

Freud's Concepts of Reality and God: A Text Study

ALVIN J. REINES

Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio

Sigmund Freud was deeply interested in the philosophic as well as psychological problems relating to reality for much of his life. Thus he takes up epistemological and metaphysical questions on numerous occasions in his writings. All of Freud's philosophic discussions are analyzed in this article. What is of particular interest is that in these discussions, which appeared in various works written at different times, Freud takes contradictory positions on the ability of the human mind to know extramental reality. In all he subscribes to four mutually exclusive epistemological positions regarding knowledge of extramental (material) objects, and to three quite different views on knowledge of extramental (other persons') minds. Freud never mentions the fact that he has taken a number of contradictory epistemological positions; each position is presented as though it were the only one to which he had ever subscribed. From Freud's inconsistent treatment of the subject of reality, two conclusions are drawn. First, that Freud was unable to arrive at a firm decision regarding the ability of the human mind to know reality; second, that psychoanalysis is not competent to resolve philosophic problems. Also, the consequences of Freud's philosophic vacillation regarding reality for a correct understanding of the reality principal and reality-testing are explained, as is its significance for Freud's critique of theistic religion. Although Freud vigorously rejects theism, he does subscribe to a concept of God. Since a concept of deity is a component of one's view of reality, an exposition and systematization of Freud's God-concept is given. Freud's God-concept is a theonaturalism, and can be understood as consistent with all the diverse epistemological and metaphysical theories he espouses.

In this study a distinction is drawn between the terms "psychoanalysis," "extrapsychoanalysis," and "Freudianism." By psychoanalysis is meant that which falls under the following three categories: 1) a procedure developed by Sigmund Freud for investigating the psyche (or mind) through free association, dream interpretation, and the interpretation of resistance and transference manifestations; 2) a theory of psychology applicable to humans generally set forth by Freud; 3) a form of psychiatric treatment developed by Freud based on psychoanalytic psychology employing psychiatric procedures.¹ Freud did not, however,

(1) Adapted from L.E. Hinsie and R.J. Campbell, *Psychiatric Dictionary*, (1960), p. 590.

limit his research and thought to psychoanalysis. He also expressed views that were not in themselves essential to psychoanalysis although usually based on or related to psychoanalysis. The views Freud expressed that are unessential to psychoanalysis will be referred to as *extrapsychoanalysis*.² Inasmuch as Freud's extrapsychoanalytic views are unessential to psychoanalysis, one can agree with Freud that psychoanalysis is true, yet reject his extrapsychoanalytic notions. The term *Freudianism* will be used to refer to the totality of Freud's views, both psychoanalytic and extrapsychoanalytic.

The subjects with which this study is concerned are extrapsychoanalytic. Primarily, the subject to be explored is Freud's thought on the ability of humans to attain knowledge of extramental reality, namely, that which ostensibly exists external to and independent of the mind. The problem of the human person's ability to acquire knowledge of extramental reality is an ancient one in the history of philosophy. This problem arises because that which presents itself to human awareness as extramental reality can be credibly argued to be in actuality intramental creations of the psyche rather than apprehensions of real entities existing extramentally. If the position is taken that that which presents itself to awareness as an apprehension of extramental reality is in fact a creation of mind, then knowledge of an ostensible extramental reality as it exists in itself is unobtainable since it can never be experienced. Moreover, if extramental reality can never be experienced, the question whether it exists at all must follow, since its existence cannot be verified.

It is evident that the question of knowledge of extramental reality is of fundamental importance to philosophy and religion. Philosophy began as a quest for knowledge of the fundamental nature of extramental reality and continues to be preoccupied with this quest. The validity of religions generally is judged to be dependent on the truth of their dogmas or essential beliefs relating to the extramental, and such truth cannot be obtained if extramental reality is unknowable. Similarly, the question of human attainability of knowledge of extramental reality is

(2) *Extrapsychoanalysis* is to be distinguished from *metapsychology* which Hinsie and Campbell (supra. n. 1 p. 460) define as referring to "[p]hilosophical speculation regarding the mind . . ." Freud's own definition of metapsychology is given in this statement: "I propose that when we have succeeded in describing a psychical process in its dynamic, topographical and economic aspects, we should speak of it as a metapsychological presentation"; *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, (1966-74), Vol. XIV ("The Unconscious" [1915]), p. 181. The *Standard Edition* . . . will henceforth be referred to as *S.E.* *Extrapsychoanalysis* refers to all Freud's views on any subject other than psychoanalysis as defined above.

basic for Freudianism, particularly in the extrapsychoanalytic realms where it deals with such subjects as religion and philosophy.³

The fundamental points to be demonstrated in the pages that follow are these:

1. In the course of his extensive writings, Freud takes a number of mutually exclusive philosophic positions regarding the ability of the human mind to know extramental reality or the not-self. Extramental reality is divided into two major categories: material objects or bodies external to the mind; and other persons' minds.

2. With respect to knowledge of material objects Freud sets forth four conflicting epistemological positions: direct realism; representative realism; transcendental idealism; and phenomenalism (pp. 6ff.). Freud never resolves the evident self-contradiction in taking these four fundamentally different positions; in fact, he shows no awareness that he has done so.

3. Regarding knowledge of extramental minds, Freud takes two mutually exclusive positions (p. 20ff.). Again, he makes no acknowledgment that he has in different places expressed contradictory philosophic positions.

4. The conclusion to which I am led by Freud's espousal of contradictory positions regarding knowledge of extramental reality is that he never arrived at a firm decision on which one was correct (p. 27). Freud's inability to arrive at a conclusive and definitive epistemological and metaphysical position was not due ultimately to some defect in Freud the thinker, but to the nature of the human mind itself. Human minds on the face of it are subjective apparatuses which have a long history of committing egregious errors even in the most rational of human epistemological endeavors, philosophy and science. Freud's philosophic uncertainty, in its own oblique way, reveals a sensitivity to the depth and complexity of the human epistemological condition (p. 28).

5. Still, from Freud's failure to arrive at a decisive single epistemological position the following significant consequences flow:

a. We are brought to the conclusion that psychoanalysis cannot resolve philosophic (metaphysical and epistemological) problems (p. 28).

b. We are compelled to come to a new understanding of Freud's concepts of the "reality principle" and "reality-testing"; namely, by

(3) My view that psychoanalysis is not necessarily affected by the problem of the knowability of extramental reality is discussed below, p. 28f., and p. 35.

drawing a distinction between "pragmatic not-self reality" and "metaphysical not-self reality" (p. 29).

c. Freud was unable to provide the conclusive refutation of the theistic concept of God which he intended to do (p. 41ff.).

6. Freud did hold to a concept of God, although he rejected forcefully the theistic concept of God (p. 36ff.). Freud's theology was naturalistic; his God is the metaphysical principle of a universe governed entirely by the inexorable laws of nature. Freud's naturalistic theology was in its broad outlines similar to the views of other naturalist theologians such as Multatuli, Einstein, and Spinoza (pp. 49-49).

I. FREUD'S THEORIES OF REALITY

Prior to entering upon an examination of Freud's treatment of human knowledge of extramental reality, the basic terms to be employed in this analysis will be defined. The terminology Freud himself used cannot be employed for this task because he not only used a number of different terms to communicate the same meaning, but at times he also used the same terms to convey different meanings.⁴

The terms that have been selected as tools for analyzing Freud's treatment of the knowability of an ostensible extramental reality present their own difficulties for they have been adapted from the field of philosophy where they have been employed with diverse meanings. Nevertheless, the decision was made to make use of these terms, which have a historic connection with the subject, rather than to create an entirely new vocabulary. To deal with the problem of past usage of these terms in different senses, precise definitions are here given, and the terms will be employed only as so defined.

1. *Extramental reality*: refers to that which exists external to and independent of a person's psyche or mind.⁵ Extramental reality is constituted of either 'extramental objects,' which are material or physical entities, or 'extramental psyches,' other persons' minds.⁶ The term 'extramental object' will be used interchangeably with the term 'material object' which is traditional philosophic usage. No more fundamental problem exists in Freudianism, as in philosophy generally, than whether extramental reality exists, and if it exists, whether it is knowable and to what degree.

(4) Discussion of Freud's terminology appears below, pp. 7f., 29, and throughout.

(5) The terms 'psyche' and 'mind' are employed interchangeably.

(6) This is not intended to constitute an exhaustive list of the extramental entities philosophers have proposed; e.g., Platonic Forms are omitted.

2. *Intramental reality*: refers to that which exists within the psyche. Intramental events include sensa, fantasy, conation, and cognition. Intramental reality is of two kinds: subjective intramental events and objective intramental events. Subjective intramental reality is created by an individual person's mind and provides no knowledge of extramental reality as it is in itself, or even that it exists at all.⁷ Thus those who hold that sensa constitute subjective intramental events maintain they provide no knowledge of an extramental world as it exists in itself.⁸ Those who hold that sensa constitute objective intramental events maintain that they do provide knowledge of an extramental world as it exists in itself.⁹

3. *Sensum* (sensa, pl.): refers to the datum or content that presents itself to immediate awareness as an apprehension of extramental objects experienced through one or more of the five senses. The term 'sensum' is neutral with respect to the question whether that which it presents to awareness as extramental objects is in fact external to the mind or intramental creations.

4. *Subjective-objective sensum* (SO-sensum): refers to sensa as conceived by those who hold that there are extramental objects and that sensa constitute direct perceptions of extramental objects which they convey to awareness as they are in themselves. SO-sensa constitute objective intramental events.

5. *Representative-subjective sensum* (RS-sensum): refers to sensa as conceived by those who hold that they are created by the psyche and do not therefore convey extramental objects as they are in themselves, but who maintain that there are such objects. RS-sensa constitute subjective intramental events.

6. *Phenomenal-subjective sensum* (PS-sensum): refers to sensa as conceived by those who hold that they are created by the psyche but who maintain that there are extramental objects which consist of possibilities of sensations. PS-sensa constitute subjective intramental events.

7. *Subjective sensum* (S-sensum): refers to sensa as conceived by those who hold that they are created by the psyche and who maintain that there are no extramental objects or that to speak of extramental objects is meaningless speculation. S-sensa constitute intramental events.

(7) This point is further discussed below.

(8) Some who take the position that sensa constitute subjective intramental reality, such as subjective idealists, maintain there is no extramental reality at all; others, such as representative realists, hold that there is an extramental reality. These points will come up again in connection with Freud's epistemological views.

(9) In some philosophic systems, such as Platonism, concepts (Forms) are held to be extramental objects.

8. *Subjective/subjective-objective sensum* (S/SO-sensum): refers to a sensum conceived of as in part a creation of the psyche and in part a direct apprehension of extramental reality.

Epistemological and metaphysical theories can be broadly categorized according to the positions they take regarding *sensa*. With respect to Freudianism four epistemological and metaphysical theories are significant: direct realism; representative realism; transcendental idealism; and phenomenalism.¹⁰ Direct realism is the theory that *sensa* are SO-*sensa*; accordingly, extramental objects exist and they are knowable as they exist in themselves.¹¹ Representative realism is the view that *sensa* are RS-*sensa*; thus extramental objects exist, but they are unknowable as they actually are inasmuch as they are never experienced in awareness. Transcendental idealism, one of the three names Kant gave to his philosophy,¹² has been interpreted differently regarding the position it takes on *sensa*. Two interpretations are significant for Freudianism. One is that *sensa* are S-*sensa*; the other is that *sensa* are S/SO-*sensa*. According to the first interpretation, language referring to material objects as they exist in themselves is nonsensical; for the second interpretation such language is meaningful to a degree since there is some awareness of material objects.¹³ Phenomenalism is the theory that *sensa* are PS-*sensa* and that by material objects is meant extramental entities consisting of possibilities of sensation whose existence is proved by the experience of PS-*sensa*.

The above introduction brings us to the primary subject of this inquiry: Freud's position regarding knowledge of extramental reality. We are, however, immediately confronted by a fundamental problem. This is that Freud in the course of his writings set forth as his view at one time or another each of the four aforementioned positions all of which are mutually exclusive. Freud's statements expressing these positions will be discussed in the following order: direct realism; representative realism; transcendental idealism; and phenomenalism.

A. DIRECT REALISM

Freud's most explicit statement expressing direct realism appears as part of an argument for the superiority of scientific thought over the

(10) Within each of these broad epistemological and metaphysical categories there are individual theories that vary in details. For the purposes of this study the broad categories will suffice.

(11) In direct realism the position is often taken that not only material objects exist but other minds as well.

(12) The two others are critical idealism and formal idealism.

(13) Kant's philosophy is further discussed below, p. 16f.

knowledge religion claims to possess.¹⁴ Analysis of the passage, which is quoted below, yields the following points.

1. There exists an extramental reality consisting of material objects, namely "what is outside us and independent of us"; for which Freud's other terms are "real external world" and "reality".

2. Truth consists of "correspondence with the real external world"; that is, thought that corresponds with extramental reality is true.

3. This inference then follows from Freud's assertions. Since we could never know if our thinking is true, that is, corresponds with material objects, if they were not directly present to awareness, then *sensa*, the data of our awareness, must be part of the surfaces of material objects.

4. Hence scientific thought is dependent upon the correspondence theory of truth, which itself entails direct realism, and therefore, science is dependent for its validity and superiority to religion upon the correctness of direct realism.

