What Does Psychoanalysis Have to Learn From Existentialism?*

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The heart has reasons that reason cannot know. –Pascal

At the center of the sickness of the psyche is a sickness of the spirit. Contemporary psychoanalysis will have eventually to reckon with this Kierkegaardian point of view. –Wm. Barrett

Abstract

Freud situated his thinking within a methodological framework adapted to the study of the material facts of the inorganic and organic worlds of natural *process*, geosphere and biosphere, the province of natural science. But his central discovery, *psychic reality,* involves what Caper describes as the immaterial facts that make up the post-biological, superorganic world of the nöosphere—symbolically mediated human *praxis* as distinct from mere behaviour, mind as distinct from brain, and meaning as distinct from mechanism. Unlike existentialism, psychoanalysis has refused, officially at least, to acknowledge what it tacitly understands: that *psychic reality* is characterized by a significant degree of agency, choice, freedom and responsibility and, as such, is an intrinsically moral world. As a clinical discipline devoted not merely to the study of the *psyche* but to its emancipation from neurotic inhibitions, symptoms and anxieties, psychoanalysis is not and cannot be "value-free." Yet its materialist and determinist framework denies its inherent morality and contradicts its clinical commitment to human freedom. If it is to overcome what Habermas describes as its "scientistic self-misunderstanding," psychoanalysis must reconsider existentialism, together with that component of the counter-transference contributed not by the id but the superego.

Like the wider culture it inhabits, psychoanalysis suffers conflict and confusion in the area of moral values—i.e., in regard to the superego, its own and those of its patients and practitioners. It was not until relatively late in his work that Freud turned his attention from the "lower" to the "higher" mental faculties—from his early preoccupation with the drives, to the ego, and finally the superego. Despite a fruitful beginning in Freud's work and valuable contributions by subsequent analysts, the theory of the superego, that component of the mind of both patients and analysts that is centrally concerned with moral judgement, is far from adequately developed. There remains a lack of clear conceptualization of the different components and functions attributed to the superego (self-observation, self-punishment, self-acceptance, conscience, ideals, etc.). In particular, the

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varieties of intrasystemic conflict between these components have been insufficiently studied. The role of the analyst's superego and that of psychoanalysis itself has been largely ignored or avoided. The fact that psychoanalysis, far from being a "value-free" science, is an intrinsically moral enterprise has seldom been acknowledged.

I. Superego vs. Conscience.

While advancing from id to ego psychology and elaborating concepts of the ego ideal and superego, Freud never fully theorized the distinction between the superego fuelled by hate and the conscience motivated by attachment and love. His conception of the superego resulting from aggression turned against the ego identified with the oedipal rival was never fully complemented by a conception of a superego infused with libido directed toward an ego identified with objects of love. While comprehending the aggressive basis of self-reproach and self-punishment, Freud failed to fully recognize the foundation of conscience in love— that is, in the "capacity for concern" (Winnicott 1963) that generates "depressive anxiety" regarding the harm we may have done to our good objects and good self and that leads to attempts at reparation (Klein, 1937).

Although at first it might appear that in the ego ideal Freud (1914) had the basis for a loving as distinct from a hateful superego, as "heir to primary narcissism" the ego ideal originates in the state of pre-ambivalent omnipotence. Despite moderation of its resulting perfectionism through the later achievement of ambivalence, it still has more to do with approval for success and disapproval for failure on the part of the real ego to live up to its ideals than with forgiveness and acceptance of the self as a whole, good and bad. In any case, Freud (1923) later dropped the idea of an independent ego ideal, subsuming it within the superego, the agency to which he also allocated the function of conscience.

Although he laid the foundation for a theory that differentiates different types of superego functioning, over time Freud came to emphasize the critical and punitive aspects of the superego. Emphasizing its potential destructiveness, even referring to a superego that can at times amount to "a pure culture of the death instinct" (Freud, 1923, p. 53), he focused on its role in moral masochism and the negative therapeutic reaction. Years passed before Schafer (1960) attempted to remind us of a "loving and beloved superego" and Furer (1967) of its role as a comforter. But even in these writings the conflict between superego and conscience is not well developed.[1]

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[1] In addition to the work of Schafer (1960) and Furer (1967) reminding us of a loving in addition to a punitive superego, the distinction between superego and conscience (Sagan, 1988; Ury, 1998) had earlier been elaborated in Kleinian theory as that between "persecutory" and "depressive" guilt (Grinberg 1964); Alford (1990) elaborated the distinction between "talion" and "reparative" morality in the context of the psychology of groups; more recently I have distinguished between paranoid-schizoid and depressive superego functioning (Carveth 2001, 2006), and Novick and Novick (2004) have differentiated the "closed system" and the "open system" superego.

Though aware that it can be corrupted and usurped, Freud nevertheless tended to associate the superego with morality and immorality with the id. The concept of an immoral superego remained undeveloped, to the point that to the ear of many psychoanalysts it sounds almost like a contradiction in terms. As a result, we have not sufficiently appreciated that in order to be truly moral we must overcome the immoral morality of the authoritarian, merely conventional (often racist, sexist, heterosexist, etc.), stupidly rigid, envious, resentful, and often enough fanatical superego.

Freud, of course, was not entirely blind to these issues. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) he wrote of the destructive consequences that often follow when the individual puts a group leader in the place of the superego (a point later confirmed experimentally in Milgram's [1963] classic studies on obedience.) Here Freud views the superego of the individual as a conscience capable of resisting both the sadism of the id and of authority, but one that is prone to being usurped by a superego offered by a group or its leader.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents,* Freud (1930) emphasized the prosocial role of the superego in preserving social order by inhibiting the antisocial drives of the id and described our increasing discontent due to the turning of aggression against ourselves. However the superego fuelled by retroflected id aggression attacks not just the self but others; the very defense against the antisocial id becomes itself antisocial, with the result that much of the world's evil stems from the superego and only indirectly from the id. Guilt evasion through defensive identification with the critical superego, displacement of blame, and scapegoating are an instance of this.

Freud (1923; 1930) acknowledged two components of the superego: in addition to retroflected id aggression it is formed through internalization of the ideals, demands, prohibitions and reproaches of the parents and identification with their values—that is, with *their* superego and that of the culture. However influenced it may sometimes be through projection of id aggression onto the parents, exaggerating their severity and that of the introjections and identifications that constitute it, the superego is irreducible to the id; it is also a product of socialization and bears all the marks of the culture that shaped it. Whereas the antisocial behaviour of both the psychopath and the normopath (McDougall, 1980; Bollas, 1987; Hantman, 2007) involves id aggression against others, in the former this is due to inadequate superego controls whereas in the latter the dogmatic, intolerant and fanatical superego is itself the aggressor. Unfortunately, such superego-mediated destructiveness is by no means limited to the individual normopath but characterizes the behaviour of the multitudes of those who commit atrocities in the name of and with the blessing of their families, groups, parties, societies and religions.

Bertrand Russell is reputed to have remarked that "there are some societies in which the only place a decent person can be is in jail." Eli Sagan (1988, chapter

2) employs Mark Twain's (1884) *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to dramatically bring home to us the conflict that may rage between the superego and the conscience. "Huck's Dilemma" is that while his conscience requires him to protect his runaway slave companion, Jim, the racist superego he has internalized from his culture demands he turn him in to the authorities. Huck finally comes to accept that he is "going to hell" and defies his superego in favor of his conscience.

After a similar inner struggle, Dietrich Bonhoeffer rejected both the "cheap grace" of the collaborationist church and his own pacifist superego and followed his conscience into a plot to assassinate Hitler. On April 9th, 1945, Pastor Bonhoeffer paid *The Cost of Discipleship* (Bonhoeffer,1937), executed along with co-conspirators Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, General Hans Oster, and Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law Hans Dohanyi, in Flossenbürg prison only weeks before it was liberated by the Allies.

Kierkegaard's meditation on the myth of Abraham and Isaac, *Fear and Trembling* (1843), is centrally concerned with the conflict between superego and conscience: Abraham is loathe to sacrifice his son, but the voice of God demands it. In Kierkegaard's view, either Abraham is mad, a view incompatible with his position of respect as the father of the "Abrahamic" religions, or there are situations in which we are called to engage, in fear and trembling, in a "religious suspension of the ethical"—i.e., in acts of conscience that are immoral from the standpoint of the culturally adapted superego.

In his important study, *The Nazi Doctors,* Robert Jay Lifton (1986) demonstrated that many were idealists who thought of the death camps as a necessary element in a project of public health that, like surgery, aimed to eliminate diseased parts that threatened the health of the whole. Our theory has biased us toward thinking of such men as sadistic psychopaths. No doubt some were, but many appear to have been driven more by the superego than the id. Eli Sagan (1988) writes:

> One cannot read Lifton's book without being profoundly aware that we are not involved here with the psychological process of rationalization, wherein a person who wishes to perform sadistic acts and cannot admit to that desire invents a reasonable explanation for his actions. We are talking about profoundly corrupt but nevertheless dedicated and idealistic people. Without an ideology that they were performing a moral action—without the superego—the whole extermination process would have been impossible (p. 11).

Similarly, while sadism and dreams of erotic reward stemming from the id may play a part in motivating him, the terrorist is most often driven by an authoritarian, ideology-driven superego that entirely overpowers conscience.

If we want to understand how otherwise moral people come to engage in evil it is not enough to talk about failure of superego controls against the antisocial id, for the superego itself is implicated. According to Lifton: "The way in which doubling allowed Nazi doctors to avoid guilt was not by the elimination of conscience but by what can be called the *transfer of conscience.* The requirements of conscience were transferred to the Auschwitz self, which placed it within its own criteria for good (duty, loyalty to group, "improving" Auschwitz conditions, etc.), thereby freeing the original self from responsibility for actions there" (p. 421). We have tended to play up the role of the drives and play down the role of values, ideals and ideologies in the constitution of evil. This is because Freud tended to associate human evil with the "beast" in us (the somatically rooted drives of the id) rather than with what is most uniquely human about us (ego and superego), despite the fact that the beasts are never really beastly, only humans are.[2]

Despite Freud's distinction between primary and secondary process thought, psychoanalysis has sometimes focused so much attention on the drive contribution to psychopathology and destructiveness that it has neglected the human proclivity toward fanaticism, literalism and fundamentalism through a mental regression from symbolic representation to symbolic equation (Segal, 1957), from the Symbolic to the Imaginary (Lacan, 1953), and from "live" to "dead," "frozen," or concretized metaphor and contrast (Carveth, 1984b). This way of looking at madness finds its roots in the higher faculties of the mind, rather than in the supposedly somatically-rooted drives, recognizing its uniquely human quality as a regression in both ego and superego functioning in which the triadic dimension, the Symbolic, the analytic third (Ogden, 2004), the depressive position and the secondary process give way to the dyadic, Imaginary, paranoid-schizoid, primary process domain where splitting and projection dominate thought. Here our madness is associated more with the quality of our thinking than with any residues of the animal in us, for only creatures capable of thought, imagination, morality and idealism and of the complex symbolic processes involved in splitting, projection and stereotyping are capable of genocide.

Many years ago my father, a family doctor, sometimes felt called upon by his conscience to terminate severely damaged neonates behind the backs of the nursing sisters. Though he was not a conventionally religious man, I know he did so "in fear and trembling," and not just out of fear of being caught. Did many of the Nazi doctors suffer agonies of doubt in their pursuit of their ideology of public health? Is Abraham, as Kierkegaard suggests, a symbol of the religious suspension of the superego by conscience? Or could the voice calling him to sacrifice his son have been, not God's, but that of the authoritarian superego? Was his obedience like that of Milgram's subjects? Was Sister Aloysius in a state of "fear and trembling" while she acted with such determination to drive Father Flynn out of the parish? Or did her *Doubt* (Shanley 2007) emerge only after the fact? How can we tell whether our choices are motivated by conscience or driven

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[2] This, of course, is a classic case of projection.

by the superego? In one of his sermons, Father Flynn asks, "What do you do when you're not sure?"

If, like Huckleberry Finn, we overcome the immoral morality of the superego at all, we do so by listening and responding instead to the humane and empathic voice of conscience. It is not always easy to discern which is which, but I think we have a clue: the superego tends to be accompanied by certainty, while the conscience usually induces a considerable, but not necessarily a paralyzing, agony of doubt ("fear and trembling"). In his preface to the play, Shanley writes: "Doubt is nothing less than an opportunity to re-enter the present. ... The beginning of change is the moment of Doubt. It is that crucial moment when I renew my humanity or become a lie" (pp. 6-7).

II. Gnostic Psychoanalysis

According to Phillip Rieff (1959), "Freud's reticence as a moralist has made him the more influential. His moralizing is of the sort peculiar to our age, most effective when executed with a bad conscience" (p. 330). While recognizing that Freud's was "the mind of a moralist," Rieff himself appeared to accept the fiction that the Freudian ethic amounts mostly to a "penultimate ethic of honesty" that leaves "ultimate" value judgement to the liberty and responsibility of the individual—a liberty and responsibility that are, by the way, inconsistent with the Freudian adherence to the doctrine of psychic determinism.

Freud (1933) argued that psychoanalysis has no other *Weltanschauung* than that of science itself and is only interested in "submission to the truth and rejection of illusions" (p. 182). As appealing as it may be as a libertarian ideal, the notion that psychoanalysis has no ethic other than that of honesty is not honest. At best it is an illusion, with or without a future. Hans Loewald (1971) is among the few to have explicitly acknowledged the moral appeal intrinsic to psychoanalysis:

> Such appeal is contained in Freud's phrase: where id was there ego shall become. It is a moral appeal. Freud shrank from making this explicit, averse as he was to the idea of imposing moral standards on the patient; nor can or should they be imposed. But there can be no question that he lived this "standard" (as a patient of mine once put it in a different context: to practise what you do not preach) and the success of psychoanalytic treatment depends on the patient's aroused propensity to heed this appeal (Loewald, 1971, p.95).

Analytic practice is guided by a range of values in addition to those of truth, but while enjoining patients to put everything into words most analysts have themselves preferred to practise ethics they refuse not only to preach but even to acknowledge.

"Where id was there ego shall be" (Freud, 1933, p. 80) is a moral imperative requiring far more than replacing illusion with truth: it enjoins us to transcend

impulsive action and, instead, develop ego strength, prudence and self-control. Developing ego where id was "is a work of culture—not unlike the draining of the Zuider Zee" (p. 80): sublimation of primitive drive is encouraged. But it is not enough to overcome illusions, develop self-control, and sublimate our antisocial drives in creative and prosocial directions. For, as Freud (1914) tells us, "in the last resort we must begin to love in order not to fall ill, and we are bound to fall ill if … we are unable to love" (p. 85). In addition to transcending narcissism in favour of object love, we must overcome the harsh, primitive superego and bind *Thanatos* with *Eros* if we are to avoid self-destruction. In these and other ways the Freudian ethic far exceeds the demand for self-knowledge.[3]

Although the Kleinians have also been less than forthright regarding their psychoanalytic ethic, they have perhaps had a more difficult time keeping it implicit. For it is hard to cloak the moral imperative in a model of psychic development as a shift from envy toward gratitude, from destructiveness toward reparation, and from the all-good/all-bad splitting and projection characterizing part-object functioning toward the capacity to experience concern (depressive anxiety) and to bear guilt that characterize whole-object functioning.

According to Freud (1937) psychoanalysis "… is based on a love of truth—that is, on a recognition of reality—and it precludes any kind of sham or deceit" (p. 248). Perhaps the time has come for psychoanalysis to surrender the illusion that its only *Weltanschauung* is that of science and accept itself as the peculiar mixture of the descriptive and the prescriptive—the ethical and existential psychology and philosophy—that it has always been. But while loudly embracing the rhetoric of truth, psychoanalysts fiercely resist the truth that psychoanalysis is grounded in a range of values in addition to truth-values, playing up the goal of self-knowledge while playing down the other ethical values that guide the analytic process.

