Denial as Vice

Youssef Yacoub

Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation

Yacoub, Youssef, "Denial as Vice" (1990). Dissertations. 2730.
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/2730

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

Creative Commons License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.

Copyright © 1990 Youssef Yacoub
DENIAL AS VICE

by

Youssef Yacoub

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May

1990
Dedicated to my mother,

Sophie Yacoub
(c) Copyright, Youssef Yacoub
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Words are too faint in expressing my infinite gratitude to all those who directly or indirectly have helped me in completing this project. I wish to express special thanks to the members of my committee:

Rev. Walter Krolikowski, S.J., the director of this thesis, whose wise guidance and supervision have been crucial to my learning how to articulate different disciplines and subject them to philosophical investigations;

Dr. Thomas Wren whose stimulating arguments have given me the privilege to renew my understanding of psychoanalysis;

Rev. Michael Perko, S.J., whose interest in psychoanalysis has been a powerful catalyst for my efforts to pursue my work.

I also cannot but acknowledge their respectful, amicable and trustworthy attitudes to my cultural background. My debt to them can only be acknowledged, never paid.

My thanks are stretched out to my family in France and Lebanon: my mother, my brother, Nicholas, and my two sisters, Therese and Emily and their families whose presence and prayers are God's gift to my life, my late
father whose precious advices still act as a sturdy
guidance to my life.

To my friends Mary Ann Connelly, William and Rachel
Gibbons, Dr. Paul Otubusin, Dr. Joan Smith, Dr. Richard
Westley, and Dr. Mike Schuk, many thanks for their support
all over the years I spent at Loyola.

Thanks to Ronald Rutkowski who helped me in putting my
bibliography together. Thanks to Dr. Thomas Ewens who drew
my attention to the difference between negation and denial
as they are expressed by Freud. Thanks to John Fredericks
who edited my last two chapters.

I also would like to thank Charlie Shepherd, Mike
Bogard, David Stout, Janice Roberts, and Barbara Martinez
for their friendly attitudes which made my break times as
pleasant as possible.

A special thanks to my great friend John Henry
Schuster whose friendship has been a deep expression of
support and brotherhood.

Last but not least my good thanks to my typist,
Valerie Collier.
VITA

The author, Youssef Yacoub, is the son of Raphael and Sophie Yacoub. He was born March 31, 1944 in Sidon, Lebanon.

His elementary education was obtained at the Collège des Frères Mariste, Sidon, Lebanon. His secondary education was completed in 1965 with a Baccalaureate Second Part at the International College, Beirut, Lebanon.

In October of 1965 he entered the American University of Beirut. In June 1969, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. In June 1972, he received a Teaching Diploma in History.

In October 1972, he taught English as a second language at the Alliance Française, Beirut, Lebanon.

In April 1974, he worked as an Educational Trainer at the Arabian-American-Oil-Company in Saudi Arabia. On the 31st of May 1981, he came to the USA to continue his education.

At Loyola University of Chicago he received the degree of Master of Pastoral Studies in 1983.

While at Loyola, in 1983-1990 he worked as an Administrative Assistant and as an Academic Counselor at the Institute of Pastoral Studies. As a faculty member he supervised several directed studies in the fields of
education, cross-cultural issues, philosophy and psychology. He also co-taught graduate courses.

In the Spring and Summer of 1989 he worked as a part-time Professor of Philosophy at Calumet College of St. Joseph, Indiana.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Context</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realization of the External World</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Notion of Denial or Disavowal</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Approach to the Meaning of Denial</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Approach to the Meaning of Disavowal</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Common Places</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As-a-Matter-of-Degree</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typology.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As-a-Matter-of-Language</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Denial as Vice Par Excellence</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE.</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separateness</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prologue

Faust. What is your name?

Mephistopheles. Small, Sir, The question seems
From one who gives the Word its lowest rate,
Who, far removed from semblances and dreams,
Only the depth of life will contemplate.

Faust. the nature of you doubtful gentleman
Nomenclature may help to recognize,
As may be seen specifically when
We say Destroyer, Prince of Flies, lies.
Who then are you?

Mephistopheles. Part of a power that would
Alone work evil, but engenders good.

Faust. What hidden meaning in this riddle lies?

Mephistopheles. The spirit I, that endless denies.

Goethe's Faust
(Part I)
INTRODUCTION

The ground of our interrogation is strictly directed to what is only implicit in Freud's literature: the theme of denial as vice. Our main concern is to show how Freud came to understand denial and how the notion of denial carries within itself an ethical problem. Understanding this implicit ethical problem we decided to draw out what is parallel and similar between Freud's writings on neurosis and psychosis and the philosophical perspectives of Aristotle's writings on ethics.

By attempting to explicate the direction of our investigation we promise neither an absolute clarity nor a new system in ethics. What we hope to achieve is a partial success; for the ambiguities inherent in Freud's text act as a stumbling block as we relate it to the field of ethics in general and Aristotle's in particular. As Freud teaches us we need to work "step by step" without overburdening ourselves with the "need" for an immediate completion. So, let us consider this investigation as a response to the invitation of many philosophers and psychologists, such as Jacques Lacan, Paul Ricoeur, William Richardson, etc. to turn back to Freud's psychoanalysis and attempt to evaluate its contributions; it might add an indispensable novelty to any intellectual and practical endeavors.
The first chapter attempts to define denial as a mechanism which occurs in states of psychosis, neurosis and normality. This is an application of Freud's perspectives on the two major different opposing directions the psychic energy tends to traverse: regression and progression. Considering these two directions, we will show the differences which characterize regression in normal development and those which characterize neurotic and psychotic denial.

The second chapter attempts to draw the framework of the major question: Can we consider denial as vice? The answer is yes. In order to develop our investigation, Aristotle's writings on ethics are considered in relation to the psychological writings of Freud. This relation is taken into account on the basis of finding the common places between Freud and Aristotle. Aristotle's three major notions of the excessive, the mean and the deficient are going to be related to the functions of the id, ego and superego as Freud sees their excessive and deficient functions conducive to sickness or health. Given the similarities between Freud and Aristotle we will come to understand how both seriously take into account that which "ruins" health and the person's relation to the external world.

Chapter three is an answer to this question: how do we encounter denial in an educational setting? Three
inextricably interwoven symptomatic notions are to be considered: separateness, anxiety and perception. Considering them separately, we will show how the regressive phenomenon of denial has negative effects on the student's function as a social being. Being intimately connected, we will see how anxiety is a phenomenon of separateness originated in the child's experience of the absence of the mother which in turn is experienced as danger. We will also see how denial results in distortions and inaccuracies in perceiving the external world.

The fourth chapter answers the following question: What are some of the virtues implied in Freud's psychoanalysis? In order to see this implicit side three important notions are to be discussed: common sense, psychopathology and the theory of cure. These three notions unfold the perspective that to be an articulate person is the weapon against vice. They also show us that functioning well is the heart of virtue; and functioning well is a tendency in the psyche which counteracts any conscious or unconscious malfunctions. In other words, we will see how building the virtues is what keeps the harmony between inherent pathology and inherent health. To substantiate our discussion, again, we will consider Aristotle's writings on ethics as evidence to what we will prove.

Finally, what is left is to acknowledge the fact that
investigating the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis is still in its infancy. If by any chance our research proves to be "partout et nulle part," i.e., neither satisfies the psychologist nor the philosopher, we should not be discouraged, instead we should follow what Freud teaches us that we should consider things step by step and never hesitate to reconsider the same phenomenon again and again.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to define the notion of denial in Freud's literature. Undoubtedly, defining a notion aims at "clarity of understanding," and it also aims at drawing the line of demarcation in a distinct fashion. In other words, explanation becomes an important factor in contributing to the field of "knowledge," and in clarifying the meaning of denial and its characteristics as distinguished from other notions. But, it may be disappointing to find out that some ambiguities and some confusions are evident in Freud's texts which may lead the investigator to pose unanswered questions. Due to his authentic scientific approach, Freud admits this fact and leaves these ambiguities and confusions liable for future clarifications.

It is almost humiliating that, after working so long, we should still be having difficulties in understanding the most fundamental facts. But we have made up our minds to simplify nothing and to hide nothing. If we cannot see things clearly we will at least see clearly what the obscurities
The presence of ambiguities should not discourage us. On the contrary, they are sources of "excitement" as a means of discovering the "beyond." Without this excitement our search to uncover the truth would be dull and boring.

Confronting these ambiguities and confusions we might "limp" without being capable of "flying." That said, in addition to many sub-questions, two major questions should be answered: 1) What is denial according to Freud? 2) What is the context in which Freud came to tackle this important notion? I will start with the latter.

The Context

Freud found himself in an enigmatic position in explicating his crucial notion of the unconscious. In the last section of his paper "The Unconscious" he acknowledges the fact that the results of his discussion of the unconscious is rather unclear. "It is certainly not much, and at some points it gives an impression of obscurity and confusion."² This impasse brought him to search for another alternative by which a proper and a clearer explanation could be attained. So, he made an interruptive appeal to schizophrenia. He says, "It is only the analysis


of schizophrenia that promises to furnish us with conceptions through which the enigmatic unconscious will be brought more within the reach"3 . . . "]It] is indispensable for a general understanding of the unconscious."4 The important position of schizophrenia is its "...reference to the anti-thesis between ego and object."5 Considering the importance of the ego in relation to its object, in schizophrenia, the regression extends "not merely to narcissism but to a complete abandonment of object-love and a return to infantile auto-eroticism."6 It is worth noting that regression according to Freud is nothing "than a name (for) an inexplicable phenomenon."7 This suggests that regression has unknown implications.

Now, what is this infantile-eroticism? Originally, Freud says that the infant exists in a state of an "undifferentiated immediacy." This means that the infant cannot distinguish between the ego and the object; "to start with, the child certainly makes no distinction between the breast and his own body."8 In other words, the

4. Ibid. p. 203.
5. Ibid. p. 196.
8. S. Freud, Standard Edition, V. XXIII, p. 188.
The ego "includes everything." The ego is the world. This is to say that the breast of the mother is the infant's world and the infant's world is the breast of the mother. It is a state of unified presence in one unified world, i.e., a "psychical rest."

**Realization of the External World**

What does this tell us? 1) The infant is in a state of "helplessness." 2) The infant is unilaterally dependent on an external reality which he is not aware of as external to himself. 3) As a result the necessity of external reality imposes itself as a factor of separation between the infant and his mother. Gradually, the infant starts to notice the absence or the separation: "...When the breast has to be separated" Freud says, "from his body and shifted to the 'outside' because he so often finds it absent, it carries with it now that it is an 'object' a part of the original narcissistic cathexis." Thus for the first time, the infant realizes that there is something existing "outside." The emergence of the external world starts to have an impact on the infant. The infant starts to realize his own dependence on this outside world which starts with the need for the mother. Then, what happens?

To go into details is not the purpose of this chapter. Suffice to outline the main points of Freud's description

---


of this important transition period. This is stated as it appears in the last section of the *Interpretation of dreams*. 1) Internal needs such as hunger or thirst appear. 2) The satisfaction of these needs is attained by either the mother or by "hallucination." 3) The unavoidable internal needs and their satisfaction by either the mother or by hallucination show that the infant acts under the influence of a spontaneous reflex apparatus. According to Freud, these three stages obey the "pleasure principle." They are called the "primary process." 4) Hallucination comes to a point when it proves to be unsatisfactory to the infant. Consequently, the reality testing principle emerges. This is called the "secondary process." This obeys the law of the "unpleasure principle." How the unpleasure principle emerges is ambiguous in Freud's thought.

What does Freud imply by the unpleasure principle? The state of the "psychical rest" mentioned before implies a purpose of staying in this "Nirvana" by avoiding stimulation from the external world. But, according to Freud, these internal needs are not "operative" without the stimulation from the external world which impinges on the infant's "reflex system." To be faithful to the "Nirvana" state, these stimulations are avoided by reflex activities, such as kicking and screaming by which the infant calls the mother in order to restore the lost unity. Freud considers
these reflex activities as "motor flight." These automatic spontaneous activities Freud describes as "an original attempt at flight from the external world with its emission of stimuli." Yet, one must bear in mind that this "psychic rest" not only receives or is disturbed by external stimulation. It is also disturbed by internal instinctual needs. In this regard, the infant is caught up by the inner stimulation and the outer stimulation. This state is clearly expressed in "Instincts" in the form of an invented case.

Let us imagine ourselves in the situation of an almost entirely helpless living organism, as yet unoriented in the world, which is receiving stimuli in its nervous substance. This organism will very soon be in a position to make a first distinction and a first orientation. On the one hand, it will be aware of stimuli which can be avoided by muscular action (flight); these ascribe to our external world. On the other hand, it will also be aware of stimuli against which such action is of no avail and whose character of constant pressure persists in spite of it. These stimuli are the signs of our internal world, the evidence of instinctual needs. The perceptual substance of the living

organism will thus have found in the efficacy of its muscular activity a basis for distinguishing between an 'outside' and an 'inside.'\textsuperscript{12}

Having in mind what we mentioned about the auto-erotic stage or the 'Nirvana' state, this crucial state is called by Freud "the original reality ego." This differs from the reality testing ego which is developed upon the impinging of stimulations from the external world. What is really important is that this confrontation with the external world assures a series of complex inner interrelated activities whose main objective is to change the external world. This is what really led Freud to conclude that instincts are "the true motive forces behind the advances [which] have led the nervous system, with its unlimited capacities, to its present high level of development."\textsuperscript{13}

In this sense, the high level of development is meant to be, we think, in the Freudian sense, the capacity to have the "passage" to the external world. In other words, the infant "takes into itself," "incorporates," "introjects," "devours," and "establishes one identification" with the object. Yet, the infant "expels," "projects" and "throws outside" all that gives rise to unpleasurable feelings. Freud expresses this in his paper on \textit{Negation}:

\begin{quote}
Expressed in the language of the oldest... the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 119.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 120.
oral... instinctual impulse, the judgement is: 'I should like to eat this' or 'I should like to spit it out'; and put more generally: 'I should like to take this into myself and to keep that out.' That is to say: "It shall be inside me' or 'it shall be outside me.' As I have shown elsewhere, the original pleasure ego wants to introject into itself everything that is good and to eject from itself everything that is bad.14

From the above discussion we come to know that the infant moves onward from a state of oneness with the mother (auto-erotic) to a state of separation from the mother which is fundamental to the formation of the ego testing of the external reality. In the Ego and the Id, Freud explains in detail the ego as "essentially the representation of the external world."15 We also come to know that in schizophrenia there is a psychotic wishful attempt to regress back to this "Nirvana" state by detaching oneself from the external world. This separation from the external world is similar to the separation of the infant from his or her mother which in turn gives rise to hallucination as an attempt to restore again the lost relationship. In the following section we will introduce further explanation of schizophrenia as an extreme case of

15. Ibid., p. 25.
denial. The theme of schizophrenia became important as a means to overcome the difficulties Freud encountered concerning the unconscious. The question is, what are the characteristics of schizophrenia that Freud thought of as valuable in understanding the unconscious? In order to answer the question let us first state the precise difference Freud gave between the conscious and the unconscious as an answer to the question he had posed at the beginning of "The Unconscious":

We now seem to know all at once what the difference is between a conscious and an unconscious presentation. The two are not, as we supposed, different psychical localities, nor yet different functional states of cathexis in the same locality; but the conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone."16

In regard to this difference between the unconscious and the conscious, a pathological state means a failure in "translating" the "thing presentations" into "word presentations" which in their normal conditions remain in contact with the object.