Scientific thinking . . . examines more strictly the trustworthiness of the sense-perceptions on which it bases its conclusions; it provides itself with new perceptions which cannot be obtained by everyday means and it isolates the determinants of these new experiences in experiments which are deliberately varied. Its endeavor is to arrive at correspondence with reality — that is to say, with what exists outside us and independently of us and, as experience has taught us, is decisive for the fulfilment or disappointment of our wishes. This correspondence with the real external world we call 'truth'. It remains the aim of scientific work even if we leave the practical value of that work out of account. When, therefore, religion asserts that it can take the place of science, that because it is beneficent and elevating, it must also be true, that is in fact an invasion which must be repulsed in the most general interest.¹⁵

Freud takes up the correspondence theory of truth a second time in the *New Introductory Lectures*. In a vigorous defense of human ability to attain certain knowledge of extramental reality, Freud argues for the validity of the correspondence theory of truth against epistemologically nihilist philosophers who propose an anarchist relativism. In his argument reproduced below, Freud makes these points.

1. Humans can attain "assured" or certain knowledge of extramental

(14) What Freud means by "religion" is commented upon below, p. 37ff.

(15) S.E., Vol. XXII (*New Introductory Lectures* [1933]), pp. 170f.

reality by means of the correspondence theory of truth. (I take this to mean that Freud here professes direct realism, that *sensa* are SO-*sensa*, otherwise there could be no "assured knowledge of the external world.")

2. If there is no assured knowledge of extramental reality, and therefore, no truth, then what is presented as scientific truth is illusion just as religious belief is.

3. Once the possibility of scientific knowledge based on correspondence with extramental reality is rejected, then any beliefs can be maintained to be as true as scientific knowledge, including mysticism and the "old religious *Weltanschauung*."

There have certainly been intellectual nihilists of this kind in the past, but just now the relativity theory of modern physics seems to have gone to their head. They start out from science, indeed, but they contrive to force it into self-abrogation, into suicide; they set it the task of getting itself out of the way by refuting its own claims . . . Once science has been disposed of, the space vacated may be filled by some kind of mysticism or, indeed, by the old religious *Weltanschauung*. According to the anarchist theory there is no such thing as truth, no assured knowledge of the external world. What we give out as being scientific truth is only the product of our own needs as they are bound to find utterance under changing external conditions: once again, they are illusion. Fundamentally, we find only what we need and see only what we want to see. We have no other possibility. Since the criterion of truth — correspondence with the external world — is absent, it is entirely a matter of indifference what opinions we adopt. All of them are true and equally false. And no one has a right to accuse anyone else of error.

A person of an epistemological bent might find it tempting to follow the paths — the sophistries — by which the anarchists succeed in enticing such conclusions from science . . . All I can say is that the anarchist theory sounds wonderfully superior so long as it relates to opinions about abstract things: it breaks down with its first step into practical life. Now the actions of men are governed by their opinions, their knowledge; and it is the same scientific spirit that speculates about the structure of atoms or the origin of man and that plans the construction of a bridge capable of bearing a load. If what we believe were really a matter of indifference, if there were no such thing as knowledge distinguished

among our opinions by corresponding to reality, we might build bridges just as well out of cardboard as out of stone . . .¹⁶

Freud, in the passage below, elaborates on how, from a direct realist viewpoint, extramental reality is determined. It comes about through one of the functions of judgment. This function makes the decision whether a presentation in the psyche reproduces an extramental ('external, outside, objective,' or 'real') entity or is only a subjective intramental ('internal' or 'subjective') event. Judgment arrives at its decision whether a presentation reproduces an extramental object or is merely subjective intramental by reality-testing, whose first aim is to see whether in real perception there is an object that corresponds to the presentation.¹⁷ In other words 'perception' is the direct apprehension of extramental objects, that is, SO-*sensa*.

The other sort of decision made by the function of judgement — as to the real existence of something of which there is a presentation (reality-testing) — is a concern of the definitive reality-ego, which develops out of the initial pleasure-ego. It is now no longer a question of whether what has been perceived (a thing) shall be taken into the ego or not, but of whether something which is in the ego as a presentation can be rediscovered in perception (reality) as well. It is, we see, once more a question of *external* and *internal*. What is unreal, merely a presentation and subjective, is only internal; what is real is also there *outside*. In this stage of development regard for the pleasure principle has been set aside. Experience has shown the subject that it is not only important whether a thing (an object of satisfaction for him) possess the 'good' attribute and so deserves to be taken into his ego, but also whether it is there in the external world, so that he can get hold of it whenever he needs it. In order to understand this step forward we must recollect that all presentations originate from perceptions and are repetitions of them. Thus originally the mere existence of a presentation was a guarantee of the reality of what was presented. The antithesis between subjective and objective does not exist from the first. It only comes into being from the fact that thinking possesses the capacity to bring before the mind once more something that has once been perceived, by reproducing it as a presentation without the external object having still to be there. The first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality-testing

(16) *Ibid.*, pp. 175f.

(17) See *infra*, p. 33ff., for further discussion of reality-testing.

is, not to *find* an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to *refind* such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there. Another capacity of the power of thinking offers a further contribution to the differentiation between what is subjective and what is objective. The reproduction of a perception as a presentation is not always a faithful one; it may be modified by omissions, or changed by the merging of various elements. In that case, reality-testing has to ascertain how far such distortions go. But it is evident that a precondition for the setting up of reality-testing is that objects shall have been lost which once brought real satisfaction.¹⁸

Freud's adherence to direct realism is further exemplified by a description he gives of neurotic or pathological mental phenomena. Such phenomena, he states, pay no attention to 'external reality' (the real external world) or to its 'psychical representatives'. The contrasting of 'external reality' and its 'physical representatives' makes sense only if persons can apprehend 'external [extramental] reality' as it is in itself, that is, if their *sensa* are SO-*sensa* and the 'psychical representatives' are entities, such as memory images, that differ from the *sensa*. For RS-*sensa* and PS-*sensa* are themselves 'psychical representatives' of 'external reality' and cannot therefore, be contrasted with them. Moreover, if *sensa* are PS-*sensa* or S-*sensa*, there is no 'external world' of which they can meaningfully be called 'psychical representatives'.

All these phenomena, the symptoms as well as the restrictions on the ego and the stable character-changes, have a *compulsive* quality: that is to say that they have great psychical intensity and at the same time exhibit a far-reaching independence of the organization of the other mental processes, which are adjusted to the demands of the real external world and obey the laws of logical thinking. They [the pathological phenomena] are insufficiently or not at all influenced by external reality, pay no attention to it or to its psychical representatives, so that they may easily come into active opposition to both of them. They are, one might say, a State within a State, an inaccessible party, with which co-operation is impossible, but which may succeed in overcoming what is known as the normal party and forcing it into its service. If this happens, it implies a domination by an internal psychical reality over the reality of the external world and the path to a psychosis lies open.¹⁹

(18) S.E., Vol. XIX ("Negation" [1925]), pp. 237f.

(19) S.E., Vol. XXIII (*Moses and Monotheism* [1939]), p. 76.

B. REPRESENTATIVE REALISM

Having examined Freud's advocacy of direct realism, we turn to an analysis of the passages in which he takes the representative realism position. Freud's most explicit presentation of representative realism is given in neurological terms. Two terms basic to this exposition are 'quality' and 'quantity'. Qualities are the sensations or *sensa* of which we are aware. Qualities, however, do not exist in extramental reality — only quantities, which are 'masses in motion', do. Nevertheless, although qualities are subjective creations of the mind, they are at the moment of their existence related to a present extramental reality, that is, they are RS-*sensa*, which distinguishes them from subjective intramental experiences such as memories which are not related to a present extramental reality. Freud's problem is to explain how qualities arise. On the one hand they are subjective creations of the psyche; on the other, they differ from subjective creations such as memories. Freud's answer is to propose a system of neurones he terms " ω " which is "excited along with perception, but not along with reproduction" (such as remembering) and thus produces qualities, the *sensa* of which the mind is aware.²⁰

Consciousness gives us what are called *qualities* — sensations which are *different* in a great multiplicity of ways and whose *difference* is distinguished according to its relations with the external world. Within this difference there are series, similarities and so on, but there are in fact no quantities in it. It may be asked *how* qualities originate and *where* qualities originate. These are questions which call for the most careful examination and which can only be treated roughly here.

Where do qualities originate? Not in the external world. For, out there, according to the view of our natural science, to which psychology too must be subjected here [in the *Project*], there are only masses in motion and nothing else. In the ϕ system perhaps? That tallies with the fact that the qualities are linked with perception, but it is contradicted by everything that rightly argues in favour of the seat of consciousness being in the *upper* storeys of the nervous system. In the ψ system then. Against this, however, there is a weighty objection. During perception the ϕ and the ψ systems are in operation together; but there is one psychical process which is no doubt performed exclusively in ψ — reproducing or remem-

(20) See S.E., Vol. I (*Project for a Scientific Psychology* [1950 (1895)]), pp. 28ff, for Editor's comment on the ω system of neurones as well as the ϕ and ψ systems.

bering — and this, speaking generally, is *without quality*. Remembering brings about *de norma* [normally] nothing that has the peculiar character of perceptual quality. Thus we summon up courage to assume that there is a third system of neurones — ω perhaps [we might call it] — which is excited along with perception, but not along with reproduction, and whose states of excitation give rise to the various qualities — are, that is to say, *conscious sensations*.

If we keep firmly to the fact that our consciousness furnishes only *qualities*, whereas science recognizes only *quantities*, a characterization of the ω neurones emerges, as though by rule of three. For whereas science has set about the task of tracing all the *qualities* of our sensations back to *external quantities*, it is to be expected from the structure of the nervous system that it consists of contrivances for transforming external *quantity* into quality . . .²¹

Freud has thus explained how two classes of subjective intramental events (or creations), RS-sensa, which are related to present extramental realities, and objects of reproduction and memory which are not, are distinguished by the mind. An excitation of and discharge from the ω neurones accompany an 'external perception' and give rise to the RS-sensa whereas no such ω activity occurs during reproducing and remembering. If this is the case, however, a problem arises. How is it that at times 'wished-for-objects' of a person's fantasy or memory are taken to be real when we would assume that no ω activity has occurred since no 'external perception' has taken place? Freud's answer is that if the wished-for-object is hypercathected ('abundantly cathected') then the same 'indication of reality' occurs as happens in 'external perception'. The reason that wished-for-objects are only infrequently hallucinated is that a 'cathected ego' has the ability to inhibit a wishful cathexis and thereby prevent it from attaining the state of intensity at which it produces the indication of reality that results in the wished-for-object being taken as real.

Both wishful cathexis and release of unpleasure, where the memory in question is cathected anew, can be biologically detrimental. This is true of a wishful cathexis whenever it exceeds a certain amount and so acts as an enticement to discharge; and it

(21) S.E., Vol. I (*Project for a Scientific Psychology*), pp. 308f. Although the *Project* . . . is a pre-psychoanalytic work, the Editor points out "the ideas contained in it persisted, and eventually blossomed out in the theories of psychoanalysis." *Ibid.*, p. 286. Even more to the point is the fact that Freud refers to 'qualities' a number of times in the sense defined in the *Project* . . . in his psychoanalytic works; see *infra*, p. 22 and n. 44.

is true of a release of unpleasure, at least whenever the cathexis of the hostile mnemonic image results not from the external world but from ψ itself (by association). Here once again, then, it is a question of an indication to distinguish between a perception and a memory (*idea*).

It is probably the ω neurones which furnish this indication: the *indication of reality*. In the case of every external perception a qualitative excitation occurs in ψ , which in the first instance, however, has no significance for ψ . It must be added that the ω excitation leads to ω discharge, and information of this, as of every discharge, reaches ψ . *The information of the discharge from ω is thus the indication of quality or of reality for ψ .*

If the wished-for object is abundantly cathected, so that it is activated in a hallucinatory manner, the same indication of discharge or of reality follows too as in the case of external perception. In this instance the criterion fails. But if the wishful cathexis takes place subject to *inhibition*, as becomes possible when there is a cathected ego, a quantitative instance can be imagined in which the wishful cathexis, not being intense enough, produces no *indication of quality*, whereas the external perception would produce one. In this instance, therefore, the criterion would retain its value. For the difference is that the *indication of quality* follows, if it comes from outside, whatever the intensity of the cathexis, whereas, if it comes from ψ , it does so only when there are large intensities. It is accordingly *inhibition by the ego which makes possible a criterion for distinguishing between perception and memory*.²²

It is difficult at times to determine with certainty which metaphysical and epistemological position respecting reality Freud is expressing. Thus, although employing language that fits direct realism, Freud in the following quotation is apparently basing his exposition on representative realism, an interpretation supported by the Editor's note (which has also been given). Discussing the concept of libido, which Freud has defined "as a measure of processes and transformations occurring in the field of sexual excitation", he states that the libido is most accessible to analytic examination when it is used to cathect sexual objects and becomes thereby object-libido. The term 'objects' Freud employs can reasonably be interpreted to refer to extramental realities. If this were so, then that which the libido cathects is external to the person and means that the libidinal cathexis can flow beyond the psyche to attach to ex-

(22) S.E., Vol. I (*Project for a Scientific Psychology* [1950 (1895)]), pp. 325f.

tramental objects. Without entering into an analysis of objections to such a view of libido, it is difficult *prima facie* to understand how a form of psychical energy can leave the psyche to fix itself to an extramental object. If the Editor is correct, and I believe he is, then the 'object' here is to be understood as a "presentation" or subjective intramental entity.²³ Such an object is a psychic creation and can reasonably be taken to be an RS-sensum.²⁴

The analysis of the perversions and psychoneuroses has shown us that this sexual excitation is derived not from the so-called sexual parts alone, but from all the bodily organs. We thus reach the idea of a quantity of libido, to the mental representation of which we give the name of 'ego-libido', and whose production, increase or diminution, distribution and displacement should afford us possibilities for explaining the psychosexual phenomena observed.