Although Freud was Jewish, his thinking is more Hellenistic than Hebraic (Arnold, 1882; Barrett, 1962). He was in many ways a Platonist, his tripartite model of the mind as ego, id and superego approximating Plato's three parts of the soul, reason, appetite and spirit respectively. His image of the ego as a rider who sometimes succeeds only in directing the horse to where it wants to go (Freud, 1923, p. 25) echoes Plato's image of reason as a charioteer attempting to control and guide the two steeds, appetite and spirit. Like Plato, Freud sought to establish what he called "a dictatorship of reason"—that is, of ego over id and superego: "Our best hope for the future is that intellect—the scientific spirit, reason—may in process of time establish a dictatorship in the mental life of man"

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[3] While some distinguish between morals as advancing standards of conduct and ethics as the formal study of such standards, for the purposes of this essay the terms are employed synonymously since both refer to judgments of value the central role of which in psychoanalysis is denied in the claim that it is concerned only with "submission to the truth and rejection of illusions."

(Freud, 1933, p. 171). He was confident that a dictatorship of reason would be a reasonable dictatorship, giving id and superego their due.[4]

Like Plato, Freud had little use for democracy and, therefore, for America, which he regarded as a "gigantic mistake" (Jones, 1955, p. 67). Regarding the common people as lazy and unintelligent, he agreed with Plato that philosophers (read well-analyzed people) should be kings and *vice versa.*[5] Like Nietzsche, he felt those who first master themselves earn thereby the right to master others. Like Plato, he believed in a type of salvation through knowledge (*gnosis*), in this case not knowledge of the Platonic Forms but of the self. Whereas Jung openly avowed his Gnostic belief in salvation through knowledge of the "archetypes" (Forms), even wearing a Gnostic ring, Freud's thinking adheres, by no means completely but to a significant degree, to the Gnostic pattern, but without naming it as such.

A central feature of Gnostic thought is its fundamental dualism, a preference certainly shared by Freud. When in 1914 his initial instinctual dualism of sexual and self-preservative drives collapsed upon recognition that the latter were merely a manifestation of the former, he was left for six years with a libidinal monism that I think was uncomfortably close to both Hebraic monism or monotheism ("Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One") and to the Christian identification of the one God with love (libido). Freud resisted such monism by introducing the subsidiary dualism of his so-called "U-tube" theory of libido distribution between self and object until, finally, in 1920, and with palpable relief, he laid a new Hellenistic foundation for psychoanalysis in the dualism of Eros and Thanatos, Greek terms that he capitalized like the names of gods or metaphysical principles, and that he acknowledged (Freud, 1937) echoed the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Empedocles' dualism of *philia* vs. *neikos.*

In both Judaism and Christianity, Gnosticism is a heresy, not merely owing to its dualism, but because in Hebraism as distinct from Hellenism salvation comes not through knowledge but through goodness; it involves far less a change of mind or intellect than a change of heart, a conversion or turning in which self-centeredness and evil are not eliminated but struggled against out of loving concern for the welfare of both the other and one's own best self. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, intellect in no way guarantees goodness; it can be employed foolishly and demonically in myriad ways. Christian literature even celebrates the

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[4] Is it reasonable to count on a dictatorship to be reasonable?

[5] In *The Open Society and Its Enemies,* Sir Karl Popper (1945) offers a critique of what he views as the proto-totalitarianism of Plato. Freud's lack of enthusiasm for democracy has to be viewed in light of the fact that he was a product of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the Habsburg monarchy of Emperor Franz Joseph. The issue of his expressed admiration for Mussolini, at least prior to his attack upon the Jews, is addressed in Roazen's (2005) book on Eduardo Weiss. See my review (Carveth, 2006).

Holy Fool who, though deficient in intellect, can at times put intellectuals to shame in light of his or her simple goodness.

Today the elitist and anti-democratic trends in the history of the psychoanalytic movement are more widely acknowledged than in the past (Kirsner, 1998). But the connection between these elements of our history and institutions and a Gnostic belief in salvation through acquired knowledge rather than through conversion from narcissism (self-centeredness) and hate to a capacity for loving concern for others—i.e., for goodness—has seldom been addressed.

I am not suggesting that Freudian psychoanalysis is pure Gnosticism, only that its official philosophy has followed the Gnostic pattern, stressing self-knowledge and downplaying the suppressed Hebraic elements that I am striving in this essay to get it to acknowledge against its deep resistance to doing so. This essay concerns what existentialism has to teach psychoanalysis. Existentialism is the reassertion of Hebraism in the history of a Western philosophic tradition that has long been dominated by Hellenism—i.e., by rationalism (Barrett, 1962, chapter 4). Although in its resistance to rationalism existentialism has, like romanticism, sometimes succumbed to irrationalism (I would place Nietzsche's philosophy of the will to power, like other forms of instinctivism and primitivism, in this category), the existentialist tradition also provides elements of a third position, neither rationalist nor irrationalist, instead offering a basis for a critique of both, since in a sense they are two sides of the same coin. It is this existentialist tradition that informs the present work.[6]

In accordance with the central European tradition representing the transition from youth to middle-age and the entry into manly maturity, on Sigmund Freud's thirty-fifth birthday Jakob Freud presented him with the old family Philippson Bible that he had freshly rebound in leather for his son. On the title page he had written a moving inscription to the interpretation of which Ana-Maria Rizzuto (1998) has devoted an entire chapter of her insightful book addressing the question *Why Did Freud Reject God?*[7] She writes, "Jacob's opening line suggests a loving invitation to Sigmund to leave behind his youthful rejection of God and return to him in maturity" (p. 72). In the inscription, Jakob quotes from *Jeremiah* 3:12-15:

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[6] An admirer of aspects of the tradition of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre may at the same time be critical of elements of their thought and their lives. Those seeking a reasonable faith, a faith disciplined by reason, may well find Kierkegaard's concept of the "leap of faith" even more troubling than Pascal's "wager." Are we not required to reason regarding the likely consequences of leaping this way or that? Although Heidegger poses a type of thinking that is neither rationalist nor irrationalist, the location of his thought in relation to romanticism and irrationalism and his odious involvement with national socialism are important issues too complex to go into here. Suffice it to say that one wishes Heidegger had had a conscience capable, like Huck's, of resisting his superego. See Cohn (2002), Farias (1989), and Steiner (2000). I have expressed my disillusionment with Sartre (Carveth, 2007b) but remain an admirer of aspects of his philosophy.

[7] Given what Rizzuto (1981) herself has taught us about the developmental origins of the god-representation, it is clear that the answer to the question posed in the title of her (1998) book is to be found in the answer to another question: why did Sigmund reject Jakob?

> Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord.
> I will not look on you in anger,
> for I am merciful ….
> Only acknowledge your guilt,
> that you rebelled against the Lord your God …
> and that you have not obeyed my voice,
> says the Lord….
> And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who
> will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

But Freud rejected this plea, and was late for his father's funeral, being "kept waiting" at the barber as he explained in a letter to Fliess (Freud, 1896) in which he reports a dream he had the following night:

> I must tell you of a nice dream I had the night after the funeral. I was in a shop and there on a board I read a notice:
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> > You are requested
> > To close the eyes
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> I recognized the shop at once as the barber's where I go every day. On the day of the funeral I was kept waiting, and as a result I arrived rather late at the house of mourning. My family was displeased with me at this time because I had arranged for the funeral to be quiet and simple, something they later recognized as quite justified. They also rather resented my being late. So the notice on the board has a double meaning. It means that one should do one's duty toward the dead in two senses: (a) apology, as if I hadn't done my duty and my conduct needed to be overlooked; (b) the duty in the literal sense. Thus the dream is an outlet for that tendency toward self-reproach which death invariably leaves among the survivors….

Like Jakob Freud, I wish Sigmund had been more willing to embrace the repressed Hebraism beneath his manifest Hellenism.

III. Psychoanalytic Ethics

Although it does not explicitly address or offer a critique of psychoanalytic Gnosticism, the thinking of the Kleinians has been far more Hebraic in pattern, emphasizing the developed capacities for concern, for bearing guilt and making reparation. But they too have tended to cloak their moralism behind a façade of scientific psychology. Although the different schools of analytic thought may reflect slightly different ethics and formulate their value judgements in different languages, they are, in my estimation, equally moralistic and equally self-deceived about this.

Kohut (1979, p. 12), for example, criticized what he saw as the "health-and-maturity-morality" of the Freudians. In an attempt to transcend the negative, Judeo-Christian moral judgement he recognized (accurately) in the term "pathological narcissism," he redefined this condition as a "disorder of the self."

But he nevertheless proceeded to articulate a very similar morality of his own in which "archaic" selfobject need gives way to more "mature" and less intense selfobject need and to "higher forms and transformations of narcissism." Instead of being ashamed of and seeking to disguise the moralism hidden beneath our psychological language, I believe we should openly acknowledge and debate the ethics we practice without preaching.

These ethics form part of the analyst's superego and contribute to the countertransference. It is remarkable that although in recent decades resistance has diminished to open discussion of those previously taboo dimensions of countertransference contributed by the analyst's id, the moral component, that element of the countertransference contributed by the superego, has remained under relative repression. It has therefore tended to be enacted rather than rendered conscious, "owned," and analyzed. A consequence of the pretence on the part of psychoanalysis that it is value-free is that its values remain implicit, rather than being put explicitly into words. This failure to practice what it preaches—putting everything into words, the "talking cure"—has the result that psychoanalysis understands clearly enough in the case of its patients, if not with respect to itself: remaining unconscious or at best preconscious, its values are not available for conscious, critical examination. And the result of this is that, not infrequently, psychoanalysis has lost touch with its critical, emancipatory potential and succumbed to the uncritical adoption of the culturally relative, conventional, taken-for-granted values of its milieu.

An instructive example of this is Freud's ambiguous stance toward homosexuality. On one hand he offers what Lewes (1995) regards as "a clear and coherent theory of its etiology and dynamics," while on the other he has "a somewhat confused and equivocal understanding of the relationship of homosexuality and 'normal' mental functioning and behaviour." While Freud's personal attitude toward homosexuality "included a profound respect for the achievements of homosexuals," he at the same time "subscribed, explicitly as well as implicitly, to cultural norms that defined healthy psychic and sexual functioning by the way it corresponded to historically contingent establishments and customs" (p. 35). Due to his Darwinist minimization of humanity's break with nature (a point upon which I will elaborate below), together with the bourgeois conventionalism that he did not entirely transcend, Freud accepted as fully legitimate only sexuality in the service of procreation, not pleasure alone. By this standard homosexuality can only be devalued.[8] Only when our values are made

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[8] Only when the radical difference between *animal symbolicum* (White, 1949) and other species is appreciated, as it is in both the existentialist tradition and that variety of social psychology stemming from the seminal work of George Herbert Mead (1934), and the break between organic *need* and human *desire* fully recognized, as it was by Lacan (1953), does the fallacy entailed in approaching human sexuality from a predominantly biological and zoomorphic perspective become apparent. Biology cannot set norms for an animal that has to a significant degree broken with its animality, as I believe Freud (1920) himself intuited when he implicitly broke with Darwin by introducing the very un-Darwinian notion of the death drive.

explicit can they can be subjected to critical scrutiny, called into question, and consciously altered or consciously affirmed.[9]

Erik Erikson (1950, 1968) is among the few psychoanalysts to make explicit the values underlying his particular psychoanalytic vision and, in doing so, to expose his moral stance to criticism. His formulation of the psychoanalytic theory of development as a process in which successful transcendence of the conflict and crisis at each epigenetic stage results in the development of a particular *virtue* (hope, will, purpose, competency, fidelity, love, caring, wisdom) entirely dispenses with the positivistic facade that psychoanalysis has usually adopted to disguise its ethical existentialism. Naturally, to admire Erikson for his forthrightness is not necessarily to affirm the particular ethical vision that by making explicit he at least enabled others to critique. Burston (2007, p. 69) points out that left-wing critics, such as Roazen (1976), viewed such talk of virtues as a regressive attempt to reintroduce a pre-psychoanalytic, conservative moralism into a discipline that, in their opinion, it had transcended. But to criticize aspects of Erikson's particular ethic one need not deny the role of value judgment as such in psychoanalysis, nor reaffirm the rationalist illusion that its only ethic is that of honesty.

IV. Flight from the Superego

The repression of the moral dimension of countertransference is an expression of what a number of writers (Sandler 1960; Menninger 1973; Arlow 1982; Wurmser 1988, 2000; Carveth 1992, 1994, 2006a, 2007; Carveth & Hantman 2003) have described as the repression of the superego itself in contemporary analytic discourse. In this connection we (Carveth & Hantman, 2003) wrote:

> It is precisely to avoid the question (why do we bring suffering upon ourselves?), and the answer to which it leads (an unconscious need for punishment), and the further question to which this answer gives rise (what is our real or imagined crime?), that we resist the premise that grounds this unwanted series of questions and answers: the idea that we do in fact bring suffering upon ourselves. If we are to evade the issue of "crime and punishment," we must evade the fundamental idea that we are the agents, rather than victims, of our hysterical and psychosomatic misery. To represent ourselves essentially as passive victims of these afflictions rather than as agents inflicting them upon ourselves for understandable reasons is to "de-moralize" our understanding of such conditions and ourselves. But however much we seek such de-moralization, both as suffering individuals and as a cultural community

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[9] In 1973 the Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality as a disorder category from the DSM. It has taken much longer for the American and International Psychoanalytic Associations to follow suit. One reason for this is the resistance maintained by psychoanalysis against recognizing itself as a fundamentally ethical enterprise. Deciding by vote what is or is not pathological clearly exposes the role of freedom, decision, ethics and politics in what psychoanalysts have preferred to present as value-free psychological science.

increasingly committed to a de-moralizing postmodern discourse, the fact remains that, like it or not, there is a moralist alive and well in each of us, and an often harsh and sadistic one at that: our unconscious superego. De-moralize as much as we like consciously; deny agency, responsibility and guilt as much as we will; all that applies only to consciousness. Unless it is analyzed, confronted, rendered conscious and modified, the unconscious superego will continue to accuse and to demand its pound of flesh. The de-moralizing cultural and personal discourses that repress or otherwise evade agency, responsibility and guilt, end up producing the demoralizing conditions (depression, masochism, hysteria, paranoia, psychosomatic disease) that result from the activity of the unconscious superego that these discourses deny: de-moralizing leads to demoralization (p. 447).

Novick & Novick (2004), trace the causes of the decline of the superego concept to "an increasing emphasis on preoedipal pathology, with a consequent neglect of oedipal and postoedipal development in general and ego development in particular" (p. 233). They argue that "A predominant focus on early mother-infant determinants leads to a shift away from fantasies or ego constructions of infantile events to an assumption of the reality of certain interactions or experiences. This in turn leads to a view of the patient as a passive, innocent victim, with the danger that the analyst may collude with the patient's wish to remain in what is assumed to be a pre-ego/superego position to avoid guilt" (p. 233). In my view, the causation here is circular rather than linear: the emphasis upon early development does contribute to the evasion of the superego, but the wish to evade the superego leads to the emphasis upon early development and the view of the patient as a passive, innocent victim.[10]

The Novicks suggest that the analyst's countertransference terror constitutes one motive for "the possible mutual avoidance of genuine guilt in relation to situations in which the patient had the choice, knew better, and decided to be mean, cruel, delinquent, or so forth …."

> Putting the patient's active ego at the center of his pathology can produce an outburst of intense, self-protective, even panic-driven rage at the analyst. The analyst loses the previously gratifying position of being a sympathetic "better mother" to the abused child and becomes the target of the patient's omnipotent sadomasochistic attack. It is no wonder that the beleaguered analyst also might want to think more in pre-superego terms such as empathic attunement (and failures in empathy), the pain of separation-individuation and of the loss of "normal" infantile omnipotence, attachment disorders, environmental failures to provide containment,

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[10] There is no need to deny the traumatic origins of much psychopathology to recognize that, as Freud (1937) argued against Rank, merely addressing such origins while ignoring their sequelae (rage, envy, aggression turned against self, savage superego, etc.) is likely to accomplish "Probably not more than if the fire-brigade, called to deal with a house that had been set on fire by an overturned oil-lamp, contented themselves with removing the lamp from the room in which the blaze had started" (p. 216).

physical or sexual abuse, selfobjects, models for growth, narcissistic humiliation of the oedipal rejection, and so forth (pp. 233-4).

