Freud Teaches Psychotherapy

CRITICISM

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Metapsychology for Freud is a causal explanatory system, substituting causal psychological explanations for our missing causal organic explanations of mental processes. He insists that his construction of a mental apparatus is justified by his clinical observations, but Basch (1973) makes it clear that philosophers of science have agreed that *no* hypothetical theory can be abstracted directly from observation. He quotes Einstein's statement that there is no logical bridge between phenomena and their theoretical principles. Thus for Basch, Freud's mental apparatus is a bogus or pseudo-entity, one whose potential existence can never be proven or disproven. Basch explains:

The experimental evidence has shown that sensory qualities, images, and words are not the building blocks of thought processes. Thinking is a biochemical and electromagnetic process which periodically and in small part may be translated into the form of subjective awareness. Becoming conscious is an activity of the brain signifying a brain state which occurs when a particular, as yet unknown, relationship obtains within that organ (p. 50).

Thus our division of the phenomena of consciousness into sensory qualities, images, words, etc., is not informative about the process of thinking. Nothing can be learned about the intrinsic nature of thought through the psychoanalytic method. Freud himself (1933A; 22:90) stated: "First, I must admit that I have tried to translate into the language of our normal thinking
what must in fact be a process that is neither conscious nor preconscious, taking place between quotas of energy in some unimaginable substratum."

Yet it is clear that Freud had a great deal to say about the nature of thought. On the premise of psycho-physical parallelism, he attempted to construct a mental apparatus of a psychological nature only, totally extricating himself from the problem of what simultaneously goes on in the brain. Thought, for Freud, consists of two components. The first of these is judgment, in which the system Pcpt.-Cs. compares an emerging word-presentation linked to a thing-presentation with successive memory traces to determine correspondence to reality. Second comes trial action, which for Freud represents an experimental way of acting, using small bits of energy cathexis without involving the motor apparatus, commonly referred to as thinking about the subject. Thus in the obsessive-compulsive neuroses, where the superego blocks in a massive fashion the infusion of energy into the motor apparatus, energy dams up, floods backwards, and hyper-cathects the thought system. The result is obsessive thinking which drains the energy in a substitute way.

Basch (1975, 1975a) points out many difficulties. For example, a basic epistemological premise maintained throughout Freud’s writing is the assumption that perceptions are endowed with sensory quality and are therefore primarily conscious, while instinctual drives are not of a sensory nature
and can become conscious only by becoming united with perceptual residues. Klein (1959) reviews the impressive body of evidence validating the fact that the brain registers and utilizes stimuli from the external world, stimuli which would never exist in subjective awareness. This contradicts Freud’s fundamental postulate equating perception with consciousness in the system Pcpt.-Cs. In later publications Klein (1976) calls for the elimination of many aspects of metapsychology from psychoanalysis, and presents some alternative, more experience-near concepts.

Basch considers Freud’s "Project for a Scientific Psychology" as his most comprehensive metapsychological effort, containing many of his basic ideas on the subject. Basch concludes, "Freud would have been more accurate had he said, in the language of the 'topographic theory', that sensory percepts are 'preconscious' from the very first" (1975, p. 16). The manner in which a percept attains the state of subjective awareness remains unknown.

Since metapsychological concepts cannot be said to have been directly inferred from clinical work, they are subject to revision without affecting the clinical findings and clinical practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Metapsychological constructs are for the purpose of explaining clinical findings, and insofar as these formulations fail to achieve this explanation and are directly contradictory to independent evidence gathered by other valid methods of scientific investigation, Basch argues that they should be replaced.
Although Freud's hypothetical-deductive theory of mentation is a brilliant model of epistemologic elegance, it must be replaced, insists Basch, by a twentieth-century counterpart (1973, 1976).

The basic official presentation of Freud's metapsychology is generally agreed to be found in chapter VII of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Basch (1976a) subjects this chapter to a careful epistemologic analysis, pointing out that it is replete with undefined terms such as "mental process" or "psychical acts." For Freud, even terms such as "mind" or "mental apparatus" were self-evident. In his eagerness to get away from neurophysiology and problems of brain function, he seems to have ignored the fact that philosophers have been arguing about these concepts for thousands of years. In his psycho-physical parallelism, Freud equates the mental apparatus with the brain and in so doing he presents a study of thought formation in general psychology. In this study the concept of brain as a physical entity is replaced by the concept of "mental apparatus," essentially a brain without anatomical properties, carrying out mental functions. This conflicts with Ryle's (1949) criticism of the mind (or mental apparatus) as a ghost concept and resting on a category mistake. Basch would substitute the systems theory, known as the systems effect of ongoing relationships: "A system has an existence that is dependent on a lower order substrate, but generates effects that both transcend that substrate's capacity and could not have been predicted from examining the substrate alone" (1976a, p. 72).
Thus Freud kept trying to create a psychologic substrate for psychological effects, working within the paradigm of Newtonian physics, but there is only one substrate, the brain, which is a matter for neurology to investigate. Psychotherapy investigates the laws of behavior for thoughts, ideas, and memories, but this approach neither necessitates nor implies establishing causal explanations for the behavioral process itself (Toulmin 1953).