This ego-libido is, however, only conveniently accessible to analytic study when it has been put to the use of cathecting sexual objects, that is, when it has become object-libido. We can then perceive it concentrating upon objects, becoming fixed upon them or abandoning them, moving from one object to another and, from these situations, directing the subject's sexual activity, which leads to the satisfaction, that is, to the partial and temporary extinction, of the libido. The psychoanalysis of what are termed transference neuroses (hysteria and obsessional neurosis) affords us a clear insight at this point.

2. [Editor's note] It is scarcely necessary to explain that here as elsewhere, in speaking of the libido concentrating on 'objects', withdrawing from 'objects', etc., Freud has in mind the mental presentations (*Vorstellungen*) of objects and not, of course, objects in the external world.²⁵

Freud's adherence to representative realism casts light upon an observation he makes in a letter to Albert Einstein who had written to ask whether there was a way to rid humankind of war.²⁶ Freud's response to Einstein expresses a qualified pessimism owing to the presence within humans of a death (aggressive or destructive) instinct as well as Eros, the instinct desiring life. In the course of his letter, Freud observes that

(23) See *supra*, p. 9f., for an earlier reference to 'presentation.'

(24) The 'object' Freud refers to can also be understood as an S-sensum. See *infra*, pp. 5f.

(25) S.E., Vol. VII (*Three Essays on Sexuality* [1905]), p. 217.

(26) S.E., Vol. XXII ("Why War?" [1933]), p. 199ff.

his own theory of instincts, Einstein's physics, and indeed all science "come in the end to a kind of mythology". By 'mythology', I take it Freud means that science is an allegory, a symbolic representation of reality but not a description of reality as it is in itself.²⁷ If *sensa* are RS-sensa Freud's observation is quite appropriate. Since according to representative realism extramental reality as it exists in itself cannot be known, then the data of science are all subjective intramental and the best that can be said is that science is a symbolic representative of extramental reality, namely, mythology. It should, however, be noted that by stating scientific knowledge is mythology, Freud is taking a position fundamentally different from the one described earlier in which he maintains that through the correspondence theory of truth science arrives at certain or assured knowledge of extramental reality as it exists in itself.²⁸

It may perhaps seem to you as though our theories are a kind of mythology and, in the present case, not even an agreeable one. But does not every science come in the end to a kind of mythology like this? Cannot the same be said to-day of your own Physics?²⁹

Freud's contention that science, including his own theories, is mythology is underscored by a statement he emphasizes in the course of arguing for his conception that the unconscious is the general basis of psychical life and "the true psychical reality". The unconscious as it is in itself, he says, is as unknown to us as extramental reality. The reason is that the unconscious is as "incompletely presented" by consciousness as the "external world" is by the "communications" of the sense organs. Taking the "communications" from the sense organs as RS-sensa, the external world is in truth unknown to us; and so is the unconscious if the data relating to it are actually created by consciousness.

The unconscious is the true psychical reality; *in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs.*³⁰

(27) S.W. Hawking writes in much the same vein: "... a scientific theory ... is just a model of the universe ... It exists only in our minds and does not have any other reality ..."; *A Brief History of Time* (1988), p. 9.

(28) See *supra*, p. 7ff. The implications of Freud's contradictory views on truth and extramental reality are discussed below, p. 28.

(29) S.E., Vol. XXII ("Why War?" [1933]), p. 211.

(30) S.E., Vol. V (*The Interpretation of Dreams*), p. 613. It is also possible to understand this passage in terms of Kant's S:SO-sensa.

C. TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

Interpretations of Kant's transcendental idealism differ over whether Kant held that *sensa* are S/So-Sensa or S-sensa. There is little question that Kant was ambivalent on the subject. As W.T. Jones writes, "There seems to be no doubt that a great deal of the time Kant did think in terms of this relatively subjectivist point of view [that each viewer's sense data are his private subjective experiences]. There is also no doubt that he wanted to insist on more objectivity than this view permits."³¹ The result is that some statements of Kant support the interpretation that *sensa* are S:SO-sensa, to wit, *sensa* are direct apprehensions of extramental objects that are conditioned or organized by mind so that the object of which we are aware is a hybrid of SO-sensa and S-sensa, or, in other words, S/So-sensa. Other statements of Kant support the interpretation that *sensa* are S-sensa (phenomenal) only. So confusing is Kant on this point that in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* the authors of two separate articles each give a different interpretation of Kant's position. One maintains that Kant holds that humans are directly aware of extramental objects: "When Kant refuted the two types of idealism mentioned above [the "problematic idealism" of Descartes and the "dogmatic idealism" of Berkeley], he argued that no one could become aware of himself unless there were enduring material substances with which he could contrast his own fleeting experiences. We should not be aware of selves unless we were also aware of material things. This line of argument disposes of the view that we could be certain of our own existence but doubtful about the material world and also of the view that material things are 'mere imaginations'."³² The other states: "If the world we confronted were one of things-in-themselves [material objects] *a priori* knowledge of it . . . for which Kant argues, would be quite impossible. The fact that we have such knowledge . . . is taken by Kant as proof that the objects of our knowledge are phenomena or appearances."³³ This conflict in Kantian interpretation is not brought up to resolve it but because it is reflected in Freud's writings. In one passage Freud seems to subscribe to Kant's view of *sensa* interpreted as S/So-sensa; and in another, to Kant's view of *sensa* interpreted as S-sensa.

In the first passage, Freud states that the perception of unconscious mental processes by consciousness is like the perception by consciousness of the extramental (external) world: in both cases our perceptions are

(31) *A History of Western Philosophy*, Vol. IV (1969), p. 49.

(32) *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. IV (1972), p. 113.

(33) *Ibid.*, pp. 314f.

subjectively conditioned so that neither the 'physical' nor the 'psychical' we perceive are necessarily "in reality what they appear to be." Freud concludes with the observation that "internal objects are less unknowable than the external world," or, rephrased, the extramental world is more unknowable than intramental objects. There are two reasons why in this passage Freud may be understood to say that *sensa* are S/So-sensa. The first is that he says the extramental world is *not necessarily* what it appears to be. In other words, the extramental world *can* be what it appears to be (at least in part). This can only be if some *sensa* or parts of *sensa* are SO-sensa. The second reason is Freud's implication that extramental reality is more unknowable than the intramental world. If we were to apprehend only S-sensa, an extramental world would not be "more unknowable", it would be entirely unknowable.

In psycho-analysis there is no choice for us but to assert that mental processes are in 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, on the one hand, as a further expansion of the primitive animism which caused us to see copies of our own consciousness all around us, and, on the other hand, 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. 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.³⁴

In this second passage, Freud does not mention Kant by name, but it is likely that Freud is referring to a subjectivist (S-sensa) interpretation of Kant or a philosophy based on Kantianism. Freud has been arguing that science is superior to religion in that scientific work can provide "knowledge about the reality of the world" which religion does not do.

(34) *S.E.*, Vol. XIV ("The Unconscious" [1915]), p. 171.

"If this belief is an illusion," he continues, "then we are in the same position as you" [the religionist].³⁵ Yet the contention that science alone gives knowledge of the extramental world is attacked not only by religionists, but by sophisticated philosophers who argue that no discipline, science included, can provide knowledge of the extramental world. The reason is that the mind is bound to the 'conditions' of its own 'organization' so that it can only attain intramental or subjective knowledge. It is on the basis of Freud's statement that the mind is bound to the 'conditions' of its own 'organization' that I take the viewpoint he is referring to as Kantian, for it is Kant's view that the mind is so structured that it organizes phenomena (sensa) in the way they appear to us. Freud makes five points in response to this argument, but he does not deny the validity of the contention that the human mind, through science or otherwise, cannot attain knowledge of the extramental world. Strictly speaking, then, Freud has not refuted the charge that science is an illusion in that the phenomenal world of which it gives us knowledge is bound to the conditions of the mind's own organization and does not exist in reality (the extramental world).

Freud's five points are these:

1. The human mind evolved as an instrument for exploring the extramental world; therefore, it must possess some measure of suitability for achieving this purpose.
2. The mind is part of the world that science investigates, and inquiry into the mind can be pursued by the mind.
3. Science's task is limited to attaining knowledge of the phenomenal (S-sensa) world, and it need not provide knowledge of the extramental world as it is in itself.
4. Scientific knowledge is not only determined by the mind, but by the things (material objects, apparently) that have influenced the evolution of the mind.³⁶
5. The extramental world as it is in itself is of no interest to science. Science is concerned with the phenomenal world, the world as it appears to us subjectively determined.

Finally, an attempt has been made to discredit scientific endeavour in a radical way, on the ground that, being bound to the conditions

(35) S.E., Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), p. 55.

(36) In the first four points Freud refers to the extramental world as existing. This is a fatal inconsistency inasmuch as the position he is attempting to defend is the validity of science where it is the case that mind has knowledge only of S-sensa it has itself structured. How then can one know anything of an extramental world including that it exists? The fifth point, consequently, is the only one logically valid.

of our own organization, it can yield nothing else than subjective results, whilst the real nature of things outside ourselves remains inaccessible. But this is to disregard several factors which are of decisive importance for the understanding of scientific work. In the first place, our organization — that is, our mental apparatus — has been developed precisely in the attempt to explore the external world, and it must therefore have realized in its structure some degree of expediency; in the second place, it is itself a constituent part of the world which we set out to investigate, and it readily admits of such an investigation; thirdly, the task of science is fully covered if we limit it to showing how the world must appear to us in consequence of the particular character of our organization; fourthly, the ultimate findings of science, precisely because of the way in which they are acquired, are determined not only by our organization but by the things which have affected that organization; finally, the problem of the nature of the world without regard to our percipient mental apparatus is an empty abstraction, devoid of practical interest.³⁷

D. PHENOMENALISM

The last in our classification of positions Freud takes on extramental reality is the phenomenalist view of John Stuart Mill. This view states that sensa are PS-sensa, creations of mind that verify the existence of extramental entities consisting of possibilities of 'sense-impressions' or PS-sensa. Mill's phenomenism denies that material objects are actual beings existing extramentally (as maintained by direct realism and representative realism); there exist only possibilities of sense impressions, and our knowledge that there are such possibilities is provided by the sensa created by mind.

A word, however, acquires its *meaning* by being linked to an 'object-presentation',³⁸ at all events if we restrict ourselves to a consideration of substantives. The object-presentation itself is once

(37) S.E., Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), pp. 55f. I readily admit that the passage quoted can be construed as presupposing that sensa are S/SO-sensa rather than S-sensa since it refers repeatedly to the extramental ('external') world. Nevertheless, Freud never says or indicates in this passage that there is a direct awareness of the extramental world. Accordingly, I prefer the interpretation that he means all that is apprehended are S-sensa. If this interpretation is correct then the same objection leveled against Kant can be made: how can Freud speak of an extramental world when nothing of such a world can be experienced and the assertion of its existence, consequently, is nonsensical.

(38) As noted earlier, a 'presentation' is intramental.

again a complex of associations made up of the greatest variety of visual, acoustic, tactile, kinaesthetic and other presentations. Philosophy tells us that an object-presentation consists in nothing more than this — that the appearance of there being a ‘thing’ to whose various ‘attributes’ these sense-impressions bear witness is merely due to the fact that, in enumerating the sense-impressions which we have received from an object,³⁹ we also assume the possibility of there being a large number of further impressions in the same chain of associations (J.S. Mill).⁴⁰ The object-presentation is thus seen to be one which is not closed and almost one which cannot be closed, while the word-presentation is seen to be something closed, even though capable of extension.⁴¹

E. EXTRAMENTAL MINDS

Extramental reality, judging from appearances, is constituted of two general classes of existents, extramental or material objects and extramental minds or psyches. Extramental minds will here refer only to other humans’ psyches.⁴² Sensa provide the immediate basis for the various theories respecting the nature of material objects. Sensa, however, cannot serve as the immediate basis for theories regarding extramental minds seeing that they are apparently nonbodily and sensa (depending upon one’s epistemology) are either perceptions of bodies, representations of bodies, or intramental creations of bodily images. The question arises, consequently, whether one can know that other persons’ minds exist, and if they exist, what their contents are. Freud, as we have seen, subscribed to several different positions respecting our knowledge of material objects; he similarly expresses different views regarding knowledge of extramental psyches.

1.

In the view we first consider, Freud states we know of other persons’ minds (“consciousness”) by inference from sensa, that is, “from their

(39) To remain consistent with Mill’s phenomenalism Freud’s phrase “which we have received from an object” is to be translated into some such language as “which has been realized from a permanent possibility of sensation.”

(40) J.S. Mill, *A System of Logic* (1843), 1, Book I, Chapter III; also, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy* (1865), cited in *S.E.*, Vol. XIV (“The Unconscious” [1915]), p. 214.

(41) *Ibid.*, pp. 213f.