But beyond such clinical manifestations and motives, the flight from the superego must be situated in its wider socio-historical context, namely the emergence of what Lasch (1979) described as our "culture of narcissism."[11] At the very time when due to the shift from industrial to consumer capitalism the culture of narcissism was emerging, psychoanalysts became preoccupied with pathological narcissism or disorders of the self. But they often theorized these conditions in ways that downplayed or ignored altogether the role of the superego in their dynamics. The last thing a narcissist wants to face is his guilt. As Riviere (1938) was among the first to point out, his narcissism essentially amounts to a manic defence in the face of unbearable reproaches by both the archaic (paranoid-schizoid) and the more mature (depressive position) superego. Ironically, some of the more recent theories of narcissism (e.g., Kohut 1971, 1977) evidenced the very flight from the superego that characterizes both this pathology and the culture that breeds it.

As the Novicks (2004) note, "the decline of the superego concept seems to coincide with a denial of the child's active ego and id participation in development" (p. 234). For to take the child's or the adult's active ego into account is to view the child or adult as a moral agent, not merely a victim. In addition to the resistance arising from the culture of narcissism to the idea of moral agency and the concept of the superego, we must face the fact that our implicit clinical commitment to human agency has always been compromised by our explicit and contradictory metapsychological commitment to determinism. When the Novicks refer to "situations in which the patient had the choice, knew better, and decided to be mean, cruel, delinquent, or so forth" (p. 233), they write in the language of existentialism, not psychoanalytic determinism.

Toward the end of their paper the Novicks argue that "If there is indeed a decline in interest in the superego concept, it may reflect avoidance by psychoanalysts of active engagement with moral issues" (p. 253). But such avoidance of engagement with wider moral issues is itself a symptom of our more fundamental failure to acknowledge the ethics underlying the entire psychoanalytic enterprise. Since ethics imply choice, such acknowledgement would amount to an admission that, *contra* Freud, psychoanalysis believes in and depends upon the reality of free will.[12] According to Ungar (2008):

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[11]If, as analysts have been known to quip, the superego is soluble in alcohol, then in narcissism it can appear to be liquidated altogether. But this is only an appearance, for the repressed superego unconsciously exacts its pound of flesh in myriad forms of self-torment (Carveth & Hantman, 2003).

[12] It makes no sense to moralize unless one believes the judged person (self or other) was free to have chosen to act differently: one praises believing one could have acted badly, and one reproaches believing one could have acted well.

> As we all know, guilt takes center stage in studies on morality, religion and law. It is also tied to the notions of innocence, forgiveness, atonement, revenge, judgment, and punishment, among others. Even though these terms do not seem to belong in the psychological realm, it is my impression that they will easily find representation in the world of psychic reality (p. 1).

Our official adherence to scientific materialism and determinism has made it difficult for us to acknowledge that both free will and moral agency are among the *immaterial facts* constituting the *psychic reality* we work with. The culture of narcissism and the rage and resistance of narcissists only makes it harder for us to admit this.

V. Non-judgmental and Equidistant

Will acknowledging the ethical elements of our therapy interfere with the "non-judgmental" attitude many regard as essential to create the atmosphere of safety and trust necessary to form a working alliance? Here we encounter another illusion: it is no more possible to maintain a non-judgmental attitude than to have no countertransference. We can no more abstain from judgment than get rid of our superegos. Although we may try not to judge, in the privacy of our own minds (and, thanks to Freud, how private these are is open to question) we judge, because that is what the superego does.

There is wide agreement among analysts that we should as far as possible refrain from *imposing* such judgments upon our patients. This by the way is itself another value judgment, part of our psychoanalytic ethic. It is my impression that when we stress that we should not impose our moral judgments on our patients the judgments we usually have in mind are negative ones. We sometimes overlook that to suggest the patient has nothing to feel guilty about is as much a moral judgment as to suggest she does—that "de-guilting" the patient is as much an enactment of a moralizing countertransference as "guilting" her would be.[13]

There is no doubt that subjecting patients to moral criticism is usually anti-therapeutic. As supporters of "harm reduction" strategies in addiction treatment emphasize, exposing the addict to judgement only increases the stress and related brain effects that lead him to turn compulsively to substances for relief in the first place. If people could "Just Say No!" to their compulsions there would be no need for treatment (Maté, 2008).[14] I recommend analysis both for those who suffer from a mania for reproaching or a compulsion to judge, as well as for those

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[13] Jean Hantman makes this point in Carveth & Hantman (2003).

[14] As I hope will become clear, although I am an existentialist critic of Freud's official and one-sided determinism, I am in no way proposing an equally one-sided, naïve voluntarism. Philosophically, I am committed to "compatibilism," the doctrine that free will and determinism are not logically incompatible perspectives. Clinically, I view the analytic task as seeking to understand the complex ways in which analysands are both objects and subjects, victims and agents.

engaged in chronic guilt evasion. Often these are the same people, since identification with the punitive superego serves as a common defense against guilt: it is the other who is the guilty one, not me, his judge.

But to refrain from *imposing* our judgments, of either type, in no way requires us to *have* no moral vision or *make* no moral judgments. Nor does it require us to pretend, to ourselves or others, that our moral judgments are a purely private matter and irrelevant to our work as analysts. The latter is yet another illusion. In the same essay in which he developed his famous image of the analyst as an impenetrable mirror reflecting nothing but what the patient shows him, Freud (1912) wrote that the analyst "must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient" and held that "the doctor's unconscious is able … to reconstruct [the patient's] unconscious …" (pp. 115, 116). Many of us now believe that such unconscious communication is a two-way street: that just as the analyst can (unconsciously and to a degree) read the analysand's unconscious, so the analysand can (unconsciously and to a degree) read the analyst's.

It is therefore inevitable that in the intersubjective field of analysis our patients will in some way be aware of and affected by our value judgments, which we communicate unconsciously even when we consciously exercise great restraint. According to Freud (1905 [1901]): "He who has eyes to see and ears to hear will be able to convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips. Betrayal oozes out of him at every pore" (pp. 77-8). Freud, of course, had the patient in mind, but his point applies equally to the analyst for whom, as for the patient, there is no hiding place. In *Archaic Torso of Apollo* Rilke (1895-96) put it simply: "There is no place that does not see you. You must change your life."[15]

For Anna Freud (1936) the proper stance of the analyst is one that is "equidistant from the id, the ego, and the superego" (p. 28). While this is a useful clinical ideal, it could only be fulfilled if there were no unconscious and if the conscious ego were "master in its own house" (S. Freud, 1916-17 [1915-17], p. 285). But psychoanalysis teaches us that the unconscious is always leaking: we witness the disguised return of the repressed in myriad forms. So our lack of equidistance, our inevitable biases, will out, despite our best efforts at neutrality. This is no reason not to try to restrict ourselves to helping to make conscious the analysand's hitherto unconscious conflicts while attempting not to take sides. But it is also important to recognize the ideal quality of this goal and

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[15] This is in no way meant to justify abandonment of discretion and self-control on the part of the analyst, or indulgence in countertransference revelations or enactments. The fact that analysands pick up on our countertransference and process it through the lens of their own subjectivity in no way justifies burdening them with conscious accounts of our subjective reactions. On the other hand, our traditional wish to hide behind a mirror of anonymity and neutrality seems rather out of step with Strachey's (1934) theory of the cure in which over time the patient recognizes the discrepancy between his phantasy of the analyst, upon whom he has projected his harsh superego, and the analyst's reality.

the inevitability of our failure, in varying degrees, to achieve it. It is now a half-century since Racker (1957) drew attention to the resistance to studying the countertransference that arises from our failure to overcome our infantile perfectionism: "We must begin by revision of our feelings about our own countertransference and try to overcome our own infantile ideals more thoroughly, accepting more fully the fact that we are still children and neurotics even when we are adults and analysts" (p. 307).

It is a value to value not imposing values. It is also a value to value rendering one's values explicit so they can be critically examined. Far from restricting itself to a "penultimate ethic of honesty," forbearing from advocacy of "ultimate" value judgments, the analyst is continuously displaying her ultimate values through her commitment to the analytic process and to each particular patient. The practice of analysis implicitly affirms not only the value of self-knowledge, but also that of Eros (life, love, connection, concern and construction) as opposed to Thanatos (death, hate, disconnection, indifference and destruction): the analyst is alive (i.e., has not chosen suicide); she is reliably available to work, thus displaying her work ethic; she can be relied on to strive to overcome resentment, revenge and retaliation in favour of both empathic understanding and of continuing the joint project of analysis, thus displaying her values, even though what her values lead her to suppress (though hopefully not repress)—the resentment and the impulse to retaliate—will leak.

Although in keeping with our psychoanalytic ethic we may hope that our analysands will choose life over death, love over hate, connection over disconnection, reparation and creativity over destruction, progress in analysis need not entail the analysand's deepening identification with our values; it may entail precisely his or her enhanced freedom to be different. However it cannot be denied that the analyst's very respect for the analysand's freedom to be different may play an important role in enabling some analysands to begin to be able to choose life and love or to recognize and begin to bear guilt. The analytic relationship is certainly about promoting self-knowledge, but it is also a human attachment and, in a relationship, the parties involved are influenced by one another's values. Even when the analyst is relatively conscious of her countertransference and skilled in managing it and preserving appropriate professional boundaries, her core values will be evident to analysands and will influence them.

Because the analytic relationship entails essential elements of "I-Thou" encounter (Buber, 1970) it transcends any merely technical-instrumental or "I-It" orientation, whether the latter be Freudian, Kleinian, Kohutian, or whatever. (Even the empathic technique employed by self psychologists can be experienced by patients as a gimmick: they sometimes react by demanding the analyst "get real.") There is a very great difference, however, between a "transference cure" wherein analysands repress conflicts through defensive identification with the analyst and a genuine cure in which they may come to

share certain of the analyst's core values of life and love through having been given the respect and the freedom to voice and work through their hatred and destructiveness and to come to their own decision.

Freud's writings are ambiguous in this area. Not infrequently his conception of the analytic cure appears to be defined in terms of a combination of health values and more broadly humane and societal values (resolution of symptoms, minimization of suffering, enhanced social adaptation, enhanced capacity to love and work creatively, etc.), but at other times he advocates truth values (making the unconscious conflict conscious.) In this latter perspective, if the neurosis is being unconscious of the conflict, overcoming the neurosis is making the conflict conscious, not necessarily resolving it. The patient who is aware of his conflict between loving and hating is not happy. He or she may have achieved "common human unhappiness" in this situation. He or she is not happy, but is no longer self-deceived—i.e., neurotic. This non-neurotic, no longer self-deceived person may choose to live with the conflict or resolve it in ways that are either congruent or incongruent with the analyst's values.[16]

To affirm the analysand's freedom to decide in ways that may differ from the analyst's values it is not necessary to deny the analyst's values or the fact that they inevitably leak despite his or her best efforts at neutrality. It is important that we recognize our value commitments and the fact that they cannot ultimately be hidden, for such consciousness is our best protection against the *unconscious* enactment of a moralizing countertransference that overrides our commitment to respect the existential autonomy of our analysands. But opposing such *unconscious* enactments does not necessarily mean one opposes *conscious* enactments of a moral, superego-*informed* countertransference, as distinct from one that is unconscious and superego-*driven*.

Würmser (2000, p. 11) rightly insists it is essential in our analytic work to avoid "the spirit of condemnation," "pejorative diagnoses" and "shaming" in favour of analytic understanding, especially in work with patients suffering from severe psychopathology. He points out that judgmentalism, together with approaches emphasizing confrontation and exhortation, is countertherapeutic, resulting in either obstinacy and defiance or "superficial submissiveness and distance from feelings." Given the central role played by the archaic, sadistic superego in such psychopathology, it is crucial that the analyst be able to resist being induced to enact the part of the projected superego precisely in order to be able to analyze it.

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[16] If a patient who has struggled for some time to use his analysis to overcome what he viewed as his "workaholism" and his "schizoid" retreat from intimate relatedness comes to the conclusion that he should instead just accept the fact that he prefers his work over almost anything else life has to offer, including intimacy, would this represent an analytic failure or a success? An analytic countertransference shaped by the contemporary therapeutic ideology that privileges relationship as the meaning of life could only view it as the former. But Storr (1988) has given us a timely critique of this ideology and reminded us of the virtues of *Solitude.* In the face of these sorts of questions, the role of ethical values in our work can hardly be denied.

At the same time, however, we must be careful not to extend our critique of condemning into a condemnation of conscious, clinically appropriate value judgement. Little is gained if we merely form a reaction against inappropriate judgmentalism by turning against judgment as such. Brian Bird (1972) offers an instructive illustration of his overcoming of the euphemisms analysts frequently employ in order not to appear "judgemental" in situations in which judgement is sometimes called for:

> The inappropriateness of our language came home to me one day with a patient who, as we say so nicely, liked to "castrate" men. While listening to her describe some extreme behaviour of this kind, I suddenly asked myself the question, What would I call this behaviour outside of analysis? The answer was easy, I would call it vicious and destructive. So I told the patient what I had been thinking. She was shocked by these terms, but she admitted that the euphemisms we usually used had made it very easy for her to ignore the literal harm caused by her behaviour (p. 289).

I find that knowing that psychoanalysis affirms a range of values beyond self-knowledge prevents me from being handcuffed in my dealings with those "anti-analysands" who seem, initially at least, to want a therapist mostly as a witness to their destruction of the analytic frame, the self and others. In this situation I point out the fundamental value conflict between us and ask such potential patients if they wish to work with me to seek to resolve the phantasies, anxieties and conflicts that have undermined their basic trust and hampered their capacity to enter into a working alliance with me to overcome their destructiveness. For if they are unable or uninterested in doing so then we are just not on the same ethical page and cannot work together. It is my impression that certain analytic impasses boil down to the fact that analyst and analysand have fundamentally incompatible values, a fact that has not been rendered conscious and faced, not least because analysts have tended to be in denial regarding the values that underlie the entire analytic enterprise.

An additional factor at work in our denial of the ethical dimension of our work is fear that its open acknowledgment might threaten withdrawal of funding by private and public insurers who are willing to pay for science-based treatment of illness but not for "personal development" or the "cure of souls." But psychoanalysts know something about the consequences of self-deception. The current crisis of psychoanalysis may in part be a result its ongoing choice to deceive itself and others about its true identity.[17]

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[17] With Szasz (1961) I believe that while our patients are sufferers they are ill only in the metaphorical sense in which we speak of a sick economy or joke. I continue to refer to my analysands as patients only because I find the medical metaphor preferable to the commercial one entailed in calling them clients; and because, etymologically, "patient" is derived from the Latin *patiens*, the present participle of the deponent verb *pati*, meaning "one who suffers"—as in, for example, "Christ's passion."

