances vanishing. This modification which the Swiss were so proud of introducing was again nothing else but a pushing into the background of the sexual factor in psycho-analytic theory.” Freud at first cautions Jung: “The farther you remove yourself from what is new in ΨA, the more certain you will be of applause and the less resistance you will meet.” He points out that praise of those who want to hear nothing more about sexuality, and nothing more about the unconscious as having to do with the prohibition of incest, is a bad sign. The lessening of resistance against Jung shows nothing else but a resistance against the paternal function and against psychoanalysis which speaks about it. According to Jung, this prohibition “is merely ‘symbolic’ and ‘without real existence.’” On the contrary, Freud speaks about certain facts “existing unconsciously,” while taking into account the pathogenic manifestations and effects through which this existence is expressed. He insists on the question of the fundamental difference between human beings, which is based on the incest prohibition and on sexuality, and he observes that psychoanalysis encounters resistance from the old anti-sexual and anti-paternal, philosophical, religious and mystical traditions. He writes that for Jung, morality and religions should not be sexualized since they are both by origin something “superior.” Freud however stresses that it is impossible to deny that representations attached to morality and religion are derived from the paternal and incestual complexes. As Freud points out, Jung is trying to “correct Freud” and make him “fit for polite society.” Freud refuses to become “flexible” and let the building blocks of psychoanalysis be diluted into more “acceptable” concepts.

The “Unifying” Force Versus Otherness

Jung resists the ideas of sexuality, separation, lack, castration and otherness and introduces a unifying form of the libido, which can include all the subject’s energies. To support his theory of a unifying instinct, the general life instinct, he makes good use of the practice of certain Tantric Buddhist sects that are removed from sexuality. Jung’s lectures on Kundalini yoga show his attraction for the stimulation of the powerful energy that leads man towards the harmony of psychical wholeness. By introducing the concept of narcissism, Freud vehemently replies that the analytic experience shows that the subject is far from having a single monist libido as a life instinct, but rather there exists a permanent tension, a process of binding and unbinding in the body of drives, between the sexual and the narcissistic,
between the libido and the death drive. He does not speak about an essence, but a dual relation. The paternal function regulates the subject’s relationship to the love object and saves him from drowning in the archaic power of the drives. Those who insist on searching for the first object sublimate a large quantity of drives, and remain closed to the substitute object. By introducing the Nirvâna principle, Freud explains the limits of the interest shown for the life or sexual drives and the unrestrained unfurling of the death drive. The passionate attachment to the mother can also result in becoming fixated on practices that aim at the realization of a fantasy of the return to a primordial time. Freud does not underestimate this solution. It is only a remedy to ease suffering and reject culture’s burdensome proposals. Those who seek individual wellbeing through inner forces can experience the libidinal satisfaction of having succeeded in acting upon the actions of the drive and in this way be liberated from the obligations to the substitute object of collective life. As for Freud, he is much too busy analyzing the “common man” who is part of the collective and living a life of desire.

The Self and the Collective Unconscious Versus the Ego and Collective Ideals

The Jungian ideas of magnetism and spiritual radiation concern an elite spiritual community opposing Satan’s undertaking, one which stands in opposition to the mass unable to move toward a higher spiritual plane. According to Jung, only the process of individuation can lead the human being, who is necessarily constrained by the collective, towards progress. Since the collective unconscious is the result of culture’s attitude to primitive instinctivity and the conscious personality, only a random fragment of the collective psyche, the legacy of humankind, the fundamental, general and impersonal qualities, are connected to personal consciousness. The individual therefore wears the mask of persona, a fragment of the collective psyche, the sum of instincts and their corollaries, the archetypes. Freud sees Jung’s hypothesis of collective unconscious as the antithesis of his own theory of collective organization, of which religion is an example par excellence. For Freud, the unconscious of each person is by its essence collective. Contrary to the inner archetype typical to a given people or a religion, Freud instead speaks of singularity and the work of exteriorizing through identification. In other words, the Freudian ego is a dual agency with both a conscious and an unconscious part, an erotic tendency opposed to the ego and a tendency to its affirmation. The ego invests in an external object, a religious ideal offered by the group, instead of the ego ideal. Jung introduces a strong Self, which exceeds the Freudian ego. The theory of collective unconscious speaks about a repressed Self only secondarily, foregrounding adaptation and the individual’s self-realization in the social framework. Jung chooses the term Self to designate the whole of man, considered as an entity superordinate to the ego. He adds: “I have adopted this expression from Eastern philosophy, which has been dealing with these problems for centuries...” He connects his conception of the totality of man to the Mandala (a meditation circle) of Tantric Buddhism. The concept of the Self refers to a psychic entity capable of putting an end to its own desires. By introducing the notion of autosuggestibility and self-regulation of the global psyche, Jung suggests we focus on the man of mature age. In his view, so-called primitive peoples have the capacity to speak with “their serpent,” while the modern man can only communicate with his Self through a kind of primitive backwardness, the natural spontaneity he still carries within himself. The archetypes have been disguised in him because primitive images have been developed into great religions, taking on rational forms. Jung speaks about the moral conscience necessary to strengthen the capacity of distinguishing between internal good and evil. He argues that it is man’s responsibility to figure out how to
Atheism, Religiosity and Esotericism