So, how do we see schizophrenia in this context? In

this context, the origin of schizophrenia, according to Freud, is a "dispositional fixation" that "lies somewhere at the beginning of the course of development from auto-eroticism to object-love."¹⁷ This is to say, at the beginning the object-love is not differentiated by the infant. In other words, the object-love is "me" and the infant is unable to draw the line of demarcation which is represented by "I am not it." In his paper: "Psychoanalytic Notes on the Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia," Freud provides us with the case of Schreber who came to speak of an internal catastrophe and a belief that the end of the world is at hand. In this state of mind, Schreber showed detachment from things he previously loved and from people. This state of detachment is called by Freud "the survival of the self alone." It is a state of a detachment from the external world. Although this case shows Schreber as paranoic, yet, as a matter of degree a schizophrenic shows an extreme detachment from the external world. The schizophrenic shows the following:

1) Gives up object cathexis.
2) Returns to a primitive objectless condition of auto-eroticism.
3) Exhibits to a great degree disorganized and incomprehensible sentences.
4) Refers to bodily organs.

5) Utters words that predominate over what has to do with things, i.e., cathexis on word presentations rather than thing presentations.

6) Treats concrete things as though they were abstract.

7) Denies external reality.

8) Hallucinates to restore what was lost.

Having these characteristics in mind, we notice that there is a split between the two worlds. The link between them is broken. In "The Unconscious," Freud maintains, "What we have permissibly called conscious presentation of the object now be split up into the presentation of the word and the presentation of the thing." Freud does not elucidate the different mechanics in a psychotic disavowal of external reality. He says that the "elucidation of the various mechanisms which are designed, in the psychoses, to turn the subject away from reality and to reconstruct reality--this is a task for specialized psychiatric study which has not yet been taken at hand." What is really shown in Freud's comment is a problem that demands a clear expression. A concept would be much clearer if we contrast it with other concepts. That said, one still feels that obtaining an absolute clarity in Freud's literature could be disappointing. The notions are overlapped and

ambiguities are inevitable. The least we can do is to try. If our try will prove fruitless, all we can say is that it is worth the try. Let us start with the differences between neurosis and psychosis. It is worth noting that neither the term "denial" nor "disavowal" is used in "Neurosis and Psychosis" nor in the "Ego and the Id." But what is really important is to decipher the text and try to find out what is implicit rather than what is only explicit. In "The Ego and the Id," Freud specifies the difference between neurosis and psychosis: "...neurosis is the result of a conflict between the ego and its id, whereas psychosis is the analogous outcome of a similar disturbance in the relations of the ego and the external world."20 Freud specifies this difference as a "genetic" one. Moreover, neurosis, according to Freud, maintains its dependence on the external world. In schizophrenia there is "a loss of all participation in the external world."21 As to the notion of disavowal or denial, in "Narcissism," Freud maintains that "...neurosis does not disavow reality, it only ignores it; psychosis disavows it and tries to replace it."22

But Freud modifies his perspective on neurosis and psychosis. In psychosis, Freud claims that the detachment

20. Ibid., p. 149.
22. Ibid. p. 185.
from external reality is "rarely if ever complete." How does this happen? Freud refers it to a split in the mind. He says,

Two mental attitudes have been formed instead of a single one... the normal one, which takes account of reality, and another which under the influence of the instincts detaches the ego from reality. The two exist alongside of each other. The issue depends upon their relative strength. If the second is or becomes the stronger the necessary condition for a psychosis is present."23

This also applies to neurosis. In fetishism as well as in some other forms of neurosis, denial of the external world is "half measures, incomplete attempts at detachment from reality."24 This denial of the external world is "always supplemented by an acceptance."25 It seems that there is an overlapping of issues. A neurotic person and a psychotic person suffer from a split in the ego. What is really the difference, we think, is only a matter of degree. Psychosis is an extreme form of denial and neurosis is a less extreme form of denial. Yet, we notice that there is a "continuity" between the two mental

24. Ibid. p. 204.
25. Ibid.
sicknesses. Unfortunately, Freud does not clearly specify the total distinction.

Although he discusses the notion of the split in the ego as it appears in his unfinished paper "Splitting of the Ego," in his "Outline of Psychoanalysis," and in other papers, the notion of denial was treated. But for Freud, as the proverb says, "plus tard que jamais" is beneficial. In his paper "Fetishism," the notion of denial becomes the center of his discussion. In this paper, Freud comes to a striking definition of denial:

A new technical term is justified when it describes a new fact or emphasizes it.... The oldest word in our psychoanalytical terminology, "repression," already relates to this pathological process. If we wanted to differentiate more sharply between the vicissitude of the idea as distinct from the affect, and reserve the word 'Verdrängung' ('repression') for the affect, then the correct German word for the vicissitude of the idea would be 'Verleugnung' ('disavowal') or denial.26

The notion of disavowal has two different contexts. The first is that which facilitates the developmental process of the child. Disavowal, in this context, is not dangerous as it is in the schizophrenic. In "Infantile

Genital Organization," Freud maintains, "Or, again, a process may set in which I should like to call a 'disavowal,' a process which in the mental life of children seems neither uncommon nor very dangerous but which in an adult would mean the beginning of psychosis."27 How does Freud explain this unharmful disavowal? In the same paper he says,

We know how children react to their first impressions of the absence of a penis. They disavow the fact and believe that they do see a penis all the same. They gloss over the contradiction between observation and preconception by telling themselves that the penis is still small and will grow bigger presently; and they then slowly come to the emotionally significant conclusion that after all the penis had at least been there before and been taken away afterwards. The lack of penis is regarded as a result of a castration, and so now the child is faced with the task of coming to terms with castration in relation to himself. The further developments are too well known generally to make it necessary to recapitulate them here."28

28. Ibid., pp. 243-244.
From the above discussion we notice that Freud's way of thinking is a paradoxical one. This is to say that in Freud's thought what is normal could be abnormal at a later stage and vice-versa. This leaves us with a state of puzzling ambiguities if we want to follow the linear way of thinking. Paul Ricoeur in his book *Freud and Philosophy* describes Freud's thought as the logic of the illogical. We can also look at this kind of thought as the thought of interrelatedness. Donald Davidson in his celebrated article "Paradoxes of Irrationality" also shows that the agents of the psyche, the ego, the id and the superego are "semi-independent" agents. In other words, in regard to Freud's way of thinking it is like someone who says yes and no at the same time. It is the logic of the dialectic whose synthesis is an ongoing process. But this should not blind us if we have in mind Moliere's statement quoted by Freud in his XVIII lecture "Fixation Upon Traumas: The Unconscious," "Il y a fagots et fagots." This means, according to Freud, that there is knowing and there is knowing, and psychoanalysis is a way of knowing different from other ways of knowing. It is a new language as Paul Ricoeur says. That said, let us consider the state of sleep which is a normal aspect of our everyday life and see how a psychotic action of the psyche could penetrate or

In his Outline of Psychoanalysis, Freud identifies dream action with "psychotic" actions. "The Unconscious" in which he formulates the relations between the conscious and the unconscious is considered to be an illumination on his theory of dreams. Freud proposes that dreams are compared with "pathological states akin to them." Why? The characteristics of dreams are like those of schizophrenia; they are "...almost complete withdrawal from the surrounding world and a cessation of interest in it." Since the ego is the agent formed by the stimulations impinging from the external world, the ego detaches itself from this external world and regresses to a state of primitive narcissism; "...in the state of sleep, the [ego] is carried to the point of restoring primitive narcissism." Regression does not only effect the ego, it also effects the libido. In the state of sleep the libido "...goes back to the stage of hallucinatory satisfaction of wishes." This is to say that there is a "withdrawal of cathexis from all ideas of objects from both the preconscious and the unconscious portions of those ideas."
But, this is not to understand that there is a complete withdrawal of cathexis. The unconscious retains some of its cathexis as well as the preconscious retains some of its. In other words, in dreams, "word-presentations are taken back to the thing presentations which belong to them." \(^{34}\) This movement must not mislead us when it is said that dreams have schizophrenic actions. What is common between dreams and schizophrenia is that both show two major characteristics: 1) A withdrawal from the external world, and 2) a hallucinatory quality. How hallucination comes into this Freud does not adequately explain. What is dissimilar between schizophrenia and dreams is that in dreams there is a free association between word-cathexes (Preconscious) and thing-cathexis (Unconscious). In schizophrenia this association does not occur. In this sense, in dreams there is a process by which the psyche, to a large extent, detaches itself from the external world in order to mirror or reflect upon itself. Both states, the waking state and the sleeping state, are interrelated by a back and forth movement; one withdraws from external reality in order to come back to it in the waking state, i.e. external reality testing. How similar to the French proverb: "Reculez pour mieux sautez."

In this matter, reality testing is not fully explained

\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 228.
by Freud. It seems that Freud has a via negativa style. He explains what is normal by what is pathological, "We can already learn from pathology the way in which reality-testing may be done away with or put out of action." Reality testing is put out of action because the ego has to "disavow" what is found to be unbearable in the external reality. Consequently, the ego breaks off its relation with this reality. But having in mind what was said before, that detachment from external reality could be extreme but rarely complete, the psyche tries to adjust itself in a homeostatic way; in this case the "wish" is a means to restore its lost homeostatic action. Then a wishful psychosis is a reaction to "...a loss which reality affirms, but which the ego has to disavow." This is to say that a "wish" tries to regain what has been lost.

What does this mean in a non-pathological state? What it really means is that Freud did not only intend to investigate the pathogenic side of the psyche. What he really intended to investigate is the normal development of the human being. His concern was with man in the world as Franz Alexander implies in his book, The Western Mind in Transition. A person who is able to "participate" in the

35. Ibid., p. 233.
36. Ibid.
world, to integrate conflicts, to develop a readiness for this world in which he or she lives. Integration, participation and readiness find their root or nucleus not in the present, but in the past and extend their influence to the present and the future. These three notions as implied by Freud are seen within the context of interrelatedness of the past, present and future. Lack of integration mostly resides in the past in a "precipitating situation." The inadequate early integration results in a fragile defense mechanism. In other words, there is a "symbolic repetition" of the early undesirable events. The dependency of the child is an extremely important notion which assumes the sociability of the human being. Denial of these external relationships destroys the possible readiness for integration and participation. In his "Formulation on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," Freud comments on the importance of external reality,

We are now confronted with the task of investigating the development of neurotics and of mankind in general to reality, and in this way of bringing the psychological significance of the real external world into the structure of our theories.38

The Notion of Denial or Disavowal

In this section two main approaches are going to be

discussed. The first is understanding denial as distinct from repression. The second approach is understanding denial as a matter of degree. The reader must be cautioned that an absolute clarity may not be achieved due to some ambiguities in Freud's text. Facing such a challenge, it would be enough to acknowledge "the obscurities." This is Freud's honest wish. Facing this challenge, let us try to uncover what could be implicit in some of Freud's texts.

Let us start with denial as seen in relation to repression which is according to Freud the primary factor in the genesis of neurosis. In his "Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" and in his "Formulation on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," denial or disavowal appears in a disguised fashion. In the latter, Freud says about neurosis that it "...has as its result and probably therefore as its purpose, a forcing of the patient out of real life, an alienating of him from reality."39 In this context, the defense mechanism used by Freud in regard to schizophrenia as well as to neurosis is repression (Ablehnung). The word "disavowal" is not used, but implied as detachment from real life. The dilemma remains in giving a technical word other than repression to the mechanism by which doing away with reality occurs. In his Introductory Lectures, Freud comes up with a temporary solution. He gives denial as an

39. Ibid.
equal meaning to repression. But he concludes with this cautious statement, "so far as we know at present."40 This means that he was prepared for further investigations.

Freud's interrogative investigations shows that he was aware of a different process than repression. For example, in "Narcissism" his interrogation pointed to disavowal without specifying it. This is explicitly apparent in finding the difference between 'repression' in schizophrenia and 'repression' in neuroses. At those difficult intellectual times the notion of repression was not clear enough as it appears in "Repression", due to his difficulty in explaining the relationships between the conscious and the unconscious. Although in the "Unconscious" he came to terms with these relationships, the notion of repression remained an enigma. The impasse reached its peak in "A Metaphysical Supplement to the Theory of Dreams," and without having a clear explanation, he called the process of detachment from external reality "disavowal."

In "Infantile Genital Organization" for the first time Freud technically uses the word denial. This in relation to the reaction of the little boy to his discovery that women don't have a penis. The little boy denies what reality affirms. In other words, he refuses to recognize the traumatic perception of the physiological reality of

the opposite sex. It is a trauma that is normal for the development of children although it shows a schizophrenic reaction. According to this discovery, Freud, at last, solved his intellectual enigma. As discussed and defined before in this chapter, and as it is shown in "Fetishism," as well as in the Ego and the Id, neurosis is the conflict between the ego and the id, psychosis is the conflict between the ego and the external world. Considering this, repression repels demands emerging from the id and disavowal wards off undesirable "idea" emerging from the external world.