VI. The Psychoanalyst Kierkegaard

Half a century before the invention of psychoanalysis, in *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844), *The Sickness Unto Death* (1849), and other works, Søren Kierkegaard posited what Barrett (1962) describes as "two general principles that are in advance of nearly all current psychologies." The first is the claim that "Despair is never ultimately over the external object but always over ourselves." In Kierkegaard's view, "The unbearable loss is not really in itself unbearable; what we cannot bear is that in being stripped of an external object we stand denuded and see the intolerable abyss of the self yawn at our feet" (p. 169). Loss of the object is unbearable when, deprived of the distraction it offered, we find ourselves faced with the intolerable fact that we have developed no genuine self to fall back on (a sin of omission), or that what self exists is unworthy (due to its sins of omission and commission).[18]

Barrett describes Kierkegaard's second principle, implied by the first, as follows:

> The condition we call a sickness in certain people is, at its center, a form of sinfulness. We are in the habit nowadays of labelling morally deficient people as sick, mentally sick, or neurotic. This is true if we look at the neurotic from outside; his neurosis is indeed a sickness, for it prevents him from functioning as he should…. But the closer we get to any neurotic the more we are assailed by the sheer human perverseness, the willfulness, of his attitude. If he is a friend, we can up to a point deal with him as an *object* who does not function well, but only up to a point; beyond that if a personal relationship exists between us we have to deal with him as a *subject*, and as such we must find him morally perverse or willfully disagreeable; and we have to make these moral judgments to his face if the friendship is to retain its human content, and not disappear into a purely clinical relation. At the center of the sickness of the psyche is a sickness of the spirit (p. 170).

Unfortunately, Barrett's way of making Kierkegaard's point virtually contradicts it, insofar as he opposes a relationship of friendship that in order to be authentically personal requires judgment to be made, to a purely clinical relation that seeks to remain free of such judgement. Certainly Kierkegaard's point is not to collapse a clinical relation into a friendship (though in the name of an "existential" or "humanistic" approach to psychotherapy such conflation has not infrequently occurred). His point is rather to reject any purely technical rationality, any pretention to a "value-free" orientation, in *any* relationship that seeks

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[18] Failure to develop an authentic self is a sin of omission in that, for Kierkegaard, we are called to the task of self-development. The self develops through increasing awareness of itself as a divided *creature* (not *causa sui* or *creator* of itself), straddling the worlds of possibility and necessity, both a free subject (*imago dei*) and a determined object ("dust from the ground"). For Kierkegaard, whether we are conscious of the fact or not, we are in despair to the degree to which we refuse to take up and carry the cross of self-development, evading our paradoxical selves by attempting to identify with pure freedom or pure necessity, or seeking refuge in a purely conventional or anti-conventional identity.

understanding of a human psyche, self or soul. For the human being is a person, not merely a thing, in possession of a mind not merely a brain, and a person is a moral agent, however much he or she is also a determined object or victim.

Freud (1920) eventually arrived at a fairly pessimistic view of human nature.[19] In the face of the devastation of Europe brought about by the first world war, together with the masochistic self-destructiveness he'd come to recognize in so many patients, he finally overcame his long-standing resistance to acknowledging aggression as equally fundamental as sexuality in human nature and announced his final dual drive theory of *Eros* and *Thanatos*. He then proceeded to misattribute (project) the naïve optimism he had earlier shared with Enlightenment thought onto the Bible:

> Why have we ourselves needed such a long time before we decided to recognize an aggressive instinct? ... We should probably have met with little resistance if we had wanted to ascribe an instinct with such an aim to animals. But to include it in the human constitution appears sacrilegious; it contradicts too many religious presumptions and social conventions. No, man must be naturally good or at least good-natured. If he occasionally shows himself brutal, violent or cruel, these are only passing disturbances of his emotional life, for the most part provoked, or perhaps only the consequences of the inexpedient social regulations which he has hitherto imposed on himself (Freud, 1933, p. 103).

In this passage, Freud seems entirely unaware of the fact that the optimism of his own earlier thought that he now mocks belongs not to the Bible but to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's notion of the "noble savage" corrupted by society, to Marxism, and to the environmentalistic social sciences stemming from irreligious Enlightenment thought. It was his own loyalty to the anti-religious Enlightenment and his estrangement from the Bible (and the father who beseeched him to return to it) that prevented him from overcoming his own naïveté until after the war and his deepened clinical experience finally made him see what the Bible had recognized all along. In its vision of human beings as fallen, perverse and broken sinners (even after salvation or redemption) the Bible is far more congruent with Freud's late, dark view of human nature than he was ever prepared to acknowledge.

Still, unlike those thinkers, such as Kierkegaard, who were influenced by the existentialism of the Bible, Freud did not believe that moral corruption is at the root of neurosis, or that the cure of neurosis renders people morally improved. "Why," he asks, "should analyzed people be altogether better than

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[19] In keeping with his agreement with Plautus that *Homo homini lupus* (Freud 1930, p. 111), to Pfister Freud wrote that "on the whole I have not found much of the 'good' in people" and that "Most of them are in my experience riff-raff" (letter to Pfister cited by Jones, 1961, p.445). To Putnam he commented on "The unworthiness of human beings, even of analysts" (letter to Putnam cited by Jones, 1961, p. 433).

others? Analysis makes for *unity*, but not necessarily for *goodness*" (letter to Putnam cited by Jones, 1955, p. 204). Both psychiatry and psychoanalysis, sharing Freud's de-moralizing attitude, have attempted to apply a purely technical rationality in the understanding and treatment of suffering souls. Both have sought de-moralized substitutes for the language of sin: for psychiatry it is the language of sickness, while for psychoanalysis it is that of mental conflict as distinct from mental unity.[20]

Clinical medicine clearly entails an ethic: illness and death are bad; health and life are good. But psychoanalysis operates on the level of the psyche or soul, not that of the body, except to the extent that the latter figures as an object of psychic processes. Freud's concepts of the "genital" character with ego strength, a mature superego, a capacity for sublimation and for object love as opposed to narcissism; Klein's conception of advance toward and working through of the depressive position through the overcoming of splitting and projection; the transcendence of envy in favour of gratitude; and the building up of a whole good internal object through acts of creative reparation for destructiveness; and Winnicott's (1963) concept of development of the "capacity for concern"—all express an ethic requiring substantially more than replacing neurotic conflict with mental unity.

Psychoanalytic concepts of development imply a process of personal evolution toward a more civilized condition, a process of moral and spiritual growth, not unlike Kierkegaard's own developmental ethic of advance from the merely *aesthetic* (read narcissistic) to the *ethical* (read object love) stage of existence (Kierkegaard, 1845) though, in keeping with the attitude of secular humanism, stopping short of his final, *religious,* stage. In psychoanalytic thought such ethical development is described in de-moralized terms: the association of object love and concern with goodness, and of narcissism and hate with badness or sin, has been left implicit or actively obscured.[21] Hence, Kierkegaard's call to reverse direction as, more than a century later, both Szasz (1961) and Menninger (1973) were to do, and to openly acknowledge what the patient's superego clearly understands even if we analysts pretend not to—namely that what underlies psychopathology, whether conceived as sickness or as conflict, is sin (or, if you prefer, wrongdoing)—represents a challenge indeed.[22]

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[20] A de-moralized psychotherapy for demoralized patients—can that work?

[21] *Contra* conventional views associating object love exclusively with (usually heterosexual) romance and family values, narcissism may be transcended though diverse forms of what Erikson called "generativity."

[22] Thirty years ago, Karl Menninger (1973) was asking *Whatever Became of Sin?* He argued for its centrality in psychopathology: "I believe that all evildoing in which we become involved to any degree tends to evoke guilt feelings and depression. These may or may not be clearly perceived, but they affect us. They may be reacted to and covered up by all kinds of escapism, rationalization, and reaction or symptom formation" (p.207). He reminded us that "The human conscience is like the police; it may be eluded, stifled, drugged, or bribed. But not without cost" (p. 231). In "Fugitives From Guilt: Postmodern De-Moralization and the New Hysterias" (Carveth & Hantman, 2003), we sought to draw attention to the guilt evasion and unconscious self-punishment in both the old and new hysterias, as well as in psychosomatic conditions.

May (1950) illustrates the therapeutic benefit of eschewing the euphemisms through which guilt is evaded and shows how empowering the attribution of responsibility can be:

> Kierkegaard believed it is a false compassion to view the shut-up [i.e., neurotic—DC] personality as a victim of fate, for this implies that nothing can be done about it. A real compassion involves facing the problem with guilt (i.e., responsibility). … The courageous man prefers, when ill, to have it said, "this is not fate, this is guilt," for then his possibility of doing something about his condition is not removed from him. … I can illustrate this experientially from a realm which is supposed in our culture to be even more closely referable to fate than psychological disturbances—i.e., infectious illnesses. When I was ill with tuberculosis (before the days of drugs to cure the disease), I noticed, in observing myself and many other patients, that we were often reassured by well-meaning friends and medical personnel that the disease was due to an accident of infection by the tubercle bacillus. This explanation on the basis of fate was thought to be a relief to the patient. But actually it threw many of the more psychologically sensitive patients into greater despair. If the disease were an accident, how could we be sure it would not occur again and again? If, on the other hand, the patient feels that his own pattern of life was at fault and that this was one of the causes of his succumbing to the disease, he feels more guilt, to be sure, but at the same time he sees more hopefully what conditions need to be corrected in order to overcome the disease. From this point of view, guilt feeling is not only the more accurate attitude, but it is also the one yielding the more genuine hope (pp. 46-7).

However problematic the borderline concept may be in many respects (Würmser, 2000, pp. 12-13), the argument that it is merely a label we apply to people we think are bad and whose behavior we abhor is itself problematic. It implies both that we shouldn't use clinical labels to mask our moral judgments and that we shouldn't judge. The former point is valid: it simply asks us to be honest and acknowledge moral judgement as what it is. But the judgement that we shouldn't judge, like the demand that we eliminate countertransference, is utterly unrealistic. The truth, as we all know, is that, whatever traumatic conditions have driven them to it, the emotionally disturbed patients labelled borderline generally have a history of bad behaviour and tend, therefore, to be unlikeable. On some level the patients know this and they judge and punish themselves accordingly. *They* are moralists, even if we pretend *we* are not.

Naturally this in no way justifies our succumbing to being induced by such patients through projective identification to embody and enact their archaic, punitive superegos, replacing analytic understanding with moral exhortation, or reacting against this temptation by abandoning analysis in favor of soothing and support. Our aim with respect to the severe neuroses should be to avoid being induced to play the part of either the bad, punitive or the good, soothing object. Nor should we be hasty to dismiss such patients as "primitive" and unanalysable

in view of such splitting. Rather, we should seek to understand their underlying conflicts, anxieties and defenses in the context of the realities and phantasies in which they arose.

While it is impossible for analysts to refrain from moral judgment, any more than from irritation, boredom, sexual arousal, envy, or any other such emotion, to the degree that we allow ourselves to become conscious of our countertransference we can minimize the likelihood, or at least the extent, of its unconscious enactment. *Our* moralizing is only problematic insofar as it gets in the way of our doing our job—which is to help patients become aware of *their* moralizing, its grounds, and its consequences in unconscious self-punishment and self-sabotage. One of the most effective resistances employed by patients to avoid such awareness involves attributing their moralizing to us, inducing us to identify with and play the part of the projected critical superego, or that of the good, soothing object that helps ward it off. Too often we seem to feel that in order to avoid such induced moralizing we must avoid moral judgement as such—that to escape capture by the patient's projected superego we must somehow jettison our own. But as Erikson (as quoted by Burston, 2007, p. 153) pointed out, "Any psychotherapist … who throws out his ethical sentiments with his irrational moral anger, deprives himself of a principal tool of his clinical perception."

It is a symptom of its repression of its superego that psychoanalysis has in recent years facilitated candid and fruitful discussion of a range of sexual and aggressive countertransferences, while the moralizing countertransference has remained unmentionable except to be morally condemned (and therefore, in a sense, acted out). The unconscious enactment, at least in a gross form, of a moralizing countertransference *should* be proscribed. (This is itself a value judgment, part of our psychoanalytic moral vision.) But to consciously *experience* a moralistic countertransference is not necessarily to enact it grossly, although it is inevitable that it will leak to some degree.

Like other countertransferences the moralizing countertransference can be a useful source of information, both about ourselves and about the patient. It tells us we feel the patient is sinning in some respect—and, provided our countertransference is more objective than subjective we might be right.[23] The patient may also feel this on some level and be punishing herself accordingly and, if so, our task is to help her become conscious of this. Of course, it is possible our countertransference is more subjective than objective, based more on projection or transference *onto* the patient than accurate perception and understanding *of* the patient. And even when it is objective, the analyst may be

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[23] The distinction between the subjective countertransference reflecting the analyst's personal neurosis and the objective countertransference reflecting the feelings this patient would stir in any therapist was initially advanced by Winnicott (1947). Freud's idea of the complemental series is useful here as actual countertransferences embody elements of both in varying degrees. Related to the objective countertransference, but worth distinguishing from it, is the countertransference resulting from the patient's use of interpersonal projective identification (Bion, 1959) or emotional induction (Spotnitz, 1969).

insufficiently capable of containing and processing it, unconsciously acting it out instead. If the distorting subjective countertransference and the inability to contain the objective and induced countertransferences do not yield quickly to self-analysis, the analyst needs supervision and/or further personal analysis. On the other hand, a conscious moralizing countertransference that is contained and thought about informs us that by the standards of our conscience, including our psychoanalytic ethic, we regard aspects of this patient's character and behaviour as destructive and wrong (however much these impulses and actions are understandable in light of the conditions that gave rise to them). Occasionally such moral countertransference may reveal to us that there is a fundamental value clash between analyst and analysand that needs to be confronted, rendered fully conscious, discussed and, in one way or another, if possible, resolved.[24]

VII. Free Will & Determinism

Freud's early training under von Brücke in the positivism, Darwinian biologism and reductionism of the Helmholtz school of physicalistic physiology resulted, even after he abandoned his explicit attempt to reduce psychology to neurology, in what Habermas (1971, ch. 11) called "the scientistic self-misunderstanding of metapsychology." In addition to conceptualizing psychoanalysis as *Naturwissenschaft* (natural science) rather than *Geisteswissenschaft* (human or social science), Freud's positivism entailed a strict psychic determinism incompatible with belief in free will and, hence, with traditional concepts of guilt and responsibility. What sense does it make to find a person guilty for her actions or failures to act, her sins of commission or omission, when her actions were entirely determined to begin with? B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948) and *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971) were embarrassing to his fellow determinists precisely because they spelled out with complete logical rigor the full and, to most people, utterly unacceptable implications of the determinist position.[25]

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[24] Today the moral relativism that dominated philosophical and social thought for many years has given way to widespread recognition on the part of both philosophers and social scientists of a core of universal human values. Hence, the countertransference ethical sentiments that Erikson recognized as key elements of our clinical perception cannot so easily be set aside as purely subjective and both personally and culturally relative. If there are universal values, it follows that there are sins that are universally recognized as such.

[25] It is a measure of the widespread failure of the synthetic function of the ego among psychoanalysts and other social scientists, our resort to isolation, splitting of the ego, or compartmentalization of mind, that we cheerfully tolerate the contradiction between our professional and intellectual adherence to determinism and the voluntarism that governs the way we think, feel and act in our daily lives and relationships, without any apparent need to work toward some higher-order, dialectical understanding in which both determinism and voluntarism can find a place. Albeit in a different context, Hanly (2005) writes: "I am struck by the cheerful attitude some analysts have toward contradiction. It is as though they had an ego lacuna where rules of logic are concerned. Primary process thought has the privilege of indifference to contradiction but secondary process thought is supposed to find contradiction unacceptable. … Psychoanalysis does not justify a casual attitude toward contradiction" (pp. 5-6).

Although moralistic himself, Freud was nevertheless (and apparently without recognizing the contradiction between his theory and his practice) committed to a complete and strict determinism, not only with respect to the material and biological worlds, but to our human *psychic reality* as well. He frequently referred disparagingly to what he called "the illusion of Free Will" (Freud, 1919, p. 236). With respect to scepticism regarding the psychic determination of so-called "free" associations (which Freud explains appear free only insofar as their determinants remain unconscious), he complains: "But when you are faced with the psychical fact that a particular thing occurred to the mind of the person questioned, you will not allow the fact's validity: something else might have occurred to him! You nourish the illusion of there being such a thing as psychical freedom, and you will not give it up. I am sorry to say I disagree with you categorically over this" (pp. 48-9). Later in the same work he writes: "Once before ... I ventured to tell you that you nourish a deeply rooted faith in undetermined psychical events and in free will, but that this is quite unscientific and must yield to the demand of a determinism whose rule extends over mental life" (p. 106).