(42) Extramental minds can refer to the minds of beings other than human persons as Freud observes in the passage quoted.

observable utterances and actions”. In other words, other persons’ psyches are not apprehended directly; we experience only other-person-bodily-sensa from which the existence of their psyches is inferred. As a result of the indirect route by which knowledge of other persons’ minds is attained it does not have the “immediate certainty” possessed by the knowledge we have of our own minds.

The assumption of an unconscious is, moreover, a perfectly *legitimate* one, inasmuch as in postulating it we are not departing a single step from our customary and generally accepted mode of thinking. Consciousness makes each of us aware only of his own states of mind; that other people, too, possess a consciousness is an inference which we draw by analogy from their observable utterances and actions, in order to make this behaviour of theirs intelligible to us. (It would no doubt be psychologically more correct to put it in this way: that without any special reflection we attribute to everyone else our own constitution and therefore our consciousness as well, and that this identification is a *sine qua non* of our understanding.) This inference (or this identification) was formerly extended by the ego to other human beings, to animals, plants, inanimate objects and to the world at large, and proved serviceable so long as their similarity to the individual ego was overwhelmingly great; but it became more untrustworthy in proportion as the difference between the ego and these ‘others’ widened. To-day, our critical judgement is already in doubt on the question of consciousness in animals; we refuse to admit it in plants and we regard the assumption of its existence in inanimate matter as mysticism. But even where the original inclination to identification has withstood criticism — that is, when the ‘others’ are our fellow-men — the assumption of a consciousness in them rests upon an inference and cannot share the immediate certainty which we have of our own consciousness.⁴³

The same thought is presented in another passage where Freud goes on to argue that psychoanalysis is no different from any other science in that it must infer a concept such as other persons’ conscious and unconscious minds from sensa (“perception”). A science such as physics must also infer what it considers to be extramental reality from sensa. Sensa, however, upon which we base our knowledge of other persons’ bodies and from which we infer our knowledge of their minds, provide

(43) *S.E.*, Vol. XIV (*The Unconscious* [1915]), p. 169.

us only with qualities, which is not extramental reality as it exists in itself. This being the case, "We have no hope of" apprehending the "real state of affairs" (as it exists in itself) of the psychical apparatus. Thus it is: "Reality will always remain 'unknowable'."

The hypothesis we have adopted of a physical apparatus extended in space, expediently put together, developed by the exigencies of life, which gives rise to the phenomena of consciousness only at one particular point and under certain conditions — this hypothesis has put us in a position to establish psychology on foundations similar to those of any other science, such, for instance, as physics. In our science as in the others the problem is the same: behind the attributes (qualities)⁴⁴ of the object under examination 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. It is as though we were to say in physics: 'If we could see clearly enough we should find that what appears to be a solid body is made up of particles of such and such a shape and size and occupying such and such relative positions.' In the meantime we try to increase the efficiency of our sense organs to the furthest possible extent by artificial aids; but it may be expected that all such efforts will fail to affect the ultimate outcome. Reality will always remain 'unknowable'.⁴⁵

(44) This is an instance of Freud's use in the psychoanalytic work of the term "qualities" in the sense defined in the pre-psychoanalytic *Project for a Scientific Psychology*; see *supra*, p. 11f. and n. 21.

(45) S.E., Vol. XXIII (*An Outline of Psychoanalysis* [1940]), p. 196. The theory of perception Freud is here expressing is representative realism in which *sensa* are regarded as RS-*sensa* and do not therefore provide knowledge of extramental reality as it is in itself. The analogy, however, that Freud draws between physics and psychoanalysis is questionable. Physics (if it proceeds on the basis of representative realism) postulates on the basis of RS-*sensa* only extramental (material) bodies, whereas Freud postulates not only extramental bodies but extramental minds as well. This puts him in the position of basing an assumption (extramental minds) on an assumption (extramental bodies), which on the face of it makes for a weaker case than that of the physicist.

2.

In the following passages, Freud presents a view opposite to the one preceding. Here he states that we can attain knowledge of other persons' psyches as they exist in themselves, both of the conscious and unconscious states. In the first passage, Freud states that every person possesses in his unconscious an "apparatus" that enables them to interpret the distortions other people (consciously and unconsciously, we may suppose) "impose on the expressions of their feelings". The second passage describes the special ability of a psychoanalyst to "reconstruct" the unconscious of an analysand from the "derivatives of the unconscious communicated" to the psychoanalyst.

If so, however, we may safely assume that no generation is able to conceal any of its more important mental processes from its successor. For psycho-analysis has shown us that everyone possesses in his unconscious mental activity an apparatus which enables him to interpret other people's reactions, that is, to undo the distortions which other people have imposed on the expression of their feelings.⁴⁶

[For the] doctor must put himself in a position to make use of everything he is told for the purposes of interpretation and of recognizing the concealed unconscious material without substituting a censorship of his own for the selection that the patient has forgone. To put it in a formula: he must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient. He must adjust himself to the patient as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone. Just as the receiver converts back into sound-waves the electric oscillations in the telephone line which were set up by sound waves, so the doctor's unconscious is able, from the derivatives of the unconscious which are communicated to him, to reconstruct that unconscious, which has determined the patient's free associations.⁴⁷

3.

A third process explored by Freud whereby knowledge of extramental minds is attained is telepathy. Telepathy or thought-transference is communication from one mind to another in ways other than "the paths of communication that are familiar to us",⁴⁸ namely, by means other

(46) S.E., Vol. XIII (*Totem and Taboo* [1913, 1912]), p. 159.

(47) S.E., Vol. XII ("Papers on Technique" [1911-1915]), pp. 115f.

(48) S.E., Vol. XXII (*New Introductory Lectures* [1933]), p. 36.

than *sensa*. Thus the manner in which knowledge of other minds is acquired differs in telepathy from inference, the process first described. Inference takes place only after the apprehension of *sensa* and is based on them. Freud does not explicate the mode of transmission in the second process examined, where the conscious and unconscious processes of person's minds is communicated to others. Freud is attracted to the telepathic hypothesis, but concludes that it is unverified. Yet, he says, were it demonstrated that telepathy does occur, it could be understood naturally as a physical process.

We are once again left with a *non liquet* [not proven]; but I must confess that I have a feeling that here too the scales weigh in favour of thought-transference. Moreover, I am certainly not alone in having been in the position of experiencing 'occult' events like this in the analytic situation. Helene Deutsch published some similar observations in 1926 and studied the question of their being determined by the transference relations between patient and analyst . . . And particularly so far as thought-transference is concerned, it seems actually to favour the extension of the scientific — or, as our opponents say, the mechanistic — mode of thought to the mental phenomena which are so hard to lay hold of. The telepathic process is supposed to consist in a mental act in one person instigating the same mental act in another person. What lies between these two mental acts may easily be a physical process into which the mental one is transformed at one end and which is transformed back once more into the same mental one at the other end. The analogy with other transformations, such as occur in speaking and hearing by telephone, would then be unmistakable. And only think if one could get hold of this physical equivalent of the psychical act! It would seem to me that psycho-analysis, by inserting the unconscious between what is physical and what was previously called 'psychical', has paved the way for the assumption of such processes as telepathy. If only one accustoms oneself to the idea of telepathy, one can accomplish a great deal with it — for the time being, it is true, only in imagination.⁴⁹

4.

Freud rejects telepathy as a non-sensum means of acquiring knowledge of extramental reality (specifically, other persons' minds) on the grounds that it remains unverified. There is, however, a non-sensum

(49) *Ibid.*, pp. 54f.

means of attaining knowledge of extramental events as they exist in themselves that Freud does accept: memories in the "archaic heritage". The archaic heritage of humans includes information regarding extramental events that were occasioned by and occurred to their ancestors.⁵⁰ Hence in addition to gaining knowledge of extramental reality as it exists in itself through *sensa*, a person can inherit such knowledge. Two items of knowledge Freud cites as inherited are: a) sons once killed their primal father; b) a primal father castrated his sons.⁵¹

The behaviour of neurotic children towards their parents in the Oedipus and castration complex abounds in such reactions, which seem unjustified in the individual case and only become intelligible phylogenetically — by their connection with the experience of earlier generations. It would be well worth while to place this material, which I am able to appeal to here, before the public in a collected form. Its evidential value seems to me strong enough for me to venture on a further step and to posit the assertion that the archaic heritage of human beings comprises not only dispositions but also subject-matter-memory-traces of the experience of earlier generations . . . My position, no doubt, is made more difficult by the present attitude of biological science, which refuses to hear of the inheritance of acquired characters by succeeding generations. I must, however, in all modesty confess that nevertheless I cannot do without this factor in biological evolution. The same thing is not in question, indeed, in the two cases: in the one it is a matter of acquired characters which are hard to grasp, in the other of memory-traces of external events — something tangible, as it were. But it may well be that at bottom we cannot imagine one without the other.

. . . Granted that at the time we have no stronger evidence for the presence of memory-traces in the archaic heritage than the residual phenomena of the work of analysis which call for a phylogenetic derivation, yet this evidence seems to us strong enough to postulate that such is the fact. . . .

After this discussion I have no hesitation in declaring that men have always known (in this special way) that they once possessed a primal father and killed him.⁵²

(50) We may assume that Freud understands the *sensa* of the ancestors to have been SO-sensa, otherwise they could not have been "memory traces of external events". See quotation.

(51) For the phylogenetic castration memory, see also S.E., Vol. XXIII (*An Outline of Psychoanalysis* [1940]), p. 190, n:1.

(52) S.E., Vol. XXIII (*Moses and Monotheism* [1939]), pp. 99–101.

II. FREUD'S REALITY THEORIES CONTRADICT ONE ANOTHER

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that in the course of his writings Freud at different times expressed acceptance of four different philosophies: direct realism; representative realism; transcendental idealism; and phenomenism. The epistemological and metaphysical positions of these philosophies cannot be reconciled or integrated into a single system. As is pointed up by the following brief summary, they are mutually exclusive.⁵³

A. According to direct realism *sensa* are SO-*sensa*, and extramental reality consists of material objects that can be known with certainty by the human mind through the correspondence theory of truth — particularly as employed by science.⁵⁴

B. For representative realism, *sensa* are RS-*sensa*, and extramental reality consists of material objects that can never be known by the human mind. Scientific knowledge therefore is mythology.⁵⁵

C. In transcendental idealism, *sensa* are either S/SO-*sensa* or S-*sensa*. In either case, certain knowledge of an extramental reality is unobtainable, either because extramental data are subjectively conditioned by the mind or entirely created by the mind. Scientific knowledge is of a world organized and structured intramentally.⁵⁶

D. Phenomenism holds *sensa* to be PS-*sensa* which are created by the mind. Extramental reality consists of possibilities of sensation rather than the material objects of direct realism; and knowledge of extramental reality is determined by empirical verification of predicted events rather than the correspondence theory of truth.⁵⁷

With respect to knowledge of other persons' minds, Freud conspicuously contradicts himself, as exemplified by his treatment of the unconscious. Thus he takes three different positions regarding knowledge of the unconscious of other persons: a) it is completely unknown to us;⁵⁸ b) it is known to us only by inference and analogy;⁵⁹ c) it is known to us through communication with our own unconscious minds.⁶⁰

Freud's contradictory statements on the knowability and nature of extramental reality naturally gives rise to the question of why the in-

(53) Primarily these summaries reflect Freud's presentations of these positions although I have amplified them somewhat.

(54) *Supra*, p. 6f.

(55) *Supra*, p. 11f.

(56) *Supra*, p. 16ff.

(57) *Supra*, p. 19ff.

(58) *Supra*, p. 22.

(59) *Supra*, p. 21.

(60) *Supra*, p. 23.

consistency. Freud himself is of no help in dealing with this question since he never acknowledges the fact — or even shows awareness — that he has expressed adherence to contradictory philosophies in respect of extramental reality, let alone provide an explanation. Whenever he puts forth a new position he writes as though he has never advocated any other view. We must therefore explore possible answers and decide on the one that appears most likely. Three suggest themselves.

One is that Freud subscribed to all the contradictory philosophic viewpoints on extramental reality simultaneously. Another is that the philosophy he presents in a later work is to be understood as his position at the time, and an implicit rejection of whatever viewpoint he may have put forward earlier. The third is that Freud was in fact never able to arrive at a firm judgement on what he believed regarding the knowability and nature of extramental reality, with the result that he vacillated, and set down as true whichever position struck him as most appropriate to and supportive of the general thesis he was advancing in some particular work at the time.

We cannot know which answer, if any, is true since Freud never addressed the difficulty. Still, one can venture an opinion. Freud, in my view, was too clear and logical a thinker to subscribe to four mutually exclusive positions simultaneously. It might be argued that he did not know they were contradictory. This would necessitate the judgement that he did not understand the positions, yet his expositions display a competent grasp of their essentials. This answer, consequently, is unsatisfactory. The second answer is possible but also unlikely. Freud, despite numerous opportunities to do so, never repudiated any of his conflicting positions on extramental reality, whereas his writings show that he was never reluctant to admit an error or change of mind on other subjects. We are left then with the third answer, which I believe is correct: Freud was unable to arrive at a definite and final decision on which philosophic theory regarding the knowability and nature of extramental reality was true. This uncertainty on his part led to the vacillation that is seen in the fact that within a relatively short period of time he subscribed to three different positions: transcendental idealism, in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927);⁶¹ representative realism, in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940)⁶² and "Why War" (1932)⁶³; and direct realism, in *New Introductory Lectures* (1933).⁶⁴

(61) *Supra*, p. 18.

(62) *Supra*, p. 22, n.45.

(63) *Supra*, p. 15, n.29.