The First Approach to the Meaning of Denial

Giving the meaning of disavowal caused another problematic issue for Freud. The problem centered around two words, denial (Verleugnung) and negation (Verneinung). At the beginning he used both terms interchangeably as a defense against the emergence of undesirable memories. He says, "the deeper we go the more difficult it becomes for the emerging memories to be recognized, till near the nucleus we come upon memories which the patient disavows even in reproducing them."41 We must not be puzzled with this. Stored memories originally come from the external world in the process of participation with this world as well as in the process of introjection. Later on, Verneinung came to be negation rather than disavowal.

Freud gives us a very penetrating example. In analyzing the dream of one of his patients, Freud says,

You ask who this person in the dream can be. It is not my mother! We amend this to: 'so it is his mother.' In our interpretation we take the liberty of disregarding the negation and of picking out the subject matter alone of the association.42

Undoubtedly, this does not seem to be perfectly clear. At least we know that there are some obscurities. Let us continue attempting to clarify. R.S. Zwi Werplowski in his "Denial and Religion" interprets both Verlungnung and verneingung as a "double aspect of denial." But this does not clarify the difficulty of Freud's usage. Let us have another attempt to put the pieces together.

Now, we need to excuse ourselves for the repetitions and the overlapping of the material discussed. This would put the ambiguities as well as the clarity into more definite perspective. Let us look at the two major meanings of disavowal. Firstly, in most general terms, according to Freud, disavowal in a psychotic state of mind refers to a reaction of the ego to an intolerable external reality. This is supplemented by "hallucinatory psychosis" as a reaction to a loss which external reality affirms. Let us call this disavowal A.

Secondly, disavowal refers to the reaction of the little boy to the absence of the male genital in a woman. We know how children react to their first impression of the absence of a penis. They disavow the fact and believe that they do see a penis all the same. They gloss over the contradiction between observation and preconception by telling themselves that the penis is still small and will grow bigger presently; and they then come to the emotionally significant conclusion that after all the penis had at least been there before and been taken away afterwards.43

In "Fetishism," Freud maintains that denial is a defense mechanism operative in the fetishist. He describes it as follows, "the fetish is a substitute for the penis.... The fetish is precisely disguised to preserve it from extinction."44 We notice that this disavowal emerges in different proportions in psychosis as well as in neurosis. Let us call this disavowal B.

Thirdly, another meaning of disavowal emerges in Freud's literature as distinct from the notion of repression. This includes the "disavowal of perceptions." Let us return to the previous theme that the childish ego, under the domination of the real world, gets rid of

43. Ibid., p. 144.
undesirable instinctual demands by a defense mechanism called repressions.

We will now supplement this by further asserting that, during the same period of life, the ego often enough finds itself in the position of fending off some demand from the external world which it feels distressing and that this is effected by means of a disavowal of the perceptions which brings to knowledge this demand from reality. 45

Let us call this disavowal C. Leo Goldberger explains this kind of denial:

the ego may be said to have at its disposal a screening apparatus which can reduce a percept to a signal. Should the original evoke pain or anxiety beyond a certain threshold the percept does not achieve conscious awareness—it is denied or somehow blocked.... What specifically is denied? The total impact of the percept, i.e., both the cognitive and its inseparable intensity component, the affects. 46

This blocking out or warding off the percepts is called by


Edith Jacobson in her article "Denial and Repression" a form of amnesia. In a metaphorical sense she pictures it as putting this memory or percept behind an "iron curtain."

So, what Freud calls repression as a reaction to ward off reality or attempting at flight from reality is now called by Freud disavowal, i.e., in our own language disavowal C. Let us have an example of this category of disavowal.

Freud gives us this,

Let us suppose, then, that a child's ego is under the sway of a powerful instinctual demand which it is accustomed to satisfy and that it is suddenly frightened by an experience which teaches it that the continuance of this satisfaction will result in an almost intolerable real danger. It must now decide either to recognize the real danger, give way to it and renounce the instinctual satisfaction, or disavow reality and make itself believe that there is no reason for fear, so that it may be able to maintain the satisfaction.47

So what can we learn from these three categories of disavowal? Disavowal A is an extreme kind of disavowal. It is schizophrenia itself. The schizophrenic does not "displace" reality as in the case of the fetish: he or she "replaces" reality by hallucination. The neurotic such as

the fetishist (disavowal B) has an "initial obedience" to reality, at the same time an "initial flight" in a symbolic way. Freud means that the neurotic ignores reality and the psychotic disavows it. In disavowal B the perceptual relation to reality remains open while in psychosis the perceptual relation to reality is "closed," and, consequently, hallucination takes place as a means to match with the new created reality and also as an attempt to restore the lost reality. Disavowal C is a stage necessary for developmental process by which the child learns how to live or to mediate between the external and the internal.

**The Second Approach to the Meaning of Disavowal**

In the previous sections we showed how important the theme of schizophrenia is to Freud. It is important because through his investigation of this extreme mental sickness he was able to draw the line of demarcation between the conscious and the unconscious, the relation between ego and the object, the internal and the external reality and the importance of the ego as synthesizer and as an agent of participation between the internal and the external world.

In this section we are going to face more ambiguities especially when the notion of lesser psychosis is taken into consideration. The line of demarcation is blurred. This should not be strange if we consider the zig-zag, circular way of Freud's thinking. We shall try to reach a
sufficient conclusion.

Schizophrenia as an "idée-limite" could be considered as a general description of regression to the auto-erotic stage which is accompanied by hallucination as an attempt to recapture what is lost. The question is: Is there a psychotic state which could be considered as psychotic, but not exactly schizophrenic? The answer is yes. It is paranoia. What are the major differences between schizophrenia and paranoia? There are, according to Freud, three major differences: Firstly, in paranoia unlike schizophrenia, the relation with the external world is retained. Secondly, the mechanism by which paranoia manifests itself is by projection on the external world. In schizophrenia hallucination takes place. Thirdly, paranoia refers to a regression to the narcissistic stage; schizophrenia refers to a regression to the auto-erotic stage. It seems that the paranoid regresses to a stage which is the next on the scale of the human development.

Having in mind the differences between schizophrenia and paranoia we are able to draw out the notion of regression as common to both, but to a lesser degree in paranoia. Considering that the paranoid keeps his or her relation to the external world as in neurosis, we come out with this question: Can we consider paranoia as a less extreme psychosis or an extreme neurosis? As to the distinction Freud's text is not clear. Let us try to dig
for what could be implicit in Freud's text.

In order to get into the implicit level it is worthwhile to refer to some of Freud's remarks already mentioned in this chapter. Freud maintains that our absolute detachment from reality could not really happen. Hallucination in schizophrenia is considered by Freud as an "attempt" to regain what was lost. What we learn from this is that an "absolute" detachment from reality is only a possibility. Referring to his ego psychology it is obvious that the ego does not reach the limit of an "absolute" detachment from reality. In other words, there is always a part of the "ego" that remains aware, "the disavowal is always supplemented by an acknowledgment."48 In his interpretation of Freud, Leo Goldberger puts it, "Denial is not an all-or-none affair."49

Another issue we would like to raise is the notion of "leakage." In relation to this notion we have in mind dreams. As mentioned before, dreams are "psychotic" manifestations of the psyche. It is a particular disavowal of the external world taking into consideration that a part of the ego does not "sleep." Although dreams have "psychotic" reactions, yet, they could not be considered as a disease of equal pathology as schizophrenia. They are less schizophrenic or less psychotic considering that

48. Ibid., p. 204.
49. Goldberger, p. 87.
absolute psychosis "perhaps never" happens. The point we would like to make is that leakage happens in degrees. Let us see what Donald P. Spence says in "The Paradox of Denial."

Denial is never complete. It has a partial effect; only when by allowing some threatening information to register can it orient the person where not to look. This information is variously elaborated and transformed, it can be mixed with the subject's own fantasies, and can often produce a supposed reality which is more terrifying than the actual reality,... It is this very "leakage" which keeps the mechanism in operation. If all input were blocked--if denial were complete--the mechanism would probably cease operating. What seems to happen is that a finely adjusted feedback loop is created which determines just how much negative information is permitted to slip though. If too much leakage is allowed, the person becomes anxious and denial is increased; with too little leakage, denial is discontinued and the person is exposed to threats which he cannot tolerate, at which point the denial comes back into operation.50

What we can deduce from this is that the notion of the "leakage" explains that the human psyche operates within oscillating limits. This is to say that there could be an extreme psychosis, less extreme psychosis, extreme neurosis, less extreme neurosis, a healthy person, less healthy and less healthier, etc. Referring to the function of the ego, the ego might have good control over the other two agents, or less control, or a minimum control, etc. It seems that getting into the limits, it would be hard to draw a sharp and clear distinction between the degrees of denial. An absolute manifestation of one phenomenon of the psyche seems to be impossible or rare. It is no wonder that Freud's psychology is the psychology of "disruptive powers"; each agent protects itself against its own forces as well as it protects itself against other attached forces. That said, the overlapping characteristics between psychosis and neurosis are overwhelming. Consequently, ambiguity emerges, and this is definitely articulated with Freud's thought, i.e., there is always an unknown to be dealt with, there is always an absent-presence to consider, there is a search for what has been lost; and finally, there are beliefs to be adopted and beliefs to be modified. It is the dialectic itself and the synthesis is an ongoing process. This confirms what the poet says: "As long as he on earth shall live/ So long I make no prohibition./ While man's desires and aspirations
stir, / He cannot choose but err" (Goethe's Faust, Part I, sc. I).

**Conclusion**

Freud describes psychoanalysis as "intellectual hell." This is due to its emphasis on studying the inner interrelated levels of the mind. In this context, prior to explicating the notion of denial, Freud had to define the two fundamental notions of psychoanalysis: the conscious and the unconscious. The latter is explained in relation to schizophrenia which is a mental disease by which the link between the "word presentation" and the "thing presentation" is to a certain degree - extreme or less extreme - disrupted or disconnected. The ego, the reality testing agent, loses much of its contact with the external reality; a reality which Freud gives a crucial importance to the development of the person as a being who participates in the world. Freud calls the defense mechanism by which a person "wards off" external reality "disavowal" or "denial".

But due to the complexities which underlie the notion of denial, Freud's investigations led us to believe that denial is never complete. This is to say that denial of the external reality is a matter of degree: extreme as it is the case with schizophrenia (denial A), less extreme as it is the case of the neurotic fetish (denial B), and the denial of the young boy of the absence of the penis in the
female which is considered by Freud as natural in the development of the person in this particular stage (denial C). This matter-of-degree in denying the external reality - as shown in denial A and denial B - is related to the inability of the ego to mediate between the inner world and the external world. This shows that although the ego is "feeble" it continues to assume its power. In other words, the ego is a major power in the process of homeostasis which affirms the perspective that denial is always accompanied by a certain degree of acknowledgement.

If denial is warding off external reality, then the question that will be addressed is: Can we consider denial as vice? This question will be answered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet
--Shakespeare
Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Sc II

Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose
--French proverb

Introduction

The major question to be answered in this chapter is: could we consider denial as vice in Freud's literature? The answer is yes. But, this is not enough, for clarification is needed about why denial could be considered as vice. To answer this question one finds that some difficulties may block this investigation. Why? The answer lies in Freud's attitude to ethics and morality. As Heinz Hartmann expresses it, in his life-long psychoanalytic investigations, morality was not that close to Freud's heart. "What is moral is self-evident"1 as Freud used to quote F.T. Visher.

But this should not be considered as a blocking wall against the purpose of our investigation. The attainment of a growing knowledge about a certain writer is not

restricted to our reading of his or her explicit side; but by reading what is between the lines. Leo Strauss expresses it as follows:

The only presentations of an author's views which can be accepted as true are those ultimately borne out by his own explicit statements. [This]... principle is decisive; it seems to exclude a priori from the sphere of human knowledge such views of earlier writers as are indicated exclusively between the lines. For if an author does not tire of asserting on every page of his book that \( a \) is \( b \), but indicates between the lines that \( a \) is not \( b \), the modern historian will still demand explicit evidence showing that the author believed \( a \) not \( b \). Such evidence cannot possibly be forthcoming, and the modern historian wins his argument: he can dismiss any reading between the lines as arbitrary guess work, or, if he is lazy, he will accept it as intuitive knowledge.²

In this regard, we pose another question: how do we investigate and support our argument? What is really needed is the understanding of Freud's psychoanalytic language from its own perspective as it emerged in our

century as a language in its own right. Paul Ricoeur affirms this point of view. He says,

It seems to me there is an area today where all philosophical investigations cut across one another -- the area of language...in search of a comprehensive philosophy of language to account for the multiple functions of the human act of signifying and for their interrelationships. We have at our disposal a symbolic logic, exegetical science, anthropology and psychoanalysis and perhaps for the first time, we are able to encompass in a single question the problem of the unification of human discourse.  

This quotation shows another important notion which is the interrelationships of the multiple functions of language as they pave the way to the "unification of human discourse." So, discourse is what we aim at, discourse between the language of Freud and Aristotle. Considering the approach, what is implicit in Freud's writing concerning denial could come to the surface as we take Aristotle's definition of vice as our starting point. Why Aristotle? F. Foot in her book Virtues and Vices gives us the answer. She says,

In spite of this recent work, it is best when considering the virtues and vices go back to

Aristotle and Aquinas...It is certain...that the most systematic account is found in Aristotle.4

This is also not easy to tackle. Comparing a psychanalytic notion to a philosophical notion would seem to uncover undefinable ambiguities. In order to conquer these prospective ambiguities, let us try to find out what were the common places upon which both Freud and Aristotle depended upon. Finding these common places will help our investigation to bridge the gap.