An aspect of the "scientistic self-misunderstanding of metapsychology" is Freud's conflation of the principle of *psychic signification* with the principle of *psychic determinism*. Whereas the former refers to an order comprised of *meaningful* connections or significations open to psychoanalytic interpretation, the latter refers to an order comprised of *causal* connections. The latter is most easily envisaged as it applies in the material world: the connections between a series of falling dominoes, for example. In contrast, the principle of psychic signification applies to connections of significance—to mental events linked not causally but by implication or association of the type, for example, *penis-feces-child* (Freud, 1917; Isaacs, 1927).

In actual clinical practice, as distinct from metapsychological theorizing, Freud and his followers have always utilized the principle of psychic signification while conflating this with the principle of causal determinism. The point is that one need not subscribe to a complete causal determinism in mental life to ground the psychoanalytic practice of bringing to light the conscious, preconscious and unconscious connections between mental events—that is, to interpret their multiple meanings or significations.

Since to reproach someone for acting in a certain way necessarily implies they could have chosen to act otherwise, a belief in free will and responsibility is necessary for moral judgment to make any rational sense whatsoever. But while such a belief is certainly incompatible with complete psychic determinism, it in no way contradicts the principle of psychic signification and the practice of decoding encoded meanings. In other words, belief in free will and responsibility is in no way incompatible with actual clinical psychoanalytic practice, however much it contradicts the determinism of Freudian metapsychology.

Despite his theoretical commitment to psychic determinism, in the socio-political domain Freud (1930 [1929]) was a champion of liberty. In *Civilization and Its Discontents,* he writes:

> The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization.... The development of civilization imposes restrictions on it.... The urge for freedom, therefore, is directed against particular forms and demands of civilization or against civilization altogether. It does not seem as though any influence could induce a man to change his nature into a termite's. No doubt he will always defend his claim to individual liberty against the will of the group (pp. 95-96).

How man's nature can differ fundamentally from that of a termite if, like the termite's, his behavior is subject to a complete determinism, Freud fails to explain.

Freud seems never to have appreciated the contradiction between his metapsychological determinism and his clinical commitment to liberating patients from pathological symptoms, inhibitions and compulsive repetitions and enhancing their psychological freedom. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud (1923) states: "after all, analysis does not set out to make pathological reactions impossible, but to give the patient's ego *freedom* [Freud's emphasis] to decide one way or the other" (n.1, p. 50). But how can we speak of giving patients freedom to decide, when such freedom is illusory? Are we committed clinically to giving patients illusions? And how would that sit with Freud's overriding commitment to truth?

This contradiction is not merely a problem for psychoanalytic theory; it not infrequently gives rise to a problem in psychoanalytic practice. For example, when confronting patients who, after considerable analysis, instead of putting their impulses and phantasies into words continue to put them into action, the analyst may be asked: "But doctor, you are a Freudian, are you not? You believe in psychic determinism? Then you must appreciate that I had no choice but to act! I couldn't help myself. My behavior was entirely determined—perhaps even, as Freud would say, *over*-determined. I acted under a compulsion to repeat!"

No matter how we might try to dance intellectually around it, the fact is that our therapy involves enjoining patients to assume responsibility for aspects of their being for which they have hitherto either been unable or unwilling to be responsible and to exercise their freedom of choice to shape their lives according to their (not our) will. But we are hampered in this therapeutic project by a doctrine of psychic determinism that renders meaningless the very notions of freedom, choice, will and responsibility.

To introduce these existentialist concepts into psychoanalysis in no way requires us to sacrifice Freud's (1916-17 [1915-17]) recognition that the human ego "is not even master in its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of

what is going on unconsciously in its mind" (p. 285). Although Sartre (1943) appears not to have recognized the fact, the existence of unconscious mental processes need not be identified with the doctrine of psychic determinism and, hence, the unconscious need not constitute a repository of excuses to be employed in the evasion of freedom and responsibility. For Freud himself drew attention to the existence of *unconscious* choice: "Yet psychoanalysis cannot … accept the identity of the conscious and the mental. It defines what is mental as processes such as feeling, thinking and willing, and it is obliged to maintain that there is unconscious thinking and unapprehended willing" (Freud, 1916-17 [1915-17], p. 22). As Lacan (1977) put it:

> Yet that is what we must resign ourselves to. The unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; what it knows of the elementary is no more than the elements of the signifier. … It is the abyss opened up at the thought that a thought should make itself heard in the abyss that provoked resistance to psychoanalysis from the outset. And not, as commonly said, the emphasis on man's sexuality (p. 170).

Hence, the ego that is not even master in its own psychic house is the *conscious* ego that is to be distinguished from the unconscious ego that is, in such instances, the agent of our decisions and actions—an ego that is thus responsible, even for its decision to conduct its operations unconsciously. While it is true that many of our choices are unconscious, we nevertheless are choosing, albeit unconsciously, and we are responsible for these choices and for the choice to make them unconsciously.

But to counter an extreme determinism we need not embrace an extreme voluntarism. While it is true that in light of the reality of unconscious choice we need not equate the existence of the unconscious with determinism, the fact remains that there are psychic realities for which we are truly not responsible: ideas or phantasies that we have not been consciously aware we have and have therefore been in no position to question or subject to criticism. Until such mental contents are brought to our attention, we cannot meaningfully be held responsible for them. A man, for example, may not have realized that he thinks of females as castrated males until this fact is pointed out to him; only at this point is he in a position to take responsibility for this belief, to rationally evaluate it, and to decide either to retain or discard it—a decision for which he is now responsible.[26]

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[26] Freud should not be blamed for his conflation of psychic signification with psychic determinism since the distinction probably never came to his attention; or for his attribution of human destructiveness to the animal in man since he may never have had occasion to recognize that the beasts are never "beastly"; or for his failure to recognize the contradiction between his theoretical determinism and his practical voluntarism, as perhaps no one confronted him sufficiently about it (though Binswanger and Pfister probably tried). Certainly he should not be blamed for his failure to see how his manifest Hellenism entailed rejection of his suppressed Hebraism, for he had no real opportunity to resolve his oedipal hostility toward his father through psychoanalytic treatment.

Psychic reality is characterized by both determinism and freedom. This gives rise to two contrasting types of what Kierkegaard (1844) viewed as self-deception and Sartre (1943) called "bad faith": we can exaggerate our freedom and deny our facticity, or *vice versa*. The former choice leads to narcissistic, sadistic, obsessional, schizoid and, at the extreme, schizophrenic states in which freedom is exaggerated in grandiose and magically omnipotent ways, while the latter results in depressive, hysterical, masochistic and psychosomatic conditions in which freedom is denied and we view ourselves as entirely determined objects or victims.

Whereas Freud attributed much of the resistance to psychoanalysis to the blow it constitutes to human narcissism, Schafer (1976) draws attention to a complementary truth: the degree to which such resistance is based upon the revelation by psychoanalysis that "People … are far more creators and stand much closer to their gods than they can bear to recognize" (p. 153):

> In this view, the problem is not only a disagreeable *reduction* of people's conception of their personal scope and influence; it is also a threatening *expansion* of this conception. In a basic sense Freud extended people's narcissistic sense of themselves. He showed that people make their lives by what they do, and, for psychoanalysis, what they "do" includes all their mental operations and thereby all the circumstances they contrive and all the meanings they ascribe to their circumstances, whether contrived or imposed on them. … It is Freud's commitment to mechanistic and organismic natural science theorizing and our continuing allegiance to him in this regard that have delayed our discovering this additional truth about the unpopularity of psychoanalysis. We have continued to think, with Freud, of energies, forces, structures, and so forth as *acting on the person* rather than as metaphoric approaches to *actions of a person.* It has been left to such searching thinkers as Binswanger and Sartre, working within the framework of existential analysis, to begin to formulate the relevant propositions. And yet the essential ideas have been at the center of Freudian psychoanalytic interpretation from its very beginning. What, after all, did Freud show in the *Studies on Hysteria* … but that a neurotic symptom is something a person *does* rather than *has* or has inflicted on him or her? It is a frightening truth that people make their own mental symptoms. It is an unwelcome insight that if neurosis is a disease at all, it is not like any other disease. It is an arrangement or a creation, an expression of many of an individual's most basic categories of understanding and vital interests. … Consequently, the widespread rejection of psychoanalysis may be understood as a species of disclaimed action. It is a way of asserting: "Do not tell us how much we do and how much more we could do. Allow us our illusions of ignorance, passivity, and helplessness. We dare not acknowledge that we *are* masters in our own house" (pp. 153-4).

Naturally, Schafer does not intend to merely replace one exaggeration with another, a one-sided determinism with an equally one-sided voluntarism. Instead, he draws our attention to the fact that we tend to err in two directions: at

times excessively *claiming* responsibility and, at other times, excessively *disclaiming* it. Typically, depressive and masochistic characters engage in the former fallacy, excessively claiming responsibility and blaming themselves as the agents of circumstances objectively beyond their control; while narcissistic, obsessional and hysterical characters engage in the latter, excessively disclaiming responsibility for actions of which they are clearly the agents and representing themselves as victims of circumstances they themselves have contrived to bring about. In keeping with the neurosis we call normality most of us commit both fallacies to some extent. One way to conceive of the task of analysis is as sorting out to what extent we are and to what extent we are not responsible for our fortunes and misfortunes.[27]

VIII. Animal Symbolicum

Drawing upon the biological perspectives of Jacob von Uexkhüll, F.J.J. Buytendijk and Adolf Portmann and evaluations of these views in terms of philosophical anthropology by Hellmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen (Grene, 1969), Berger and Luckmann (1967, pp.47-52) have drawn attention to our peculiar position in the animal kingdom as a "biologically insufficient" creature characterized by "world-openness" as a result of a unique ontogenetic development characterized by a period of "postnatal foetalization" that has resulted in our relative lack of a "species-specific" instinctual preadaptation to our environment. Because of the essentially premature birth of the human neonate and its prolonged dependency upon its significant others, the infant gradually acquires from its "surrogate ego" and its "facilitating social environment" (Winnicott, 1960) a capacity to replace its missing instincts with a symbolic and self-reflexive linguistic facility and a distinctive type of ego-functioning that elevates the human being to a fundamentally emergent and superorganic level of being.

Far from being instinct-dominated creatures, we are instinctless but meaning- and metaphor-ridden animals (Burke, 1968; Carveth, 1984b; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). As the existentialists have argued, we are in one sense denatured

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[27] Recently a supervisee reported on a session in which his patient held himself entirely responsible for destructive aspects of his personality and behavior. I recommended he point out to him that, once again, he was splitting, in this instance viewing himself entirely as an agent and denying the degree to which he had been shaped by circumstances beyond his control. Naturally, if the patient had split in the opposite way, claiming to be entirely a determined object or victim, I would have recommended a parallel but opposing intervention. The splitting enshrined in Freud's one-sided commitment to determinism has made it difficult for analysts to identify and confront such splitting in their patients. This illustrates how apparently abstract philosophical issues, such as free will and determinism, can have practical clinical implications. (For present purposes I will not elaborate upon the obvious meta-communication entailed in the intervention I recommended: it clearly moves in opposition not only to the patient's splitting but to his harsh superego and its irrational exaggeration of his responsibility and is likely to have been felt by the patient as both empathic and protective--though possibly on a deeper level also unempathic, even endangering, by encouraging a rebellion against the harsh superego that could set him up for a painful retaliation by his inner "gang" whose hegemony is threatened.)

animals, condemned to be within nature and yet in some ways inevitably outside it (Fromm, 1941), bridging the worlds of the biological and the symbolic or cultural (Becker, 1973), of necessity and possibility (Kierkegaard, 1980), moved by organic appetites and yet able both to "nihilate" (Sartre, 1943) them and imaginatively elaborate both a uniquely human, superorganic *desire* distinct from organic *need* (Lacan, 1977) and a *jouissance* transcending merely finite pleasure—a longing for the infinite (or an infinite longing) that, for thinkers such as Kierkegaard (1844), only the infinite can satisfy.

According to Sartre, our possession of a nihilating consciousness enables us to say "No." Though psychoanalysis has long been aware of the negativism that often characterizes the anal phase of psychosexual development and its significance in the development of the capacity for autonomy and active mastery, with a few exceptions (e.g., Erikson, 1968, pp.107-114), it has generally been unwilling to recognize in these developments the foundation of human freedom, albeit in its negative form. Without exaggerating the scope of the human subject's freedom, it would appear necessary to recognize that "development produces a marked qualitative shift somewhere around the rapprochement subphase" (Blanck and Blanck, 1979, p.73) of separation-individuation: a "point of fulcrum" associated with the development of language. Having attained the emergent level of symbolic action and interaction, the child is no longer an infrahuman (but potentially human) *reagent* restricted to the inorganic and organic worlds of *process*, but a person or human *agent* acting on the superorganic level of human *praxis*.

When the insights of Sartre are combined with those of G.H. Mead (1934), we recognize that our capacity for symboling constitutes us as "inventor[s] of the negative" (Burke, 1968, p.9), enables us to imagine "what is not" and compare it to "what is," to posit various "Thou shalt nots" and to "secrete a nothingness" (Sartre, 1943, pp.33-85) between our situation and our reaction to it (i.e., ourselves)—an act of nihilation that transforms "reaction" into "action" in the proper sense. At the point at which, like Helen Keller in that moment of realization that words refer to things and that everything has a name (Cassirer, 1944, pp.33-36; White, 1949, pp.36-39), we cross the emergent evolutionary boundary between the prehuman and the human condition, we acquire the freedom to refuse; to delay our response to stimuli; to replace an overt response by a covert symbolic action (i.e., to think or imagine); to distance ourselves from immediate influences; to compare what is with what was, will be, or might be; to deny the truth; and to repress our wishes—even to die rather than submit to the force of circumstance.[28]

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[28] Kierkegaard (1849) interprets the *Genesis* story of the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil as a mythical account of the loss of animal and infantile innocence with the emergence of human self-consciousness—i.e., of a self that as a synthesis of mind and body, possibility and necessity, is capable of relating to and realizing itself as such. Though a passionate Christian (albeit an equally passionate critic of Christendom), Kierkegaard implies, contra Augustinian doctrine, that the preverbal infant is innocent until falling into sin with the rise of language and self-consciousness. Unlike the orthodox Christian view, this is compatible with

For the early Sartre (1943, 1948), if a prisoner confesses when her interrogator holds a gun to her head and threatens to shoot unless she complies, she is in bad faith if she claims she had no choice. While her *positive* or *practical freedom* ("*freedom to*" do, be, or have whatever she wants) is radically restricted in such a situation—as it is in the lives of most persons owing to the limitations of poverty, ignorance, disease, social powerlessness and the like—the prisoner's *negative* or *psychological freedom* ("*freedom from*" mechanical determination) remains absolute: she could have chosen to die rather than confess. Although he never abandoned this insistence upon our psychological (negative) freedom from mechanical determination, the later Sartre (1960, 1969, 1977, 1980) came to recognize the overwhelming power of our psychological and social conditioning in childhood by family, class, and culture—all of which constitute for us a kind of "predestination" he concluded. Nevertheless, Sartre continued to believe that, to the extent that we remain human, capable of the complex symboling processes entailed in minding and selfing, we retain an "I" (the subjective or agentic pole of the self as conceptualized by Mead) in addition to a "me" (the objective or socially determined "looking-glass self" [Cooley, 1902])—that is, a degree of subjective freedom to reflect upon our conditioned selves and in this way purchase some degree of liberating distance from them. Such emancipatory self-reflection is, after all, what clinical psychoanalysis is all about.