(64) *Supra*, p. 7, n.15. As these references show, Freud's ambivalence is particularly

The conclusion that Freud was unable to make a definitive choice among contradictory philosophic theories on extramental reality prompts several observations. Extramental reality constitutes a problem that has confounded and divided philosophers from the beginning of the philosophic enterprise. The reason is evident: no objective, convincing means exist to resolve with absolute certainty the question of the mind's ability to know whether there is an extramental reality; and, if there is, what its ultimate nature is since we must always employ for the determination a subjective instrument, the mind itself, whose possible distortions and falsification of our knowledge of an ostensible extramental reality cannot be known. Consequently, the beginning points of every epistemology are assumed or intuited with the result that all philosophies are in the final analysis arbitrary. Freud therefore had good reason for vacillating: no unconditionally compelling resolution of the problem of extramental reality exists. Moreover, contributing to the difficulty of resolving the problem is an additional factor which I believe is ultimately emotional (exploring its roots would take us far afield). This is that thinkers generally, as illustrated in the case of Kant,⁶⁵ prefer the belief that the mind can know extramental reality as it is in itself to the belief that it cannot. The difficulty arises, however, that although one may desire to know and relate to extramental reality as it is in itself, the intellect points out very good reasons why one cannot. Freud appears to have suffered from this dilemma which he could never conclusively resolve. The final observation is that Freud's vacillation on the question of extramental reality underscores the fact that psychoanalysis cannot answer the essential questions with which philosophy deals. No matter how thoroughly psychoanalysis may clarify the recesses of the psyche it probes, there are ultimate epistemological and metaphysical issues respecting extramental reality that it (or the physical sciences for that matter) cannot settle.

III. PRAGMATIC NOT-SELF REALITY

Still, central to psychoanalysis⁶⁶ is the concept of a not-self reality, namely, people and things that are related to by a person as other than himself. Not only are neuroses and psychoses fundamentally characterized by difficulties with not-self reality, but normal human development psychoanalytically understood involves critical interactions with not-self

noticeable in his changing from representative realism in 1932 to direct realism in 1933, and back to representative realism in 1940.

(65) *Supra*, p. 22.

(66) As defined earlier; see *supra*, p. 1.

reality. Yet if any decision on whether there is an extramental reality is entirely arbitrary, how can a concept of not-self reality be employed? The answer, I believe, lies in drawing a distinction between what may be termed 'pragmatic not-self reality' and 'metaphysical not-self reality'. Pragmatic not-self reality is that which a person experiences as other than himself irrespective of his philosophic decision that it is intramental or extramental. Metaphysical not-self reality is that which a person determines philosophically is extramental. All *sensa* are experiences of at least the appearance of extramental reality; therefore, whether one person's philosophic determination is that *sensa* are intramental (*S-sensa*, for example) and another person's decision is that they are extramental (*S:O-sensa*), both can agree that *sensa* constitute pragmatic not-self reality. It is pragmatic not-self reality that serves as 'reality' for psychoanalysis. Thus for a psychoanalytic procedure or treatment to proceed, it is common agreement between analyst and analysand on pragmatic not-self reality that is necessary, not agreement on metaphysical not-self reality. In some, for its validity and efficacy psychoanalysis does not require knowledge or a determination of metaphysical not-self reality, pragmatic not-self reality suffices.⁶⁷

The concept of pragmatic not-self reality is, I believe of considerable importance in understanding Freud's theories. I do not think it an overstatement to say that as a general rule, when Freud employs the terms 'reality', 'external reality', or similar terms, and does not expressly give them a philosophic determination (that is, state whether the sense impressions or *sensa* — which is what he means by expressions like 'reality' and 'external reality' — are intramental or extramental), these terms should be understood as referring to pragmatic not-self reality, not metaphysical not-self reality. When one considers that psychoanalysis cannot resolve the philosophic question of metaphysical not-self reality, to which Freud's vacillation on the subject gives salience, the point is evident. If the psychoanalytic procedure had for its purpose reconciling an analysand to metaphysical not-self reality, its task would be impossible since it is incapable of determining the truth or nature of such a reality.

The proposition that the terms 'reality' and 'external reality' when employed by Freud without explicit philosophic determination refer to pragmatic not-self reality is consistent with two basic concepts of psychoanalysis: the reality principle and reality-testing.

(67) This is not the case with respect to Freud's extrapsychoanalytic theories, particularly relating to a subject such as the concept of deity. See *infra*, p. 51f.

A. REALITY PRINCIPLE

Taking pragmatic not-self reality as that which Freud intends by 'reality' in the term 'reality principle', Freud's concept of the reality principle is understood as follows.⁶⁸ In the life of the newborn, for all practical purposes, the reality principle plays no role. For in the earliest stage of life, when internal needs produce stimuli that disturb the homeostatic state of the psyche, the wished-for satisfaction is attained by hallucination. The reason is that the pleasure principle — gaining pleasure — governs what the mind does, and instant gratification, which is the most pleasurable happening for a person when a need arises, is provided by hallucination. There is no need to wait for pragmatic not-self reality to provide it. The hallucination does not bring satisfaction, the infant cries and displays other bodily actions which bring from the parent the satisfaction it desires. Nevertheless, the very young infant takes hallucinating as the means whereby satisfaction is attained. Available in the mind of the very young infant is pragmatic not-self reality (*sensa*), but hallucination rather than pragmatic not-self reality is regarded as the source of gratification so that, following the pleasure principle, no notice of it (since it does not provide pleasure) is taken. As the developing infant experiences increasing occasions when hallucinating does not bring satisfaction, its psyche is forced to give it up and turn to pragmatic not-self reality to gratify its needs. Accordingly, when a need now arises, it is not a hallucination that is focused on by the infant's psyche but pragmatic not-self reality, even if such reality does not give instant pleasure or pleasure at all. The appearance in the psyche of pragmatic not-self reality rather than hallucination in response to an instinctual need as the means of satisfying the need is termed by Freud 'the reality principle'. It is evident that the pleasure principle is not eradicated by the emergence of the reality principle, rather the reality principle serves the end of pleasure by directing the person to satisfaction of its needs when hallucination, or phantasy generally, fails.

Use of the expression pragmatic not-self reality clarifies what Freud means by 'reality' in the phrase 'reality principle', inasmuch as there is no such thing as an absolute meaning for 'reality' that is universally agreed to or — as has been shown — on which Freud's various writings agree. Clearly, it is *sensa* as pragmatic not-self reality that Freud understands to constitute for an infant 'real circumstances in an external world'. Infants cannot make a philosophic determination of the ontological status of *sensa*. One further point is telling. Freud, after describ-

(68) The quotation on which this summary is based appears below, p. 32ff.

ing the infant mind as having presented to it what is 'real' and 'real circumstances in the external world', explains what he means by *real*: "Consciousness now learned to comprehend sensory qualities. . . ." Sensory qualities, as explained earlier, are RS-sensa, creations of the mind.⁶⁹ Hence what Freud intends by 'real' and 'external world' in the reality principle as described below is a subjective intramental event, not extramental reality as it exists in itself, the meaning that is likely to come to mind at first reading.⁷⁰

I shall be returning to lines of thought which I have developed elsewhere when I suggest that the state of psychical rest was originally disturbed by the peremptory demands of internal needs. When this happened, whatever was thought of (wished for) was simply presented in a hallucinatory manner, just as still happens to-day with our dream-thoughts every night. It was only the non-occurrence of the expected satisfaction, the disappointment experienced, that led to the abandonment of this attempt at satisfaction by means of hallucination. Instead of it, the psychical apparatus had to decide to form a conception of the real circumstances in the external world and to endeavour to make a real alteration in them. A new principle of mental functioning was thus introduced; what was presented in the mind was no longer what was agreeable but what was real, even if it happened to be disagreeable. This setting-up of the *reality principle* proved to be a momentous step.

The increased significance of external reality heightened the importance, too, of the sense-organs that are directed towards that external world, and of the *consciousness* attached to them. Consciousness now learned to comprehend sensory qualities in addition to the qualities of pleasure and unpleasure which hitherto had alone been of interest to it.⁷¹

Freud subsequently expands upon his description of the development of the reality principle. The infant comes to recognize that some kinds of sensations (feelings) occur only when he performs an action

(69) *Supra*, p. 11f.

(70) Nevertheless, the reality principle should not be restricted to representative realism. The reality principle is consistent with all Freud's philosophic positions on extramental reality, which is made clear by understanding 'pragmatic not-self reality' to be the meaning of 'reality' in the phrase 'reality principle'. No reference to any philosophic theory of extramental reality appears in Freud's discussion of the reality principle in the passages quoted below or in any other description of it.

(71) *S.E.*, Vol. XII ("Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" [1911]), pp. 219f.

such as crying and certain *sensa* or instances of pragmatic not-self reality appear; to wit, the sensation of appeasement of hunger when mother's breast *sensa* are experienced. Other kinds of sensation, such as hunger, occur regardless of the *sensa* that are present. Thus the infant gradually learns that certain sensations 'come from outside', that is, only when a pragmatic not-self reality is present, and other sensations come from the self or ego, that is, they require 'him' (his existence) alone, and can occur regardless of whichever *sensa* are present. In addition, the infant learns that by performing particular actions he can cause the pragmatic not-self reality that gives him pleasurable sensations to appear.

An infant at the breast does not as yet distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensations flowing in upon him. He gradually learns to do so, in response to various promptings. He must be very strongly impressed by the fact that some sources of excitation, which he will later recognize as his own bodily organs, can provide him with sensations at any moment, whereas other sources evade him from time to time — among them what he desires most of all, his mother's breast — and only reappear as a result of his screaming for help. In this way there is for the first time set over against the ego an 'object', in the form of something which exists 'outside' and which is only forced to appear by a special action. A further incentive to a disengagement of the ego from the general mass of sensations — that is, to the recognition of an 'outside', an external world — is provided by the frequent, manifold and unavoidable sensations of pain and unpleasure the removal and avoidance of which is enjoined by the pleasure principle, in the exercise of its unrestricted domination. A tendency arises to separate from the ego everything that can become a source of such unpleasure, to throw it outside and to create a pure pleasure-ego which is confronted by a strange and threatening 'outside'. The boundaries of this primitive pleasure-ego cannot escape rectification through experience. Some of the things that one is unwilling to give up, because they give pleasure, are nevertheless not ego but object; and some sufferings that one seeks to expel turn out to be inseparable from the ego in virtue of their internal origin. One comes to learn a procedure by which, through a deliberate direction of one's sensory activities and through suitable muscular action, one can differentiate between what is internal — what belongs to the ego — and what is external — what emanates from the outer world. In this way one makes the first step towards

the introduction of the reality principle which is to dominate future development.⁷²

Three functions of the reality principle have now been described: 1. distinguishing between self and pragmatic not-self reality; 2. discarding hallucinating when it does not satisfy the person's needs; and 3. motivating the person to perform such actions as are necessary to receive gratification of its desires from pragmatic not-self reality. Freud assigns to the reality principle still another function. The *id* gives mental expression to instinctual needs that it takes over from somatic processes, and its impelling force is to attain satisfaction of these needs. Satisfying them produces pleasure; any delay in attaining satisfaction and certainly their complete frustration, produces displeasure. The *id* is governed solely by the pleasure principle. This means that nothing except attaining pleasure and avoiding displeasure determines its action. Hence the *id* seeks immediate satisfaction of its desires since any delay causes displeasure. Thus the *id* governed by the pleasure principle motivates the person to gratify instinctual desires instantly. The difficulty is that gratifying one's desires the moment they arise can bring injury or death. Available, however, to the *ego*, among whose functions is preservation of the person's life and well-being, is the reality principle, which is aware of the requirements of pragmatic not-self reality and the potential danger it may present to immediate gratification of a desire. The *ego* employs the reality principle to block, delay, reshape or redirect the *id*'s desires so that they are dealt with in a manner that brings no harm to the person from pragmatic not-self reality.⁷³

To restate briefly the conclusion: the emergence of the reality principle comes about entirely in relation to pragmatic not-self reality. The reality principle provides neither an answer to nor sheds light on the philosophic question: Is there metaphysical not-self reality, and if there is, what is its nature?

We turn next to Freud's concept of reality-testing which, as will be seen, is of no more help in resolving the question of metaphysical not-self reality than is the reality principle.

B. REALITY-TESTING

Reality-testing takes place after the infant has made a distinction between what is 'external' or 'real' and what is 'internal' or 'unreal'. In

(72) *S.E.*, Vol. XXI (*Civilization and Its Discontents* [1930]), pp. 66f.

(73) *S.E.*, Vols. XVI, p. 357; XVIII, p. 10f.; XIX, p. 25; XX, p. 201; XXII, p. 76; XXIII, pp. 116f., pp. 198f.

other words, the reality principle first determines that *sensa* — or pragmatic not-self reality — are to be taken as reality, and then this meaning of reality is the basis on which reality-testing functions. Accordingly, since the reality principle offers no information toward the solution of the problem of metaphysical not-self reality, neither can reality-testing, inasmuch as it is based on the former. The criterion utilized in reality-testing for distinguishing between a mental presentation that is real (a *sensum*) and one that is unreal (a non-*sensum*: such as a memory) is whether the presentation can be made to disappear by a bodily action (as, for example, turning the head or closing the eyes). Presentations or perceptions that can be made to disappear by bodily action are considered real; those that cannot are unreal, that is, of internal origin.⁷⁴ “Reality-testing need be nothing more” than *Cs.* [consciousness] determining through appropriate bodily action whether perceptions, that is, *sensa*, disappear or not; those that do are real.

