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Freud's dreams of reason: the Kantian structure of psychoanalysis

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ABSTRACT

Freud (and later commentators) have failed to explain how the origins of psychoanalytical theory began with a positivist investment without recognizing a dual epistemological commitment: simply, Freud engaged positivism because he believed it generally equated with empiricism, which he valued, and he rejected 'philosophy', and, more specifically, Kantianism, because of the associated transcendental qualities of its epistemology. But this simple dismissal belies a deep investment in Kant's formulation of human reason, in which rationality escapes natural cause and thereby bestows humans with cognitive and moral autonomy. Freud also segregated human rationality: he divided the mind between (1) an unconscious grounded in the biological and thus subject to its own laws, and (2) a faculty of autonomous reason, lodged in consciousness and free of natural forces to become the repository of interpretation and free will. Psychoanalysis thus rests upon a basic Kantian construction, whereby reason, through the aid of analytic techniques, provides a detached scrutiny of the natural world, i.e. the unconscious mental domain. Further, sovereign reason becomes the instrument of self-knowing in the pursuit of human perfection. Herein lies the philosophical foundation of psychoanalytic theory, a beguiling paradox in which natural cause and autonomous reason – determinism and freedom – are conjoined despite their apparent logical exclusion.

Key words autonomy, Sigmund Freud, Immanuel Kant, psychoanalysis, reason

All things are foreknown, and man has free choice. (*Pirkei Avot, The Sayings of the Fathers*: 3, 15)

INTRODUCTION

Sigmund Freud's basic philosophical commitments were divided between his aspirations for a positivistic science of the mind (originating in his neuroscience investigations) and an interpretative strategy that rested upon Immanuel Kant's argument about the transcendental relation of mind and nature. While Freud promoted (and later critics assumed) the first position, the Kantian influence has not been generally acknowledged. Yet Kantianism plays a complex role in the development of Freud's thought: the capacity of autonomous reason to detach itself from the natural domain permits scrutiny of nature and oneself, and from that faculty scientific inquiry and moral choice derive. In a parallel structure, psychoanalytic reason not only has the capacity to discern unconscious processes, but also putatively attains the power to control them. Upon this transcendental understanding of the relationship between mind and nature, psychoanalytic theory established its crucial tenets.

Psychoanalytic theory begins with the challenge of establishing the basis of psychic cause. Freud argued, on the one hand, humans are subject to unconscious activities (framed within a biological conception), and thus subject to a form of natural determinism. On the other hand, the rational faculty of the ego permits, given proper support and articulation, the means of both understanding the deterministic forces of the unconscious as well as freeing the ego from their authority. Psychoanalysis thus depends on an implicit notion of autonomy, whereby the interpretative faculty would free the analysand from the tyranny of the unconscious in order to pursue the potential of human creativity and freedom. So to liberate an ensnared psyche, psychoanalysis relies on an ego capable of separating itself from its own instinctual biology and thus radically distinguishing itself from the deterministic influence of the unconscious. In short, the authority of autonomous reason serves as the foundation of psychoanalysis and while Freud does not specifically address the philosophical infrastructure of that position, he built the entire psychoanalytic edifice upon it.

This conception of reason is lifted directly from Kant, and, like Kant, Freud employed this rationality for both epistemological and moral ends. Epistemologically, the study of the (natural) unconscious domain of the mind

followed a strategy indebted to Kant's conception of reason, namely, a faculty independent of nature and thus able to study phenomena and generalize laws describing natural causes. And beyond this epistemological formulation, reason's autonomy represented the fundamental requirement for Kant's notion of moral responsibility. Accordingly, Freud relied on reason's autonomy to establish criteria of normative behaviors and, more deeply, reason so configured offers the means for establishing psychological freedom from oppressive psychic drives.

I am not suggesting that Freud closely followed Kant to the extent of seeing the categorical imperative, the kingdom of ends, and the negation of self-interest as the content of some true moral system. Further, I am not arguing that Freud followed Kant in terms of the content of moral philosophy, e.g. he did not subscribe to the renunciation of self-interest as the basis of morals at all. And perhaps most saliently, Freud did not derive 'autonomy' from a conception of the self, i.e. humans are rational and reason permits only one moral law, therefore we are free because we dictate the one moral law to ourselves. However, while Freud did not follow key features of Kant's moral philosophy, he did adopt from Kant the much broader framework in which the autonomy of reason is the basis for the personal struggle to establish a life deemed 'free'.

Reason's instrumental role promotes the self-interests of the individual and the social collective in which she or he lives. The demands of controlling unconscious desires and at the same time mediating the fulfillment of those desires within the cultural context requires that reason establish, and enact, an individualized system of value in which desires are weighed and judged on a wider spectrum than immediate pleasure. Reason thus has the dual roles of not only enforcing ethical conduct, but also establishing moral coordinates of behavior. Indeed, for Freud, reason is humankind's only hope.

> The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest till it has gained a hearing. Finally, after a countless succession of rebuffs, it succeeds. This is one of the few points on which one may be optimistic about the future of mankind, but it is in itself a point of no small importance. And from it one can derive yet other hopes. (Freud, 1927: 53)

Notwithstanding reason's standing, its authority remains disputed, even problematic in the Freudian universe, because rationality is always in precarious balance with its counterpoise – the pervasive power of the a-rational. Analysis raises self-consciousness to a new level of complexity. Self-consciousness itself becomes acutely self-conscious in the encounter with the unconscious, which appears as radically enigmatic, even a stranger, to the (rational) ego. More, that primordial element behaves dangerously, not only as a result of its unpredictability, but also because its control is always in question, and

so the unresolved challenge to Freudianism circles around the ability of reason to accomplish its assigned tasks. Indeed, given Freud's respect for the power of the unconscious, he might well have aligned himself with Hume's prescription of ethics as rationalized emotion and thereby discounted the ability of rational thought to distinguish subjective self-interest from more complex choices. When discussing the super-ego, a Humean dynamic is operative, but in the context discussed here – moral inquiry as a deliberate and enlightened pursuit – Freud sided with Kant. Accordingly, the ego's faculty of reason requires (and assumes) degrees of freedom in making its observations and assessments, albeit limited by various psychic obstacles (resistances and defense mechanisms). Through the help of the analyst these may be overcome, so despite an abiding skepticism, Freud nevertheless assumed the integrity and autonomy of ego's reason to conduct its own investigation.

So, as important as the positivist tenets were to Freud's aspirations to create a new science of the mind, an equally compelling commitment was made to Kant. Here, we will explore the fundamental dilemma of reconciling the determinism of the natural world (in this case, the influences of the unconscious) and the autonomy of reason, which bestows moral responsibility and free choice, and how the tension in psychoanalytic thinking arises from these competing visions of human nature, namely, a biologically conceived organism subject to primitive drives and a rational faculty independent of those deterministic forces. Despite the endless battle of these opposing psychic demands, Freud sides with Kant, whereby reason affords the analysand the ability to scrutinize psychic life and from some achieved insight, attain liberation from unconscious (*sic*. biological) forces. To explicate this interpretation, we begin with summarizing Freud's understanding of Kant's notion of reason.