Trying to bridge this gap, one must bear in mind that Freud never meant to divorce himself from the intellectual as well as the mythological principles of the "Greco-Roman" traditions. This is unquestionably apparent in having the myth of Oedipus as the heart of his psychoanalytic discoveries which he based on the scientific principles and traditions of the western civilizations. That said, finding the common places between Aristotle and Freud will help us in understanding the intentional implicit meaning which underlies the difference between the language of Freud's psychoanalysis and the language of Aristotle's philosophy.

The Common Places

1) Man as a Social Being. The proverbial statement by Aristotle "Man is a social animal" is enough to state his

position. But this is not enough considering that Aristotle's ethics aims at the "good" which he defines as "that at which everything aims." To attain the "good," Aristotle gives "political science...the ruling science" as the science which "uses the other sciences concerned with action, and moreover legislates what must be done and what avoided. Hence its end will include the ends of the other sciences, and so will be the human good." In this respect, the human good is not only the good of the individual but also the good of the city. This is to say, "the good is the same for a city as for an individual, still the good of the city is apparently a greater and more complete good to acquire and preserve. For while it is satisfactory to acquire and preserve the good even for an individual, it is finer and more divine to acquire and preserve it for a people and for cities." So what Aristotle seems to say is that the good of the human being is attained only in a city, i.e., in a society. In other words, there is no human being without a society; and being superior to the individual, society dictates law, forms the character of the individual and allows the integration of its values and norms within the individual person. In this


6. Ibid., Bk 1, 2, 1094b.

7. Ibid.
sense there is, to a larger extent, an articulation between the individual and his or her society.

Society is no less important to Freud. In the first chapter, it was discussed how much Freud took pain to prove the importance of the external world; a world which is responsible for the differentiation of the ego as well as to the formation of the superego. This does not stop here. According to Freud, the human experience is deeply rooted in the unavoidable contact between the infant and his parents, especially the mother, and later the individual's desire to attain the "lost object." In other words, the essential task of civilization is to unite the individual with society. In his book, *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud says,

This task is one of uniting separate individuals into a community bound together by libidinal ties... the integration of separate individuals into a human group, and in the other case the creation of a unified group out of many individuals."

Moreover, Freud in his essay "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad,'" in which he discusses a model by which the psyche operates, shows how the ever "fresh" "receptive" psyche is open to the stimulation from the external world

---

and at the same time retains traces of the past impressions. These traces are preserved in the id which activate themselves by disrupting the ego and by threatening the social "oughts" incorporated by the superego. There is a circular movement from the outside to the inside and then from the inside to the outside. Furthermore, in the clinical setting the inherent social dimension is also present. One can unmistakably observe that the client does not only reach the level of self-understanding, but also, he or she is understood by the therapist, i.e., by another person.

The social dimension in the life of the person is clearly evident in both Freud and Aristotle. It is evident in the sense that the person is a social being who articulates, incorporates and develops only in a culture. Whatever happens within the life of the individual, its social dimension remains the source and the dynamic factor in the formation of his or her character.

This similarity between Freud and Aristotle is clear. But, as it appears in his Civilization and its Discontents, Freud, unlike Aristotle, perceives society and culture as the source of neurosis. For Aristotle the "good of man" is attained in the city state. But Freud has a "tragic" sense of life which originates in an attitude of "negation," as Jacques Lacan explains it, resulting from the a "loss" of the "bond with the mother." In other words, it is a form
of "castration" or a separation from what was "all" to the infant. Hence, later in life the individual fights a lost battle in attaining this "lost object." So, in contrast to Aristotle, for Freud the attainment of the absolute "good" is prohibited by society. According to Lacan, the attainment of the desired object remains within the framework of desire. He calls it "manque-à-être."\(^9\)

Referring to what was already discussed, we can say that Freud and Aristotle present us with the two sides of the same coin. Freud maintains that society is a necessary unavoidable tragedy in which the good is desired, but never attained. Aristotle, on the other hand, maintains that society is a necessity to achieve the good as well as to achieve happiness.

**Desire**

As shown above, for Aristotle the "good" of the human person is attained in the city through participation. Considering the individual a participant in his or her society implies that for Aristotle ethics is not something over there. It is incorporated within the person and actualized in a form of "activity." Also, to be a participant in a culture, a person, to a large extent, holds himself or herself back from wishing or desiring too much. A desire should be deliberated on. In Book III of

the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle explains how a person gets to a final decision:

We have found, then, that what we decide to do is whatever action among those up to us we deliberate about and desire to do. Hence also decision will be deliberative desire to do an action that is up to us; for when we have judged [that it is right] as a result of deliberation, our desire to do it expresses our wish.\(^\text{10}\)

What we notice in this quotation is that desire is connected with deliberation which leads us to assume that Aristotle does not imply any unconscious processes as Freud does. This is to say that upon deliberation one is conscious of his or her desire. Freud adds a new dimension, i.e., the dimension of the unconscious which embodies the id as "desiring," as Philip Rieff calls in his book *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist*. Rieff describes this desiring id as "indestructible" forces which knows "no values, no good and evil, no morality"; a "primitive chaos," "blind," "natural will" which "desires" what the conscious mind is ignorant of. In other words, the unconscious id is the "larger sphere"\(^\text{11}\) which out of its "fertility" the two other agents the ego and the superego

---


emerge under the influence of the external world. Freud describes this unconscious instinctual id as a mob. He says,

Woe, if they should be set loose! The throne would be overturned and the ruler trampled under foot. Society is aware of this -- and will not allow the topic to be mentioned.12

Let us try to relate what is implied in both perspectives. For Aristotle we desire what is in accordance with deliberation. For Freud we desire more than what is in accordance with the deliberation of the ego and more than what culture allows. But we must not forget Aristotle's perspective that a human being is like any other animal. In De Anima he insists on the governing powers of the human passions and desires; and in his ethics, he also insists on the building of virtues in order to organize our inner space and act with a sense of "proportion" and coordination. So in this context, Freud and Aristotle speak a similar and an assimilable language. As Aristotle advocates a sense of proportion in the persons' life, so does Freud. Freud advocates that this "mob...eager for enjoyment and destruction has to be held

down...by a prudent superior class."13 Then, what else other than prudence would come up with a sense of proportion!

**Reason**

Aristotle, the child of his time, puts reason as that faculty which distinguishes the human being from living things. In Book I of the Nicomachean Ethics, he clearly states his position:

For living is apparently shared with plants, but what we are looking for is the special function of a human being; hence we should set aside the life of nutrition and growth. The life next in order is some sort of life of sense-perception; but this too is apparently shared, with horse, ox and every animal. The remaining possibility, then, is some sort of life of action of the part that has reason.14

Again, in his qualification of those who study ethics, Aristotle argues that a youth should not be a student of "political science;" "since he tends to be guided by his feelings, his study will be futile and useless; for its end is action, not knowledge."15 What Aristotle says is that "political science," the science which builds the good

13. Ibid.
15. Ibid., Bk 1, 4, 1095a.
citizen, is a study guided by reason whose end is knowledge put into action. He continues, "If, however, we are guided by reason in forming our desires and in acting, then this knowledge will be of great benefit." 16

In the last chapter of his book, The Future of an Illusion, Freud is no less an advocate of reason than Aristotle. "I stand for the claims of reason...," 17 he says. For Freud, reason is not omnipotent. Reason is weak, but persistent. Its voice is "a soft one...but it does not rest until it has gained a hearing. Finally, after a countless succession of rebuffs, it succeeds." 18

In this regard, Aristotle and Freud insist that building a life according to reason is not an easy accomplishment. This is to say, it is a struggle between the "irrational" and the "rational." Being a struggle, a virtuous life, according to Aristotle, is not an easy thing to attain; it has to be developed by practice. In chapter 31 of his A History of Philosophy, F. Copleston, S.J., says, that in the process of making a choice the "moral struggle" is evident in Aristotle's writings on ethics. This choice is defined as "desireful reason" or "reasonable desire." 19

16. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
Although Freud and Aristotle are considered to be rationalists in their approach, yet one must be cautious in attributing to them the qualifications attributed to some other rationalists as shown in Tom Stoppard's play *The Jumpers*, i.e., rigid self control and rigid obedience to rules which do not allow the "articulation" between the rational and the irrational. Freud and Aristotle are "common sense" people. But what is common sense? J.H. Randall and J. Buchler define common sense in its non-technical usage as "good sense," "native shrewdness," and "a certain sense of practicality or rudimentary intelligence." In its philosophical sense they define it as "sense that is common."

Its source is experience of the most fundamental and pervasive character, the minimal biological, social, and psychological experience of man. All that is necessary for its acquisition is the exercise of the sense and the memory, and the simplest kind of reasoning. Common sense knowledge is acquired by us willy-nilly, and not in virtue of any method. It results not from infusing but from mere living.... Thus common sense is the starting-point of all inquiry. We may, by the employment of deliberate methods, rise above it, but we can never dispense with
From this quotation we can infer four important notions: character, experience, reasoning and living. If we combine all of these four notions together we find that what underlies them is the act of living. Isn’t this what Freud and Aristotle try to convey to us? How? Let us start with Aristotle.

In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle never meant by possessing the virtues a kind of abstract way of thinking, but experiencing what is good for the human being in "activity." He says that it is much better to be brave then to know about bravery. In other word, the main purpose of ethics is the developing of human character in "concrete action," like "acting well." How to act well? Aristotle does not give us general rules. To act well depends on our upbringing, on our virtues and on the models we set for ourselves. Aristotle gives Pericles as an example. To act well entails experience; experience that may change our lives in an act of "conversion." But how does one know that it is the right experience? The answer is, as Michael Novak puts it, by "discernment." He interprets Aristotle by saying that discernment cannot be taught, it stems from the person's experience: It is an experience which is developed as the poet develops his

poetry and the artist develops his art and "that we make of
our lives an 'art of action..."\(^{21}\) i.e. acting well at the
right time and in the right place. Therefore, according to
Aristotle, the practice of rational decisions in our
everyday life is akin to art.

How is this implied in Freud's literature? In *The Ego
and the Id*, Freud described the ego -- the rational agent
of the psyche, as a shrewd diplomat. It represents reason
and common-sense.

The ego uses borrowed forces...so, in the same
way the ego is in the habit of transforming the
id's will into action as if it were its
own\(^{22}\)...in the matter of action the ego's
position is like that of a constitutional
monarch, without whose sanction no law can be
passed but who hesitates long before imposing his
veto on any measure put forward by parliament....
All the experiences of life that originate from
without enrich the ego; the id, however, is its
second external world, which it strives to bring
into subjection to itself. It withdraws libido
from the id and transforms the object -- catheces

---

Carnegie Institute in Philosophy of Religion, Notre
Dame University, 27 June, 1969.

15.
of the id into ego structures... [the ego] is not only a helper to the id; it is also a submissive slave who courts his master's love... tried to remain on good terms with the id; it clothes the id's unconscious commands with the Pcs [Preconscious] rationalization, it pretends that the id is showing obedience to the admonitions of reality, even when in fact it is remaining obstinate and unyielding; it disguises the id's conflicts with reality and, if possible, its conflicts with the superego, too.\textsuperscript{23} In its position midway between the id and reality, it only too often yields to the temptation to become sycophantic, opportunist and lying, like a politician who sees the truth but wants to keep his place in popular favor.\textsuperscript{24}

It does not take much to observe that underlying the functioning of the ego there is discernment and evaluation of a certain impinging situation. The ego weighs situations and decides which is the best way to keep an unbroken relationship with the external world. If the ego lies -- a "noble lie" -- it is only because of the necessity for adaptation rather than only the necessity for integration. In other word, the ego, sometimes falls sick,

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 46.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
deceives itself and deceives the other two agents only, paradoxically speaking, to preserve itself. It is a way of "savoir vivre" or the possession of the "art of living."

In this respect, there are two important similarities between Freud and Aristotle. 1) Both do not give us rules on what to do or what not to do. They provide us with an "operative structure" which we try to use the best we can. 2) The matter of choice is an art revealed in a certain style, tact and manners. As the ego falls sick in order to preserve itself, so it is with some ethical choices in Aristotle's ethics. He says that it would be, sometimes, better to err on the deficient side rather than to err on the excessive side. For both, a person is capable of prudent and adaptive mistakes. Freud calls this the "self confidence of health."

For more clarification, let us see how discernment and this kind of diplomacy reveal themselves in a clinical situation. Freud, according to Joseph Rychlack, was never only concerned with insightful intellectualization. What Freud is really concerned with is the fusion of insight with activity. So the insight he has on the activities of ego in relation to the id and the superego, manifests itself in the therapeutic situation. How? Firstly, insight is joined after interpretation and after the
"reenactment" of the past repressed experiences, e.g., the act of transference. Secondly, in order to outdo the past repressed fixation, oftentimes, the psychoanalyst, according to P. Rieff, acts as the ego of the client, while the client becomes an id coming to consciousness. Secondly, in order to outdo the past repressed fixation, oftentimes, the psychoanalyst, according to P. Rieff, acts as the ego of the client, while the client becomes an id coming to consciousness.\textsuperscript{26}

Thirdly, as Freud describes the diplomatic function of the ego, the analyst, oftentimes, allies with the id of the client in order to bring it to consciousness. In one of his letters to Fliess, Freud metaphorically says that he acts as "the devil" in order to get out the demons hidden in the patient's breast. In other words, he directs the demons out to consciousness. In other instances the analyst becomes the superego of the client, i.e., the prototype of the father. When and how the analyst take these acts depends on his or her power of discernment. In this regard, reason is a discerning faculty and a synthesizer of thoughts, actions and desires.

The very nature of reason is a guarantee that it would not fail to concede to human emotions and to all that is determined by the accurate position to which they are entitled.\textsuperscript{27}


\textsuperscript{26} Philip Rieff, The Mind of the Moralist (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 35.