It must be emphasized that in all this insistence upon our symboling functions, our freedom from instinct and from mechanical determinism (insofar as our action rather than our material reality or rudimentary reflexes is concerned), there is no attempt to deny the fact of the human body, its natural appetites and functions, or the fact that we are subjected to various happenings beyond our control and various conditions that severely limit our positive or practical freedom to realize our wishes. Our finitude, creatureliness and mortality are inescapable aspects of our being and our subjectivity is conditioned by psychosocial forces that shape our very definition of the situation within which we must act. But the fact remains that as human beings, as *Homo Sapiens* or *animal symbolicum* (White, 1949), as *being-for-itself* (*pour-soi*) at the same time as we are immersed in *being-in-itself* (*en-soi*), we are "condemned to be free" (Sartre, 1946, p.34), at least in the limited sense that as long as our nihilating consciousness is not eliminated or subjected to control through physical or chemical techniques (which, in effect, render us things rather than persons), we retain that minimal degree of psychological freedom to refuse at whatever cost and to "make something out of what is made of [us]" (Sartre, 1969, p.45), if only by reflecting upon and choosing our attitude toward this.

Jewish doctrine that sin is not "original" but universally and inevitably developed at a later age due to an inclination toward it: "Judaism teaches that human beings are not basically sinful. We come into the world neither carrying the burden of sin committed by our ancestors nor tainted by it. Rather, sin, *het,* is the result of our human inclinations, the *yetzer,* which must be properly channelled" (Rabbi Reuven Hammer, n.d.)

IX. The Centaur Model of Human Nature

According to Erikson (1950):

> The id Freud considered to be the oldest province of the mind, both in individual terms—for he held the young baby to be "all id"—and in phylogenetic terms, for the id is the deposition in us of the whole of evolutionary history. The id is everything that is left of our organization of the responses of the amoeba and of the impulses of the ape, of the blind spasms of our intra-uterine existence, and of the needs of our postnatal days—everything which would make us "mere creatures." The name "id," of course, designates the assumption that the "ego" finds itself attached to this impersonal, this bestial layer like the centaur to his equestrian underpinnings: only that the ego considers such a combination a danger and an imposition, whereas the centaur makes the most of it (p.192).

While agreeing with Erikson's characterization of the Freudian anthropology, Guntrip (1971) regards the theory as "astonishing and unrealistic, in its assumption that human nature is made up, by evolutionary `layering,' of an ineradicable dualism of two mutually hostile elements" (p.50). He takes the seeming plausibility of the centaur model as evidence both of "how far back in history human beings have suffered from split-ego conditions" (p.51) and of "how tremendous has been the struggle to disentangle the two elements in Freud's original thought, the physiological and biological impersonal-process theory of id-drives and superego controls, and the personal object-relational thinking that has always been struggling to break free and move on to a new and more adequate conceptualization of human beings in their personal life" (pp. 51-2).

Freud's centaur model is certainly "astonishing and unrealistic " in its conception of human nature as divided between a human ego/superego harnessed to a bestial id and in its misconception of human destructiveness and evil as manifestations of the beast in man. Yet Freud's very dualism, his depiction of the human being as a fundamentally divided self, accounts for the power and the enduring validity of the psychoanalytic vision of the human condition. For Freud's (1923, 1930 [1929]) depiction of human beings as caught between the forces of culture (ego/superego) and of nature (id) approximates an existentialist understanding that while fundamentally "de-natured" as free subjects through our possession of reason, morality and symbolic self-consciousness unknown in other species, we are at the same time immersed in nature by our physical existence as objects and our biological being as animals destined to die—but unlike other animals in possession of minds that know this.[29]

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[29] It has not been widely appreciated that in his later additions to his developing theory of religion, Freud (1927, 1930) moved in the direction of existentialism by adding to his earlier (1908, 1913) conceptions of the instinctual and Oedipal dynamics in religion an understanding of the role of human helplessness in the face of such unavoidable existential conditions as the facts of death, aging, illness, the suffering inflicted by socialization, etc., in generating a wish-fullfilling transference onto the universe at large of the child's image of an all-wise, all-powerful protector and judge.

In suggesting that this dualism is not existential, that is, not an intrinsic feature of what it is to be human, but results instead from an historical fall into "split-ego conditions," Guntrip echoes Heidegger's fateful mistake in historicizing the subject/object split by tracing its origins not to the birth of human consciousness *per se*, but to a moment in history and philosophy in which we came to identify with a rational subject differentiated from the objects of its knowledge. In positing a *human* condition prior to or beyond "the fall of man" into dualism such thinkers fail to recognize Edenic unity and wholeness as pre-human and unrecoverable on the human plane.[30] The resulting romanticism and mysticism may be explicitly religious or assume a political and even a therapeutic guise. In Heidegger's case it led to Nazism (Cohn, 2002); in Guntrip's to a kind of therapeutic romanticism in which the "true self" and the original "pristine, whole ego" of even the most broken, schizoid and schizophrenic patients could be resurrected through heroic measures by the omnipotent therapist. Guntrip was a Christian minister as well as a therapist. As such he should have appreciated that while Jesus may have been able to raise the "dead," as human-all-too-human therapists we may have to content ourselves with more modest therapeutic accomplishments.

In reality, the subject-object split represents no historical fall at all: it is *existential,* a characteristic of human consciousness as such, a contradiction at the core of human *being-in-the-world*, a kind of "brokenness" that is a part of what it is to be a human being in all times, all places, all cultures*.* As fashionable as at times it has been in philosophical circles to dismiss such dualism as a fallacy it is, on the contrary, simply true—as both Kierkegaard and Sartre fully understood. We are beings caught between the realms of possibility and necessity, culture and nature, the ideal and the material, mind (psyche, soul and spirit) and body, *being-for-itself* and *being-in-itself*. Freud's centaur model approximates this existential (not historical) split and this is its truth and its strength. As Becker (1973) might put it, we are spiritual beings who have to defecate and die and we know it—however much we may seek to deny one or the other aspect of our divided selves, pretending to be pure subject or pure object, all angel or all animal, completely free or completely determined, when we are always already both.[31]

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[30] In this view the human infant differs from other animal species in having the unique potential for humanization, a potential not actualized until the emergence of symbolic functioning. Once actualized, there is no return, short of substantial brain damage, to the pre-human condition of Edenic innocence. In the *Genesis* (3:24) myth a flaming sword is set up at the east of Eden to prevent our return.

[31] Kierkegaard and Sartre both explore what the latter calls the strategies of bad faith through which we seek to deny the contradiction at the core of human existence. In "The Psychoanalyst Kierkegaard," Becker (1973, ch. 5) explores this line of thought as applied to different types of psychopathology, schizophrenia, for example, representing the extreme of denial of facticity and a mad, omnipotent exaggeration of subjective freedom; depression being just the opposite, denial of freedom and one-sided identification as a finite object or victim of determining forces.

Here we see a fundamental division within existential philosophy itself, between those who, following Heidegger (1927), view existentialism as a critique of and an attempt to transcend both subject/object and mind/body dualism, and those who, following Kierkegaard and Sartre, find in such dualism the key to an existentialist understanding of the human predicament. For existentialists of the latter school, where Freud went wrong was not in conceiving humans as divided beings, or the human mind as essentially and necessarily conflicted, but in his misconception of the nature and origin of human passions. Misconceiving them as biologically grounded *drives* he obscured their true nature as responses to the crucifying contradictions (subject/object, mind/body) of the human condition. Human passions arise not from the animal element of human nature, but from the fact that human beings are not merely animals or objects, and not merely minds or free subjects either, but always both.

Though Freud (1915) knew the human *trieb* is not equivalent to animal *instinkt*, its aims and objects being acquired and environmentally influenced and not biologically fixed, he nevertheless viewed it as a "frontier" concept:

> If we now apply ourselves to considering mental life from a *biological* point of view, an 'instinct' appears to us as a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body (pp. 121-122).

Furthermore, the drive arises from a somatic *source*: "By the source [*Quelle*] of an instinct is meant the somatic process which occurs in an organ or part of the body and whose stimulus is represented in mental life by an instinct" (Freud, 1915, p. 123). For Freud the source of the drive is not the brain, but a somatic zone of the body. In defining the *triebe* in this way, Freud biologizes and naturalizes human passion, representing it as arising ultimately from biology rather than from human *existence*—from the animal in the human rather than from our uniquely human being as self-conscious, future-oriented creatures struggling with the existential anxiety arising from our awareness of both freedom and death.

The problem with Freudian theory is not its mind/body dualism *per se*, for such dualism, insofar as its anthropology, its vision of the human predicament, is concerned is simply accurate: we are immaterial mind inseparably attached to material body. It is not in its dualistic anthropology that Freudian theory falls into error, but in its conflation of human *desire* with organic *need.* As animals we experience the latter. But, as both Sartre and Lacan understood, our uniquely human *desire* arises from that very *manqué-a-etre* or "lack of being" established by the nihilating consciousness that "places a nothingness" between stimulus and response, impulse and action, and that gives rise both to our freedom and

the existential *angst* that inevitably accompanies it.[32] Organic need comes from material body; human desire comes from immaterial mind.

X. The Three Worlds Hypothesis

Following von Uexkhüll and others (May, 1958; Grene, 1969), the existentialists distinguish three modes of world in each of which we simultaneously have our being:

> First, there is the *Umwelt*, literally meaning "world around"; this is the biological world, generally called the environment. There is, second, the *Mitwelt*, literally the "with-world," the world of beings of one's own kind, the world of one's fellow men. The third is the *Eigenwelt*, the "own-world," the mode of relationship to one's self (May, 1958, p. 61).
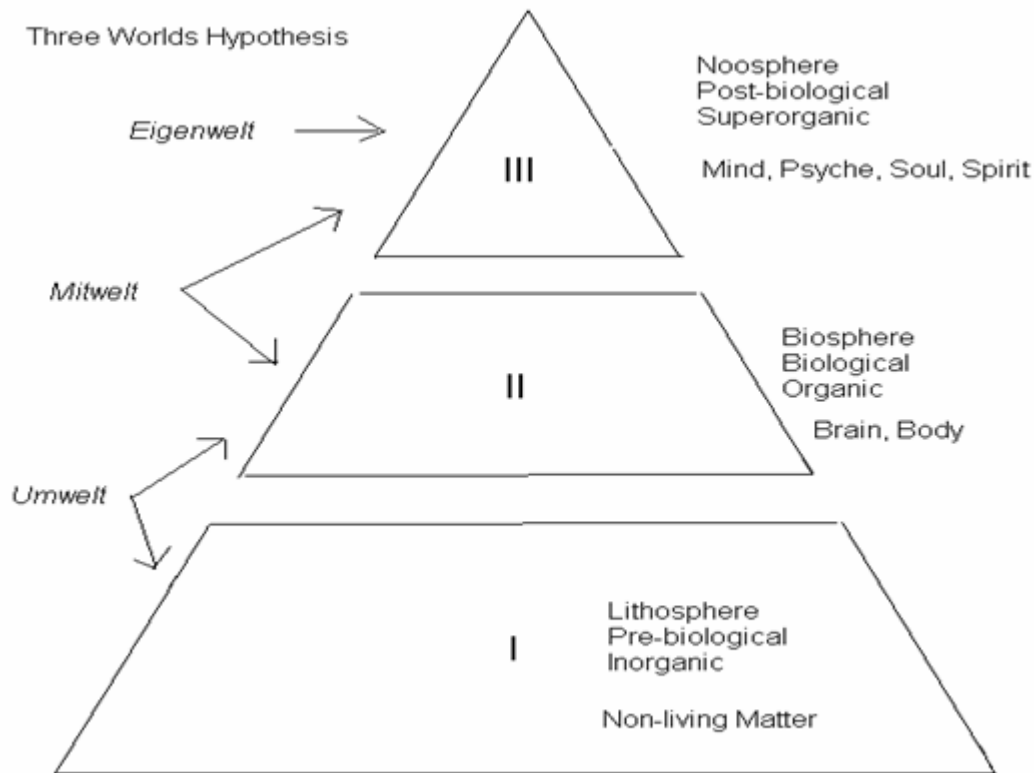
As useful as this model is in many respects, it fails to make certain important distinctions. For example, *Umwelt,* the environment, contains both organic and inorganic phenomena, living organisms and non-living matter. Also, the concept of *Mitwelt*, the "with-world," the world of social interaction, fails to distinguish two fundamentally different types or levels of interaction: symbolic and non-symbolic interaction.

While non-symbolic or signal communication is shared with subhuman species, symbolic communication is uniquely human. It involves the penetration of *Mitwelt* by *Eigenwelt*, for as G.H. Mead (1934) most clearly explains, symbolic interaction with others entails a simultaneous inner dialogue with oneself. For these reasons, I prefer the *Three Worlds Hypothesis* associated with the *emergent* as distinct from the *continuous* theory of evolution.

Whereas the *continuous* theory, expounded by Darwin and his advocate Thomas Henry Huxley, sees evolution taking place through a series of quantitative differences of degree between species, the *emergent* theory, expounded by, among others, psychologist C. Lloyd Morgan and biologist Sir Julian Huxley (Thomas Henry's grandson and brother of the writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley), conceptualizes it as a process in which such quantitative differences of degree add up, at certain "critical levels," to qualitative (emergent) differences of kind. Huxley (1948) felt that now that his grandfather's struggle to establish Darwin's recognition of the animal nature of man had largely been won, we could pull back from exaggeration and afford to recognize what a unique animal the human being is—how radically different from other species we are biologically, psychologically, socially and culturally. Just as at critical levels water turns into ice or steam, so at critical levels an organic world emerges from the inorganic

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[32] Although Freud conceived of the ego as representing the capacity for deferred action, for placing a process of thought between stimulus and response, he did not recognize such ego function as incompatible with his notion of the drive or fully appreciate its radical implications for the theory of human nature.

and, in turn, a superorganic world (the world of mind and culture) emerges from the organic (body and brain).[33] In this existentialist perspective the human being is a partially "denatured" animal "ex-isting" or standing out from the rest of nature, *geosphere* and *biosphere,* in a *noösphere* characterized by symbolic consciousness, self-awareness, a degree of freedom and responsibility, consciousness of time and death, and the existential (as distinct from neurotic) anxiety, among many other things, all this generates.

Three Worlds Hypothesis

Eigenwelt →

III

Noosphere
Post-biological
Superorganic

Mind, Psyche, Soul, Spirit

Mitwelt

II

Biosphere
Biological
Organic

Brain, Body

Umwelt

I

Lithosphere
Pre-biological
Inorganic

Non-living Matter

This model has the advantage of distinguishing social interaction on the level of World III mediated by the *symbol* and involving self-interaction (*Eigenwelt*) from non-symbolic forms of social interaction mediated by the *signal* that characterize both human interaction and the often elaborate communication systems of lower species on the level of World II. And just as it permits us to differentiate these

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[33] Many adherents of the theory of continuous evolution seem to assume that those who, like Huxley, focus upon the differences rather than the similarities between man and other species are arguing not just for the uniqueness but for the superiority of man. They respond with vigorous criticism of the arrogance of such claims and point to the extreme destructiveness of human beings toward ourselves, other species, and the planet as a whole. But in so doing such critics seem not to realize they themselves are now arguing for the uniqueness of man. It seldom occurs to them that those of us who focus upon this may do so in an attempt to better understand and limit our unique destructiveness.

fundamentally different levels of *Mitwelt*, so it allows us to distinguish two levels of *Umwelt*, organic and inorganic.

Applied to psychoanalytic theory, the *Umwelt/Mitwelt/Eigenwelt* model formed the basis for a critique of both Freudian and various types of post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory. With respect to the former, the existentialists hold that "it is an oversimplification and radical error to deal with human beings as though *Umwelt* were the only mode of existence or to carry over the categories which fit *Umwelt* to make a procrustean bed upon which to force all human experience" (May, 1958, p. 62).