FREUD'S UNDERSTANDING OF KANT

References to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are sprinkled throughout Freud's writings. Indeed, Freud knew Kant well enough to dispute certain basic Kantian precepts (Freud, 1920: 28) and Kantian arguments (Freud, 1990: 110–11), or draw on detailed Kantian insights (Freud, 1905: 12). (The English *Standard Edition* lists 19 instances where Freud invoked Kant [Guttman, 1984].) In an unusual nod to Kant, Freud wrote in 1915:

> In psycho-analysis there is no choice for us to assert that mental processes are themselves unconscious, and to liken the perception of them by means of consciousness to the perception of the external world by means of the sense organs. We can even hope to gain fresh knowledge from the comparison. The psycho-analytic assumption of unconscious mental activity appears to us . . . as an extension of the corrections undertaken by Kant of our views on external perception. Just as Kant

> warned us not to overlook the fact that our perceptions are subjectively conditioned and must not be regarded as identical with what is perceived though unknowable, so psycho-analysis warns us not to equate perceptions by means of consciousness with the unconscious mental processes which are their object. (Freud, 1915: 171)

Similar comments appeared in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900: 615–17), but reference to Kant is not made there, rather only to a general analogy between the sense organs and conscious thought processes.

Freud saw some connection between Kant's noumenal self and the psychoanalytic unconscious. Neither can be directly perceived, and instead each must be interpreted by emerging phenomena. Clues provided by dreams, slips of the tongue, jokes, neurotic behaviors, etc., then serve psychoanalysis with the desiderata of the unconscious, and while the unconscious cannot be directly observed, like a noumenon we may infer its existence as refracted through psychoanalytic techniques analogous to Kantian categories of understanding. And like Kant's apperception of the ego, the unconscious seems to have a 'unity' – an integrity of its own, and drives, which follow their own *telos* and exhibit their own distinctive character.[1] One might argue that this primitive 'self' becomes the object of inquiry as some elusive entity perhaps not so different from the noumenon of the natural world.[2]

In private conversations, Freud mused on whether his own categories of understanding the mind (the analysis of repressions in particular) related to Kant's transcendental philosophy. In several informal discussions with Ludwig Binswanger these issues were aired (also discussed in this context by Bergo [2004]). In 1910, Binswanger reports that Freud entertained that his version of the unconscious was close to Kant's noumenon:

> He thought just as Kant postulated the thing in itself behind the phenomenal world, so he himself postulated the unconscious behind the conscious[ness] that is accessible to our experience, but that can never be directly experienced. (Binswanger, 1957: 8)

Freud's gesture to transcendentalism and Kant's 'thing in itself' arose again in 1913 during a discussion between Freud, Binswanger and Paul Häberlin:

> Freud asked [Häberlin] whether Kant's thing in itself was not identical with the unconscious. [Häberlin] denied this, laughing, and suggested that the two notions were on entirely different levels. (Binswanger, 1957: 9)

No further comment is made, other than Häberlin's (as well as Binswanger's) dismissal of the idea, but as already cited, Freud in 1915 seemed still attached to some resonance between his own thinking about the unconscious and the Kantian noumenal/phenomenal construction. And he held on to this echo until the very end.

In the posthumously published 'Outline of Psycho-analysis' (1940), Freud reiterated his earlier conviction and presents the 'psychical apparatus' as a noumenon:

> In our science as in the others the problem is the same: behind the attributes (qualities) of the object under examination [the unconscious] which are presented directly to our perception, we have to discover something else which is more independent of the particular receptive capacity of our sense organs and which approximates more closely to what may be supposed to be the real state of affairs. *We have no hope of being able to reach the latter itself*, since it is evident that everything new that we have inferred must nevertheless be translated back into the language of our perceptions, from which it is simply impossible for us to free ourselves. But herein lies the very nature and limitation of our science. . . . *Reality will always remain 'unknowable.'* (Freud, 1940: 196; emphasis added)

The Kantian position could not be more explicitly formulated. Freud goes on to draw parallels between psychoanalysis and physics, since he regarded each discipline as following the same basic scientific strategy: perceptive abilities are constantly improved; sense perceptions permit connections and dependent relations to be made, which are 'somehow reliably or reproduced or reflected in our internal' thought; 'understanding' follows that in turn permits prediction and control (Freud, 1940). He concludes his primer on scientific method with another parallel to physics:

> We have discovered technical methods of filling up the gaps in the phenomena of our consciousness, and we make use of those methods just as a physicist makes use of experiment. In this manner we infer a number of processes which are themselves 'unknowable' and interpolate them in those that are conscious to us. (Freud, 1940: 196–7)

Here we see Freud adopting the Kantian modification of empiricism, namely, to draw the causative linkage between phenomena, the observer must infer by *rational* means that, or how, event A causes event B. So by analogy, whereas the physicist employs experiment in which boundary conditions are limited and defined to establish causal connections, the psychoanalyst must 'interpolate' the relations between two psychic events. Despite the obvious differences in the degrees of freedom characterizing each system, the 'scientific' method is the same: just as a physicist must posit the character and placement of an enigmatic particle based on observable phenomena, so must the psychoanalyst infer the character and expression of the psychical apparatus, whose public character appears as the expression of an unobservable unconscious.[3]

Putting aside the irreconcilable differences between an experimental system and the psychoanalytic couch, the impossibility of controlling the boundary

conditions of an analysis, and the vastly different interpretative criteria, the striking character of Freud's epistemology is the persistence of applying his notion of a Kantian noumenon to the problems of deciphering unconsciousness. Of course he made that linkage with the intent of legitimating psychoanalytic methods as a form of science. After all, given the example of the microscope, are not invisible organisms brought into view with the appropriate machine that enhances human perception? And does not the uncertainty of quantum mechanical 'particles' not require intermediate inferential cognitive steps analogous to those employed by the psychoanalyst? Each must trace, through a series of deductions, concealed entities and processes. The 'invisibility' metaphor holds only in part, for the issue does not revolve around the elusive nature of an unseen object, but rather the character of that object and the manner in which the conjectures about it are made.

Strictly, the Kantian noumenon is empty of content and resides outside nature, postulated but ever mysterious 'in itself'. The Freudian unconscious hardly fulfills that criterion and here we come to an interesting confusion: in his clinical investigations, Freud remained unhesitant in pursuing the unconscious as a *natural* biological entity (Sulloway, 1979). He followed the scientific logic drawn from physics (e.g. electric effects) and from biology (e.g. variation within species), in which phenomena are witnessed and then accounted for by measuring forces – electromagnetism and natural selection, respectively. As in these natural sciences, Freud attempted to apply the same basic strategy to uncovering the underlying psychic forces by tracing back observations to their underlying causes.[4] Indeed, establishing *cause* became the arch-principle of Freud's project, and he repeatedly proclaimed the success of those investigations. Putting aside the question as to whether he actually established cause, clearly the Kantian debt is not found in parallels between the unconscious and the noumenon. So the question is raised, why did Freud even entertain such a notion?

A clue is offered in another private conversation, when Freud made a fascinating comment precisely on this point: In 1910, Binswanger reported:

> Freud had a genuinely philosophical vein, *even though he was not aware of it*. . . . On one occasion, [Freud stated] . . . that 'the unconscious is metaphysic, we simply posit it as real'. (Binswanger, 1957: 8; original emphasis)

Binswanger challenged Freud, who quickly back-pedalled and opined that 'the proper term [for the unconscious] was not "metaphysic" . . . but metaconscious' (ibid.). This correction might be interpreted as a parapraxis, which reveals Freud's deepest fears.