Freud tries to divert Jung from religious and spiritual morality, in order to bring him back, through atheism, to the path of the scientism of psychoanalysis. He eventually gives up - or rather Jung leaves him in order to pursue his own way. Freud recognizes that it is the most intimate tendencies that drive a subject towards occultism. He gives up: “I cannot argue with that, it is always right to go where your impulses lead.” He nonetheless confides his disappointment in Karl Abraham, who in turn says that Jung “seems to be reverting to his former spiritualistic inclinations.” Freud tries to explain that neither himself nor Abraham are interested in the mystical elements because of their Jewish tradition and their atheism, while Jung has this tendency as the son of a pastor and a strongly devout Christian.

Theory and Technique

Freud detects a tendency, among his own colleagues, to introduce, instead of psychoanalysis, a technique of journeying towards the inner realm, based on theories of conceptual synthesis. Jung with his collective unconscious and Groddeck with his id which exceeds the body are trying to erase the analyzable and empirical aspects of the unconscious.

Even Freud’s faithful female disciple Lou Andreas-Salomé is attracted to the Buddhist concept of enlightenment and by the neurotic tendency of moving towards a chimeric void. In her case specifically, Freud finds a spiritual phenomenon that drives her to always reach too high, while going too fast. He writes:

“I strike up a—mostly very simple—melody; you supply the higher octaves for it; I separate the one from the other, and you blend what has been separated into a higher unity; I silently accept the limits imposed by our subjectivity, whereas you draw express attention to them.”

Freud knows that the unconscious is always at risk of becoming an “indescribable” phenomenon. He distinguishes between an “alogical”, non-scientific thought, close to mystical contemplation, and logical scientific thought, where representations and speech play their part. He writes to Jung:

“Logical” thinking is thinking in words, which like discourse is directed outwards. ‘Analogical’ or fantasy thinking is emotionally toned, pictorial and wordless, not discourse but an inner-directed rumination on materials belonging to the past. Logical thinking is ‘verbal thinking’. [Sprechen-Denken]. Analogical thinking is archaic, unconscious, not put into words and hardly formulable in words.