Now it would certainly be false to argue that Freud dealt with human beings as though *Umwelt* were our only mode of existence. For this to be so he would have had to argue that the human being is all *id* and to have ignored *ego* and *superego.* In studying the drive's cathexis of objects, and the ego's object relations, Freud describes *Mitwelt*—albeit without distinguishing cathexis of objects as a means of drive discharge, an extension of *Umwelt* into *Mitwelt,* from the ego's relations with objects involving both *Mitwelt and Eigenwelt.* Furthermore, in describing the ego's capacity for self-observation, its ability to split itself into ego and superego, Freud (1933 [1932]) recognizes the human being's capacity for self-reflection—i.e., *Eigenwelt*: "The ego can take itself as an object, can treat itself like other objects, can observe itself, criticize itself, and do Heaven knows what with itself. In this, one part of the ego is setting itself over against the rest. So the ego can be split; it splits itself during a number of its functions—temporarily at least" (p. 58).

But while he clearly did not represent *Umwelt* as the only mode of existence relevant for human beings, Freud does force aspects of human experience belonging to *Eigenwelt*, and to that dimension of *Mitwelt* that involves *Eigenwelt*, into the categories suitable only for *Umwelt*—that is, he conceptualized uniquely human phenomena on the level of World III in terms applicable only to the biological and material phenomena of Worlds II and I. As instances of this type of reductionism we have already discussed Freud's conflation of causal connections (Worlds I and II) with connections of significance (World III), and our uniquely human *desire* (emerging on the level of World III from the very *manqué-a-etre* established by symboling and the nihilating consciousness it entails) with organic *need* (existing on the level of World II).

While Freud's theory of object relations in which we learn to attach to objects as necessary means to the end of drive gratification misrepresents as a learned or secondary drive what appears to be a biologically-given primary attachment need, both of these views lose sight of that element of *Mitwelt* that involves *Eigenwelt* (World III). Attachment theory, at least prior to its later emphasis upon "internal working models," also downplayed the uniquely human, World III elements of human relationships in favour of those World II elements shared with other primates.

A theory of object relations conceived only in terms of primary and secondary drives would be inadequate even to describe the sort of instrumental relations Buber (1970) characterizes as "I-it": even the sadistic psychopath employs a uniquely human, symbolically mediated empathy (without sympathy); she must employ the process Mead (1934) called "role-taking," imagining the experience of others and their experience of the self in order to manipulate them and enjoy their suffering. Such reductionist theories of object relations are even less capable of doing justice to "I-Thou" relations, human relations so characterized by love and care that they transcend self-interest altogether. May (1958) puts it this way:

> The genius and the value of Freud's work lies in uncovering man in the *Umwelt*, the mode of instincts, drives, contingency, biological determinism. But traditional psychoanalysis has only a shadowy concept of *Mitwelt*, the mode of the interrelation of persons as subjects. One might argue that such psychoanalysis does have a *Mitwelt* in the sense that individuals need to find each other for the sheer necessity of meeting biological needs, that libidinal drives require social outlets and make social relationships necessary. But this is simply to derive *Mitwelt* from *Umwelt*, to make *Mitwelt* an epiphenomenon of *Umwelt*; and it means that we are not really dealing with *Mitwelt* at all but only another form of *Umwelt* (pp. 63-4).

Whereas Freud may be faulted for emphasizing the categories of *Umwelt* at the expense of the human being's other two modes of *being-in-the-world* (while in no way ignoring them), the post-Freudian interpersonal, relational, self-psychological and intersubjectivist schools at times seem guilty of an emphasis upon *Mitwelt* to the neglect of *Eigenwelt*. May (1958) points out that human sociality "is not to be confused with 'the influence of the group upon the individual,' or 'the collective mind,' or the various forms of 'social determinism'" (p. 62). He points out that if *Eigenwelt* is neglected, "interpersonal relations tend to become hollow and sterile" (p. 64). When *Eigenwelt* is neglected we soon arrive at what Wrong (1962; Carveth, 1984a) called "the oversocialized conception of man" in which Cooley's (1902) "looking-glass self" composed of the "reflected appraisals of others," and Mead's (1934) "me" based on one's imagination of the other's view of oneself, come to be taken for the self as such. Within the so-called "culturistic" or interpersonal school of psychoanalysis there has been controversy over whether Harry Stack Sullivan's theory of the self is "oversocialized" in this sense. His statements regarding "the illusion of personal individuality" (Sullivan 1950) appear to reduce the self to the field of its social relations.

Whether or not Sullivan joined them in this respect, Mead's so-called followers in "symbolic interactionist" social psychology largely reduced the self to the level of a social product (sociologism or sociological determinism) and, in doing so, ignored Mead's own conception of the self as an ongoing dialogue between the "me" (the self as an object viewed from the imagined standpoint of the other) and the "I" (the self as the subject who imagines how the other views "me"). Such

social constructivism loses sight of the "I" as the ultimately unknowable subjective self that, like the photographer who is always taking the picture and therefore never appears in it, eludes both self-knowledge (for any self we know is the "me" and not the "I' that is doing the knowing) and complete social determination.

For Mead, the "I" is the mysterious and unpredictable part of the self that we are most interested in, the source of both our freedom and creativity. *Eigenwelt* is precisely this relationship between the "I" and the "me"—the self's relating to itself. This is the process that, for Kierkegaard, constitutes the human soul or spirit and that, for St. Augustine, represents the mystery of the Trinity (a point implicitly understood in the psychoanalytic Catholicism of Lacan): "I" and "me," subject and object, only constitute a dyad when separated by the third thing that brings them into being by dividing them—just as God created the world through a series of separations, dividing the light from the darkness, establishing a *vault* to separate the waters, and dividing the waters from the dry land (*Genesis I*). It is the internal trinity established by the *vault* (boundary, cut, or differentiation) and its existential consequences and implications that is neglected by much interpersonal, relational, self-psychological, intersubjectivist, culturistic and sociological thinking in psychoanalysis.

Without disturbing his claim to represent a return to Freud by explicitly criticizing the master, Lacan (1977) recognized Freud's conflation of human *desire* with organic *need.* While we certainly share organic or biological needs with other animal species, this is not what psychoanalysis is about. It is about human *desire* which, as many philosophers have rightly understood, emerges from a sense of *lack.* The emergence of symbolic consciousness in the human child, a process in which the child begins to ex-ist (*existere*: to step or stand out), entails both self-consciousness and the dialectic of *being* and *nothingness*: the awareness of self entails recognition of what the self *is not.* "Man is the being through whom nothingness comes to the world," Sartre (1943, p. 59) writes. Human consciousness is *doubly nihilating*: in order to know this cup I must know (1) that I am *not* the cup and (2) that the cup is *not* the table it rests on. In thus separating or distinguishing subject and object, I "secrete a nothingness" between them—as I do in distinguishing object from object. In so bringing nothingness (gaps, lacks, cracks, splits, distinctions, differences, boundaries and limits) into the world, I encounter what Lacan describes as my *manqué-a-etre*: my lack of being. And it is out of this lack that my desire emerges.

Just as Lacan never overtly criticizes Freud while radically revising him, so he never acknowledges Sartre while thoroughly assimilating and appropriating his insights. What Lacan valuably adds to Sartre is the recognition of the semiotic basis of the existential facts described in Sartre's phenomenological ontology. Human beings bring nothingness into the world because we are symboling beings and symbolization not only requires recognition of the difference between signifier (the arbitrary sign that stands for the thing) and signified (the mental

concept of the thing), but also the difference between the signified (the concept of the thing) and the thing-in-itself (the so-called *ding-an-sich* existing in the *Real* beyond both conceptualization and signification). It is for these reasons that human consciousness is doubly nihilating as Sartre claims.

As symboling and time-binding beings we ex-ist, stand out from or transcend, both here and now (Heidegger, 1927). We are in perpetual dialogue with that which does *not* empirically exist: yesterday (which leaves traces but exists no longer) and tomorrow (which does not exist yet). And we relate to people, places and things that, although they do exist empirically, exist elsewhere. Since we can stimulate ourselves with the symbols of empirical things apart from the things themselves, we can relate to such things even in their absence. And our capacity to relate to symbols whose referents are non-empirical enables us not only to relate to non-empirical things (such as yesterday, tomorrow and God), but also to bestow non-empirical qualities upon empirical things, making moral and aesthetic judgement possible. Beauty is not in the empirical thing; it is a quality bestowed upon it by a particular subject. No amount of scientific analysis of the empirical qualities of a painting (its chemical composition, etc.) will resolve the dispute between a person who finds it beautiful and a person who finds it ugly. Hence we say "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Similarly, moral goodness and evil are qualities we bestow upon empirical things. Two observers may agree on the empirical fact that so many civilian non-combatants were killed in a conflict, but entirely disagree with respect to moral evaluation of the fact, one viewing it as genocide, the other as a necessary means to a justifiable end.[34]

Due to our capacity to distinguish this from that by placing a gap between them, to view the self as not the other, to relate to absent and even non-existent things and people, and to impose non-empirical qualities upon empirical things, our experience is pervaded by difference, absence, nothingness, gap and lack. It is the emergence of human consciousness into this field of negation that Kristeva (1982) describes as "abjection"—the opening up of a metaphorical wound that, in health at least, bleeds perpetually, or of a loss that can, and must not ever, be finally mourned (Derrida, 2001). For it is this very wound and loss that constitute our freedom and our *angst*, the foreclosure of which constitutes our narcissism, and the cure of which entails the "acceptance of castration" (Lacan, 1977).

But to make the point exclusively in this mournful way, making human consciousness all about absence and loss, results in what I have called "melancholic existentialism" (Carveth, 2004). Its insights need to be complemented by awareness that the gap between subject and object makes possible not only the loss of the object but of true communion with it as *other.* In

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[34] To recognize in this way that "one cannot deduce an ought from an is"—the so-called fact/value disjunction in which it is understood that science is limited to description and incapable of prescription—in no way contradicts the increasingly recognized fact that certain "oughts" appear to be universally prescribed by human beings. In other words, the fact/value disjunction in no way justifies moral relativism.

this way, nothingness opens us up to love, connection and *jouissance,* as much as to loss and sorrow. The human passions, broadly categorized as sexuality and aggression, that Freud misconceived as arising from biological sources, in reality emerge from the contradictions of human existence, the desire that emerges from lack, and the longing, aggression and defensive strategies that emerge in the face of the anxieties of freedom and of death.

XI. Existentialism

Viewing the human being as a centaur, a beastly id in perpetual tension with a human ego and superego, Freud naturalized and biologized human destructiveness. For all translation issues aside (yes he used the German term *trieb* not *instink*t), he described the *triebe* as arising from a somatic source, by which he did not mean the brain but, in the case of the sexual drive, an erogenic bodily zone. Freud was never able to determine the somatic zone that gives rise to aggression, which might have caused him to wonder if this whole idea of the drives arising from somatic sources might be misconceived. In the existential view, our destructiveness derives from what is uniquely human about us: our self-consciousness; our awareness of time and of mortality; the existential anxiety that such awareness, including consciousness of our freedom, generates in us; and our capacity for what G.H. Mead called "role-taking" (i.e., empathy) which enables us to use our empathic awareness of others' experience either to help or to manipulate, torture and injure them.

In relation to the nature/nurture polarity, in addition to (1) *biologism,* the one-sided emphasis upon the causal role of biological (anatomical, physiological, neurological, etc.) factors; and (2) *environmentalism,* the one-sided emphasis upon the causal role of environmental factors (conditioning, social and cultural influences); and also to (3) *biosocial interactionism,* in which both nature and nurture, heredity and environment are recognized (this being Freud's position: id plus ego/superego); there is (4) *existentialism,* a perspective that recognizes an emergent human reality irreducible to either nature or nurture or their interaction, an emergent level of being beyond both the inorganic and the organic (the pre-biological and the biological, geosphere and biosphere) that is post-biological or superorganic (though not necessarily supernatural), the noösphere, the world of mind and culture, dependent upon but irreducible to brain, organized by the symbol (both discursive and non-discursive), and characterized by the freedom and existential anxiety described by Kierkegaard, the *being-toward-death* described by Heidegger, the possibilities of bad faith or self-deception described by Sartre, and the ego's capacity to substitute thought for action as described by Freud. If to all this we add insights of G.H. Mead and Lacan, we understand that these emergent and, in a sense, transcendent capacities have to do with the symbolic function.

While it is true that human beings are partly things among things that can be studied from a strictly natural science vertex, this only applies to human being on

the levels of Worlds I and II, geosphere and biosphere, the pre-biological or inorganic, and the biological or organic worlds. But on the level of World III which opens up sometime during the second year of life when symbolic functioning develops, the noösphere or post-biological world of mind (as distinct from brain though, of course, requiring brain), emerges and on this emergent level the human being is no longer a thing among things and cannot be studied as such. What the Germans call the *Naturwissenschaften* work well on the level of our existence as things and organisms, but to study human *being-in-the-world* on the level of World III as emergent symboling beings requires the characteristic method of the *Geisteswissenschaften*: the *verstehen* (understanding) method of Max Weber; the *sympathetic introspection* of Charles Horton Cooley; George Herbert Mead's *role-taking*; and Heinz Kohut's *introspective empathic method*.

Mind requires brain but is irreducible to it. World III rests on Worlds II and I, but is irreducible to them. Sometime during the second year of life a revolution occurs: during the "rapprochement crisis" (Mahler et al., 1975) language generates the concept of loss or absence and stimulates separation anxiety. Freud (1920) interprets the *Fort! Da!* game of his grandson at eighteen months as his use of symbolic play and magic to work through the anxiety and depression that recognition of separateness brings. For Kierkegaard the myth of *Genesis* symbolizes this fall into self-awareness, freedom and anxiety. Insofar as our human *existence* is concerned, materialism and positivism are grossly insufficient as a basis for knowledge: at best they allow us to understand the *material* facts of the organic and inorganic levels of our being when, the current fad of so-called "neuro-psychoanalysis" notwithstanding, psychoanalysts have been more interested in the *immaterial* facts of the post-biological domain of *psychic reality*.

Like Daniel Stern's (1985) description of the "preverbal senses of self" that he sees appearing prior to the emergence of the verbal sense of self, the work of Bion (1967), Bick (1968), Meltzer (1974), Tustin (1981) and others on what may be precursors or prototypes of the symbolic functioning we see emerging some time during the second year is very suggestive, as long as such work is not used to justify a romantic sensibility that blurs the fundamentally important distinction between such preverbal precursors and the kind of symbolism that emerges during the second year and that, unlike its precursors, effects a true revolution in the mind.[35]

Let it be clear that in emphasizing humanity's uniqueness in these ways I am in no way celebrating our superiority, only our difference. Symbolic functioning generates in us a capacity for madness and destructiveness unparalleled in other

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[35] Rather than saying this revolution creates the *mind,* those concerned to avoid what Heidegger sees as the subjectivism characteristic of Western metaphysics will prefer to say it creates the *human situation* that Heidegger calls *Dasein,* human *being-in-the-world*, and that Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre describe in terms of its freedom, anxiety, care and guilt—qualities that appear to be absent (though their analogues exist) in both subhuman species and infants (those literally beneath speech).

species. To a degree, Thomas Hardy's (1919) poem *Before Life and After* is congruent with the existential perspective elaborated here:

Before Life and After

A time there was - as one may guess
And as, indeed, earth's testimonies tell -
Before the birth of consciousness,
When all went well.

None suffered sickness, love, or loss,
None knew regret, starved hope, or heart-burnings;
None cared whatever crash or cross
Brought wrack to things.

If something ceased, no tongue bewailed,
If something winced and waned, no heart was wrung;
If brightness dimmed, and dark prevailed,
No sense was stung.

But the disease of feeling germed,
And primal rightness took the tinct of wrong;
Ere nescience shall be reaffirmed
How long, how long?