We must remind ourselves that Freud adamantly rejected the equation of mind with consciousness, which served as the primary scaffolding of those philosophies inspired by Kant. In 'The Ego and the Id' (1923a), he drew a

bead on the crucial philosophical issue of defining mind and went to some length to describe, as he had many times previously, the repressed character of the unconscious, the transitory nature of consciousness, the latency of pre-consciousness, and, most beguiling, the utterly different logic employed by the unconscious relative to conscious thought. And most importantly, the unconscious *is* the mind and psychoanalysis is the means of revealing its true character.[5]

Because consciousness establishes conditions that preclude direct 'observation' of the unconscious and, correspondingly, because the unconscious has no 'language' (as normally construed) and functions with a 'logic' alien to conscious thought, a new method is required for its discernment. The primary point, the foundation of the entire enterprise, rests on accepting that *the unconscious cannot be directly known*, inasmuch as it follows its own 'laws' of cause and temporality. Indeed, to *know* the unconscious in order to ultimately control it (and concomitantly to free humankind from repression), another faculty, 'reason', must be invoked. And reason's capacity to fulfill that role rests on an astonishing claim, one that truly indebts Freud to Kant. At the end of his 1915 acknowledgement to Kant (quoted above), Freud writes:

> Like the physical, the psychical is not necessarily in reality what it appears to us to be. We shall be glad to learn, however, that *the correction of internal perception will turn out not to offer such great difficulties as the correction of external perception* – that internal objects are less unknowable than the external world. (Freud, 1915: 171; emphasis added)

According to Freud, the tyranny of the despotic unconscious would be broken by reason's autonomy, by its ability to free itself from disguised and hidden psychic forces to discern deterministic causes of overt behaviors and thoughts that hitherto were inaccessible. Reason, in service to the ego, would fulfill the ego's demands and thus establish the reasoning self as a responsible *moral* agent, one who might discern psychic reality and then act with new choices and means of control. On this view, to be human in the highest sense, following a modernist (Kantian) ideal, was to recognize the authority of reason in its struggle against the unconscious. Split by a cautious confidence and a despondent resignation, Freud tirelessly promoted psychoanalysis as reason's best tool. From where did such optimism originate? Simply, from Kant's invention of autonomy (Schneewind, 1998).

DIVIDED REASON

Kant's 'criticism of reason' concerns the conditions and limits of human cognition (Velkley, 1989). For Kant, the place of reason, the role of emotions,

the intuitions of the spiritual domain, and the ability to understand human psychology each requires a model of the mind that would account for their respective claims to different forms of knowledge. For instance, on what basis could knowledge of the natural world or the moral universe be conceived as legitimate and unified? What schema might tie together the natural world of cause and effect with the moral universe of an agent's exercise of free will? What is the relationship between scientific thinking as objective knowledge and, opposed to it, subjective ways of knowing?

Kant attempted to mend these various divisions by first separating reason into two modalities, one that dealt with the natural world and the other to navigate the moral. Although dealing with different domains, reason still functioned as a whole, and Kant posited a faculty of judgment that brought unity to thought. By drawing that synthesis, he provided a rationale – and outlined the ability – for individuals to connect the theoretical (i.e. natural) and practical (i.e. moral) aspects of human reason (Kant, 1987[1790]). His formulation provided a model by which the natural sciences, anthropology, psychology, ethics, aesthetic judgment and religious belief might coexist, secure in their own domains.

Kant called these rational modalities, respectively, 'pure' (or theoretical) and 'practical' reason. Pure reason applied to the understanding, the Kantian faculty that spontaneously systematizes and organizes those cognitive functions by which humans address and then glean knowledge of the natural world. Such knowledge, as already discussed, is derived from appearances – the cognitive product or the phenomenon that humans perceive. The noumenon, the thing-in-itself, cannot be known, indeed, it cannot be observed, only 'thought'. Given the success of human cognition to navigate the world and discern its workings, Kant remained confident that the categories of understanding, those cognitive faculties by which reason ordered the plenum of experience, were, in some fundamental way, synchronized to natural happenings. (Those sympathetic to this point of view would later argue that these abilities were developed through Darwinian evolutionary mechanisms.) In short, Kant's schema of pure reason made the natural world intelligible, and thus susceptible to scientific investigation.

A second kind of thought, 'practical' reason, dealt with the moral realm by operating analogously to the workings of pure reason: each was autonomous and thus capable of following its own dictates; each operated with its own particular modes of knowing; and each corresponded to some order – natural or moral. Thus reason's products included discovery of laws, i.e. natural laws through pure reason, as well as the prescriptions of a categorical imperative discerned by practical reason. The consequence of this division was, from Kant's perspective, a way to save belief. But what he in fact did (for those so inclined) was to legitimatize one way of knowing as 'real' in a particular sense, and the other as 'less real' in that same sense. Accordingly,

science could claim a special legitimacy, and it was this ethos of authenticity of the real that appealed so powerfully to Freud and the intellectual society he inhabited (Decker, 1977; Schnädelbach, 1984).[6]

A deeper complexity underlies Kantian reason: if the noumenal reality can only be refracted by reason's own laws, if the real is a synthesis of mind and nature, if the very self which knows the world is itself a noumenon, what could reason's own foundations be? Kant's answer: 'Reason operates according to laws that it gives to itself' (Neiman, 1994: 91). In other words, reason is independent of the natural world of appearances and causation. And paradoxically, self-consciousness itself (like the unconscious) is phenomenally inaccessible, at least in any direct sense.

Further parallels appear: Kant meticulously derived reason's 'laws', which include the unrequited search for the unconditioned (the ground or foundation of the world) (Neiman, 1994: 86). Simply, reason becomes 'the capacity to act according to purposes' (ibid.: 88), which is comprised by the search for its own grounding. Further, as Kant argued in the first *Critique*, by seeking 'its own reflection in nature', (ibid.) reason structures reality according to a human perspective, not as the world *really* is in any final sense, but only in reason's own terms, or, in other words, human minds are 'the lawgivers' to nature.

> Reason, in order to be taught by nature, must approach nature with its principles in one hand, according to which alone the agreement among appearances can count as laws, and, in the other hand, the experiments thought out in accordance with these principles – yet in order to be instructed by nature not like a pupil, who has recited to him whatever the teacher wants to say, but like an appointed judge who compels witnesses to answer questions he puts to them. (Kant, 1998: 109)

Thus the 'concepts of the understanding give order to experience; the principles of reason are the standard by which it is judged' (Neiman, 1994: 6).

Indeed, reason has 'complete spontaneity [to] make its own order according to ideas, to which it fits the empirical conditions and according to which it even declares actions to be necessary that yet have not occurred and perhaps will not occur . . .' (Kant, 1998: 541). Kant goes on to describe how reason possesses its own ordering principles (ibid.: 542), and thereby distinguishes itself from the world that it examines. Further, unlike certain human behaviors that have an obvious empirical content and thus deterministic causality, reason possesses no temporality (or what we perceive as natural causality) 'and thus the dynamical law of nature, which determines the temporal sequence according to rules, cannot be applied to it' (ibid.: 543). Thus to fulfill its function, reason must be free of experience and, on this view, the ability to survey the world and make judgments depends on reason's independence of that world. Reason, accordingly, resides outside the natural domain, free and

autonomous, to order nature through scientific insight and regulate human behavior through rational moral discourse. This allows for creative judgment in science and freedom of choice in the social (ethical) domain. Indeed, the autonomy of both theoretical and practical reason serves as the bedrock of Kant's entire philosophy, enabling the synthesis and apprehension of the natural world and the discernment of the moral universe.

FREUD'S KANTIAN CONSTRUCTION

In pursuing science, Freud was committed to defining the deterministic causation of natural phenomena and when studying unconsciousness, he applied this same principle to follow instinctual drives (Sulloway, 1979). Irrespective of the over-determination (multiple causes) of psychic phenomena and the inaccessibility of the unconscious, which 'has no organization, produces no collective will . . . [nor] logical laws of thought' (Freud, 1933: 73) (above all, the law of contradiction), psychoanalysis – *as a science* – would discover the dark workings of the unconscious mind by establishing through retrospective reconstruction a causal chain of mental events. Thus psychoanalysis, following the basic premise that effects have causes, evolved to discern the 'strict determination of mental events' (Freud, 1923b: 238) and expose 'the illusion of Free Will' (Freud, 1919: 236).