In Freud, the Cartesian dualism reasserts itself in the implication that thought, mind, and mental apparatus are somehow something different and beyond the physical. The term "mental apparatus" cannot be defended as a way of categorizing psychologic phenomena in the manner that biologists make classifications, because "mental apparatus" has been given a generative capacity with causal substantive explanatory value. For Freud, the clinical observation that some mentation is conscious, some preconscious, and some unconscious became expanded into reified systems, the generative entities Ucs., Pcs., and Pcpt.-Cs. of the topographical theory.

Freud’s concept of perception was simplistic, assuming the sequence "stimulus-perception-memory." We know however, that perception does not antedate conception, "but that, to the contrary, conception creates a ‘perceptual set’, which determines how stimuli are perceived" (Basch 1976a, p. 78). The whole notion that dream formation is based on a regression to
hallucinatory wish-fulfillment assumes that perceptions, or sensory images, are the simple beginning of mentation in infancy. But Piaget has demonstrated experimentally that evocative recall through imaging does not occur in mentation until about eighteen months of age. Similarly, "The progression from perception to hypothetical-deductive thinking and then to a muscular action described by Freud does not correspond with what is known today of mentation" (Basch 1976a, pp. 82-3).

Freud's application of Fechner's principle of constancy to stimulation and discharge in the mental apparatus was in error, since Fechner's principle does not apply to biological or living systems. There is considerable experimental evidence to support the contention that the brain is a stimulus-seeking rather than a stimulus-avoiding system. Similarly, Freud's use of a concept of "psychic energy" is theoretically untenable because it substitutes an obscure metaphorical force for a mathematical abstraction in the field of physics. The use of energy in physics has a precise mathematical and measurable meaning which it does not have in Freud's application of it to the mental apparatus. Yet it does have practical value in trying to understand the vicissitudes in the minds of our patients. It all depends on what level of abstraction is chosen in thinking about a given patient.

Basch (1975a) gives us an example of how he would substitute systems theory for Freud's causal explanatory concepts. This approach has the
advantage of being *au fait* with current experimental research and twentieth-century theoretical paradigms. For Basch, mind and brain form a hierarchy in the general systems sense, not a unity. The brain supplies the fuel and the molecular substrate in which message-processing takes place, and "mind" is "a word encompassing vicissitudes of encoded patterns whose relationship form [sic] a nonmaterial structure based on, but not equated with, brain" (p. 491). The paradigm used by Freud lacks the understanding that living systems are open systems which temporarily defy the laws of thermodynamics, move toward greater complexity, and resist disintegration. Living systems do not respond just passively but influence their environment by selective interaction and actively participate in shaping their own future, which explains why the traditional behaviorist models that naively equate behavior with what is public and overt and eliminate private experience from consideration are totally unsatisfactory. Instead of seeking a low-level equilibrium on Fechner's principle, the brain is continuously active in its need for optimal stimulation. As sensory-deprivation experiments have shown, the brain, instead of welcoming a peaceful state, engages in a veritable frenzy of activity in its search for stimuli and ends up if necessary by artificially providing them through fantasies, hallucinations, and so forth.

It should be noted that in general systems theory, *reality* is conceived in terms of "patterns of neural activity that reflect what signals have been received, the manner in which they have been connected with other signals
past and present, and the reactions and interactions that have taken place as a result of the ordering activity" (Basch, pp. 495-6). Therefore sense data represent information that the brain derives from stimuli. Such stimuli are replaced by a preconscious percept formation or, more accurately, a "not-conscious process." Our use of the term reality has been mistakenly reified and externalized, leading to the Cartesian dualism. This problem persists in one way or another in all epistemological thinking even today.

It seems to me, however, that even the general systems theory avoids the question of where the stimuli that constitute sense data originate. The theory leaves us with the Kantian dualism between the unknowable things-in-themselves and our knowledge of the phenomenal world. In fact, as Basch writes, "The world of so-called material objects is a part of the symbolic world; it belongs to the world of ideas as much as do our dreams. ...This is not to deny that there is a reality apart from our reflections to which we react to perceptions, but this reality is one we never know directly" (p. 509). So the proposed cybernetic paradigm offers us nothing new on the old metaphysical question of our relationship to the external world. Instead, it proposes a better modern explanation, more in keeping with experimental evidence, of the relationship of mind and brain.