A perception which is made to disappear by an action is recognized as external, as reality; where such an action makes no difference, the perception originates within the subject's own body — it is not real. It is of value to the individual to possess a means such as this of recognizing reality, which at the same time helps him to deal with it, and he would be glad to be equipped with a similar power against the often merciless claims of his instincts . . .

This function of orientating the individual in the world by discrimination between what is internal and what is external must now, after detailed dissection of the mental apparatus, be ascribed to the system *Cs.* (*Pcpt.*) alone. The *Cs.* must have at its disposal a motor innervation which determines whether the perception can be made to disappear or whether it proves resistant. Reality-testing need be nothing more than this contrivance.⁷⁵

The need for reality-testing arises with the infant's recognition that presentations that appear in the mind can either be real (namely, *sensa*, which constitute pragmatic not-self reality) or reproductions, such as memories.⁷⁶ The child at this point is aware that only what is real (mother-*sensa*, for example) can gratify various fundamental needs. Accordingly, reality-testing is employed to reassure the child that what it

requires exists and is available to respond to its needs. Reality-testing also has the function of correcting distortions that may enter into a presentation when it is reproduced from a perception (*sensum*). To repeat the conclusion expressed earlier, the psychic operation of reality-testing, like that of applying the reality principle, bears not at all on the problem of metaphysical not-self reality. The ‘reality’ in reality-testing is pragmatic not-self reality.

The other sort of decision made by the function of judgement — as to the real existence of something of which there is a presentation (reality-testing) — is a concern of the definitive reality-ego, which develops out of the initial pleasure-ego. It is now no longer a question of whether what has been perceived (a thing) shall be taken into the ego or not, but of whether something which is in the ego as a presentation can be rediscovered in perception (reality) as well. It is, we see, once more a question of *external* and *internal*. What is unreal, merely a presentation and subjective, is only internal; what is real is also there *outside*. In this stage of development regard for the pleasure principle has been set aside. Experience has shown the subject that it is not only important whether a thing (an object of satisfaction for him) possesses the ‘good’ attribute and so desires to be taken into his ego, but also whether it is there in the external world, so that he can get hold of it whenever he needs it. In order to understand this step forward we must recollect that all presentations originate from perceptions and are repetitions of them. Thus originally the mere existence of a presentation was a guarantee of the reality of what was presented. The antithesis between subjective and objective does not exist from the first. It only comes into being from the fact that thinking possesses the capacity to bring before the mind once more something that has once been perceived, by reproducing it as a presentation without the external object having still to be there. The first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality-testing is, not to *find* an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to *refind* such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there. Another capacity of the power of thinking offers a further contribution to the differentiation between what is subjective and what is objective. The reproduction of a perception as a presentation is not always a faithful one; it may be modified by omissions, or changed by the merging of various elements. In that case, reality-testing has to ascertain how far such distortions

(74) *S.E.*, Vol. XIV (“Instincts and Their Vicissitudes” [1915]), p. 119.

(75) *S.E.*, Vol. XIV (“A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams” [1917]), pp. 232f.

(76) *S.E.*, Vol. XXIII (*An Outline of Psychoanalysis* [1940]), p. 199.

go. But it is evident that a precondition for the setting up of reality-testing is that objects shall have been lost which one brought real satisfaction.⁷⁷

IV. FREUD'S THEOLOGY

In the histories of theology, philosophy, and religion, a variety of different meanings have been given to the word 'God'. [We have seen this also to have been the case regarding the term 'reality'.] This is not to deny that various persons and groups have maintained that some particular meaning of the word 'God' is the sole legitimate one, thus, in effect, claiming a proprietary right to exclusive ownership of the word.⁷⁸ Such claims are reduced to nonsense by the plain historical fact that the term 'God' has been employed from the earliest times in many different senses. Inasmuch as there is no one sense for the term 'God', the term is empty of meaning when used without specifying the particular sense that is intended. Accordingly in the discussion that follows, different 'God' meanings or concepts will be individually designated. Two meanings are of importance in the discussion: theistic absolutism and Freud's concept.⁷⁹ The word 'God' employed in a theistic absolutistic sense will be referred to as the 'theistic God-view'; Freud's concept will be referred to as the 'Freudian God-view'. As is well-known, Freud submitted the theistic God-view, which he forcefully rejects, to intense and penetrating psychological analysis. The burden of the presentation here is not Freud's critique of the theistic God-view, but rather an ex-

(77) *S.E.*, Vol. XIX ("Negation" [1917]), p. 237f. The Editor of *S.E.* is apparently somewhat in error in his understanding of reality-testing; see Editor's note, *S.E.* (*supra*, n. 2), Vol. XIV, pp. 220f. The editor includes in the reality-testing operation the 'delaying' or 'postponing' activity of thought. This is incorrect. Freud distinguishes between reality-testing and thought. As stated in my description, reality-testing is limited to determining whether a presentation in the mind is a *sensum* or non-*sensum* (such as a memory), and to correcting, if necessary, presentations into which distortions may have entered when reproduced from *sensa*. The postponing activity of the *ego* on the other hand is attributed by Freud (at different times) to the reality principle (*supra*, p. 32f.) or to thought, at no time to reality-testing. It may be noted, as the Editor points out, Freud at one point attributed the function of reality-testing to the *ego* ideal, but shortly after placed reality-testing in the *ego*.

(78) Freud was himself at times one of the claimants. E.g., he condemns philosophers who use the term 'God' to refer to concepts other than theism; *S.E.* (*supra*, n. 2), Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), p. 32. At such times, Freud appears to insist that the term 'God' must be used to refer to that in which he does not believe. On other occasions, however, as will be seen, he employs 'god' to refer to his own concept; see *infra* pp. 47-49.

(79) Theistic absolutism is to be distinguished from theistic finitism; see E.S. Brightman, *A Philosophy of Religion* (1940), pp. 280ff.

position of the Freudian God-view, although the theistic God-view will be described briefly at the outset by way of contrast to help clarify Freud's position. The point should perhaps be stressed that Freud's critique of the theistic God-view and his statements on his own God-view are extrapsychoanalytic. Neither is an essential component of psychoanalysis. One can therefore reject either or both, yet maintain the validity of psychoanalysis.⁸⁰

A. CRITIQUE OF THE THEISTIC GOD-VIEW

In the view of those who believe in the theistic God-view, the word 'God' refers to an extramental being who possesses the attributes listed below. (Needless to say, in addition to the attributes enumerated, individual theistic religions, such as Orthodox Judaism, Roman Catholicism, and Sunni Islam, add others that are individual to their particular creeds.)

1. Eternal existence (*causa sui*).
2. Transcendence (separate from the universe and any other beings that may exist).
3. Personhood (possesses self-consciousness; consciousness of other beings; ability to relate to and communicate with other persons, such as humans).
4. Omniscience (knows all there is to know).
5. Freedom (acts by free choice — not out of necessity).
6. Omnipotence (able to do all he chooses to do).
7. Creator of the universe (creator of all that exists external to himself).
8. Exercises providence (sustains, cares for, and guides humans and all other creatures either supernaturally [by miracles] or through natural forces).
9. Exercises mind control (prohibits as sinful all thought including scientific inquiry that may or does lead to rejection of the theistic God-view, and all mental activities, such as various forms of sexual phantasizing that violate his commandments).

As a general principle, when Freud employs the word 'God' without further qualification he refers to the theistic concept of 'God'.

Freud's use of the word 'religion' is integrally related to the theistic God-view. By religion Freud means 'belief in the theistic God-view' and

(80) Freud states that there are psychoanalysts ('fellow-workers') who do not agree with his attitudes regarding religion, i.e., belief in theism; *S.E.* (*supra*, n.2), Vol. XXI, *The Future of an Illusion* [1927], pp. 36f.

carrying out the various ritual observances and moral actions that are based on belief in such a God-view. Freud is aware there are definitions of the word religion that do not require belief in the theistic God-view,⁸¹ and which can include his system. Nevertheless, Freud generally uses the word religion to mean the theistic religion in which he does not believe.⁸² Religion defined as belief in the theistic God-view will be designated 'theistic religion'. Freud's analysis and rejection of God and religion pertain to the theistic God-view and theistic religion (and, of course, to the primitive variations of theism and theistic religion).

The basis of Freud's rejection of the theistic God-view and theistic religion in his conviction that no evidence exists to support the judgement that the theistic God exists in extramental reality or that theistic religious doctrines are true. This being the case, belief in them is an illusion or even a psychic state approaching delusion.

What is characteristic of illusions is that they are derived from human wishes. In this respect they come near to psychiatric delusions. But they differ from them, too, apart from the more complicated structure of delusions. In the case of delusions, we emphasize as essential their being in contradiction with reality. Illusions need not necessarily be false — that is to say, unrealizable or in contradiction to reality.

Having thus taken our bearings, let us return once more to the question of religious doctrines. We can now repeat that all of them are illusions and insusceptible of proof. No one can be compelled to think them true, to believe in them. Some of them are so improbable, so incompatible with everything we have laboriously discovered about the reality of the world, that we may compare them — if we pay proper regard to the psychological differences — to delusions.⁸³

(81) *S.E.*, Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), pp. 32f.

(82) A.J. Reines, *Polydoxy: Explorations in a Philosophy of Liberal Religion* (1987), pp. 55ff.

(83) Freud is somewhat undecided about whether certain religious beliefs are illusions or delusions. He defines illusions as beliefs for whose truth there is no proof which "are derived from human wishes." Illusions have no proof, but they are not necessarily false. Delusions, on the other hand, also derive from wishes but they are "in contradiction with reality". Hence delusions are necessarily false. But what is the status of such a belief as "the Messiah will come and found a golden age"? Freud states: "Whether one classifies this belief as an illusion or as something analogous to a delusion will depend on one's personal attitude." *S.E.*, Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion*), pp. 30f., 33. Thus despite Freud's statement (*ibid.*, 33) that his intention is not to "assess the truth-value of religious doctrines," but rather to explain "their psychological nature as 'illusions,'" his underlying view that the theistic God-view and theistic religion are false is apparent; *S.E.*, Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), pp. 30f., 33.

Why do adult humans create the illusion or quasi delusion of the theistic God-view and theistic religion? In the course of his writings, Freud responded to this question in elaborate detail. The brief summary of his explanation that appears in the following passage will suffice for our purpose. The reason is that the existence of humans even as adults is finite and, therefore, vulnerable to physical and psychic injury as well as subject to death. Consequently the distorted infantile memory of father-mother is fashioned by illusion into the theistic God-view believed in in adulthood.

When a human being has himself grown up, he knows, to be sure, that he is in possession of greater strength, but his insight into the perils of life has also grown greater, and he rightly concludes that fundamentally he still remains just as helpless and unprotected as he was in his childhood, that faced by the world he is still a child. Even now, therefore, he cannot do without the protection which he enjoyed as a child. But he has long since recognized, too, that his father is a being of narrowly restricted power, and not equipped with every excellence. He therefore harks back to the mnemonic image of the father whom in his childhood he so greatly overvalued. He exalts the image into a deity and makes it into something contemporary and real. The effective strength of this mnemonic image and the persistence of his need for protection jointly sustain his belief in God.⁸⁴

A critical point in Freud's critique of theistic religion is his explanation of the psychological process whereby the theistic God becomes 'reality' for the adherents of theistic religion. A mechanism of the unconscious is projection, in which intramental subjective ideas and images are attributed to (or cast out upon) intramental objective or extramental reality. Through the science of psychoanalysis the phantasies of theistic religion produced by the projection process can be corrected and thus supernatural metaphysical theology turned into metapsychology.⁸⁵ There can be little doubt that in this passage Freud does not take theistic religion to be an illusion — which has the possibility of being true — but a phantasy that is simply false.

(84) *S.E.*, Vol. XXII (*New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* [1933]), p. 163.

(85) For Freud's definition of metapsychology, see *supra*, n. 2. I have taken Freud's use of the term *metaphysics* to refer to "supernatural metaphysical theology" rather than to its meaning in philosophy. In his numerous efforts to determine the human mind's ability to know extramental reality discussed earlier, Freud was engaged in philosophic metaphysical as well as epistemological inquiries and never suggests that metapsychology can solve the problems philosophic metaphysics raises.

In point of fact I believe that a large part of the mythological view of the world, which extends a long way into the most modern religions, is *nothing but psychology projected into the external world*. The obscure recognition (the endopsychic perception, as it were) of psychical factors and relations in the unconscious is mirrored — it is difficult to express it in other terms and here the analogy with paranoia must come to our aid — in the construction of a *supernatural reality*, which is destined to be changed back once more by science into the *psychology of the unconscious*. One could venture to explain in this way the myths of paradise and the fall of man, of God, of good and evil, of immortality, and so on, and to transform *metaphysics* into *metapsychology*.⁸⁶

It is important to understand that Freud's condemnation of theistic religion is not due to the fact that it is phantasy and illusion. Art and philosophy also are phantasy and illusion, yet they are acceptable. The reason is that the latter are not destructive of the scientific enterprise, religion is. Art not only does not claim for itself reality, it also gives pleasure, which, although the result of phantasy, is productive.⁸⁷ Philosophy, unlike art, claims for itself reality, but it is harmless. Theistic religion, however, is the enemy of science and for this reason it is a dangerous and harmful phantasy. Religion controls the most powerful human emotions and manipulates them to destroy the scientific enterprise by restricting free inquiry. Such prohibition of scientific research will bring to ruin humankind's best hope for the future: the dictatorship of reason over the psyche of the individual human.