For Freud, humans exist as a composite of a natural, biological matrix (termed unconsciousness) and another part, the conscious ego. (The biological formulation is discussed below.) Schematically in the last formulation, the rational ego (with its own laws, logic and language) and the a-rational id function with differing causalities through their respective operations and goals. As the id strives for its own aggrandizement, the ego, with its countervailing rationality, attempts to restrict it. Psychoanalysis would empower this rational faculty by penetrating the unconscious to discern its functions through rational inquiry. Simplistically, this schema structures Freud's notion of psycho-dynamics, and, while no neat partition exists in Freud's mature presentation, where the ego is divided between conscious and unconscious components, for this discussion, suffice it to leave rationality (for better and for worse) insulated within the conscious faculty of the ego. Indeed, this repository is the crucial arena in which psychoanalysis ultimately achieves its own goals: reason 'understands' and then putatively better restrains the unconscious drives that inhibit or prevent goals and behaviors established by the rational faculty.

Despite confident assertions, Freud's program operates in ambiguity: given that the self-conscious, rational ego functions autonomously, what grounds that function and by what authority does Reason achieve its adjudicating role? *What*, indeed, is this ego, this agent, this me, she or he? And more to

the point, the philosophical character of Reason and its active personification were also left nebulous, and possibly incoherent, throughout its various characterizations (dating from the early 1890s to the topographical definition described in 'The Ego and the Id' in 1923a). Simply, the ego, the *Ich*, swings between the Cartesian indubitable self and the Kantian noumenon, fundamentally unknowable given its complex conscious/unconscious structure (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973: 130–43). So, *what* is this rational faculty enlisted into the deliberations of consciousness? These questions are, of course, central to a critical assessment of psychoanalysis, but Freud himself offered little guidance, largely because this issue eclipsed his interests. In short, he took *reason* as a given, and just as a carpenter uses a hammer, so Freud applied reason to reveal the psyche.

In Freud's mature writings, the ego became a complex composite of conscious and unconscious domains, with the latter in dynamic intercourse with the id and super-ego. Indeed, the ego as part of the mental triad increasingly attracted his attention as he pondered the mystery of a rational faculty surveying and judging other domains of the mind. He explained this ability in almost an off-hand gesture in his 1933 lecture, 'The Dissection of the Psychical Personality':

> We wish to make the ego the matter of our enquiry, our very own ego. But is that possible? After all, the ego is in its very essence a subject; how can it be made into an object? Well, there is no doubt that it can be. 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. (1933: 58)

Freud might have then further developed this Kantian construction, but he did not, and instead he observes how consciousness becomes self-consciousness:

> In this, one part of the ego is splitting itself over against the rest. So the ego can be split; it splits itself during a number of its functions – temporarily at least. Its parts can come together again afterwards. That is not exactly a novelty, though it may be putting an unusual emphasis on what is generally known. (Freud, 1933: 58)

Agreed, and in this wave of the hand, Freud skirts the philosophical status of consciousness and the rational faculties upon which his entire enterprise rests. Of course he was in good company.

Some have argued that Kant held an incoherent theory of self-consciousness as understood on the subject–object model (the so-called reflection model, whereby reflection is analyzed by a two-termed relation between the subject of consciousness and the object of consciousness), because this theory presupposes the self-conscious awareness it attempts to explain; others dispute that Kant even held that position, and instead maintain that a subject/object

structure does appropriately apply to an understanding of self-knowledge, which of course is a different problem altogether (Tugendhat, 1986: 55–60; 133–43; Keller, 1998: 103–5; 252, notes 19, 20). Be that as it may, Freud offered nothing to this discussion. Self-consciousness, and more particularly the faculties of reason, is simply given, and here, at the interface of his clinical descriptions and philosophy, we see the limits of Freud's epistemology. Indeed, based on the issues raised here, one must conclude that Freud's views on self-consciousness remain stuck in an unsophisticated folk psychology. Yet, he does fulfill a remarkable philosophical role as a moral philosopher. In building the case for that claim, we return to further consider his debts to Kant.

WHITHER FREUD AND KANT?

Since Freud himself remained conspicuously silent about any philosophical allegiance beyond 'science', he did not present his notion of the unconscious in explicit Kantian terms,[7] nor did he explore the relationship of language and thought, which was to dominate post-Wittgenstein philosophy (Cavell, 1993; Gomez, 2005: 9–15; 103–6) and Lacanian psychoanalysis (Boothby, 2001).[8] More, he actively rejected attempts permitting psychoanalysis to claim legitimacy independent of that paragon of knowledge of his era, science. In short, as Freud regarded philosophy, he could not place psychoanalysis as a *philosophical* problem. Instead, he was engaged with clinical conditions that required empirical methods, which he identified as 'science' (as opposed to 'philosophy').[9] His psychical hypotheses aped physical principles (e.g. the preliminary 'Project for a Scientific Psychology', which formulated the mind as a balance of opposing natural forces [Freud, 1895]) and, while understanding that science had its own philosophical structure, he uncritically and exclusively accepted the positivist mode, leaving other constructions aside.

However, in other respects Freud's implicit acceptance of Kant's formulation offers a rich philosophical mulch in which to plant psychoanalysis. The theme we will now explore concerns how Freud's philosophy arises from the deepest reaches of his humanistic interests and commitments. In a complex duet, I maintain that (1) even without a sophisticated understanding, Freud appreciated the basic Kantian precepts, and (2) Freud shared with Kant a vision of human beings as committed to a moral venture. I base this interpretation on reading Freud as a modernist, who conceived psychoanalysis fulfilling the quest of moral responsibility. So on this general Kantian view, psychoanalysis becomes an ethical inquiry, similarly based on reason's emancipation and the potential of freeing humans from what Kant called their 'immaturity' (1996a), and which Freud described in clinical terms of dysfunctional defenses, neuroses and repressions. Let us begin with an outline of Kant's notion of human freedom and morality.

Kant may fairly be credited with the invention of individual autonomy (Schneewind, 1992: 309–41; 1998). His clearest exposition is found in the famous answer to the question 'What is Enlightenment?' to which he answered, '*Enlightenment is mankind's exit from its self-incurred immaturity*' or as he further extolled, 'Have the courage to use your *own* understanding . . .' (Kant, 1996a: 58–64). He goes on to celebrate the virtues of an independent mind guided by rationality, moral forthrightness and, above all, a vision of personal freedom that captures these moral and epistemological virtues. Note, the entire enterprise rests on the notion of reason as fully autonomous (O'Neill, 1992). Freud similarly understood humans as capable of achieving freedom by breaking the shackles of repressive defenses and disarming unrecognized unconscious drives. Putting aside the degrees of freedom potentially achieved through psychoanalysis, that possibility was predicated on a view of an autonomous rationality, which in turn makes humans *metaphysically* free and *morally* rational. Psychoanalysis, based on this capacity, offered two arch lessons. The first teaching concerned the *opportunity* to discern hidden psychic forces and in that understanding stymie their pernicious effects on human conduct. Reason, in the form of enlightened rationality, thus serves as the vehicle of personal liberation, specifically by uncoupling the determinism of early experiences and allowing reasoned choice. Such reason could function only if it achieved some degree of independence from a tyrannical 'a-reason', and thus Freud integrated Kant's basic formulation of reason with a new method of inquiry.