\textsuperscript{27} Heinz Hartman, Psychoanalysis and Moral Values, p. 80.
Freud describes character as what is "...based on the memory-traces of our impressions; and, moreover, the impressions which have had the greatest effect on us -- those of our earliest youth -- are precisely the ones which scarcely ever become conscious."\(^{28}\) Regardless of how or why a certain character is formed, both Aristotle in his Ethics and Freud in his typology, give a crucial concern to character. For both of them, there is an ethical component which contributes to the formation of character; namely, the internal as well as the external social world. Being locked in this internal-external struggle, the person, in order to possess an adaptable and an integrative character must exercise self-control and learn through experience the act of discernment. Without these two qualities the person falls, according to Aristotle, into excessive or deficient personality traits, and according to Freud, a person is bound to be controlled by a personality type unconsciously regulated by a regressive and fixative behavior brought about by an unsatisfied early level of human development. In spite of the differences in language, both Freud and Aristotle give us certain character traits to which each one gives different names. In his book On Moral Character, Jody Palmour provides us with a table showing us how

---

different names are given to the same character traits:\(^{29}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aristotle</th>
<th>Freud</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Genital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miserly</td>
<td>Anal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Oral-Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extravagant</td>
<td>Oral-Receptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will elaborate on these in due course. It is worth noting that due to the "dialectic approach" to the study of the human mind, neither Freud nor Aristotle, ever isolates one character trait from another. They both believe in the coexistence of different character traits. Psychologically speaking, two positive and negative contents could coexist. Those who have some fixation on their anal stage which includes "fecal interest" may develop two opposite coexisting characteristics: stinginess and cleanliness. For Aristotle, a clever person could be courageous (a positive characteristic) as well as stingy or exploitative (a negative characteristic).

But, in spite of this coexistence of negative and positive characteristics, one is capable of altering one's life into a more favorable way; for Aristotle by building the virtues, and for Freud, by insight and by undoing the "libidinal fixation" on early stages of the person's childhood. According to P. Rieff, Freud's therapeutic aim is to build two important virtues: the virtue of prudence

and the virtue of compromise. Since it is a continuous struggle, every highly competent and virtuous person may have some doubts and fears. What is really crucial is that a competent and virtuous person is able to "suppress" or "control" these doubts whenever it is discerned as necessary, thanks to their "normal" struggle. So; a character, as Jody Palmour defines, refers to

The particular form of development of a person's moral and emotional powers which dispose him to excessive, deficient or appropriate responses; developed through the interaction between one's constitutional capacities or gifts and environment, opportunities and pressures; while relatively fixed and marked as an adaptation and strategy toward life, one's character can become either more or less virtuous.

The last part of this quotation leads us to the next common place.

As-a-Matter-of-Degree

In the first chapter we referred to the idea that extreme schizophrenia as a psychosis is an "idée-limite." This led us to the opinion that in Freud's literature the line of demarcation between a schizophrenic denial and a neurotic denial (the fetish) is only a matter of degree.

30. Rieff, p. 61.
The former has an extreme denial of the external world, the latter has a less extreme denial of the external world. This is also applicable as shown before, to other cases of psychosis and neurosis. Now let us see how as-a-matter-of-degree is shown in Aristotle's ethics.

Let us prove our point by considering what Aristotle says about a brave person. The test of a brave person is in a "life-threatening" situation. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* we notice that Aristotle uses the superlative in order to prove that a certain act is the bravest. This means that this act is considered to include more courage than another act.

Then what sorts of frightening conditions concern the brave person? Surely the most frightening; for no one stands firmer against terrifying conditions. Now death is most frightening of all, since it is a boundary, and when someone is dead nothing beyond it seems either good or bad for him any more. Still not even death in all conditions, e.g., on the sea or in sickness, seems to be the brave person's concern. In what conditions, then, is death his concern? Surely in the finest condition. Now such deaths are those in war, since they occur in the greatest and finest danger;... Hence someone is called brave to the fullest extent if he is intrepid in
facing a fine death and the immediate dangers that bring death -- and this above all true of the dangers of war.\textsuperscript{32}

From this quotation we can assume that a person who dies on the battlefield for the sake of the city state is the bravest. This also means that facing death in the battlefield is braver than facing death when a person is diseased. Why? It is because on the battlefield a person "shows greater prowess against that which threatens him."\textsuperscript{33} Again, we notice the superlative and the comparative tense which means that as-a-matter-of-degree is another element in Freud's as well as in Aristotle's literature.

These common places prove that Freud's literature is assimilable into Aristotle's literature. These will help our investigation by uncovering the implicit side of Freud's notion of denial as vice. But before coming to a conclusion, we need to define vice as it is shown in Aristotle's \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}. So, the question is: What is vice according to Aristotle?

Aristotle identifies vice with that which "ruins." It ruins because it is an "activity" exercised in either "excessive" or in a "deficient" practice: "For both excessive and deficient exercises ruin strength; and likewise, too much or too little eating or drinking ruins

\textsuperscript{32.} Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, Bk 3, 7, 1116a.

\textsuperscript{33.} Jody Palmour, \textit{On Moral Character}, p. 98.
health..."  

It is contrary to virtue which "...like nature, is better and more exact than any craft, it will also aim at what is intermediate." i.e. the "mean." But one should not be misled by the word "excess" or "extreme." for virtue, according to Aristotle, is an extreme. In other words, virtue is an "excellence," i.e., an extreme. Nicolai Hartmann provides us with this explanatory diagram.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goodness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Copleston S.J., explains this diagram. He says,

The diagram illustrates the important point that virtue...has a double position. (i) As regards the ontological dimension, it is an excellence or extreme. It is not as through virtue were a composition of vices from a valuational point of view, since, from this point of view, it stands in opposition to both vices, but it is nevertheless a mean from the ontological viewpoint, since it combines in itself both the

good points which, run to excess, constitute vices. For example, courage is not boldness alone, nor is it cool foresight alone, but a synthesis of both -- this character of a synthesis preventing courage from degenerating into the daring of the foolhardy man on the one hand or the prudence of the coward on the other hand. 37

How similar this act of synthesis is to Freud's function of the ego as a synthesizer that was discussed earlier in this chapter. Considering this diagram we can say that vice is an excess or a deficiency on the "ontological" level. Considering the "ontological" basis, the question to be addressed is: how are the excess and the deficiency evident in Freud's account of what "ruins" the psychological harmony of the person? Let us start with the excesses and deficiencies of the functions of the three agents of the human psyche.

Before getting into the excesses and deficiencies, one must bear in mind that in addition to its ever fresh receptivity, the psyche is ambivalent. How is this evident in Freud's opinion? In the Ego and the Id, Freud shows how fluctuating are the instincts: he says, "...That the satisfaction of one instinct can take the place of the

37. Ibid.
satisfaction of another..."38 This is also applicable to the three agents of the psyche. In other words, each agent has its oughts and intentions. As David Sachs explains this, "... between any person's emotions ... and the causes thereof, there always obtain an actual proportionality or real appropriateness, no matter how incongruous those relations may appear to be."39 What do we understand from this? We understand that the agents of the psyche disrupt each other. It is an interplay between "urging and checking forces" as Freud describes it. Why are we alluding to this perspective? The reason is that due to the interrelatedness of the three agents of the psyche, one is unable to discuss one without discussing the other. More precisely, discussing the excess functioning of one agent explains the deficiency imposed on the other. This could be understandable if we have in mind how the process of "negation" and "repression" operate, a topic not to be discussed in this chapter. Our aim is to prove that excess or deficiency in the functioning of one of the three agents is destructive and brings "ruin" to the harmony of the psyche, by giving way for the two others to press the expression of their need, i.e., the "return of the

38. S. Freud, The Ego and the Id, p. 34.

Now let us start with the super-ego and see how its excess or deficient functioning explains the excess or deficient functioning of the other two agents. The super-ego has two major parts: Conscience and the ego-ideal. The former is described as follows:

[the conscience] aggressiveness is introjected, internalized; it is, in point of fact, sent back to where it came from -- that is, it is directed towards his own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego, which sets itself over against the rest of the ego as super-ego and which now, in the form of 'conscience' is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would have liked to satisfy upon other, extraneous individuals.40

One cannot avoid noticing the paradoxical thinking in Freud's literature. Conscience is seen by Freud as an object-cathexis which has been replaced by an identification. It is the agency which "has a great share in determining the form taken by the ego and that it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its 'character.'"41 It is the agency which "...gathers up from the influences of the environment the

40. S. Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, p. 78.
41. S. Freud, The Ego and the Id, p. 18.
demands which that environment makes upon the ego...." 42
In other words, it is the "goal of ethics." A. Esman looks
at it as a useful concept in "...categorizing the
internalized model aspiration, goals and 'positive'
values." 43 From these similar points of view we gather
that the ego-ideal is both an agent in contact with the
environment in order to sustain already internalized values
and goals which are central to the formation of an ideal
image. That said, the ego-ideal incorporates the virtues
and values of a culture which become the corner stone for
the person's actions, virtues and values which manifest
themselves in a "constant habit" whose contents are
"order," "moderation" and "constancy." Their dynamic
quality is "perseverance." This is to say that virtue,
i.e., values in action, is a conformity to an ideal
standard accompanied by a capacity to act in a responsible
way.

So the super-ego has three important functions:
First, a censor or a negator responsible for suppressing
the aggressive destructive instinctual drives; Second, the
carrier of moral virtues; third, a help in observing the
person's responsibility towards oneself and towards
society.

42. Ibid.

43. Aaron Esman, "Consolidation of the Ego Ideal in
Contemporary Adolescence," from The Psychology of
Adolescence. Ed. by A. Esman, p. 211.
Considering these three functions of the superego, one must carry in mind that these functions should be manifested with moderation. An excess of these manifestations results in an inadequate suppression or repression of the instinctual demands. In his paper, "On the Theory of Hysterical Attack," Freud says,

[the three functions of the superego] are all of them impressions that have failed to find an adequate discharge, either because the patient refuses to deal with them for fear of distressing mental conflicts or because (as in the case of sexual impressions) he is forbidden to do so by modesty or by social circumstances.44

A crucial point should be observed in this quotation: "fear of distressing mental conflicts." What does this lead us to say? Reading between the lines we can assume that, firstly, the hysteric patient faces an ethical dilemma, i.e., it is right not to do it, or, it is wrong if I do it. Secondly, to be possessed by an excess of fear means that the patient lacks courage to do the right thing in the right time; or, we can say that the patient lacks the art of discernment to act in a proportionate way. Thirdly, the patient, to an extreme sense, is controlled by a tyrannous superego. Fourthly, the patient is locked

between two extreme oughts: the oughts of the id and the oughts of the superego. Two "contrary wish fulfillments" which find their expression in a "single expression" i.e., the hysteric attack.

More precisely, the virtue of "compromise" or the virtue of "prudence" is lacking in the hysteric patient. As implicitly implied, the virtue of "compromise" is an aid by which the person compromises between two extremes. Let's give an example: love and hate. Freud shows a suspicious attitude toward "altruistic love." He maintains, "A love that does not discriminate seems to me to forfeit a part of its own value, by doing an injustice to its objects; and secondly, not all men are worthy of love."45 In this sense, an altruistic love hides "hate" which has an undeniable existence in the human psyche. So the virtue of "compromise" is strengthened by the virtue of prudence. This is to say a person knows well not to cast his or her pearls to swine. Oftentimes, in Freud's psychology the compromise arises in mechanisms such as sublimation, identification, etc., mechanisms by which human impulse have an adequate chance of discharge.

What has already been discussed shows that extreme repression by the superego of the instinctual desires leads to a pathological physical or psychological discharge of these inhibited impulses which ruins the person's relation

with himself or herself and with society. Now, the question to be addressed is: What happens when an extreme permission is given to these instinctual impulses? Previously it was mentioned that Freud calls these impulses "mobs" whose aim is destruction of both the individual and "civilization." Let us take our present days as a good example of this phenomenon. H. and Y. Lowenfeld say that the observable "change in society's attitude towards sex has made the conspicuous symptoms disappear...and replaced by a multitude of character neurosis and psychosomatic manifestations."46 This change in society's attitude has bent itself towards permissiveness assuming that the liberation of instincts is equivalent to freedom. This permissiveness neglects the proper maintenance of harmony among the different agents of the human personality, and, consequently, the individual loses his or her equilibrium and also loses a realistic contact with the external world.

Another example of how society neglects the psychological states of the individual is the concentration on materialism which eventually leads to material wealth. Freud warns us that the survival of a society does not depend on the accumulation of wealth. He says,

It has become clear that civilization cannot consist principally...in wealth itself and the

means of acquiring...for these things are threatened by the rebelliousness and destructive mania of the participants in civilization.47

Freud implicitly means what Aristotle calls "greed." So, the liberation of instincts as well as the emphasis on materialism reflects the idea on how a permissive society gives an ultimate authority to one and only one factor as the sole reason for directing the individual's life. That said, we assume that such kinds of attitudes are the result of overlooking two important factors: Firstly, the harmony and the unity of the person, and, secondly, the moderation which is a crucial aspect of building up the character of the person. Consequently, the "pleasure principle" dominates one's life and the "feeble" but "persistent" ego is unable to process the introjection and the repression mechanisms through which the ego takes them upon itself to "erect" them again as an "obstacle within itself." The introjection and the repression mechanisms are weakened and the "reality principle" is given up to the "pleasure principle." This kind of character is called by Aristotle a "self-indulgent" character.

Moreover, in such kinds of society the role of the father is reduced and the process of identification and internalization is reduced, too. The lasting effects of the first identification with the parents which takes place

"earlier than any object cathexis" is blocked and the result is a great disappointment. This is due to the discrepancy between the infantile and the later image of the father. H. and Y. Lowenfeld maintain,

The contemporary father acts much more like a weak older brother. We have always seen that the milder father does not lead to a milder superego...but rather to an increase of fantasies and projections. For the development of the superego the projections are decisive; power and cruelty of the parents are magnified by the fantasies."48

Eventually, the ego fails to do the work of reality testing. This disappointment with the later image of the father is replaced by a disappointment in society, traditions, and history. The cultural ideal which, according to Freud, provides the individual with a "narcissistic" attitude is replaced by distrust and self-centeredness. Aristotle calls this kind of character the "hoarding" character. In this context, the word "narcissism" used by Freud implies a moderate narcissism of similar meaning to pride; e.g., the teacher says to his or her student "I am proud of you." It is a "mean" between infantile narcissism and pathological narcissism.