*Debates and Compromises.* Some of the difficulties of replacing Freud's metapsychology with a systems approach to the mind have been presented
by Friedman (1972). He points out that Peterfreund's more formal theory (1971) of information and systems has only a superficial resemblance to the theories of Piaget. Actually, Piaget's theory is only one of many theories and models of mental life, and there is no one theory of Piaget, since he repeatedly changed his conceptions. Friedman argues that the information-systems alternative is a high abstraction of potential causes and potential effects and he regards it as doubtful that "so abstract and formal a theory can make a bridge between physics and behavior" (p. 554).

The argument obviously remains unsettled. One of the values of Peterfreund's book (1971) lies in his criticism of Freud's fundamental metapsychology, regardless of whether or not we wish to accept Peterfreund's alternative. For example, he argues convincingly that the psychoanalytic concept of psychic energy is "quite alien to the rest of the scientific world." Psychic energy appears in the psychoanalytic literature "as though it were an imponderable fluid with identity, a fluid with directional properties, a fluid whose identity can be changed, a fluid that can be dammed up, discharged, transferred, and so on. In general, current psychoanalytic theory appears to be based on a simple hydrodynamic model" (p. 53). Peterfreund pejoratively compares this "fluid" to other famous "imponderable fluids" in the history of science—phlogiston, caloric, aether, electric fluids, magnetic fluids, spirits, and essences.
Peterfreund presents a similar argument against Freud's crucial concept of the ego, claiming it is a concept which is vitalistic and especially anthropomorphic. It is generally agreed that Freud in his later writings presented an increasingly anthropomorphic concept of the ego as a "ghost in the machine" (Ryle 1949) or "homunculus" (Skinner 1971) that recognizes, knows, fears, judges, and becomes the "master" of the id. Peterfreund views Freud's ego theory as "a typically nineteenth-century vitalistic anthropomorphic concept to explain the nature of control, adaptation, regulation, integration, and organization."

Hartmann, Kris, and Loewenstein (1946) attempt to resolve the ego problem within the framework of general psychoanalytic theory. A basic anthropomorphism still remains in their work because, regardless of modifications in the language used, the mind is still viewed as an interplay of highly anthropomorphic entities such as ego and superego. Conflict is explained in terms of conflict among these various entities, and the ego, furthermore, is spoken of as though it is an intelligent mind within the mind. The reason for this way of speaking is that psychoanalysts are attempting to present causal explanatory hypotheses rather than systems descriptions. Theories such as those of Peterfreund or Skinner make such fundamentally human concepts of conation, purpose, or striving seem to be illusory and to basically represent, as Friedman points out, an effort to eliminate intentionality.
Two arguments remain current. The most radical of these, as presented by Peterfreund, would eliminate the metapsychology of Freud along with his concepts of psychic energy, id, ego, and superego. A less radical argument, based on considerable scientific evidence, challenges Freud’s fundamental notion that thing-presentations exist in the unconscious and enter the preconscious by becoming associated with word-presentations, implying also, as Freud proclaims, that the earliest mode of infantile thinking occurs in hallucinatory plastic representations or mnemic images of thing-presentations.

This argument is very important and accounts for some of the extreme notions of the Kleinian school of psychoanalysis, in which highly complex and unbelievably sophisticated mental processes are attributed to the mind of the infant. Piaget’s research established that during the earliest period of development, the so called Sensory-motor period, lasting at least until one-and-a-half years of age, coordination of action occurs in the absence of representation—without evocative memory—and during this time, adaptation is based on the recognition in action of familiar sensory-motor schemata being experienced at the moment. Evocative recall or imaging only develops around eighteen months of age, rather than at birth as assumed by Freud. Wish-fulfilling hallucination cannot occur in infancy, and the only "memory" present in infancy is based on the recognition of certain schemata in the presence of experience; there is no symbolic function or evocative
recall of images. Freud's early notion of retrogression of function assumes a primitive function that is not present.

A middle position is presented by Gedo and Goldberg (1973). These authors point out that in metapsychology we are dealing with various models of the mind, and at the present time it is not possible to devise one model which adequately portrays all of the crucial aspects of psychic life. They present five such models which are useful as conveniences, and they explain, "a different model may be most useful and theoretically valid for the study of each of the various phases of an individual's life history." Although these models have been devised to explain mental conflicts, none of them represent autonomous functions such as perception or cognition—therefore, metapsychology becomes narrowed down and is no longer used to establish a basic general psychology. In a later work, Gedo (1979) also seeks to abandon metapsychology entirely, and offers a theory of his own.