In an instrumental sense, reason becomes the tool by which humans become moral in each context – Kantian and Freudian. Indeed, the very possibility of self-discovery and moral choice must be predicated on notions of freedom and thereby the two endeavors powerfully resonate despite their differing domains of discourse. So despite the deterministic character of the Freudian universe, he, like Spinoza before him, understood that personal insight and understanding constituted the basic freedom humans possess, and, more, their defining characteristic. The second lesson entailed a moral mandate: insight provided by psychoanalysis allows *exercise* of choice, which ultimately frees humans to pursue a mental life cast in some normative framework. Putting aside the problematic definition of 'normal', *normative* suggests perfectionism, which directs the ethical enterprise. In other words, psychoanalysis becomes an exercise of moral behavior formulated in terms of some clinical insight. Based on 'an ethic of honesty', knowing authentically (i.e. psychically informed) becomes a 'primary ethical act' (Rieff, 1959: 322). Self-consciousness then becomes 'a task' of reflective discovery, of self-awareness (Ricoeur, 1970: 45). The task has a teleological structure – the moral command to 'know thyself'.

The psychoanalytic venture eventuates in a new life-story, one re-examined historically and redirected into a purposeful future. Freud wrote of this

movement in his *Introductory Lectures*: 'The neurotic who is cured has really become another man, though at bottom, of course, he has remained the same; that is to say, he has become what he might have become at best under the most favorable conditions' (1916: 435). However, as Freud showed so dramatically, 'knowing' through self-consciousness may be totally inadequate to the challenge, and in this analytic scenario, self-consciousness itself becomes a problem:

> . . . for our capacity to turn our attention on to our mental activities is also a capacity to distance ourselves from them, and to call them into question. . . . The reflective mind cannot settle for perception and desire, not just as such. It needs a *reason*. (Korsgaard, 1996: 13)

And reason serves the moral, inasmuch as we are constantly judging actions, relationships and choices. Accordingly, this process of self-discovery leads from alienation (because 'I do not at first possess what I am' [Ricoeur, 1970: 45]) to the freedom of self-identity, self-knowledge and self-understanding. In grasping 'the Ego in its effort to exist, in its desire to be' (ibid.: 46), this ethic moves the fundamental moral question from 'What ought I *do*?' to 'What should I *be*?' To that end, Freud's method of discovery, which began as a therapy for severely ill patients, has over the course of the past century evolved into a broadly applicable existential psychology. In this latter mode, we more clearly see how psychoanalysis enacts an ethics of self-appraisal with the coupled goal of self-improvement. The entire enterprise rests on reason's autonomy and the capacity to exercise freedom of choice and thereby assume ethical responsibility. Psychoanalysis thus becomes a moral philosophy of investigation underwriting an ethics of personal identity, in which reasoned analysis would free the ego, not only from the instinctual drives of the id, but also from the neuroses imposed by a despotic super-ego.[10]

Now we must confront the most ironic of Freud's debts to Kant: while free will might be an illusion, its assumption serves as the very basis of the therapeutic enterprise. After all, introspection and reasoned examination depend on some disjunction between an 'unreasoned' id and a rational ego. Analysis, as an exercise of reason over nature, not only serves Freud's *scientific* ambitions, but also draws upon the Kantian construction of reason as constitutive of *moral* inquiry. Free will, the ability to make decisions independent of deterministic cause, is the bedrock of moral responsibility and choice. Indeed, as a humanist, Freud devised psychoanalysis as a means for liberating the ill neurotic by exposing the workings of the id, as in the famous adage, 'Where id was, there ego shall be' (1933: 80). He meant, quite specifically, that by 'making conscious what is unconscious, lifting the repressions, filling gaps in the memory' (ibid.: 435), the ego would be strengthened 'to achieve a progressive conquest of the id' (1923a: 56) and thereby attain relief of unconscious forces.

Freud, in building a case for the moral will as arising from unconscious sources, allows reason various degrees of freedom in determining the ethical framework in which choices must be made. Simply, I am referring to the psychoanalytic process itself, whereby insight and perspective emerge from a new appraisal of personal identity (and moral agency more generally). Reason thus functions as an arbiter of ethical choice, and here we see Freud implicitly accepting the Kantian prescription of moral agency as residing in some autonomous authority of self-responsibility based on reason's autonomy: '[T]he power to judge autonomously – that is freely, (according to principles of thought in general) – is called reason' (Kant, 1996b: 255). Freud's debt to Kant thus centers on the dialectical interplay of the natural and moral domains, and, in the end, the epistemology leads to an ethical venture.

THE MORAL PROJECT

Three cardinal characteristics form Kant's depiction of reason: (1) the antecedent standards of reason are unknown and unknowable; (2) reason is like a currency – ideas must be exchanged, justifications must be accepted, options and choices must be understood, and actions must be explained; and (3) most importantly for Freud's own project,

> . . . reason must subject itself to critique in all its undertakings, and cannot restrict the freedom of critique through any prohibition without damaging itself and drawing upon itself a disadvantageous suspicion. Now there may be nothing so important because of its utility, nothing so holy, that it may be exempted from the searching review and inspection, which knows no respect for persons. The very existence of reason depends upon this freedom . . . (Kant, 1998: 643)

In this famous quote, Kant encapsulates the Enlightenment project: reason is the medium both of morals and of action, but it has no final dictatorial authority and is thus always subject to criticism. In what Adam Seligman calls 'modernity's wager' (2000), Kant presents the gambit to liberate the modern individual from external social and religious norms by supplementing them with the rational self as its own moral authority. However, humans cannot appeal to some final rational authority, or even rationality itself, to discover the foundations of morality. In this scheme, (1) *reason* becomes the vehicle of moral discourse; (2) moral agents, persons, discover and act according to principled autonomy;[11] (3) the will that might discover a universalized moral imperative has no prior antecedent or given moral code; and (4) the exchange of reasons generated by autonomous individuals creates a community's rationality that may be freely understood and then chosen. So on this view, Kant dispensed with all sovereignty, including reason's own

claims, established the basis for self-governance as the basic characteristic of ways of thinking and willing, and in so doing, created a moral 'space' in which external authority was replaced with individual responsibility and communal normative standards. He thereby set the foundations for later conceptions of the self and its moral structure.

While Freud adopts the underlying premise of Kantian freedom, he departs from Kant's philosophical path by assuming a naturalistic stance. Unlike Kant, who sought to recognize and act according to a universal categorical imperative, Freud assigned the placement and character of value (and choice) within the individual's own psychical apparatus. He provided the means by which value and morality were formed and incorporated into the psyche, and he presented a dynamic psychology that accounted for the interplay of values in individual behaviors. In this sense, Freud rejects the universal, pristine idealism of Kant's moral law, and he would decipher the moral domain, not as constituted by some metaphysical moral order, but rather as one composed of chaotic drives and desires of a psyche striving for its own self-fulfillment and pleasure. As unruly emotions clash with the reality principle, moral choice must be made, and so one dimension of psychoanalytic theory's ethical structure conceives of an ego monitor, whose character declares itself as the mediator between the reality principle and self-aggrandizing inner drives. That ego function itself is subject to both super-ego demands and a socially imposed conscience, and so a universal moral imperative has been replaced by a radically conditional moral culture. Freud thus replaced Kant's precept with a *relative* conception of the right, one that arose from the contingency of culture, the vicissitudes of history, and, most importantly, the constitution and needs of psychic drives and demands.