Of the three powers which may dispute the basic position of science, religion alone is to be taken seriously as an enemy. Art is almost always harmless and beneficent; it does not seek to be anything but an illusion. Except for a few people who are spoken of as being "possessed" by art, it makes no attempt at invading the realm of reality. Philosophy is not opposed to science, it behaves like a science and works in part by the same methods; it departs from it, however, by clinging to the illusion of being able to present a picture of the universe which is without gaps and is coherent, though one which is bound to collapse with every fresh advance in our knowledge. . . . But philosophy has no direct influence on the great mass of mankind; it is of interest to only a small number

(86) S.E., Vol. VI (*The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* [1901]), pp. 258f.

(87) See S.E., Vol. IX ("Creative Writers and Daydreaming" [1908]), pp. 144f.; and Vol. XXI (*Civilization and Its Discontents* [1930]), pp. 80f.

even of the top layer of intellectuals and is scarcely intelligible to anyone else. On the other hand, religion is an immense power which has the strongest emotions of human beings at its service.⁸⁸

....

What we do is to emphasize the fact that what is in question is not in the least an invasion of the field of religion by the scientific spirit, but on the contrary an invasion by religion of the sphere of scientific thought. Whatever may be the value and importance of religion, it has no right in any way to restrict thought — no right, therefore, to exclude itself from having thought applied to it. . . . The prohibition against thought issued by religion to assist in its self-preservation is also far from being free from danger either for the individual or for human society. Analytic experience has taught us that a prohibition like this, even if it is originally limited to a particular field, tends to widen out and thereafter to become the cause of severe inhibitions in the subject's conduct of life.⁸⁹

B. EVALUATION OF FREUD'S CRITIQUE

Is Freud's critique of the theistic God-view and, consequently, of theistic religion successful, that is, has he demonstrated these conceptions to be false? The answer, as Freud himself recognizes, cannot be based on the fact (assuming Freud has demonstrated this) that humans generally have a psychic apparatus that can — out of fears arising from their vulnerable finity — create and maintain the theistic God-view as an illusion or delusion even if no such being exists. The reason is that one can possess a psychic apparatus capable of entertaining a theistic God-view phantasy, and not only claim this does not mean the theistic God-view is false, but that on the contrary, it is true; for it indicates the theistic God so created humans that their psyches are in harmony with theistic religion. Consequently, to refute the truth-claim of theistic religion, Freud must establish that the theistic God does not in fact exist in extramental reality. In order to accomplish this, he must demonstrate that he knows what does and does not exist extramentally.

He says as much in a passage cited earlier. Science's endeavor, he asserts, is to arrive at "correspondence with the real external world" or "truth". Theistic religion, on the other hand, cannot show that it is in correspondence with extramental reality; it asserts that it deserves to

(88) *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, 160f.

(89) *Ibid.*, 170f.

be considered true because it is "beneficent and elevating".⁹⁰ Beneficence and elevation, however, are not the test of true beliefs; the only criterion is correspondence with extramental reality, and inasmuch as theistic religion cannot demonstrate this it is to be rejected. The view that concepts must provide knowledge of extramental reality to be considered true is repeated by Freud in this passage where he again argues for the superiority of science over religion.

We believe that it is possible for scientific work to gain some knowledge about the reality of the world, by means of which we can increase our power and in accordance with which we can arrange our life. If this belief is an illusion, then we are in the same position as you.⁹¹

Is it true that science can gain "knowledge of the reality of the world", namely, knowledge of extramental (metaphysical not-self) reality as it is in itself? Is it so that Freud's belief that science apprehends such knowledge is no illusion? Is it then the case that Freud is not 'in the same position' as the theistic religionist? To these questions, the answer that must be given based upon the preceding examination of Freud's statements on human knowledge of extramental reality is: It is in truth an illusion to believe that science any more than theistic religion can claim to provide "knowledge about the reality of the world". Freud, by the witness of the preponderance of his own writings, is indeed in the same position as the theistic religionist.

Whether a belief is an illusion (or delusion) can be ultimately determined only if it can be compared with indubitable knowledge of extramental reality. The essential characteristic of an illusion is that it is a belief whose truth is wished for but for which there is no evidence in extramental reality or is improbable by the evidence of extramental reality. If Freud's assertion, therefore, that religion is an illusion is to be convincing, he must first demonstrate that he possesses indubitable knowledge of extramental reality and, then, that scientific belief is true of extramental reality. Just the opposite is the case. As the examination of Freud's epistemological positions in the preceding pages reveals, Freud vacillated on the question whether humans could attain knowledge of extramental reality as it is; and if on occasion he maintained that humans could know extramental reality, the credibility of this as-

(90) *Ibid.*, 170f.

(91) *S.E.*, Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), p. 55.

sertion is vitiated by his many statements which unequivocally contradict it.⁹² Witness the following taken from passages quoted earlier:

1. "But does not every science come in the end to a kind of mythology like this?" (1932)⁹³

2. "The unconscious . . . in its innermost nature is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world." (1900)⁹⁴

3. "... 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 . . ." (1915)⁹⁵

4. "Reality will always remain unknowable." (1940)⁹⁶

The conclusion consequently is inevitable that Freud's extrapsychoanalytic effort to present decisive argumentation that theistic religion is an illusion (or delusion) failed. Yet, more completely than any other theory in the history of thought, psychoanalysis explains how theistic religion can be created as a phantasy by an intramental process. That nevertheless this does not mean that theistic religion is in fact a phantasy and untrue of extramental reality is due to the intrinsic limitations of the human mind. Owing to its inherent finity, no person can present a demonstration claiming absolute and indubitable knowledge of extramental reality that will be accepted after critical examination by all other persons who are philosophically aware. The history of philosophy — the field of study that deals in disciplined fashion with the question of human knowledge of extramental reality — is a history of metaphysicians who radically and fundamentally disagree with one another. It is evident that the human mind epistemologically begins *in medias res*, over an abyss, and cannot demonstrate to the satisfaction of all other competent observers (even if it satisfies itself) that its beginning premises are not arbitrary. Freud, in his rather frequent changes of epistemological and metaphysical positions, appears as a microcosm that reflects the continuing changes in the history of philosophy macrocosm. As has been true of the history of philosophy (taken as a totality), indubitable knowledge on the question of extramental reality eluded him, and as a result his contention that belief in theistic religion is an illusion (or delusion) and false never attained irrefragable status.⁹⁷

(92) *Supra*, p. 26ff.

(93) *Supra*, p. 15.

(94) *Supra*, p. 15.

(95) *Supra*, p. 17.

(96) *Supra*, p. 22.

(97) If psychoanalysis is valid, and I believe it is, then the implication is present that unconscious forces influenced the formation and intensity of Freud's extrapsychoanalytic adversative thinking on religion and philosophy. This comment is not made as a prelude

C. FREUD'S CONCEPT OF GOD

The term 'God' is here defined as the ground, that is, basic metaphysical cause, of being and/or the processes of being. The concept of theism, described above, comes under this definition as does the Freudian God-view and generally the other god concepts that have been put forth in the history of thought. Still, Freud's concept of 'God' differs fundamentally from the theistic God-view. The theistic God-view falls under the category of God-concepts called theosupernaturalism; the Freudian God-view belongs to the theonaturalism classification.⁹⁸ In theosupernaturalism, the term 'God' is understood as referring to a being that can and does miraculously interrupt the natural processes of the universe. In theonaturalism, the term 'God' is so defined that there are no miraculous interventions into the processes of the universe, which, consequently, is entirely governed by the laws of nature. Freud was not a systematic theologian, and it has been necessary therefore to reconstruct his theology from a number of revealing remarks he dispersed among his writings.

I have attempted to avoid three temptations in reconstructing the Freudian God-view. The first is overstating Freud's concept of 'God', that is, attributing to him more than can be reasonably inferred from his remarks. The second is overdrawing upon Multatuli to fill in the gaps left by Freud's sporadic comments. Yet discriminating use of Multatuli is certainly in order. Freud explicitly expresses his agreement with Multatuli, and refers his readers to Multatuli's writings.⁹⁹ The third

to conjectures regarding Freud's unconscious, an enterprise I consider futile. Rather, it is offered for the sake of completeness and for whatever it is worth. An interesting observation perhaps related to this point is that Freud often wrote in a dialectical style in his writings that pertain to religion and philosophy, opposing his own views and those of his opponents in a dialogue. (This is not to deny that he does so in other works as well; notably, *The Question of Lay Analysis* [1926], *S.E.*, Vol. XX, pp. 177 ff.) It does not require a subtle and abstruse understanding of psychoanalysis to recognize that an author who writes in a dialectical style, since he is both himself and the opponent with whom he is disputing, does in some sense identify with his partner in dialogue. Do the partners in dialogue with whom Freud debates on religion and philosophy represent vestiges of himself that remain unvanquished and must be therefore disavowed and repudiated? This view is given credence by the fact that the proponents of philosophic positions he has himself at one time advocated are at another time attacked and disparaged with great feeling. E.g., he calls 'nihilists' and 'anarchists' those who say there is no assured knowledge of reality (see *supra*, p. 8), yet this 'nihilist' position is one he has himself put forth on a number of occasions (see *infra*, p. 43).

(98) A.J. Reines (*supra*, n. 82), p. 38.

(99) *S.E.*, Vol. IX ("Contribution to a Questionnaire on Reading" [1907]), p. 246; *ibid.*, XIX ("Economic Problem of Masochism"), p. 168; *ibid.*, Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), p. 54, n. 1.

is to assume that Freud possessed a philosophy historian's knowledge of the rich philosophic history behind the terms he employed for his concept of 'God', and that this knowledge therefore is entirely relevant to an understanding of his meaning. This having been said, it can be stated at the outset that it is quite evident that Freud's primary source for his concept of 'God' is Multatuli. I do not mean by this that Freud did not arrive at similar thoughts on his own — he very likely did — but the particular formulations and language he used are clearly derived from Multatuli.

1.

The most succinct way to introduce the Freudian God-view is by examining this passage.

There is little to be said against the Dutch writer Multatuli when he replaces the *Μοῖρα* [Destiny] of the Greeks by the divine pair *Λόγος καὶ Ἀνάγκη*, [Reason and Necessity]; but all who transfer the guidance of the world to Providence, to God, or to God and Nature, arouse a suspicion that they still look upon these ultimate and remotest powers as a parental couple, in a mythological sense, and believe themselves linked to them by libidinal ties.¹⁰⁰

Preliminary to more extensive analysis, the following points are clear.

1. *Logos* *Λόγος* and *Ananke* *Ἀνάγκη* are the guiding powers of the world. As such, they are 'divine' or godly.

2. *Logos* and *Ananke* are absolutely impersonal. They are in no sense conscious beings and it is a futile act of phantasy to relate to them as though they were persons, in particular, parental persons.

3. The terms 'providence', 'God', or 'God and Nature' are objectionable because they are commonly used anthropomorphically to refer to that which provides guidance to the world as persons. In other words, the generality of humankind employs these terms to refer to the theistic God-view or similar theosupernatural beings. No such anthropomorphic and anthropopathic beings exist except in phantasy;¹⁰¹ ultimately they are parental imagos projected onto the impersonal powers that in fact govern the world. The corollary to this point is that Freud has no objection in principle to the use of the term 'God' for an impersonal meta-

(100) *S.E.*, Vol. XIX ("The Economic Problem of Masochism" [1924]), p. 168.

(101) Maimonides objects even more strenuously than does Freud to the belief that deity is anthropomorphic and anthropopathic. He considers those who hold such a belief to be not only metaphysically ignorant but blaspheming heretics; *Guide of the Perplexed*, Part I, chapters 50–58, *inter alia*.

physical principle of being if it is made unequivocally clear that it does not refer to a supernatural person such as a theistic God, and there is consequently no intention to deceive the reader.¹⁰²

In the passage quoted above, Freud states his agreement with Multatuli that Reason (*Logos*) and Necessity (*Ananke*) are the guiding powers of the universe. Freud's statement is not to be understood, however, as implying that there are two separate grounds of being. He means rather that the ground of being, or God, has two integrated attributes or aspects, Reason and Necessity. Despite Freud's view that the ground of being has two attributes, Reason and Necessity, he referred to the ground most frequently simply by the name Necessity (*Ananke*).¹⁰³

Thus we are brought to the question: What does Freud mean by 'Necessity'? He did not answer this question in so many words, but his intent is clear: 'Necessity' is the principle by virtue of which natural causation is fixed, permanent, and unalterable;¹⁰⁴ or in other words, the metaphysical reason events in the universe take place according to the laws of nature. Nothing for Freud is exempt from inexorable 'Necessity'. Since Freud declares his debt to Multatuli, we are free to draw on the latter to expand on Freud's concept of 'Necessity'. Multatuli illustrates the meaning of 'Necessity' by the proposition $1 + 1 = 2$ — by God's will it cannot be more or less than two; it must be two. "The necessity," he states, "that wills this, prescribes and dispenses it, is almighty, eternal, immutable, is God."¹⁰⁵

(102) See further on this point, *infra*, pp. 63ff.