It is the unwarranted extension of Freud's metapsychological explanations or working models into a general psychology that has created much of the difficulty and controversy as well as a collision with twentieth-century science. The use of these models as conveniences for organizing the clinical data of psychoanalysis and psychodynamic therapy, rather than their use as theoretical explanations of how the mind works, permits us to employ these extremely valuable models in the practice of intensive psychotherapy.
without committing ourselves to any notion that we have "explained" the working of the mind. The primary purpose of each theory with its corresponding model is to facilitate the reduction and ordering of clinical data, a function which is extremely important to the psychotherapist in his or her continuous effort to conceptualize what is happening in the mind of the patient.

In the everyday practice of intensive psychotherapy I agree with Gedo and Goldberg that the use of models is much more practical and appropriate than attempting to restructure everything on the basis of behavioristic psychology or general systems theory. Although these models are organized in a hierarchy and appropriately so, their use avoids the issue of what "really" goes on in the minds of infants and reminds us that models are only conveniences or heuristic fictions (Chessick 1961) rather than representative of a general psychology or an attempt to describe the evolution of the mind and the brain.

Freud and Kant Among the innumerable studies of various aspects of Freud's thought, few overall studies exist from the point of view of metaphysics and epistemology. Important studies of Freud's philosophy of science are those by Peterfreund (1971) and Basch in a series of major papers (1973, 1975, 1975a, 1976, 1976a, 1977). These authors severely criticize Freud from two points of view. In the first place they attack Freud's phi-
losophy of science, which is essentially Newtonian, and, as we have seen, his use of such concepts as psychic energy, which they vigorously claim is a meaningless concept produced by Freud in an effort to make psychoanalysis sound like Newtonian physics. This criticism has been addressed by Galatzer-Levy (1976), who does not see it as reason to completely revise the philosophical premises of psychoanalysis.

Piaget (1971) presents what is perhaps an extreme view about the postulation of any epistemologic premises in science or philosophy. He demands a "genetic epistemology" in which scientific study of the development of reality-testing in the child replaces philosophical reflection on how we get our knowledge and eliminates entirely the use of speculation and intuition in philosophy. Although he is polite about it, Piaget leaves little for philosophers to do except to seek what he vaguely calls "wisdom." This is an extreme illustration of Blanshard's (1969) contention: "Between the account of ideas and inference supplied by the psychologists, eager to construe their study as a natural science, and that of the epistemologists and logicians, there has gradually appeared a chasm that is now all but impassable."

A view less extreme than that of Piaget is found in the pronouncements of the scientist Lorenz (1977), who insists that all human knowledge derives from "a process of interaction between man as a physical entity, an active,
perceiving subject, and the realities of an equally physical external world." He proposes to study human understanding "in the same way as any other phylogenetically evolved function which serves the purposes of survival, that is, a function of a natural physical system interacting with a physical external world."

Some post-Kantian commentators have insisted that Kant's philosophy requires the postulation of a real external physical world (e.g., Wilkerson 1976). Many of these authors insist that Kant's major philosophical advances were made in epistemology and the philosophy of mind and they disregard his ethics. I have reviewed the contributions of Kant to epistemology and the philosophy of mind here in a previous publication (1977a), where I placed Freud in the evolutionary development of general philosophical thought from Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. The most important point, as Grene explains (1974), is that Kant has shown irrevocably that the mind as an agent shapes experience. This means the entire empiricist image of experience as purely passive is mistaken and the existence of mind as an agent is presupposed in the very analysis of experience itself.

Freud essentially subscribed to this theory. As mentioned previously, the parallels between Freud and Kant have been explored most meticulously by Rapaport (1951, 1960, 1961, 1967), who unfortunately died before his work could be finished. Rapaport, who obtained his doctorate in
epistemology, emphasized the relatedness of Kant's epistemology to the assumptions of Freud. He mentions that Piaget's studies have reached specific epistemological conclusions similar to those of Kant. Gedo (1973) presents an overall view of Rapaport's contribution.