Insofar as Freud devised psychoanalysis to break the causal chain of instinctual drives to come under the rational control (as opposed to repression) of the ego, and thus free choice (as opposed to psychological determinism) might be achieved, a gap opened before him: reasons are not causes; retrospective reconstructions are not causal; interpretation follows its own ways, and the basis of clinical efficacy would seek no firmer grounds than reference to insight. Indeed, Freud never explained, beyond the procedures of disclosure and analysis, how the leap from one domain (natural causation) to the other (moral freedom) might be accomplished. Note, this unresolved tension appears in various formats during this period and one can hardly fault him for failing to meld this metaphysical breach. However, in that admission we must recognize that Freud left a huge conceptual breach (uncharitably, a contradiction) that has vexed commentators, who, despite extensive debate, have failed to reconcile this inner fault-line of psychoanalysis (Meissner, 2003: 53–112).

Freud, while pausing to acknowledge Kant, did not see his own project in the Kantian tradition, not only because he regarded that course of philosophy

as hopelessly speculative and contemplative, but more deeply because it was based in idealism. So, identifying himself as a scientist, one firmly committed to the positivist principles of his day (Sulloway, 1979), Freud could not abide placement with the unnamed 'philosophers', whom he regarded as following an outmoded school of thought.[12]

However, as already discussed, a powerful resonance between Kantianism and Freud's thought underlies psychoanalytic theory. That shared orientation resides less in the epistemological domain than in the moral. So while Freud regarded the ego in various theoretical formulations as embodied (the last being a mixture of conscious and unconscious faculties [Freud, 1923a]) and thus subject to scientific scrutiny, on my reading, the full *philosophical* thrust of Freud's formulation points to the ego as a *moral* agent. Indeed, when Freud addresses the analysand as a *person*, he does so as one committed to a certain kind of inquiry, which itself constitutes an ethical undertaking in various ways: a scrutiny of behavior within a normative framework; a relentless self-assessment; a *telos* of individual perfection. This endeavor rests upon a conception of reason's autonomy, which ultimately determines how the knowing subject discerns the world and himself or herself, and this epistemological independence also allows the subject, as a *moral* agent, to act with varying degrees of freedom in opposition to the determinism of unconscious forces.[13]

Such parallels consequently go beyond the epistemological frameworks in which Kant and Freud worked, for they each began with an epistemology and ended with a moral philosophy. In these regards, the Freudian and Kantian systems of thought begin at the same place, follow the same general course and share a deep philosophical kinship: an ethics of freedom that must be based on reason's independence and the capacity to judge itself. Freud erected that position against a competing notion of agency, namely, one construed as organic and primitive, i.e. ultimately instinctual. Acknowledging the authority of that essentially biological view complements the Kantian moral portrait he saw as juxtaposed against it. For indeed, Kant, and Spinoza before him, recognized that humans must make ethical choices within a naturalistic construct.

This problem was eloquently stated at the end of Kant's *Second Critique*, where he famously mused on the mystery of reason's ability to bridge the moral and natural domains: 'Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence . . . *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*' (1996c: 269; original emphasis). This paradox – the dual characteristic of Man as a creature of the organic world and yet one who exercises free choice independent of natural causation – remains a tension throughout Freud's opus. In sum, the theoretical link between Freudian psychoanalysis and Kantian idealism posits an understanding of the freedom of reason as a prerequisite for moral agency. Indeed, reconciling this duality is a central philosophical problem of Freud's theory.

CONCLUSION: FREUD, THE POST-KANTIAN

In conclusion, that Freud was indebted to Kantianism in some respects does not make him a Kantian. Indeed, he melded certain Kantian ideas with those derived from a deep appreciation of the biological character of human emotions, and in this respect he must be regarded a Darwinian, closely aligned to Nietzsche, whose philosophy begins not in some dialogical *response* to Kant, but in *reaction* against him.[14] Indeed, autonomous individualism, associated with a liberated self, freed from political, religious and social bonds, is a distinctly post-Kantian modification attached during the Romantic era (Tauber, 2001; 2005). Beyond the specific construction of reason's autonomy as a prerequisite of scientific inquiry and the adoption of reason's independence of unconscious psychic forces, Freud employed autonomy in this Romantic sense, one that had been adopted by Nietzsche and other late 19th-century thinkers who would reinvent the aspirations for personal potential, i.e. the struggle to establish a life deemed 'free'.

This interpretation builds from two distinct notions of autonomy that become fused in Freud's thought. Typically, Nietzsche's moral scheme is usually taken to be almost perfectly opposed to that of Kant, inasmuch as they are presenting two opposing conceptions of autonomy. For Kant the law that is self-dictated is one and universal; for Nietzsche, the revaluation of values replaces the unitary with a radical pluralism, in which a unique expression of one's own personal needs and requirements for 'health' emerge.[15] On this axis, Freud closely aligns with Nietzsche both in the flexibility of the norms governing behavior and perhaps more importantly in the potential for self-determined choice on a spectrum of options. So for Freud and Nietzsche, autonomy has shifted from recognizing the rational and some universal moral order to a radical individualism, where autonomy has become the characterization of human potential, a potential that would move biologically driven humans to a new moral order. What separates Nietzsche and Freud is the role of reason: Nietzsche celebrates the instincts (Tauber, 1994), while Freud champions the reason that would control them. In that triangulation, I place Freud between Kant and Nietzsche.

In this general scheme, a complex duet is played out between Kant and Nietzsche, where psychoanalysis offers a promissory note: take one's history in hand to command the effect of emotional traumas to declare a liberation and the forthright assertion of personal autonomy for a life of meaningful love and work. Here we hear most clearly the call of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, who demands that humans strive towards some as yet unrealized ideal. The notion that such a venture is feasible, that it is morally inspired, that it serves to actualize human potential, has carried forth the Romantic expression of individuality to become a credo of contemporary western societies. Psychoanalysis, as a means of personal investigation, thereby becomes a tool for

self-responsible choices directed towards that ideal. Outlining that effort and inspired by its possibilities, Freud legitimately becomes a key architect of contemporary ethics.

Because of the freedom conferred by autonomous reason, humans might not only realize moral choice and accept moral responsibility (Kant's undertaking), but Romantics added that humankind might also perfect itself according to its own dictates. At this juncture, we witness an important transition in the evolution of moral philosophy, which carries Freud far from Enlightenment ideals and aligns him with Nietzsche, where Kantian reason is balanced against a biological construction, and morality thereby shifts from enacting some universal moral order to a radical individualism. On this view, Freud is placed between Kant (commitment to reason's autonomy) and Nietzsche (the biological imperative), and there psychoanalysis balances its theory between the demands of its moral agenda of liberation and the constraints of a deterministic biology. The attempts to resolve those contending positions mark the history of Freudianism.

NOTES

1 According to Kant, because the shape of reality is partly formed by the mediation of the observer, the things in themselves are insurmountably a translation or an interpretation. The self thus emerges, since in the idea of a thought, every mental content embeds the notion of a subject that has an immediate and intuitive unity. Kant refers to this unity as the 'Transcendental Unity of Apperception' (Kitcher, 2006). *Apperception* in this sense means 'self-consciousness', and *transcendental* indicates that the unity of the self is known as the presupposition of all (self-) knowledge. In Kant's scheme, the self is an 'original unity' whose mental states are not adjuncts but properties. In short, identity is corollary to the first-person presupposition that the self exists as an object.

(Note, the level at which Kantian philosophy is interpreted and applied remains a formidable challenge, not only because common consensus about much is not available, but, more to the point, the degree of detail and explanation of the various perspectives must vary according to the philosophical sophistication [and interest] of the readership. Here, I have endeavored to strike a balance between a fair account of Kant's transcendentalism and its application to a [hypothetical] non-professional philosophical reader, with secondary resources offered to supplement my synoptic summaries.)