This pioneering period shows us that the concept of the unconscious has great difficulty leaving behind the obscure realm of the human soul. Freud does not neglect the risk of the unconscious becoming the victim of mystical contemplation. He now suggests that we move from the unknown to what is known and analyze these unformulated “materials of rumination,” taking into account their slightest manifestations hidden in speech, with its gaps.
and stumblings, and to give them meaning through interpretation.
The final breakup between Freud and Jung happens in 1913. After his separation from Freud, Jung’s objective is to find solutions to the problem of the human soul by bringing man into a state of mental synthesis. Freud observes that Jung is transforming both psychoanalytic theory and its technique:
Theory: the unifying and obscure character of the unconscious, versus the scientific approach to analyzing the different psychic processes.
Technique: a totalized Self’s journey into the inner realm, versus the analysis of psychic agencies through the analyst’s intervention.
In 1914, Freud uses a clever metaphor to explain Jung’s “modification” of psychoanalysis:
Jung has given us a counterpart to the famous Lichtenberg knife. He has changed the hilt, and he has put a new blade into it; yet because the same name is engraved on it we are expected to regard the instrument as the original one.
Is “nomination” what is at stake here, rather than “adherence”? Freud knows that Jungianism will continue to exist as a modification of the theory and technique of Freudian psychoanalysis. Still, “the hilt and the blade” has been changed.
It seems that what he means is that this modification will keep the name “psychoanalysis” but that it cannot actually be used or practiced as “psychoanalysis.” Was he able to foresee the later use of the terms Jungian and Freudian, or of “psychoanalysis” and “analytical psychology”? Through his metaphor, Freud seems to be saying that from the theoretical and technical point of view, “Freudian psychoanalysis” and “Jungian psychoanalysis” must be considered as two different instruments. Jungianism now opposes Freudianism developed under the name “psychoanalysis.” Jung invites us on an inner journey, a rather solitary one, not neglecting however the possible intervention of the analyst. He seems to have become fixated on the moment when psychoanalysis encountered the unconscious of a dark soul as the “impossible through speech.” Freud on the other hand struggles on at all costs, not changing his instruments. He shows that the primitive attitudes close to instinct, so dear to the mystics, are only valuable in restituting an “embryology” of the soul but remain useless to any research concerned with the external world that is foreign to us. Freud explains that Jung’s extrovert and introvert have “a value in themselves.” On the contrary, psychoanalysis focuses on agencies such as the ego, on narcissism or repression, which are by nature descriptive and can only be grasped based on “mental processes [that] may change direction or combine forces with each other.” We should therefore analyze them using tangible contents, rather than fleeing into obscure synthesis.
Correspondingly, Freud acknowledges the difficulty he has in introducing psychoanalysis into the field of scientific research:
I can see from the difficulties I encounter in this work that I was not cut out for inductive investigation, that my whole make-up is intuitive, and that in setting out to establish the purely empirical science of ΨΑ I subjected myself to an extraordinary discipline.
He has invented an analytic method that is situated between science and metaphysics: a metapsychology. Freud writes: “Without metapsychological speculation and theorizing—I had almost said ‘phantasying’—we shall not get another step forward.” The psychic agencies and their combinations allow us to analyze psychic activity through its constitutive parts and then to isolate each element in order to put together a new arrangement. Rejecting synthesis, Freud shows that the separated element never remains isolated but immediately enters into a new combination. Synthesis is produced by itself through interpretation; we have no need to encourage it. He therefore categorically rejects the idea of freezing the different components, which would hinder the continuity of the processes of combination and of analysis.
The Challenge

Freud takes up the challenge of studying religiosity by psychoanalysis understood as a scientific research method. He therefore situates psychoanalytic theory and practice in the non-religious and non-mystical scientific worldview (Weltanschauung). Jung wishes for psychoanalysis to spread among the nations and revive the intellectual’s sense of the symbolic and the mythical. To him, psychoanalysis could speak the “universal language” of the mystical and the archaic, if we emphasize mythology and the aspects of the soul in the form of religious philosophy. Freud clearly and resolutely rejects Jung’s idea of making psychoanalysis into a kind of religion. He writes: “You mustn’t regard me as the founder of a religion. My intentions are not so far-reaching. [...] I am not thinking of a substitute for religion; this need must be sublimated.”

When Freud suggests that we sublimate this need, he is not referring to a longing for the primordial state or the maternal womb. He wishes to break Jung’s attachment to the inner force and to the oceanic synthesis which would annul the work of analysis. Freud is determined to remain the partisan of God-logos. When he speaks of sublimation, the question is solely of science, as the least dangerous of the three cultural activities based on sublimation: art, religion and science.

Bibliography:


Notes:


Several of the essays collected in this book are not published in English ; we shall therefore refer to the French version, which has no English counterpart.


19. For as the mass, it attends to meritorious practices and as a preference adores Buddha-the-Father and the Buddhist divinities. See Kaluarachige, E. (2008).


48. Ibid. p. 196.


The author:

Elizabeth Kaluaratchige, PhD
Clinical Psychologist, Practicing Psychoanalyst. Associate Professor [Maître de Conférences], Psychopathology, Paris Diderot University at Sorbonne Paris Cité; Research Unit “Body, Social Practices and Psychoanalytical Anthropology”, part of the Center for Research in Psychoanalysis, Medicine and Society Lab (EA 3522).

Campus Paris Rive Gauche
Bâtiment Olympe de Gouges
11, rue Jean Antoine de Baïf
75013 Paris
France

Translated by Kristina Valendinova (revised translation).

Electronic reference:


This article is a translation of Freud versus Jung : Analyse versus Synthèse - Le début d’une conflictualité inspirée des religions occidentales et asiatiques dans l’histoire du mouvement psychanalytique.

Full text

Copyright
All rights reserved