Rapaport (see chapter 21) explains that philosophical psychology was concerned with how we acquire our knowledge of the world of reality. Freud, on the other hand, was concerned with the evaluation by the psychic apparatus of internal stimuli rather than external stimuli. Rapaport mentions the parallel to Leibniz, who formulated the problem of epistemology as, "How is it possible that reasoning arrives at conclusions which coincide with the outcome of processes occurring in reality?" He suggests that this query is parallel to Freud's question, "How can a mental apparatus regulated by the pleasure principle internally be adapted to external reality?" Although Rapaport concedes that Freud's finding that the "psychological" appears as the determining cause of behavior (and even of some physiological processes) points to idealism, he claims that Freud himself never made any concession to philosophical idealism, an opinion which is certainly questionable.

Basically, Freud would have agreed with Rapaport that a study of cognitive development would establish the validity of the Kantian categories, at least in general. It is fair to say that it has been established in the previous
literature, although not without notable dissent even today, that Freud's basic epistemology is Kantian. One might argue that in the anthropomorphism previously mentioned, Freud fell into the same error made by Kant when the latter discussed the noumenal world and the noumenal self. It is interesting that Kant, and probably Freud, would reply to this criticism by insisting that these concepts are regulative and therefore necessary in our explanations of human freedom and human behavior. Furthermore, it is remarkable that although few philosophers would still agree with Kant on this matter, many psychotherapists, including the present author, still agree with Freud. A complete review of various contemporary theories of the nature of thought in psychology and philosophy is presented by Blanshard (1969). But Freud's name does not appear in the index of this two-volume work, which is generally considered one of the finest overviews of the subject.

*Natural Science or Hermeneutics?* The empirical roots of psychoanalytic practice have been debated at great length by philosophers. Psychoanalysts have been prone to err in attempting to claim too much for their discipline and by insisting on comparing it with advanced empirical sciences such as physics. When psychoanalysis is thought of as analogous to physics it becomes vulnerable to criticisms such as those of Popper (1965), who maintained that science occurs only when there exists a community that agrees on certain empirical criteria by which statements can be falsified. Thus the theories of physics may be thought of as context-free and stand or fall by
the classical methods of science. The theories of psychoanalysis are context-dependent, that is to say, psychoanalytic theory has grown out of the clinical treatment of neurotics and in that context it functions to provide suggestions for the interpretation of particular cases. In addition, it is associated with certain techniques such as the analysis of dreams, free associations, and the transference, for ferreting out repressed material in particular cases. Rather than explaining and generating testable hypotheses about conditions in general, psychoanalytic theory provide leads for the practicing psychotherapist. This very important function is discussed at length by Alston (1967) and explains the offer of the present book.

One is reminded of such continental rationalists as Spinoza, who saw metaphysics as the queen of the sciences and was convinced that by applying scientific procedure and especially mathematics to metaphysical problems, demonstrations about reality could be provided. Kermode (1976) states that the relevant difference between the physical and the hermeneutic sciences is that the former base their explanations on context-free laws while the latter are context-dependent, that is, their explanations and interpretations are part of the process of context. He bases his explanation on the work of Schafer (1968), who sees interpretation as a process of giving meaning to what had lacked meaning. In this sense, interpretation has more affinity for the humanities than for natural science. It is, in short, a hermeneutic activity. "It is simply a different kind of science and belongs to what discriminating
Germans call the *Geisteswissenschaften.*"

Fischer and Greenberg (1977) review the psychoanalytic field and argue that although suggestion and the personality of the therapist are important matters in any form of psychotherapy, Freud did put forward a vast number of fruitful and challenging hypotheses concerning the nature of the human mind, and that many of these are far more testable than has been supposed. If this opinion is correct, psychotherapy tends more toward the natural sciences than that of hermeneutics. The debate remains undecided today.

The whole question of whether clinical medicine, of which psychoanalysis is a part, deserves scientific autonomy has been discussed by Forstrom (1977). He argues that clinical medicine should be regarded as a relatively autonomous science and not just an application of laboratory and basic sciences:

Its contributions to medical knowledge are made within the context of patient care (the term "clinical medicine" is used here to emphasize this matter). It is distinct from other sciences in its domain of inquiry and its approach to this domain, studying relationships between events and processes of many kinds and levels as they occur in the human organism... The practical justification of its approach, and of clinical medicine itself, rests in its accomplishments (p. 18).