2 Kant took the 'pure subject' of Descartes and Locke – and the somewhat ambiguous posture of Rousseau – and showed that the self was capable of knowing itself only because it could also know the world as an object (Keller, 1998; Allison, 2004). Experience *qua* experience is structured according to a priori categories of understanding. These included the principles that every event has a cause and that objects have substance and exist in space and time. As a priori principles, these cannot be established empirically. Knowledge arises from the synthesis of

concept and experience, and as it is 'transcendental', that is, non-observable as a process, it must be presupposed (Longuenesse, 2006). Synthetic a priori knowledge is possible because, according to Kantian tenets, we can infer how experience must conform to the categories of understanding. Kant's understanding of the synthetic a priori depends on the synthesis of concept and experience. We can have such knowledge of reality only as 'phenomena' – as objects of empirical enquiry. Phenomena are discoverable; they enter into relationship with us. This was a crucial refutation to those rationalists who attempted to describe reality as apprehended by the pure intellect, and it represents the foundation of establishing the reality of the phenomenal world – the world of appearance. To apprehend this reality, a subject is required.

In direct response to Hume, the transcendental argument moves from the nature of experience back to understanding the subject of experience, that is, it arrives at a view of what we must be like in order to have experience as we do. Thus, the observing subject is defined by inference: the self is observed as the external world is known, even as ultimate reality remains elusive. The noumenon, whether subject or object, is an existent; though in itself an unknowable, it is an inferred reality that reason must postulate. Transcending experience and all rational knowledge, reason must assume the existence of noumena as the source for all science and philosophy (Guyer, 1992; Allison, 2004; Longuenesse, 2006).

3 Kant's influence on 19th-century science encompasses a complex array of issues, but in the context discussed here, the neo-Kantian examination of 'methodological' concerns in the natural sciences (as well as in academic philosophy) is the most direct link between Freud's own description of his psychoanalytic method and more formal Kantian-inspired accounts of the same period. (See Willey, 1978; Friedman and Nordmann, 2006.) The intellectual context in which Freud worked, beyond the positivism with which he most naturally affiliated, included a powerful neo-Kantianism, an emergent historicism, a fledgling phenomenology, a pervasive Nietzschean ethos, and the stirrings of analytic philosophy. For synoptic views of this intellectual climate see Decker (1977), Schnädelbach (1984), Könke (1991) and Bambach (1995).

4 For treatment of the determinism in the psychoanalytic context issue see, for example, Arlow (1959), Holt (1972, 1989), Rosenblatt and Thickstun (1977), Wallace (1985), and Meissner (1995, 1999).

5 Freud did, of course, begin with a biological conception of the mind (Sulloway, 1979), in which unconscious forces and processes emanate to determine human behavior, and, as a counterpoise, a distinct modality of consciousness, by which the ego navigates the world. Accordingly, the unconscious functions subject to its own predispositions in a biological context, and the reflective, self-conscious ego employs its own faculty of reason to scrutinize and ultimately control unconscious drives. In short, an autonomous reason allows for psychoanalytic understanding. As Freud explained:

> We know two things about what we call our psyche (or mental life): firstly, its bodily organ and scene of action, the brain (or nervous system), and on the other hand, our acts of consciousness, which are immediate data and cannot be further explained by any sort of description. Everything that lies

> between is unknown to us, and so the data do not include any direct relation between these two terminal points of our knowledge. If it existed, it would at most afford an exact localization of the processes of consciousness and would give us no help towards understanding them. (Freud, 1940: 144–5)

So Freud acknowledges that he could not 'locate' consciousness in the brain-based mind and he simply assumes its autonomy. In the context of our own philosophical preoccupations with 'consciousness' and 'selfhood', Freud's dismissal of each (the former as noted above, and the latter by the complete absence of *Selbst* in Freud's opus) are important clues to Freud's own philosophy of mind, whose pursuit I must postpone for future comment.

6 Many commentators have noted that Kant effectively failed to meld these two forms of reason or postulate a shared origin (e.g. Neuhouser, 1990; Neiman, 1994). For our purposes, suffice it to accept two kinds of reason directed at two domains of experience.

7 Of course, the relationship Freud's ideas had with Kant's depends on how Kant is construed and employed. Predictably then, scholars disagree on this assessment. Others have also drawn parallels between Kant and Freud (MacIntyre, 1958: 31, 71; 2004; Pettigrew, 1990: 67–88; Rozenberg, 1999; Bergo, 2004: 338–50; Fulgenico, 2005: 108–10; Askay and Farquhar, 2006); however, virtually every previous consideration of Freud's relationship to philosophy either ignores or pays scant attention to Kant, and some actively deny any connection (e.g. Kaufmann, 1980; Decker, 1977). Walter Kaufmann offers the best example of this latter position. He opined that Freud embraced a 'deeply anti-Kantian conception of science' (1980: 79), which Kaufmann characterizes as a 'poetic science of the mind [which] constitutes his first major discovery' (ibid.: 109). Indeed, as a poet-scientist Freud, according to Kaufmann, models himself after Goethe (Kaufmann, 1980: 16 ff.; 32–45), an opinion shared by Fritz Wittels (ibid.: 38) and later commentators (e.g. Ellenberger, 1970: 465–7). Kaufmann's antipathy for Kant notwithstanding (1980: 42–3), he strangely saw Kant as 'Goethe's great antipode' (ibid.: 13), when contrary testimony is plain and direct that Goethe saw himself fulfilling Kant's project (Goethe, 1988[1817]: 29; Tauber, 2009: ch. 2). Beyond the shared sensibility of the aesthetic and the sublime, the rejection of positivism (ibid.) (the construction of reality by melding 'mind' and 'nature'), Goethe embraced Kant's characterization of reason: rather than divide reason as irredeemably separate, Goethe regarded them as emanating from a single root (ibid.), which Kant called the 'Unconditioned'. Indeed, contrary to Kaufmann's appraisal, the Goethean–Freudian affinity offers further support to Freud's debts to Kant.

Of those most sympathetic to a Freud–Kant alliance, Bettina Bergo and I disagree that this relationship was self-evident to Freud himself, i.e. 'Freud sought to go further than Kant had ventured' (Bergo, 2004: 344); i.e. 'the unconscious was arguably more than Kant's noumenon, because it did not set a speculative limit to the possibilities of experience but instead opened certain types of experience to systematic investigation' (ibid.: 345). Alasdair MacIntyre also comments on Freud's use of autonomy in the Kantian context, namely, how two versions

of the ego appear in Freud's opus: the ego is 'in heteronomous thrall to the Id and the Superego' and has the 'task of becoming autonomous' (MacIntyre, 2004: 10). MacIntyre thus sees the same paradox of an ego-as-determined that I have explicated.

8 Freud built his theory on a representationalist foundation (Cavell, 1993). For him as for Kant, 'it is not the thing itself, but a representation of it, that is being interpreted' (Rieff, 1959: 105). This is hardly noteworthy in and of itself, inasmuch as the ether of 'representation' permeated post-Kantian thought by the end of the 19th century. Nevertheless, we must note that for Freud, 'the object of either conscious or unconscious mental processes is not the world itself but a *mental representation* of it, outer world or inner as the case may be' (Cavell, 1993: 14). This assignment places Freud within the tradition of Anglo-American philosophers of language, where psychoanalysis becomes the relationship between words and the world they describe. From this perspective, Freud embraces an 'internalist view according to which the role of language [consciousness] is to give expression to "ideas" that are prior to and logically independent of it, ideas that are entirely subjective and internal' (Cavell, 1993: 47; quoting Freud, through 'interposition [of word-presentations] internal thought-processes are made into perceptions' [Freud, 1923a: 23]).