Narcissism in this sense is related to the ego-ideal. Having an ego-ideal or a model helps the individual to accept something "unpleasant" for the sake of an ideal. It also helps in the suppression of the instinctual drives. Freud explains this as follows:

The satisfaction which the ideal offers to the participants in the culture is thus of a narcissistic nature; it rests on their pride in what has already been successfully achieved.... The narcissistic satisfaction provided by the cultural ideal is also among the forces which are successful in combating the hostility to culture within cultural unit. This satisfaction can be shared in not only by the favored classes... but also by the suppressed ones, since the right to despise the people outside it compensates them for the wrongs they suffer within their own unit.49

From the above discussion we come to know that self-indulgence is the result of the freedom given to the "sexual" instincts. This leads to the weakening of the ego control and the ego adaptive alliances with the two other agents. As a result, the ego-ideal exemplified by the father is weakened and given up to an aggressive and distrustful fantasies, but one might argue that, at least,

the sexual urges are satisfied. Clinical psychoanalytic research has shown contrary result. Freud explains this. He says,

If sexual freedom is unrestricted from the outset the result is not better. It can easily be shown that the psychical value of erotic needs is reduced as soon as their satisfaction becomes easy. An obstacle is required in order to heighten the libido."

The notion of obstacle, in this sense, is very important. It is the function of the ego which allows a well timed, necessary alliance with one of the other agents of the psyche; it is an alliance in order to exercise self control. The self-controlled man as appears in Aristotle's ethics is a virtuous man.

What else results from the reduction of the "obstacle?" The reduction in the power of the "obstacle" over the aggressive drives creates in the individual a sense of self-absorption in his or her own desires and needs. This results in the loss of interest in relationships, and contributes to the projection of fantasies on the external reality. Consequently, reality testing is impaired. It also adds an "...amazing lack of fear," i.e., a "foolhardy" character. This leads to two important features: "aggression" and the desire for an

"easy life." This means that the individual possesses the vices of laziness, lack of self-control and foolhardiness.

In addition to the weakening of the ego by the tyrannous onslaughts of the id and superego, the ego has its excessive functioning. In our everyday language we describe a person by saying that he has a "big ego" or he is going on an "ego trip" Using these description we imply that this person is arrogant, stubborn, etc. These qualifications attributed to a person whether in the religious traditions or the Aristotelean traditions are called vices. In Freud's words this ego loses having "flexibility" and "craft." Edith Jacobson in her article "Denial and Repression" presents us with a case of a man who, repressing and denying his childhood traumatic experiences with his mother, reached a point of denying the existence of both the id and the superego. This is to say that this man's ego wards off the existence of what is external to itself and becomes like a king without subjects.51

Typology

In the course of this chapter we have seen that both Freud and Aristotle show interest in character, character which distinguishes in thought and action one person from another. The difference between Freud and Aristotle is

that Aristotle qualified the person's character between virtuous and vicious. Freud was satisfied in describing the psychodynamic of the human psyche. But, as Freud always said that morality is self-evident; and since, as H. Hartmann says that Freud never meant to break off from the principles of the Greco-Roman nor from the principles of the Judeo-Christian traditions, then, we can take Freud up on his position that some human characters are vicious. Let us start with his typology and try to see how close he is to Aristotle. Since our concern is vice, we are going to concentrate on the "vicious" character and overlook the virtuous ones.

I) The Oral Personality. A person who fixates on the oral stage tends to be, to a large extent, passive and receptive, subservient, a follower, trusting, optimistic, and accepting. He or she also tends to be a heavy eater and enjoys activities related to the mouth. But, since, as discussed before, opposite characters do coexist in the same person, as they stem from the same "sexual instinct," an oral character might be hostile. In book 4, Chapter 5 of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle equates hostility with "excessive anger," a quality of character which includes these characteristics:

1. Those who get angry at the wrong people, at the "wrong time."

2. Those who get angry quickly -- irascible people.
3. Those who are "quick tempered to extreme."
4. Those who are hard to reconcile -- bitter people.
5. Those who are irritable by "the wrong things."

II) Anal Personality. The anal character exposes the following characteristics: Orderly, hoarding, and obstinate. Character traits such as hoarding, miserly or obstinate originated in an early conflict with parents over when to "go potty." It also stems from lack of parental appreciation to "fecal matter" which is "the first gift that the child has for the parent." As a result, the child likes to keep it for himself, and consequently, the child develops the tendency to be a taker than a giver.

In Aristotle's ethics, hoarding is the vice of "deficient giving." He calls it ungenerosity.

It comes more naturally to human beings than wastefulness; for the many are money-lovers rather than givers... For it consists in two conditions, deficiency in giving and excess in taking.

III) Urethral Personality. This character trait is the result of humiliation of enuresis. The child develops a "burning ambition to succeed in life." He or she aims

54. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Bk 4, 1, 1121b.
only for his or her success and develops an inhibited "envious" attitude. Considering humiliation as its root, competitiveness hides a sense of inferiority which acts as a catalyst for wishing an easy success. Disappointed by the difficult struggle, this person tends to be easily bored and consequently ends up being unsuccessful. Being ambitious, yet, unsuccessful, he or she tends to be selfish, crude and exploitative. His or her sexuality is energized by competing to obtain other wives or husbands in particular in fantasies.

Let us take what Aristotle says about envy in his *Rhetoric*.

Those who in any respect are ambitious of glory are given to envy in that respect.... [Envy is] a sort of pain at apparent good fortune.... Men also envy those with whom they are at rivalry.... And as men are affected by ambition in regard to rivals, and competitors, and all...who are eager after the same objects, it must follow that they envy these in a special manner.... And those who either succeed with difficulty, or do not succeed at all, envy those who succeed quickly."56

In other words, an envious person is selfish.

IV) The Phallic Personality. This type of

personality trait shows a "sexualized pattern." It results from an unsatisfactory resolution of the Oedipal stage. The person shows the following inclinations: 1) Self-centered, 2) egotistical, 3) lustful with a vengeance attitude, 4) revolutionary "[males] not accepting the paternal superego." 5) "Masculinity complex" among females.

From this description of the phallic personality we are able to observe that the person lacks "temperance" and possesses "self-indulgence," i.e., an intemperate person. In his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle maintains that temperance "...is a mean concerned with pleasures...for it is concerned less, and in a different way, with pains. Intemperance appears in this same area too.... To enjoy these things, [body pleasures] and to like them most of all is bestial.... The touching that is proper to the intemperate person concerns only some parts of the body, not all of it." 59

V) The Genital Personality. The genital person, according to Freud, is the healthiest among all the other types. Yet, we need to caution ourselves that Freud clearly states that the line of demarcation between health

60. Ibid., 1118b.
and sickness is ambiguous. This is to say that the boundaries oscillate and overlap. If the genital person is the healthiest, then, let us consider this personality trait as an "idée-limite." We need to ask why it is the healthiest. The answer is simple. At the age of six the child has already formed a "person prototype," i.e., the parents as an "image" to identify with. J. Rychlak explains this phrase as follows:

Since the personality structure is finalized by the onset of latency... Freud had no need to frame a latency or adolescent personality type.... All this means...is that the person is finally capable of reproduction and presumably can find in sexual relations the satisfactions that he or she had obtained earlier from the pregenital erogenous zones."61

But how many pass the pregenital erogenous zones without any neurotic drawbacks is debatable in Freud's thought. More precisely, the genital personality traits overlap with other traits resulted from an early fixation during the child's development.

In this regard, considering Aristotle's approach to the human character, we notice, as discussed before, that negative and positive qualities do coexist. This is to

say, that one or more characteristics dominate the others without eliminating their existence. And if we assume that the genital person is the "generous" man in Aristotle then the "generous man" is not without certain dissatisfactions. Therefore, the genital personality is an "idee-limite."

As-A-Matter-of-Language

Considering what Paul Ricoeur says that psychoanalysis is a new language at our disposal, one might raise the following question: How do we know that Freud means by the excess or the deficiency of the activities of the three agents of the psyche what Aristotle means? The answer lies in the implicit side of Freud's writings. L. Wittgenstein in his book, Philosophical Grammar, says that a basic idea is a rule which determines meaning within the language.62

In this regard, we can say that Aristotle demands one language with one set of rules and Freud uses another language. But the key is the use of terms in each language, i.e., the use of "vice" in Aristotle and the use of "neurotic" or "psychotic" ego in Freud. If so, then, they have the same meaning in different languages. Let us give a simple everyday life example. In the film, Fiddler on the Roof, Teviah asks his wife Golda, "Do you love me?" Golda's only answer was that she always washed his clothes, cooked his dinners, and took care of their children. Her

answer means the same as the answer his daughter gave to her Christian lover: "Yes, I love you."

In our readings of Freud, nothing is detected which shows Freud ever compared his thought with Aristotle's. But, undoubtedly, as mentioned before, Freud never detached himself from the Western Greco-Roman traditions. In this regard, let us see how Freud relates the language of the Middle Ages to his psychoanalytic language. In describing the notion of the "return of the repressed," he says,

[the repressed feelings] are stored up and enjoy an unsuspected existence in a sort of shadow kingdom, till they emerge like bad spirits and take control of the body, which, as a rule under the orders of the predominant ego-consciousness.63

Freud uses the words "bad spirits" in reference to the "mass hysteria" which used to occur among clergy and nuns during the middle ages. In other words, the return of the repressed means what used to be called "possessions by the devil." So, in this respect, different words refer to the same "basic idea," or, different words refer to the same meaning, or the practice or the activity the words refer to.

Having this in mind, the practice and the activity of a person dominated by the "desiring id" is nothing but

"self indulgence," "rash" and "reckless" in the Aristotelian sense; and, the practice and the activity of a person dominated by the codes of the superego refers in Aristotelian sense to a "deficient pleasure"; and, finally, the activity and practice associated with an excess of "ego" is what is called arrogance, boastfulness and vanity in the Aristotelian sense. From this we conclude that the implicit meaning underlying the excess and deficient activity of any of the three personality agents is "vice." These practices and activities contribute to the "ruin" of the person's ethical conduct in relation to himself or herself as well as to his or her relation to society.

**Extreme Denial as Vice Par Excellence**

In the first chapter we discussed the state of schizophrenia. The link in the state of schizophrenia between the "word presentation" (the conscious) and the "thing presentation" (the unconscious) is cut off to an extreme degree. Also, we discussed that, according to Freud, denial is a primitive mechanism which wards off the external reality. But due to the notion of "leakage" the mechanism of denial is never complete and an absolute schizophrenia is an "idée-limite." And since denial of the external world is never complete, we come to know that there is a minimum acknowledgment of what is denied. The question we would like to address is: Why the person is not able to continue encountering what is acknowledged in the
external world? In our opinion, the answer could be simply stated, i.e., the lack of virtues, such as "the virtue of compromise" and "the virtue of prudence" which the psychoanalyst tries to reenact in the client. Implied in this comment is the lack of courage to face reality, the lack of prudence to discern what to do at the right time and in the right place, and the lack of temperance to exercise self-control. The person falls into a vicious state of mind.

In this second chapter we have concerned ourselves with the common places between Freud and Aristotle; common places which show the crucial activities by which the person assumes his or her "being in the world." Also, we alluded to what is vice according to Aristotle and how the psychoanalytic language of Freud refers to the same "basic idea." As vice is implicit in Freud, so is denial implicit in Aristotle. This means that if the social external world is denied, the person cannot fulfill his or her humanity, i.e., the person is to a large extent unable to reason, interact, incorporate values and live in participation with his or her fellow humans.

Moreover, the external world which is responsible for the differentiation of the ego and the superego, and which tries to tame the aggressive sexual instincts of the individual is to a large degree disavowed. In relation to the individual's self-fulfillment, the world in which this
individual tries to regain unity with the "lost object," i.e., the mother, is also lost and denied. Instead of indulging oneself in this necessary, unavoidable "tragic" battle, the individual reverses this necessity into a world of hallucination and regresses to the "auto-erotic" stage which is the prerequisite to the emergence of the social life.

Comparing this detrimental denial to other vices, such as vanity, stinginess, rash, arrogance, foolhardy, envy, lust, cowardice, etc., we notice that such vices although they show an overriding tendencies over some virtues possessed by the same person, yet, the person remains a social being capable of participating, capable of committing some virtuous acts. Considering this, the notion of as-a-matter-of-degree reemerges again; for if we consider the above mentioned vices as vices which "ruin," it follows that an extreme denial is an extreme repression or inhibition of what is called the "impulse of life." Therefore, it is vice par excellence. No wonder that Goethe refers to denial as a satanic act.64

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

Our concern in this chapter is to answer the following question: How do we encounter denial? In order to answer this question three important symptomatic notions will be discussed: anxiety, separateness, and perception.

In discussing these three important notions we promise no absolute clarity. The limitations imposed on us are inherent in the ambiguity of some fundamental principles. Ambiguity may be "humiliating" in any philosophical or psychological discussions, but it is also a fact of our everyday life in which we inevitably learn how to feel at home. Freud writes,

We can console ourselves with the thought that we have been obliged to build our way out into the dark. If we are not wholly in error, other lines of approach are bound to lead us into much the same region and the time may then come when we shall find ourselves more at home in it.  

How does Freud help us by maintaining this position?

Without denying the importance of deep speculative

theoretical issues, he simply wants us to make use of what is helpful for practical reasons. According to Freud, since it is, for example, difficult to determine whether darkness is the least light or light is the least darkness, we just accept the most recurrent practical fact that light is in the day time and darkness is at night. We come to affirm our position that in this discussion we are not going to speculate whether the known or the denied reality is completely presented to us with utmost clarity. Our concern is how persons reject and disavow what is painful and intolerable. In this connection, we will notice that what is ambiguous in a certain expression or another assumes a kind of meaning in form of symptoms. Merleau-Ponty interprets this notion in Freud's literature as follows:

Ambiguity is of the essence of human existence, and everything we live or think has always several meanings.... Existence is indeterminate in itself by reason of its fundamental structure, and in so far as it is the very process whereby the hitherto meaningless takes on meaning... chance is transformed into reason in so far as it is the act of taking up a de facto situation.²

Having this in mind, an attempt at flight is a symptom of denial which we encounter in different settings. So let us start with anxiety.