(103) In fact, Freud uses the term Necessity, i.e., *Ananke*, as a name for the ground of being long before he ever mentions Reason, i.e., *Logos*. As pointed out by the editor, Freud employed the term *Ananke*, in his paper on Leonardo (1910), whereas *Logos* is first mentioned in the "Economic Problem of Masochism" (1924); *S.E.*, Vol. XIX, p. 168, n. 4. Use of only one attribute to refer to a deity is widespread, e.g., the term 'Almighty' is employed to refer to the theistic God although omnipotence is but one of the attributes predicated of deity in the theistic God-concept.

Freud also employs the term 'Fate' for the principle of being; see *infra*, p. 50f.

(104) Freud was a strict determinist; see *inter alia* *S.E.*, Vol. VI, pp. xiiif., and pp. 253f.

(105) "Dit is Gods wil, namelijk: 't is noodzakelyk dat $1 + 1 = 2$ is. Die som kan niet meer wezen dan twee, ze kan riet minder zyn dan twee, ze is dus twee.

De noodzakelykheid die dit wil, coorschryft en handhaaft, is almachtig, eeuwig, onveranderlyk, is God." Multatuli (pseudonym of E. D. Dekker), *Multatuli — Denker En Dichter* ([Amsterdam,] 1919), p. 97. There is a striking similarity between Multatuli's and Freud's views of 'necessity' and Spinoza's. The following quotation from H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza I* ([Cambridge,] 1948), p. 416, demonstrates this similarity: "All these three principles [regarding God's nature and action] are included in what Spinoza calls necessity, by which he means that things cannot be otherwise than what they are, that they cannot be more than they are, and that they cannot be more perfect than they are". Was Freud aware of a philosophic-theological affinity with Spinoza? It may be. Freud

We may take it as established that Freud did not consider Necessity, the ground of being, as a person, yet this did not keep him from expressing emotions of respect — even reverence — for the impersonal deity, or employing with reference to it such terms as 'god' and 'goddess'. In addition he describes Necessity in terms ('stern', 'educator', 'instructress') ordinarily used in respect of persons. Thus he writes:

But, you will ask, if people make such a mystery of their phantasying, how is it that we know such a lot about it: Well, there is a class of human beings upon whom, not a god, but a stern goddess — Necessity — has allotted the task of telling what they suffer and what things give them happiness. These are the victims of nervous illness, who are obliged to tell their phantasies, among other things, to the doctor by whom they expect to be cured by mental treatment.¹⁰⁶

....

A surgeon of earlier times took as his motto the words: "Je le pansai, Dieu le guérit" ['I dressed his wounds, God cured him']. The analyst should be content with something similar.¹⁰⁷

....

But we know the power which forced a development [of the libido] of this kind upon humanity and maintains its pressure in the same direction to-day. It is, once again, frustration by reality, or, if we are to give it its true, grand name, the pressure of vital needs — Necessity (*Ανάγκη* [*Ananke*]). She has been a strict educator and has made much out of us. The neurotics are among those of her children to whom her strictness has brought evil results; but that is a risk with all education.¹⁰⁸

....

The other instincts [other than sexual ones], the ego-instincts, have the same aim [pleasure] to start with. But under the influence of the instructress Necessity, they soon learn to replace the pleasure principle by a modification of it.¹⁰⁹

quotes a poem of Heine expressing a sentiment Freud ascribes to "one of our fellow-unbelievers." The word "*Unglaubensgenossen*," which is the original German for "fellow-unbelievers" was, according to the *S.E.* editor, "applied by Heine himself to Spinoza"; *S.E.*, Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), p. 50 and n. 1. It is also interesting to note that Freud, like Spinoza, had non-theistic names for the deity; Necessity, Fate, Logos and Nature for the former; Substance for the latter.

(106) *S.E.*, Vol. IX ("Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" [1908]), p. 146.

(107) *S.E.*, Vol. XII ("Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-analysis" [1912]), p. 115 and n. 1.

(108) *S.E.*, Vol. XVI (*Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* [1917]), p. 355.

If we are to die ourselves, and first to lose in death those who are dearest to us, it is easier to submit to a remorseless law of nature, to the sublime [Necessity], than to a chance which perhaps might have been escaped.¹¹⁰

2.

Consideration must now be given to *Logos* (or Reason) that along with *Ananke* (or Necessity) is an attribute of Freud's God. What property does *Logos* give to God in addition to the attribute of *Ananke*? *Ananke*, as we have seen, is the attribute of the ground of being by reason of which events in the universe take place inexorably according to the laws of nature. *Logos*, on the other hand, is the attribute of the ground of being by virtue of which the inexorable processes of nature are such that they are intelligible to the human mind.¹¹¹ Thus intelligible, the human mind is able to comprehend natural causation and shape being to benevolent human ends. As he does with the term *Ananke*, Freud at times uses the term *Logos* alone to refer to the ground of being, that is, 'God', although it is only one of its attributes. In addition, Freud employs the term *Logos* for the human intellect, which is the power that comprehends the *Logos* of the ground of being. Together, *Logos* as the intelligible aspect of God and *Logos* as the human comprehending faculty can meliorate the human condition. Freud describes in the passage below how in his view God will serve to bring about the betterment of humankind.

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

(109) *Ibid.*, p. 357.

(110) *S.E.*, Vol. XVIII (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [1920]), p. 45.

(111) The *locus classicus* of the concept that Reason and Necessity are principles or causes of being is Plato's *Timaeus* (47E–48E). Plato begins his discussion of the subject thus: "Now our foregoing discourse, save for a few matters, has set forth the works wrought by the craftsmanship of Reason; but we must now set beside them the things that come about of [N]ecessity. For the generation of this universe was a mixed result of the combination of Necessity [Ἀνάγκη] and Reason [νοῦς rather than Λόγος]. Reason over-ruled Necessity by persuading her to guide the greatest part of the things that become towards what is best; in that way and on that principle this universe was fashioned in the beginning by the victory of reasonable persuasion over Necessity." Translation by F.M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology* ([London,] 1937, p. 160. As Cornford points out in his commentary (*ibid.*, pp. 161–177), there is considerable disagreement among scholars as to Plato's precise meaning regarding this passage (a subject we cannot pursue since it would take us far afield).

of no small importance. And from it one can derive yet other hopes. The primacy of the intellect lies, it is true, in a distant, distant future, but probably not in an infinitely distant one. It will presumably set itself the same aims as those whose realization you expect from your God (of course within human limits — so far as external reality, Ἀνάγκη,¹¹² allows it), namely the love of man and the decrease of suffering. This being so, we may tell ourselves that our antagonism is only a temporary one and not irreconcilable. We desire the same things, but you are more impatient, more exacting, and — why should I not say it? — more self-seeking than I and those on my side. You would have the state of bliss begin directly after death; you expect the impossible from it and you will not surrender the claims of the individual. Our God, Λόγος, will fulfil whichever of these wishes nature outside us allows, but he will do it very gradually, only in the unforeseeable future, and for a new generation of men. He promises no compensation for us, who suffer grievously from life ...

Our god Λόγος is perhaps not a very almighty one, and he may only be able to fulfil a small part of what his predecessors have promised. If we have to acknowledge this we shall accept it with resignation.¹¹³

3.

Ananke is for Freud, as has been described, the aspect of God that is the metaphysical principle or determining cause responsible for the inexorability of the laws of nature. These laws result at times in ineluctable events or evils, such as death, that humans must endure. When the laws of nature produce such evils, the metaphysical principle of the laws, namely, the *Ananke* aspect of God, is at times referred to by Freud as 'Fate' rather than *Ananke*, as the following passages illustrate.

(112) In addition to the use of Ἀνάγκη to refer to an attribute of his God-view and to deity itself, Freud here uses it in a third sense to refer to extramental reality.

(113) *S.E.*, Vol. XXI (*The Future of an Illusion* [1927]), 53f. Albert Einstein fundamentally agreed with Freud's concept of deity. In Einstein's statement, "God does not play dice with the universe," the same view as that held by Freud is expressed, namely, that the principle of being's process of causation which governs the universe constitutes a strict determinism. Similarly, Einstein agrees with Freud in rejecting the theistic notion that the principle of being exercises personal providence over humans. Einstein believed, as he described it, "in Spinoza's God who revealed himself in the harmony of all that exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and actions of men." Quotations from R.W. Clark, *Einstein: The Life and Times* (1971), p. 19.

Fate is 'untamed nature' — the forces of nature that humans have failed to bring under control, and which wreak havoc upon human life.

But no one is under the illusion that nature has already been vanquished; and few dare hope that she will ever be entirely subjected to man. There are the elements, which seem to mock at all human control: the earth, which quakes and is torn apart and buries all human life and its works; water, which deluges and drowns everything in a turmoil; storms, which blow everything before them; there are diseases, which we have only recently recognized as attacks by other organisms; and finally there is the painful riddle of death against which no medicine has yet been found, nor probably will be. With these forces nature rises up against us, majestic, cruel, and inexorable; she brings to mind once more our weakness and helplessness, which we thought to escape through the work of civilization . . . To this [the distress caused by civilization and fellow human beings] are added the injuries which untamed nature — he calls it Fate — inflicts on him.¹¹⁴

Theistic religious needs arise from the "infant's helplessness and the longing for the father" this produces. It is Fate, however, the destructive forces, that sustains these needs in adulthood.

The derivation of religious needs from the infant's helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it seems to me incontrovertible, especially since the feeling is not simply prolonged from childhood days, but is permanently sustained by fear of the superior power of Fate.¹¹⁵

Historically, those who believe in the theistic God-view deal with the suffering Fate inflicts upon them in a psychically tortuous manner. Rather than give up belief in theism as illusory when calamities come upon them, they blame themselves for their misfortunes, maintaining their afflictions are punishments they deserve because they have sinned against the theistic God.

Fate is regarded as a substitute for the parental agency. If a man is unfortunate it means that he is no longer loved by this highest power; and, threatened by such loss of love, he once more bows

(114) *S.E.*, Vol. XXI *The Future of an Illusion* [1927], pp. 15f.; also, *ibid.*, p. 50.

(115) *Ibid.*, p. 72. The implication of this statement is interesting. Humans would grow out of the need to believe in theistic or T-God were it not for the anguishing onslaughts of Fate or F-God.

to the parental representative in his super-ego — a representative whom, in his days of good fortune, he was ready to neglect. This becomes especially clear where Fate is looked upon in the strictly religious sense of being nothing else than an expression of the Divine Will. The people of Israel had believed themselves to be the favourite child of God, and when the great Father caused misfortune after misfortune to rain down upon this people of his, they were never shaken in their belief in his relationship to them or questioned his power or righteousness. Instead, they produced the prophets, who held up their sinfulness before them; and out of their sense of guilt they created the over-strict commandments of their priestly religion.¹¹⁶

If those who believe in theism deal with Fate by self-denunciation as sinners, and beg forgiveness of their deity, how does Freud, who adheres to his naturalistic God and regards theism as an illusion, cope with the destructive aspect of his God called Fate? By the renunciation of desire ('wishes') for that which of necessity Fate has determined will not occur and the acceptance of ('acquiescence in') that which Fate has determined must be. (Freud makes this observation in explaining his lack of concern that the publication of *The Future of an Illusion* may cause him harm.)

The one person this publication may injure is myself . . . But if one puts in any pleas at all for the renunciation of wishes and for acquiescence in Fate, one must be able to tolerate this kind of injury too.¹¹⁷

D. FREUD'S THEORIES OF REALITY AND GOD

One last question remains for discussion: is Freud's God-view with its attributes of *Logos* and *Ananke*, compatible with each of the four philosophic theories that Freud subscribed to at various times, namely, direct realism, representative realism, transcendental idealism, and phenomenalism. The consideration that prompts this question is this. Two of the epistemological positions Freud takes, representative realism and transcendental idealism,¹¹⁸ state that the human mind cannot know extramental being or reality as it exists in itself, whereas direct realism

(116) *Ibid.*, pp. 126ff.

(117) *Ibid.*, 35 f.; also see *supra*, p. 49 ("... we shall accept it [the Freudian God-view] with resignation.").

(118) When transcendental idealism is interpreted as maintaining *sensa* are S-sensa; *supra*, p. 16ff.

and phenomenalism maintain that the mind can. Freud's God-view is compatible with the latter two positions,¹¹⁹ but the former two present a problem. Can we speak of Freud's God-view, which is the principle of being, if extramental being as it exists in itself is unknowable?

The answer I propose is that Freud's God-view remains a meaningful concept even if the position is taken that being as it is in itself is unknowable. For despite the unknowability of extramental being in itself, S-sensa and other intramental events are known, and these also constitute being, although — in the Kantian sense — they form phenomenal, not noumenal, reality. Freud's God-view would then be the principle or ground of phenomenal being. As the principle of phenomenal rather than noumenal being Freud's God-view may be entirely untrue, but given the limits of the epistemological system within which it is a concept, it possesses a reasonable probability of truth and its falsehood can never be ultimately determined. Thus, although its truth cannot be determined with certainty, still, the coherence of Freud's God-view with all that is known argues that it be given serious theological consideration.

In sum, all of Freud's epistemological positions are compatible with his concept of God, an impersonal metaphysical cause of a universe in which the laws of nature are inexorable yet intelligible to human reason, and which is indifferent to human concerns but can within limits be persuaded by human reason to meet human needs. Freud's contribution to reason's array of tools necessary to direct the forces of deity toward rational and beneficent human ends was the monumental discovery of psychoanalysis.

(119) A.J. Reines (*supra*, n. 82), p. 175ff.