Thus representationalism appears at the foundations of psychoanalysis, where psychic experiences are re-presented with a new vocabulary and grammar; the objective reality of our judgments arises from a merging of conscious perceptions mediated by psychic 'categories of understanding', and their synthesis in a consciousness capable of self-reflection offered psychoanalysis its basis of study. However, if both Kant and Freud reject the idea that there is a direct correspondence between the mind and the world, then how do they believe the individual can act freely in a world to which he (or she) has no immediate connection? Is not the individual inescapably bound up in his (or her) world of representations, which themselves are psychically determined? As both focus on the interface between the world of representations and events in the 'real' world, they must account for an independent capacity of the mind – reason – that permits the individual to navigate the world freely, i.e. to allow for moral responsibility. Kant's method sought to clearly delineate the boundaries of freedom (and therefore the moral) by challenging the supposed 'truth' of the vast majority of our experiences. Similarly, Freud sought to liberate the individual by breaking the causal chain of instinctual drives and containing them through rational control and free choice.

9 Despite an early interest, Freud explicitly rejected philosophy, because of its 'speculative' character. He struggled with balancing the intellectual appeal of philosophy with the 'certainty' he hoped to find in positivist science. Putting aside the scientific status of Freud's work, I have examined (Tauber, in press) how Freud failed to recognize the assumptions of his own investigations, and thereby segregated psychoanalysis from 'philosophy'. In pursuing his science, Freud regarded psychoanalysis as an alternative to philosophy of mind. He charged philosophers with equating mind with consciousness and being guilty of unfounded speculations and false conceits of comprehensiveness. However, Freud never completely abandoned his philosophical proclivities, which he admitted

privately. Indeed, his own contributions to cultural history, social philosophy, notions of personal identity and the humanistic thrust of psychoanalysis demonstrate that he vigorously addressed his earliest interests.

10 Note, the moral agent on this reading is centered on reason, not the super-ego. Obviously, for Freud, the two represented two entirely different modalities to express the ethical, one as a liberator, the other as part of a despotic unconscious experience. In the topographical model, the super-ego is the repository of moral consciousness, 'an agency . . . in the ego which confronts the rest of the ego in an observing, criticizing and prohibiting sense' (Freud, 1939: 116). In this last articulation, Freud described the super-ego as 'the successor and representative of the parents (and educators) who superintended the actions of the individual in his first years of life; it perpetuates their function almost without change' (ibid.: 117), and as formed by the 'inhibiting forces in the outer world, [the super-ego] becomes internalized' (ibid.: 116) and thus a potential source of neurosis. Derived from childhood experience and explicit training (or conditioning), a moral imperative becomes a policing of individual desire and behavior that may or may not be consonant with benefit to the individual. Freud succinctly described these dynamics as follows:

> This super-ego can confront the ego and treat it like an object; and often treats it very harshly. It is important for the ego to remain on good terms with the super-ego as with the id. Estrangements between the ego and super-ego are of great significance in mental life. . . . [T]he super-ego is the vehicle of the phenomenon we call conscience. Mental life very much depends on the super-ego's being normally developed – that is, on its having become sufficiently impersonal. And that is precisely what it is not in neurotics. . . . Their super-ego still confronts their ego as a strict father confronts a child; and their morality operates in a primitive fashion in that the ego gets itself punished by the super-ego. Illness is employed as an instrument for this self-punishment, and neurotics have to behave as though they were governed by a sense of guilt which, in order to be satisfied, needs to be punished by illness (1926: 223).

Even in the non-neurotic case, the super-ego's chief function 'remains the limitation of satisfactions' (Freud, 1940: 148). For Freud, the individual always remains his focus, and more particularly, individual welfare, and thus the restrictions imposed on the pleasure principle through the super-ego faculty always require a mediation; sometimes successful, sometimes not.

11 However, it is important to note that he did not mean by 'autonomy' a 'self-determination of the person as a person or of the I as an I, but a self-determination of reason' (Tugendhat, 1986: 133–4). Kant never refers to an autonomous self or an autonomous person or an autonomous individual, but rather to autonomy of reason, the autonomy of ethics, the autonomy of principles, and the autonomy of willing (O'Neill, 2002: 83). Hence, so-called 'principled autonomy' is not something one has, nor is it equated with personal independence or self-expression. Rather, it is the self-legislated moral behavior prescribed by principles that could be laws for all.

> Reasoning . . . is simply a matter of striving for principled autonomy in the spheres of thinking and of action. Autonomy in thinking is no more – but also no less – than the attempt to conduct thinking (speaking, writing) on principles on which all others whom we address could also conduct their thinking. . . . Autonomy in action is no more – but also no less – than the attempt to act on principles on which all others could act. . . . Kantian autonomy is neither derived from antecedently given but unjustified account of reason (hence unreasoned), nor lacking in structure (hence willful and arbitrary); principled autonomy itself supplies basic structures of reasoning. (O'Neill, 2002: 94)

Thus for Kant, moral agency is grounded in our ability to discern moral principles – to judge and choose, to act and execute according to what might reasonably be applied to others. In short, principled autonomy is a formulation of the basic requirements of all reasoning (O'Neill, 2002: 90–1), and, accordingly, moral will is primary, not reason, and moreover, this will is the foundation of reason itself!

12 Those philosophers whom Freud dismissed fell into two groups: those who simply speculated without the aid of empiricist findings, and a second set who considered 'the mind' the *conscious* mind. Most notable of these was the prominent Viennese philosopher Franz Brentano, whose mentorship of Freud as an undergraduate student must have influenced the impressionable youth in decisive ways (Tauber, in press). Brentano argued forcefully for empirical approaches to develop the new science of psychology, and in so doing, he adamantly maintained that the science was confined to conscious processes. Indeed, he denied the unconscious altogether (Brentano, 1973), and I have argued elsewhere that Freud built his own case for psychic causation in response to Brentano's position (Tauber, in press).

13 Of course, one could not draw any parallels between Kant's development of his explicit moral philosophy, embedded in the notion of a categorical imperative, with the Freudian construction that would deny any such idealistic formulation (Wallwork, 1991: 239; Meissner, 2003: 31–5). Indeed, in this context, Freud utterly rejected Kantian deontological ethics, but this is not the domain in which I have sought to chart Freud's debts to Kant. Further, as noted by an anonymous reviewer, for Kant, 'moral reason is not based on freedom *per se*. Freedom is and remains a regulative ideal, rationally undemonstrable. It is even the object of an Antinomy in the first Critique. If it should be assumed in the practical sphere (along with an abiding, spiritual substance like the soul, and its creator: liberty, soul, God), it can never be demonstrated.'

14 Nietzsche noted in an early notebook: 'What a curious opposition, "*knowledge and faith*"! What would the Greeks have thought of this? Kant *was acquainted with no other opposition*, but what about us! A cultural need impels Kant; he wishes to *preserve* a domain *from knowledge*: that is where the roots of all that is highest and deepest lie, of art and of ethics . . .' (1979: 11; original emphasis). Given Nietzsche's sustained and relentless attack on Reason, this astute comment struck at the heart of Kant's project. And perhaps more deeply, as an anonymous reviewer notes: 'The transcendental project has no space for psychological observation or insights, and Freud surely understood this – possibly, as a hiatus

that had to be bridged or overcome ("pure practical reason" in Kant had to be restored to the affective and passional dimensions of the psyche; this was also Nietzsche's project of surpassing Kant: i.e., re-embody reason, historicize concept formation, and dissolve the radical distinction between reason and affectivity).'

15 Nietzsche's preoccupation with health as a governing metaphor for his philosophy (Tauber and Podolsky, 1999) suggests another parallel with Freud's own construction, an issue not further explored here.

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