But only to a degree, for the excessive pessimism of Hardy's dark concluding stanza ignores the fact that human symbolic consciousness, while certainly bringing regret, loss, starved hope and heart-burnings, at the same time makes possible love, joy, reverence and awe. If existentialism has not infrequently failed to sustain ambivalence toward human existence and assumed a melancholic form, a fault it shares with those Freudians who celebrate the "tragic sense of life" at the expense of the epic/heroic, comic/ironic and romantic visions, this is no reason to embrace a manic optimism or refrain from the ongoing struggle to overcome splitting.

XII. Existential Anxiety and Guilt

As Kierkegaard (1844) most clearly understood, a major though by no means the only consequence of freedom is *angst*—a pervasive, objectless anxiety that is not neurotic but *existential*. Often it is evasion of the existential anxiety that is an inevitable and intrinsic consequence of the freedom to which we are condemned that results in the neurotic anxieties, symptoms, inhibitions and character deformations with which, as analysts, we are all too familiar.

In the face of attempts to pathologize such existential *angst*, to rationalize it as neurotic, and to dismiss the existentialism that posits it as ontological as nothing more than intellectualization of personal neurosis, there is no need to deny that a

one-sided focus upon such anxiety that denies our capacity for *jouissance* and for *faith* (i.e., for what Erikson [1950] describes as "basic trust") certainly *is* neurotic. Some existentialists have advanced such neurotically intellectualized justifications of anxiety and guilt—as I have argued in a critique of Becker's (1973) *The Denial of Death* (Carveth 2004).

But the sword cuts both ways. If the rationalization of neurotic anxiety and guilt as existential is a fallacy, so also is the reduction of ontological anxiety and guilt to the categories of neurosis. Ontological anxiety arises not from irrationality, illusion or delusion but from the frightful reality of our freedom to make choices and our responsibility for the, often irreversible, choices we make. While not every choice entails a fateful fork in the road in which we are forced to choose a path we cannot retrace, in every human life there are times in which we are faced precisely by such fateful either/ors. In such moments, Kierkegaard argues, we face our existential freedom and, in choosing, "in fear and trembling," we form a self, precisely by dying to those other potential selves we thus foreclose. Efforts to refuse such choices and to evade the dying that choosing entails results in failure to become a self and in the existential guilt entailed in failing ourselves in this way. In all this we hear an echo of the Christian idea that only through dying may we live; only through a kind of crucifixion can resurrection occur; only through the acceptance of *non-being* (the potential selves we sacrifice) may we come to *be* (the self we become in choosing); only through acceptance of castration on the part of the narcissistic ego that longs to *be* the phallus (the omni-potent and exclusive object of the other's desire), can the living *subject* come into being.

But if we transcend a Hamlet-like paralysis and make the crucifying choices self-development requires, we avoid one type of existential guilt only to find ourselves afflicted with another. For self-development sometimes requires destruction of a pre-existing *status quo,* an equilibrium that involved us in relationships now fundamentally altered, even sometimes abandoned, as the older relational covenant is displaced in favour of a new one. Growth entails change and change sometimes involves separation. If I refuse such separation from a past self-in-relationship, I may well fail myself. If I embrace it, I may well fail others. These two types of existential as opposed to neurotic guilt—the betrayal of the self if one refuses to grow; the betrayal of others and past selves that growth sometimes entails—do not arise from irrational illusions or delusions of wrongdoing. Nor are they reducible to ordinary, non-neurotic guilt arising from avoidable sins of commission or omission. In contrast to both neurotic and ordinary or normal guilt is the unavoidable existential guilt arising from our very pursuit of self-development or its evasion.[36]

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[36] An existentialist perspective alerts us to the fact, not unknown to psychoanalysts, that sometimes analysis itself may serve as a resistance to facing existential anxiety and guilt. Here the analysand prefers interminable analysis to fateful decision and remorse. Etchegoyen (1991) describes Meltzer's view of the impasse as occurring at the threshold of the depressive position "when the patient has to take charge of his moral pain, his guilt and his badness. Following the

Whether our guilt is real, neurotic, or existential, we may seek to avoid its becoming conscious and having to bear it. In my view the alternative to bearing conscious guilt is not, as Freud thought, to suffer from unconscious guilt, but rather from the unconscious need for punishment Freud equated with it. But this equation obscures the ways in which unconscious self-punishment serves as a defence *against* guilt (Carveth 2001, 2006a). On analysis, such guilt evasion may prove to be directed against neurotic guilt (in which the injury to the self or the other exists in phantasy rather than reality), or against real guilt (in which case the injury to the self or the other is real), or against existential guilt (in which case the injury to the self derives from evasion of self-development, or from the betrayal of past selves and others self-development entails).

These distinctions are complicated by the fact that the phantasy of harm underlying neurotic guilt often results from a wish to harm, and this wish is in itself grounds for normal guilt, quite apart from the magical, omnipotent thinking that conflates wishes with deeds. Freud (1923) makes this point as follows:

> In certain forms of obsessional neurosis the sense of guilt is over-noisy but cannot justify itself to the ego. Consequently the patient's ego rebels against the imputation of guilt and seeks the physician's support in repudiating it. It would be folly to acquiesce in this, for to do so would have no effect. Analysis eventually shows that the super-ego is being influenced by processes that have remained unknown to the ego. It is possible to discover the repressed impulses which are really at the bottom of the sense of guilt. Thus in this case the super-ego knew more than the ego about the unconscious id (p. 51).

In this sense, there is often an element of normal guilt underlying neurotic guilt. Nevertheless, it remains important to distinguish this rational element from that based on primary process, omnipotent thinking. For while a death-wish toward a sibling, for example, is in itself grounds for guilt, such legitimate guilt-feeling needs to be separated out from the irrational guilt arising from imagining that death-wishes are equivalent to murderous actions.

But frequently matters are still more complicated. When guilt appears entirely neurotic because the sin or crime is entirely imaginary, in addition to any part played by unconscious destructive wishes, it may also reflect displacement from some other wrongdoing that is real enough. When a patient suffers from (conscious) guilt feeling, or from the evasion of conscious guilt through unconscious self-punishment, and when the alleged wrongdoing that is the object of such guilt or guilt evasion appears entirely imaginary, it is wise for the clinician to wonder (at least to herself) what guilty wish, or what other sin of commission or omission, what thought-crime or real crime, may be the real basis of the guilt or guilt evasion. But, whatever its origins, sometimes such experienced or

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line of least resistance, he prefers to use the analyst indefinitely as a toilet-breast, while he maintains a dissociation of the feeding breast in an external object …" (p. 798).

evaded guilt appears entirely founded in phantasy insofar as the patient's current reality is concerned. Here again we encounter the inevitable doubt that our work requires us to endure.

Returning to the distinction between the normal, neurotic and existential varieties of anxiety and guilt, the fact is that even well-analyzed and minimally neurotic people necessarily suffer from ontological anxiety and guilt. In Sartre's (1946) view, "man is condemned to be free" (p. 295). However much we may seek to evade them, fateful and often irrevocable decisions are ultimately inescapable in which, as Kierkegaard (1849) points out, we can easily lose ourselves—a fact that, neurosis aside, justifies making them "in fear and trembling." And then there is the reality of our impending death. As Heidegger (1927) points out, *das Man*, the "one" of the abstraction "naturally, one dies," seeks precisely through such intellectualizations to sidestep the existential anxiety arising from the fact that, right now, at this very moment, I myself am dying and no one is going to do my dying for me. Even if I am surrounded by loved ones, I will be going "into that good night," experiencing "the dying of the light" (Thomas, 1937), alone.[37] In a sense, as we have seen, the anxieties of freedom and of death come together, because any significant decision affirming one of our possibilities entails the death of a range of others. Again, in avoiding existential guilt by taking steps to realize rather than evade self development, I encounter the guilt occasioned precisely by such growth. To develop means to change and, hence, to leave or destroy (i.e., "die" to) an old equilibrium in favour of a new one and this can sometimes entail what may be felt as, and may even be, a kind of betrayal.

Very often neurotic anxiety results from the evasion and displacement of existential anxiety: I worry obsessively about this or that triviality instead of consciously recognizing my failure to confront and make truly important decisions about my life and face the fact that my time is running out. The same reasoning applies in the case of guilt: I obsess neurotically about this or that trivial sin of commission or omission rather than confront the fundamental existential guilt I feel, or struggle not to feel, over my failure to take my life seriously and to make the most of my potentials and fulfill my responsibilities (to myself, not just to others) while there is yet time. Unfortunately, analytic therapy can sometimes get caught up in an interminable analysis that functions as an evasion of a real existential issue.

On the other hand, sometimes the failure to realize one's self, actualize one's potentials, etc., that leads to ontological guilt is caused by evasion of ordinary guilt: the unconscious superego requires one to unconsciously punish oneself (because the pain of conscious guilt has been found unbearable and evaded) and one does so by failing to develop one's self. In this case one suffers two types of guilt: the original guilt for sins and crimes, plus the ontological guilt for the failure to develop the self brought about by the need to self-sabotage. It is the

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[37] This is not to deny that while facing death objectively alone, many do not feel subjectively alone (Winnicott, 1958).

responsibility of the analyst to help analysands become conscious of such evasions and displacements and to recognize the distinction between normal, neurotic and existential anxiety, between normal, neurotic and existential guilt, and between the existential guilt arising from self-betrayal and that arising from the betrayal of others that authentic self-development sometimes entails.

XIII. Philosophy: For and Against

Having argued that psychoanalysis needs to be informed in various ways by existential philosophy, I must at the same time acknowledge that continental philosophy has gotten itself so entangled with both obscurantism and extreme social constructivism and relativism that at times it appears alien to the truth-values so central in the psychoanalysis of Freud, Klein and Bion. Given the level of intellectual abstraction reflected in many current discussions of psychoanalysis on the part of those who seek to free it from its traditional connections with psychiatry and clinical psychology, one need not be in any way anti-intellectual to feel uneasy with the notion of philosophy as an alternative "home" for psychoanalysis. Since the biological and pharmaceutical turn in psychiatry has rendered psychoanalysis marginal there, and the narrow and positivistic training of psychologists makes psychology unsuitable, I think it is time for psychoanalysis to outgrow its need for a "home" and grow up and create one for itself: a free-standing psychoanalytic profession.

Freud was no lover of philosophy. In the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (Lecture 35) he describes "the various systems of philosophy which have ventured to draw a picture of the universe as it is reflected in the mind of thinkers who were for the most part turned away from the world." In a more general sense, psychoanalysis reveals that supposedly disinterested reason is often little more than a tool in the hands of emotional forces it has no conscious awareness of—like a cork bobbing in the sea thinking it commands the rising and falling of the tides. In other words, psychoanalysis has pretty much confirmed the Nietzschean view. In Section 6 of "On the Prejudices of Philosophers" (*Beyond Good and Evil*) this philosopher/psychologist writes: "Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir."[38]

In Section 5 Nietzsche writes:

> What provokes one to look at all philosophers half suspiciously, half mockingly, is not that one discovers again and again how innocent they are—how often and how easily they make mistakes and go astray; in short, their childishness and childlikeness—but that they are not honest

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[38] Regrettably, he was not able to consistently apply this insight to his own work.

enough in their work, although they all make a lot of virtuous noise when the problem of truthfulness is touched even remotely. They all pose as if they had discovered and reached their real opinions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely unconcerned dialectic (as opposed to the mystics of every rank, who are more honest and doltish—and talk of "inspiration"); while at bottom it is an assumption, a hunch, indeed a kind of "inspiration"—most often a desire of the heart that has been filtered and made abstract—that they defend with reasons they have sought after the fact. They are all advocates who resent that name, and for the most part even wily spokesmen for their prejudices which they baptize "truths"—and very far from having the courage of the conscience that admits this, precisely this, to itself; very far from having the good taste of the courage which also lets this be known, whether to warn an enemy or friend, or, from exhuberance, to mock itself.

Although we must guard against the subordination or reduction of psychoanalysis to other disciplines and cultivate our own properly psychoanalytic garden,[39] the domain of *psychic reality,* we must also recognize that through its very indifference and hostility to philosophy psychoanalysis fell victim to a taken-for-granted philosophy and a "scientist self-misunderstanding." Psychoanalysis needs existential philosophy to properly comprehend itself as an essentially hermeneutic and ethical enterprise, a perspective and a therapy that seeks to grapple with the unique dilemmas of *Dasein*, fearful of death, in flight from freedom, and burdened by existential, in addition to neurotic, anxiety and guilt.

As Klein (1946) taught us, human psychic reality is characterized by two essentially different modes of processing experience, paranoid-schizoid and depressive. The type of thinking experienced in D is characterized by symbolic representation (Segal, 1957), but such thinking tends to deteriorate into the symbolic equations characteristic of PS. Our "live" metaphors tend to go "dead," becoming "frozen" or concretized (Carveth, 1984).

This applies to our own models and metaphors as well as those of our patients. For this reason, we need both to utilize our theories of the mind and at the same time maintain a critical awareness of how they may become concretized, taken-for-granted, ideological or fundamentalist. In our work with patients we need to move dialectically between, for example, a structural focus upon conflicts and defenses on the one hand and, on the other, a deconstructive attempt to bring

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[39] The forms in which the flight from psychoanalysis appear vary over time. For the interpersonal or culturistic school the reduction was to sociology; for the self, intersubjectivist and relational schools it is to social psychology; for the Freudians, at least insofar as the drives were concerned, it was to biology; today the flight from the immaterial to the material takes the form of "neuro-psychoanalysis," currently all the rage. Perhaps one of these days we will acquire a capacity to be who we are, a difficult spiritual task, to be sure, as Kierkegaard (1849) certainly realized: "The biggest danger, that of losing oneself, can pass off in the world as quietly as if it were nothing: every other loss, an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc. is bound to be noticed" (pp. 62-3).

the patient's core phantasies to consciousness where they can be subjected to critique.

Analysis, for example, of a patient's obsessional defenses against aggression can sometimes seem to confirm his personal myth that at his core he is dangerous. However grounded his self-concept may originally have been in hostile feelings toward parents and siblings, it may now amount essentially to a delusion. Patients are sometimes able to induce their fear of themselves in us if our (e.g., Freudian or Kleinian or Augustinian Christian) assumptions about human nature tend both to correspond to their dark view of themselves and to be taken-for-granted (i.e., held ideologically) by us.

I once heard James Grotstein remark that "The trouble with us analysts is that we tend to believe our patients." Sometimes we should. Often we shouldn't. In the sort of work we do, we have to cope with a considerable amount of doubt. Certainly Grotstein's insight needs to be complemented by recognition that "The trouble with us analysts is that we tend to believe ourselves."

What I most appreciate about Klein is that aspect of her thinking in which she reminds us that the psyche is a tissue of phantasies, a series of stories that, when unconscious, generally take the form of symbolic equations or "dead" metaphors that live the patient until he or she becomes able to live by de-literalizing, resurrecting or bringing them back to life—that is, by rendering them conscious and thus getting some critical distance from them. For Klein, projective identification is nothing real: it is merely A's *phantasy* that he has placed some piece of himself in B. On a path that would eventually lead him from ego psychology to Klein, Schafer (1976, chapter 8) wrote "Internalization: process or fantasy?" He was beginning to realize that internalization is nothing real; it is a phantasy that somehow what was "out" has been taken "in".

Sometimes we are "taken in" by our theories in ways that reinforce rather than call into question our patients' pathogenic phantasies. Sometimes our theories unintentionally confirm rather than deconstruct the patient's worst fears: that he has within him a barely controlled, dangerous, antisocial beast; or that he has a fragmentation-prone self; that there remains a deprived or abused child within him; or even that he is the victim of a sadistic superego. On one level there may be an element of truth in all these ideas, but such truth can often be used to justify what amounts to a delusion. If the patient's pathology arises from the fact that he is held captive by his concretized phantasies, we do him little good if we ourselves are imprisoned within our literalized theoretical metaphors. Traditionally, it has been the aim of philosophy (love of wisdom) to promote a liberating degree of self-consciousness with respect to the categories of our thinking. Without this we can hardly hope to help our patients with theirs.

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