* * *

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, wherefore it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
that I have much ado to know myself
(Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice
Act I, Sc I)

Anxiety

In the first chapter we mentioned that the realization of the external world comes into being when the breast of the mother has to be separated from the infant. With such a separation the infant starts to realize that the breast is something over there, i.e., an object to be denied in order to satisfy certain internal needs. In other words, desiring and attaining this object means minimizing the excess of stimulation, i.e., achieving a certain satisfactory degree of the "pleasure principle." Also, being over there the breast of the mother is a something which is lost. This is to say, something which is absent. Having this in mind, the emergence of the external world starts to have an impact on the infant. This is known as the end of the auto-erotic stage. But how does Freud go about explaining this development? By answering this
question we will come to have a grip on the notion of anxiety.

Not only did Freud struggle in explaining the enigma of the unconscious, but he also underwent great intellectual pains in how to explain the realization of the external world. In his two papers, "Negation" and "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety", Freud comes up with his explanation. In "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" he explains the notion of anxiety. It is worth mentioning that in neither paper does Freud tackle the notion of denial. But in these theoretically important papers, Freud lays down the context by which we come to understand why and how one can do away with the external world. In this regard, the notion of danger is very important, and it will be discussed in due course.

Both papers have one common similarity; the notion of the loss of object. In other words, having an object which is lost means the experience of something out there, and this leads the infant to reality testing, i.e., a reality out there external to oneself. So, the contribution of "Negation" and "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" to the notion of denial is that in a psychotic state it is the reaction to a loss which reality affirms, but which the ego has to disavow, since it finds
it insupportable. Thereupon the ego breaks off its relation to reality....³

In "Negation" Freud says, "But it is evident that a precondition for the setting-up of reality testing is that objects should have been lost...."⁴ In the "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" he gives us his conclusion,

The conclusion we have reached is that anxiety comes to be a reaction to the danger of a loss of an object... the first determinant of anxiety, which the ego itself introduces, is loss of perception of the object.⁵

How does he come to this conclusion?

It is not rare in Freud's literature to note that the first five years of the life of the human being are the most important as they contribute to later development. Accordingly, in "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" Freud starts his discussion of anxiety by mentioning that birth is the "prototype" of anxiety. Being the "prototype" of anxiety, we need to ask this question: What is the nature of this birth anxiety? Or, is it biological or psychological? Freud's answer is that the separation from

---


the mother is understood biologically.6 In this regard, anxiety is "an affective symbol which biological necessity demands that a situation of danger should have."7 In this sense, birth anxiety has a "prototype" relation to danger. Although it is biological, yet, ambiguously speaking, it is a sort of anxiety whose nature Freud does not explicate. But, he tells us that it happens without explaining why or how. In other words, for Freud as for Nietzsche8 things happen simply because they happen; "What happens is that the child's biological situation as a foetus is replaced... by a psychical object-relation to its mother."9 So, understanding it as prototypic of the danger situation, i.e., the loss of object, i.e., the mother, is "generalized" so that in the live of the person it refers to the anxiety involved in any later "object losses." This is to say, anxiety acts upon the individual whenever the threat of danger arises. So, what the infant encounters is two kinds of anxieties: 1) biological10 (birth) and 2) psychological (loss of object).

8. In his Birth of Tragedy, F. Nietzsche criticizes Euripides for giving reasons to causes. Things happen because they happen as Sophocles shows in Oedipus Rex.
10. Freud does not give a name to this biological anxiety.
Speaking of a sort of anxiety (biological), we need to ask this question: does Freud mean that this kind of anxiety is an interruption of a prenatal Nirvana? If yes, Freud does not explain what constitutes this interruption and he does not explain why it happens. But as he teaches us "if we cannot see things clearly we will at least see clearly what the obscurities are." This prompts us to pose two other questions: why are they obscure and ambiguous? Is ambiguity a reality? Although it is worth answering these questions, yet, they are not what really concern us in this chapter.

Now, what does Freud mean by danger? Or, what does he refer to? In the body of "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" he maintains,

The situation... which [the infant] regards as a danger and against which it wants to be safeguarded is that of non-satisfaction, of a growing tension due to need, against which it is helpless.... The situation of non-satisfaction in which the amounts of stimulation rise to an unpleasurable height without its being possible for them to be mastered psychically or discharged must for the infant be analogous to the experience of being born... must be a repetition of the situation of danger. What both situations

have in common is the economic disturbance caused by an accumulation of amounts of stimulation which requires to be disposed of. It is this factor, then, which is the real essence of the danger.12

In this sense the notion of danger is associated with what heightens the unpleasurable excitations. Due to the infant's helplessness, mastering the situation whether on the biological or the psychological level is an impossibility. So, to restore a constant level of excitation there must be an object, someone out-there to change this non-satisfaction to satisfaction. By experience the infant comes to realize the presence of another who is able to end this non-satisfaction. The inner disturbances are the means by which the mother is called in order to satisfy this emerging need. So it is the absence of the mother which is experienced as danger; and the infant's kicking and screaming are signs of danger as well as means of self preservation.

When the infant finds out by experience that an external, perceptible object can put an end to the dangerous situation which is reminiscent of birth, the content of the danger it fears is displaced from the economic situation on to the condition which determined that situation, viz.,

12. Ibid, p. 137.
the loss of object. It is the absence of the mother that is now the danger; and as soon as that danger arises the infant gives the signal of anxiety.... This change constitutes the first great step forward in the provision made by the infant for its self-preservation.13

Having this in mind, loss of object -- absence of the mother -- is what determines the experience of an "external, perceptible object." This means that it is through the absence of the mother that her presence is recognized. Moreover, giving the signal for help, the infant not only maintain self-preservation, but also learns how to master this unpleasurable situation.

In this context, we come to know how Freud brings "the significance of the real external world" to his theory. That said, another crucial issue should be considered. It is the realization of an external reality which brings the infant into the state of being in the world. Without this process, the infant would have stayed in the "Nirvana," i.e., "I am all and the all is me." In this regard, we come to an equation that an extreme denial is not being in the world, i.e., a regression to the auto-erotic stage rather than a "progressive" movement into the world, i.e., subject/object relation by which the reality testing is accomplished.

Maintaining this position, we understand that maternal care is not only the agent of satisfaction, but it is that by which the infant experiences security. Parental care does not allow an extreme catastrophic situation to take place. We also learn that the physiological satisfaction is "transposed" to a psychological presence, i.e. the presence of the mother -- a "psychical object relation." So, prior to the absence of the mother, the infant does not experience its ego, nor does he experience a "meaningful perception." Loss of object is the prime determiner of anxiety. By going through this anxiety the infant comes in touch with the external world for self-preservation.

Anxiety, absence, presence, reality testing are inevitable conditions in the progressive development of the infant. The question we would like to pose is: how does the child learn to live his paradox? In _Beyond the Pleasure Principle_, Freud introduces us to the game which he considers a "great cultural achievement." It is the effective entry of the child into a world of absence/presence. In other words, the child learns the acceptance of the "loss which reality affirms."

Visiting his sister Sophie, Freud had the opportunity to observe his nephew playing a game invented by himself. The little "good boy" takes any small object and throws it away. Doing so, he utters the expression o-o-o-o-- which means, according to his mother, "Fort," i.e., "gone." Then
searching for his lost object, and, upon finding it the child joyfully expresses himself by saying "da" which means "there." Freud maintains that through this game the child comes to master the painful reality of the loss of object; a painful reality followed by the reappearance of the object. "Fort-da was related to the child's great cultural achievement.... The instinctual renunciation which he had in allowing his mother to go away without protesting."\(^{14}\) In this sense the child reconciles with reality by experiencing that absence is a livable reality. What makes it promising is the disappearance of the mother which is followed by her appearance. In this connection, the child develops a 'link' between what is present and what is absent. This is the end of the auto-erotic stage.

Following Freud's train of thought, we notice that the end of the erotic stage is itself something that is lost. The ego develops its relation with the external as well as with the internal world. These two worlds exist to the ego as that which "appear" and "disappear". The ego is in the world. Being in the world it develops the readiness for accepting the dialectic of presence/absence as a reality. This game is the art of making what is tragic as a promising livable entity.

The game "Fort-Da" contributes to another order in the life of the child. It is the order of language. "Fort"

---

and "Da" are two expressions of double meaning. This is to say, they are equivocal. Paul Ricoeur explains this,

By the same token, language itself is from the outset and for the most part distorted; it means something other than what it says, it has a double meaning. It is equivocal.¹⁵

In this vein, "Fort-Da" means something other than "there" and "gone." The expression refers to absence/presence. More deeply, it refers to what this absence/presence refers to. It is the mastery of being in the world.

After this brief discussion of the notion of anxiety, we come to understand that the drama of life as described by Freud is a paradoxical one. It is from the pain of separation that an infant moves towards the pleasure of mastery; and from this pleasure of mastery it becomes a being in the world who progressively moves towards death.

Why are we thrown into this world? To this question, Freud does not give us any answer.¹⁶

Since we are destined to being in the world, denial in its extreme sense is contrary to the progressive movements of the infant's life. It is facilitated by two major


¹⁶. We refer the reader to David Bakan's, *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Traditions* (London: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1958). Bakan argues that Freud's psychoanalysis is deeply rooted in the Jewish mystical tradition. From Bakan's perspective one could find an answer to this question, i.e., a theological interpretation of Freud's psychoanalysis.
factors: the mechanism of regression and the absence of parental care. Absence of parental care has the following effects: a) Blocks a healthy discovery of object relationship; b) Incapacitates the person to deal with the demands impinging from the external world; c) Gives way to the immediate gratification of the blind forces of the id; d) Prohibits the playfulness which leads to a healthy mastery of the surrounding world; e) Disrupts the use of consistent language; and f) Disturbs what is rational or articulate. Having this in mind, we can assume the position that denial is set into motion as a result of a certain high degree of anxiety. This anxiety is developed as a reaction to what is perceived by the agent as an intolerable danger. We also come to realize that "loss of object" is the prime determinant of anxiety. So, what becomes the real issue in this context is the notion of separateness. This is the point to be discussed in the next section.

* * *

Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow.
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.
Shakespeare
Romeo and Juliet
Act II, Sc. II

Separateness

Before we start, an important point should be mentioned. It has become very clear that in Freud's thought isolating one notion from another is in a practical
sense extremely difficult due to the inter-relatedness and the interdependence of all psychic phenomena. This implies that we can distinguish them in their unity which underlies what is distinct in them. Metaphorically speaking, it is like a theme in a symphony put in different settings with different variations.

The mastery by the child of the dialectic absence/presence can be rephrased into a mastery of "separation" from the mother. This is to say, the "loss which reality affirms" assures the infant's mode of being in the world. In other words, the physical and the psychological distance assumed by the separation process is also understood as a mode of relating to another. So, relationships imply separation. E. Ortigues says that the separation between the infant and the mother is that which gives their relation its significance. That said, we can adopt the assumption that denial of separateness is denial of relationships.

In the first chapter we discussed three notions of denial, namely,

1) Denial A (Schizophrenia)
2) Denial B (Neurosis as came to be realized in Freud's study of Fetishism.)

---

17. E. & M.C. Ortigues, Oedipe Africian, "n.p.", Paris, 1966, p. 70. "Comme on voit, ce qui est "seperateur" entre la mere et l'enfant, c'est d'abord ce qui signifie leur relation."
3) Denial C (The denial of the nonexistence of the penis in the female genitalia. It is an unavoidable happening in the normalcy of development in every child.)

We also need to bear in mind that the boundaries between neurosis and psychosis oscillate and depend on the degree of regression, and, also, depend on the degree of readiness to deny in the individual. So, in discussing specifically the neurotic denial, it is not meant to refer only to fetishism. This is because underlying the notion of fetishism lies the denial of separation; taking into consideration that a person takes the fetish as a symbol of what was lost. In most general terms, Freud explains the person's generalized attitude as follows. He says,

It has been quite correctly pointed out that a child gets the idea of a narcissistic injury through a bodily loss from the experience of losing his mother's breast after sucking, from the daily surrender of his faeces and, indeed, even from his separation from the womb at birth. Nevertheless, one ought not to speak of a castration complex until this idea of a loss has become connected with male genitals.18

So we develop a generalized attitude -- symbolic mediation -- which qualifies the blurred line of demarcation between

neuroses and psychoses. In other words, in neuroses the ego loses to some extent its synthetic function. How?

Freud gives us the answer in his paper "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process" in which he emphasizes the fact that what is at issue is the ego's rejection of reality while it maintains some acceptance of its perception of another portion of reality. This partial rejection of reality shows a connection between denial, reality testing and separateness. Separateness is what is painful, i.e., what is denied. As a result of rejecting this painful experience the ego loses the distinction between the self and the world outside, or, the object relation. This is to say, a "fusion" between the self and the object. But, what makes this fusion possible? Freud's answer is the "wish." He defines it as

A current of this kind in the [psychical] apparatus starting from unpleasure and aiming at pleasure, we have termed a 'wish'; and we have asserted that only a wish is able to set the apparatus in motion and that the course of excitation in it is automatically regulated by feelings of pleasure and unpleasure.19

The motion in the context of denial of separateness is regressive.

Now, let us pose the case that may happen in many educational settings. Oftentimes, it is noticed that some students strive hard to be "A" students. Let us suppose that these students like to be considered as unique in their own right. A teacher may observe that some students feel threatened amidst such intense competitive atmosphere. As a reaction these students search for a haven and desire to replace this undesirable atmosphere by the safety of an unconditional submission to the teacher's will. In this case, they become like a fetish who replaces the loss which reality affirms by a thing such as a handkerchief. They start to idealize the teacher with the belief that this person has the ability to make this unbearable reality a soft one.