The debate about whether psychoanalysis is primarily in the category of
observational science or in the field of hermeneutics is discussed at length by Ricoeur (1970). He clearly believes that psychoanalysis is not a science of observation. Rather, he says, a psychoanalytic interpretation is "more comparable to history than to psychology." He regards the scientific status of psychoanalysis as having been subjected to devastating criticism by epistemologists, logicians, semanticists, and philosophers of language, who have generally "come to the conclusion that psychoanalysis does not satisfy the most elementary requirements of scientific theory." On reviewing the development of Freud's thought, Ricoeur insists that the development of Freudian theory can be understood as the gradual reduction or conversion of the notion of physical apparatus, in the sense of a machine which would run by itself, "to a topography in which space is no longer a place within the world, but a scene of action where roles and masks enter into debate; this space will become a place of ciphering and deciphering" (p. 70). From this it is clear why Ricoeur can write, "There is no doubt that psychoanalysis is hermeneutics," a discipline, according to Ricoeur, in which there is a correlation between energetics and hermeneutics, between connections of forces and relations of meanings. Psychoanalysis, like hermeneutics, he says, concerns itself with coding and decoding rather than with a natural science.

Sawyer (1973) agrees with me that much of Freud's thinking is Kantian and sharply criticizes Ricoeur's work because it is based on the condition that Freud "not damage or destroy a world which Ricoeur thinks of as deeper,
more meaningful. This is the world of mysticism, spirituality, art, and religion. Such a limitation on his encounter with Freud has distorted several of Ricoeur’s interpretations."

On the other hand Jahoda (1977), claims that psychoanalysis is hermeneutics, and that Freud belongs to the Geisteswissenschaften, "for which the term humanistic sciences is the only available translation, even though not quite catching the connotation of the German term." She argues, however, that there is nothing in the psychoanalytic method which disqualifies psychoanalysis from the scientific task. Thoma and Kachele (1975), after an exhaustive review of the controversy over psychoanalysis as science or hermeneutics, conclude by a limited agreement with Jahoda. They distinguish hierarchical steps in psychoanalytic theory: communicated observational data, clinical generalizations, clinical theory, metapsychology, and Freud’s personal philosophy. Objectification and falsification, of course, apply chiefly to clinical theory and this fact confirms the scientific aspect of psychoanalysis.

Many books have been dedicated to discussion of the scientific and philosophical status of psychoanalysis. For example, an excellent book of reprints of various classical articles on the subject is offered by Mujeeb-ur-Rahman (1977). A thorough discussion of the position of psychoanalysis in scientific and philosophical thought would require a complete book of its own and is beyond the scope of the present work. For a similar collection of major
critical essays on the subject of psychoanalysis in philosophy, see Wollheim (1974).

Perhaps the best conclusion to this debate was offered by Albert Einstein (1967), who explains:

It has often been maintained that Galileo became the father of modern science by replacing the speculative, deductive method with the empirical, experimental method. I believe, however, that this interpretation would not stand close scrutiny. There is no empirical method without speculative concepts and systems; and there is no speculative thinking whose concepts do not reveal, on closer investigation, the empirical material from which they stem (p. xvii).

Freud and Langer. Langer (1942, 1967) presents a philosophical viewpoint which is absolutely essential to examining the basic assumptions of Freud. She begins by defining the "sign" as something that stands in a one-to-one relationship or correlation to something else. The sign signifies that something else, and the interpretation of signs is the basis of animal intelligence. There exist both natural signs, for example, a patter on the roof is a sign that it is raining, and artificial signs, for example, crepe on the door signifies that someone has died. Artificial signs are easier to interpret.

A "symbol," on the other hand, is a vehicle for the conception of objects. It is not like signs which are proxy for their objects. Signs announce their objects but symbols lead one to conceive their objects, for example, a personal
name. Language or words can be both because human language is symbol-using whereas animal expression is not.

Discursive symbolism or language assumes the usual notion of thought and ideas in the intellectual sense. The old theory was that language is the only means of our articulating thought, and everything that is not speakable thought is feeling. Langer points out that mental life is greater than discursive reason. She emphasizes an aspect usually called "irrational," "artistic truth," "intuition," and so on. Conceptualizing the flux of sensations via the ear, eye, and so forth, for example, gives us concrete "things" which are non-discursive symbols.

Presentational symbols, constituting nonverbal representations, connotations, inflections, voice emphasis, and so forth, are a prevalent vehicle of meaning and widen our conception of rationality. Langer reminds us to consider the most familiar sort of nondiscursive symbol, a picture. She writes, "Given all at once to the intelligent eye, an incredible wealth and detail of information is conveyed by the portrait, where we do not have to stop to construe verbal meanings. . . . Clearly, a symbolism with so many elements, such myriad relationships, cannot be broken up into basic units" (1942, p. 77). Thus a picture has no vocabulary. A picture is first and foremost a direct presentation of an individual object. Langer labels this "presentational symbolism" to distinguish it from language proper (discursive symbolism).
The basis of symbolization, according to Langer, is the order of perceptual forms—a concept quite close to Freud’s notion of mnemic residues in the unconscious.

Ideas first generated in fantastic form become intellectual property only when discursive language rises to their expression. Langer speaks of the doctrine of Cassirer, who insisted that linguistic thinking cannot be sharply divided into mythical and scientific, but rather there is a fusion of both. This doctrine is similar to Freud’s discussion of the combination of word-presentations with thing-presentations as material rises into the preconscious mind and is given linguistic expression.

Similarly, Langer's (1942) theory of artistic emotion connects to the comprehension of an unspoken idea. "Aesthetic emotion," she writes, springs from "overcoming barriers of word-bound thought and achieving insight into literally 'unspeakable' realities" (p. 211). This theory leads in her later work to a complete elaboration of the role of human feelings and nondiscursive images as the evolutionary basis of scientific and abstract knowledge. For Langer, "Rationality is the essence of mind, and symbolic transformation is elementary process." In this view, feelings have definite forms which become progressively articulated.

Basch (1973) points out that Freud contributed a method of "exploring,
understanding, and transforming presentational symbols." Langer (1942) points out that so long as we admit only discursive symbolism, or language proper, as a bearer of ideas, thought must be regarded as our only intellectual activity. It begins and ends with language, but of course, Langer believes that there are matters which require to be conceived through some symbolistic schema other than discursive language. Langer's mature philosophy outlines a process beginning with signs in animal life, and proceeding to feeling, symbol formation, and higher and higher transformations of symbols to the peak of discursive thought. This process clearly parallels Freud's notion of the movement from unconscious through preconscious to conscious ideation. Freud's error was in the naive nineteenth-century view that unconscious mentation consisted of mnemonic images.

It is the separation of mind and brain that Langer (1967) tries to break down, defining mind as a "phase" of brain activity. The transformation of presentational symbols as they present themselves in the patient's dreams, gestures, and rituals, into discursive symbols is a vital work of the psychoanalytic process and yields an intellectual power equivalent to the development of discursive thought. As Langer (1942) points out:

Every major advance in thinking, every epoch-making new insight, springs from a new type of symbolic transformation. A higher level of thought is primarily a new activity; its course is opened up by a new departure in semantic. ...Ideas first adumbrated in fantastic form become real intellectual property only when discursive language rises to their
expression (pp. 163-4).

In *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* (1967, 1972) Langer points out how all the dynamic activities of neurophysiology, when reaching a certain intensity, enter into the "psychical phase." This is the phase of being felt:

It is this transiency and general lability of the psychical phase that accounts for the importance of preconscious processes in the construction of such elaborate phenomena as ideas, intentions, images and fantasies, and makes it not only reasonable but obvious that they are rooted in the fabric of totally unfelt activities which Freud reified with the substantive term "the Unconscious" (1967, p. 22).

As soon as feeling is regarded as a *phase* of a physiological process instead of a product or a byproduct of it, Langer (and Basch) hopes that the paradox of the physical versus the psychical will disappear. Langer hopes to demonstrate that the entire psychological field is a vast and branching evolutionary development of feeling. The development of the phase of feeling stands as the turning point in the rise of the mind. Furthermore, "simpler forms of feeling which become so specialized that they are no longer called by that word compose the mentality of man, the mind, the material of psychology" (1967, p. 55).

It is clear that the metapsychology of Freud is fraught with a number of philosophical and neurophysiological that would today be seen as mistakes and confusions. One of the unanswered questions is whether, working from
such philosophers as Langer and such recent scientific advances such as general systems theory, the whole field of metapsychology could or should be rewritten and re integrated into modern science, or whether it would be better to maintain metapsychology as a set of heuristic fictions useful in the clinical practice of intensive psychotherapy. These experience-distant conceptions would then be maintained as "as-if" hypotheses (Chessick 1961) having either a clinically heuristic value, or as applicable to a hermeneutics depending on one's view of psychoanalysis as a natural science or as a subdiscipline of hermeneutics. Modell (1978) points out in a recent review of the subject that the entire matter of the nature of psychoanalytic knowledge remains unsolved, but the "enigma of the epistemology of psychoanalysis" poses a challenging and exciting interdisciplinary opportunity for philosophers and psychotherapists.

Perhaps the most extreme rewriting of Freud's metaphysics and metapsychology is to be found in two incredibly obscure books by Lacan (1977, 1978, see Chessick 1992c). By returning to Freud's original language, in a study of the nuances of his German in a manner reminiscent of Heidegger's approach in Being and Time, Lacan ignores the structural theory, ego psychology, and the whole of organized psychoanalysis, and tries to place the unconscious at the center of psychoanalysis, which he claims is a true return to Freud. The unconscious for Lacan, based on his reading of Freud, takes on the characteristics of a reflection of the speech of significant others.
around the person. Even transference becomes "the enactment of the reality of the unconscious," based on desires, signs, and symbols. So for Lacan, the transference is a reflection of the desires not of the patient but of the analyst: "Your desire is the desire of the Other." The whole ego-psychological theory of the transference then becomes "merely a defence of the analyst" (Lacan 1978, p.158), a misconstruction or *meconnaissance*, to use Lacan's term. Since for Lacan the unconscious is structured like a language, and all speech is a demand, an appeal to the Other, and what comes from the Other is "treated not so much as a particular satisfaction of a need, but rather as a response to an appeal, a gift, a token of love" (1978, p. 278), it follows that “*only the integrity of the analyst and of the analytic situation can safeguard from extinction the unique dialogue between analysand and analyst*” (1978 p.132).

Turkle (1977) presents an excellent view of this "French revolution" that somehow combines psychoanalysis and politics.

We have come to the end of a long road, investigating the thought of Freud from his earliest conceptions and struggle for identity to the metaphysical speculations of his old age. During that process we have reviewed the development of his independence from organic neurology, his invention and application of a new technique for the investigation of mental disorders, and the fruitful flowering of this technique into an explosion of information about the mind and its workings. Our goal has been to emphasize those aspects of his thought having immediate clinical application to the
practice of intensive psychotherapy, rather than to formal psychoanalysis. In a previous publication (1992) I have discussed at length the controversial issue of the differences between psychoanalysis and intensive psychotherapy. Both rest firmly on Freud’s discoveries, incorporate his clinical writings and experience-near ideas, and to a variable extent employ his basic experience-distant metapsychology, even though some of his basic metapsychological conceptions remain uncorrected.

As I see it, the essence of psychoanalysis or intensive psychotherapy begins with (1) the data of introspection by the patient; (2) communication of this data, both verbally and nonverbally, from the patient to the therapist; and (3) empathy, defined as vicarious introspection (Kohut 1971, 1977, 1978), combined with scientific rigor applied by the therapist to this data. Such a procedure generates experience-near and experience-distant theorizing by the therapist, theorizing which is then tested in the clinical situation, again using scientific rigor, to fit the observed data into a context of broader meaning and significance such as "constructions," described by Freud in his famous 1937 paper (Freud 1973D; 23:256ff).

Each branch of science has its natural limits, determined approximately by the limits of its basic tools of observation. The limits of psychoanalysis and intensive psychotherapy are set by the limits of the potential capacity of the therapist and the patient for introspection and mentalization (Fonagy et al.
Through introspection in ourselves and through vicarious introspection in others—defined as empathy—we are able to observe their inner world, the world of thoughts, wishes, feelings, and fantasies. We organize this observational data and proceed to develop the experience-near and experience-distant concepts—as is the procedure with any science. Some of these concepts are abstractions or generalizations, for example, we observe thoughts and fantasies introspectively, observe the conditions of their disappearance and emergence, and arrive from this at the concept of repression. This is the standard formation of inductive theories in science.

Kohut (1971) explains that the potential for the acquisition of a special talent for empathic perception is largely acquired early in life, and he offers some remarks on those who choose a career in which the empathic preoccupation with others forms the center of their professional activity. If the essence of psychoanalysis lies in the therapist's protracted empathic immersion into the observed for the purposes of data-gathering and explanation, it follows that the empirical-scientific validation of psychoanalytic propositions will have to come from the continued collection and correction of introspective data by properly trained and qualified observers with developed empathic talents, and from the application of scientific rigor to the classification of such data and the abstraction of hypotheses from them. Laboratory research and empirical observational studies such as in sociology, anthropology, psychology, and clinical medicine can at best provide only
ancillary evidence and hints for future investigation. Research findings that clearly contradict psychodynamic hypotheses require alteration of the latter, but none of these other disciplines are useful directly in either psychoanalytic data-gathering, psychoanalytic hypothesis formation, or the process of psychodynamic psychotherapy. Because it is based on the data of introspection and empathy, listening to the patient’s free associations with evenly hovering attention and focus on one’s parallel thought processes, psychoanalysis, and intensive psychotherapy, its derivative discipline, is unique among the sciences and is clearly delineated from other sciences that inquire into the nature of man. We owe this science to the tenacity, integrity, and creative genius of one man—Sigmund Freud.
All references to Freud in this bibliography follow the commonly accepted cross-reference list given in the Appendix to the Abstracts of the Standard Edition (Rothgeb 1973).


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