So, considering this, their excellent achievements are not due to their tireless efforts, but their reliance on the teacher to act as their "ego-function." But let us assume that at a certain time this teacher resigns, gets transferred, or gets sick and can no longer be there. Or let us also assume that the teacher is one of those who respect individual differences and a reasonable independency. In this situation, it would be remarkably noticeable that these students get frustrated and start complaining about work, learning, and relationships. Actually, what is really the cause of frustration is not work, learning, or the low quality of these relationships,
but, firstly, the ego's immaturity in relation to its object, and, secondly, the withdrawal of the teacher who was adopted as a personal ego. These students are not able to handle the demands of reality; they become overwhelmed, helpless, and finally, expose either a partial or a massive denial of what is perceived as unpleasant. In her article "Denial and Repression," E. Jacobson refers to this "meek submission" as the "introjection" of another ego to oneself. 20

Since at school we don't find extreme cases of schizophrenia (massive denial), we wish to restrict our discussion to partial denial. It is a partial alienation which "aims at denying the existence of the particular event that occasioned the outbreak of insanity. But actually every neurotic does the same with some fragment of reality." 21 How do we encounter this neurotic manifestation? In the case presented, it is expected that after the withdrawal of the teacher's support, one of the most recurrent symptoms of denial which is expected to appear is the wish to sleep, i.e., the regression to a dreamy state. It is a regression by which the subject undoes the pain of separateness by creating the illusion that the "object" cannot be "lost."


The wish to sleep, according to Freud, is "the factor of withdrawal from the external world [which makes] possible the regressive character of representation in dreams."\(^{22}\) From this we can understand, as Freud implies, that the unconscious wish is also effective during daytime. It is like a magnet which attracts what is unpleasurable at the present to what is still infantile and pleasurable in the depth of the psyche. Freud maintains, "a wish which is represented in a dream must be an infantile one."\(^{23}\) Students in such a state of mind move along with this regression to a state where separateness is diminished; a state of "I-am-all" or the state of "the-world-is-me."

This shows itself by observing their expected behavior. They

1) absent themselves from classes with the excuse of being tired and need some sleep.

2) use alcohols, drugs, etc..., as a real instigator of a dreamy state.

3) sit in class dozing off; pulled by two opposite poles: listening and not listening, seeing and not seeing.

4) rebel against the teacher's class material and the school system because they see the school as a boring setting.

\(^{22}\) S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 629.

\(^{23}\) Ibid, p. 592.
5) fantasize a more gratifying reality as a substitute for the painful existing one.

6) lose the skill or art of living and tend to be idealistic in their inclinations, i.e., the world must be a loving one; a most beautiful Nirvana.

Considering these points, it is obvious how the pleasure principle takes hold of the student's judgement, attitude, and perception. What is considered as normal in dealing with their everyday life is "submitted to abnormal treatment"24 of the unconscious wish to regress to either the "auto-erotic" or to a "narcissistic" stage. In both stages there is immediate gratification, fusion of the subject/object relation, and a replacement of the painful external reality to an altered state of perception.

To sum up, separation from the mother is the first determinant of anxiety. It is an anxiety caused by our experience of danger which is associated with the absence of the mother upon the emergence of inner needs. Growing from infancy to childhood, the child experiences learning of keeping up with the tragedy he was brought to. This is accomplished by parental care, and by games like "Fort-Da" by which the child makes out of this life a promising and a livable tragedy.

But, in spite of this splendid conquest of the external reality, persons carry within themselves what is

inherent in the human psyche -- the dominance of the pleasure principle. Facing an intolerable danger, individuals regress to stages where they do away with what is painful. One of these anxiety provoking situations is the denial of separateness from the world. For these individuals "parting" becomes a sorrowful event but lacks the "sweet" mastery of absence/ presence.

He thought he saw an Elephant
That practiced on a fife:
He looked again, and found it was
A letter from his wife
"At length I realize," he said
"The bitterness of life!"
Lewis Carroll
The Gardener's Song

Perception

Freud, a revolutionary of his time, gives a new formula of perception. In his Outline of Psychoanalysis he says,

The perceptual periphery of the cortex of the ego can be stimulated to a much greater extent from inside as well; internal events such as sequences of ideas and intellective processes can become conscious; and a special apparatus becomes necessary in order to distinguish between the two possibilities -- that is, what is known as
reality-testing. The equation "perception = reality (external world) no longer holds.25 Understanding the content of Freud's new formula one must ask the following question: what operation takes place in this "special apparatus?" The answer lies in the principle which regulates the process of mental functioning. Freud calls it the "pleasure principle" whose responsibility is to keep a constant quantity of excitation. This is in reaction to another principle which sets the mental apparatus in an opposite excitatory direction called the "unpleasure principle" whose "final outcome coincides with lowering of that tension."26 Underlying these two principles an inherent force is embedded in the psyche which gives both of these principles the power to activate themselves. Freud calls this force "compulsion to repeat."

Considering this ambivalence in the nature of the psyche we also come to understand that the agents of the psyche are "semi-independent." Every activity has its counterpart within itself and outside itself. In his paper, "Formulation Regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning," Freud describes this as follows, "Just as the pleasure-ego can do nothing but wish, work towards gaining pleasure and avoiding 'pain,' so the reality-ego need do


nothing but strive for what is useful and guard itself against damage."\textsuperscript{27} In other words, what is "useful" belongs to the domain of the "unpleasure principle" adopted by the reality-ego only as a step for future gratification, i.e., for the "pleasure principle." This may seem paradoxical; but it seems plausible considering the fact which Freud gives us in Beyond the Pleasure Principle: what is unpleasure for one system is pleasure for the other.

Having briefly laid down the two principles which regulate the movement of the psychic apparatus, we would like to pose this question: what are the components of these two principles? The answer is the perceptions as they are preserved as "traces" in the unconscious and preconscious memory of the psyche,

We possess a system [Perceptual-Conscious] Pept-Cs, which receives perceptions but retains no permanent trace of them, so that it can react like a clean sheet to every new perception; while the permanent traces of the excitations which have been received are preserved in 'mnemic systems' lying behind the perceptual system.\textsuperscript{28}

But how do these perceptions act as a catalyst to the "wish" which, as discussed before, has the components of

\textsuperscript{27} S. Freud, \textit{Collected Papers}, Vol. 4, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 176.
forwarding itself to satisfaction? Freud gives the answer in the *Interpretation of Dreams*. He says,

An essential component of this experience of satisfaction is a particular perception... the mnemonic image of which remains associated thence forward with the memory trace of the excitation produced by the need. As a result of the link that has thus been established, next time this need arises a psychical impulse will at once energy which will seek to recathect the mnemonic image of the perception and to re-evoke the perception itself, that is to say, to re-establish the situation of the original satisfaction. An impulse of this kind is what we call a wish.\(^{29}\)

There are three important points we gather from what is already mentioned: firstly, the external world is what makes human beings a "social animal." Secondly, although the unconscious traces are internal within the human psyche, their origin is based on the conscious or unconscious interaction with the objective world. This is to say, the experience of the objective world is "internalized" though impressions and perceptions, i.e., stored as memories. This leaves us with the notion that as human beings we are memory people. Thirdly, the

dialectical tension that the psyche undergoes creates a state of paradoxes eased by the interference of primarily the "reality-testing ego" which keeps a harmonious relationships with the external world. How? By diplomacy, or, the "art" of survival as discussed in the second chapter.

But before getting into how we encounter denial in perception, we must glance at how our perceptions normally act upon the world. In other words, knowing what is normally processed, we come to understand more clearly the pathological process.

In this connection, we need to refer to the notion of absent/present as shown earlier. To recapitulate, it is worth mentioning that the "Fort-Da" game is what facilitates the perception of what is present. More clearly, there is a "link" with what is absent or lost which makes it present; present somewhere. Whether we can say that this "link" is what causes "imagination" is not to be considered in this discussion. But to be faithful to the line of this discussion, suffice to say that the "link" implies "relationship," i.e., "separation." Also, we come to understand that due to the disruptive powers within the psyche, perception, in this sense, is dependent on different factors. G.B. Levitas, an authority in psychoanalysis, maintains,
The human being's reaction to the world about him is at first very simple. As he matures, however, his perception comes to be dependent on many factors: his background and language, temperament and role, physical and emotional conditions. The reality of what he sees depends upon the way in which he interprets phenomena.\(^{30}\)

Freud is Kantian in this regard. This means that the "intention" behind the perception of the thing is what determines its interpretation. Furthermore, the "Fort-Da" game shows us that what is perceived by the child is not only what is present, but an absence "signified" by presence. Separation, therefore, is perceived as an occurrence of a presence which is absent. For the child what is absent is a prospective presence; it is a presence in "intention." Having this in mind, we can assume the position that for Freud the person's relation to the external reality as something separate is perceived in a symbolic way. No wonder that psychoanalysis is a tool by which "reduction of illusion" is achieved.

From this discussion, what can we come up with about perception in respect to denial? With the development of the reality-testing ego, perception of the external world becomes a tool of relationships. But, with the weakening

of the reality-testing ego the perception of the outer world is blurred, and the chances for the mechanism of denial is strengthened. Why? The ego withdraws itself and becomes "insensitive" to the stimulations impinging from the external world and thereby lowering the level of consciousness. Consequently, in an extreme case, the ego reconstructs a perceptual reality of its own, and its orientation to the outer world is minimized. In the case of a neurotic denial, part of the external reality is replaced by a perception of another.

In order to give an example of neurotic denial, let us concern ourselves with the notion of humor. In his paper "Humor," Freud considers humor as the "triumph of narcissism" and also of the "pleasure principle." It is an assertion of the ego in the face of a painful situation. Freud says,

These last two characteristics, the denial of the claim of reality and the triumph of the pleasure principle, cause humor to approximate to the regressive or reactionary processes.... By its repudiation of the possibility of suffering, it takes its place in the great series of methods devised by the mind of man for evading the compulsion to suffer a series which begins with neurosis and culminates in delusions, and
includes intoxication, self-induced states of abstraction and ecstasy.\textsuperscript{31}

Accordingly, humor is that by which a person wards off an impending suffering by "repudiating" it. It means: "Look here! This is all that this seemingly dangerous world amounts to."\textsuperscript{32} In an educational setting, it is often noticed that some students under the pressure of the final exams or any distressing classroom situation burst out into a fit of laughter for no reasons known to them.

Sometimes, warding off a fragment of reality takes the shape of certain perceptual images resulting from unconscious phantasies. Students of this sort are led by certain images by which teachers, if they are the cause of distress, are identified with a fictional image that may lead to humor. This fictional image is characterized by identifying one trait with the whole person. In his short paper, "A Mythological Parallel to a Visual Obsession," Freud describes these obsessive images as "caricatures" which derogatorily "replace a whole person by one of their organs"\textsuperscript{33} or by a joking expression such as, for example, the teacher is "all ears" or a "walking encyclopedia" or a "nobody." In this case, it is the "internal perceptions" which "yield sensations of processes arising in the most

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, p. 220.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 346.
diverse and certainly also in the deepest strata of the mental apparatus." So, these internal perceptions stored in the deepest levels of the psyche provide us with some notions about the "readiness" to activate the defense mechanism of denial. They also imply that the readiness to deny is associated with the "character" of the person. In this sense, we have in mind the typology of personality traits discussed in chapter two. More precisely, unconscious fixation on certain perceptions seeking satisfaction arises to eclipse the painful reality, and, consequently, the mechanism of denial operates by warding off the impinging painful perceptions.

It is true what Shakespeare says in Hamlet "the readiness is all." This works both ways; as already mentioned there is the "wish" to deny, and, also, there exist internal and external disturbances which facilitate the need to deny. As Louis Linn puts it, "Just as disturbances of perception facilitate denial, so does a need for denial result in disturbances of perception." This means that the need for denial causes "inexact observations." According to Freud, what causes this inexact observation is an "expression of the rebellion of

the id against the outer world." Subjugated by its two masters the reality-ego shows an "unwillingness to adapt itself to necessity." 36 In this psychological state of mind students show a tendency to:

1) be careless in regard to their school work,
2) be forgetful,
2) fantasize and to substitute reality by wishful thinking.

As Freud puts it, "It is from this world of fantasy that neurosis draws the material for recreating the world afresh according to its desires, and it finds this material there, as a rule, by way of a regression to an earlier period in real life." 37 The neurotic denial makes possible a partial withdrawal of the quantity of "cathexis" from the external or internal world. This withdrawal of cathexis causes diversion of the person's attention as a defense against an impinging anxiety-provoking situation. As a result, the perception of a given situation is withdrawn and the ego under the influence of the pleasure principle reconstructs a hallucinatory or a fantasized nonthreatening reality. Consequently, these unhappy students live in the reality of their graduation day rather than the reality of finals.

Fantasy or suppression of a given stimulus is not denial per se. Either can be the vehicle of a "central

wish" which is "infantile" in nature by which regression to a state of "pleasure" is achieved. This is to say, the quantity of excitation impinging from the external world is reduced to a minimum.

As mentioned earlier, according to Freud, the first step to civilization is the renunciation of instinctual demands. The id's impulses are like "mobs," "blind" and know no morality. But, although a part of the ego is in the id, yet, in some sense, the id is external to the reality-ego. For self-preservation the reality-ego tries to ward off painful or threatening impulses from the id in the same way that it wards off painful or threatening stimuli from the external world. In this regard we may consider that denial of the external reality occurs only when this reality, though not painful as it is, evokes the desires of the id which constitute, on their own terms, a threat to the moral principles of the student concerned.

Let us imagine a female student who finds herself in a classroom with an extremely handsome teacher. Having him in front of her stimulates her sexual desires towards him. But, how can this be, since she was taught that a student should not sexually desire her teacher? This student falls in conflict, torn between her attraction to her teacher and her moral values. Being a good student with a respectable average, she has to find a solution. But what solution does she seek? The solution she seeks is the denial of the
cause of her intolerable anxiety. This is to say, the 
teacher's physical presence. She might close her eyes, 
look constantly at her notebook or comes up with any other 
means by which her visual perception is "repressed." 
conducting herself in such a way, we can say that she 
"heard" and "understood" the lecture very well. In his 
paper, "Psychogenic Visual Disturbance," Freud explains an 
 extreme case,

It would appear as though repression on the part of 
the ego had gone too far and poured away the baby with 
the bath-water, for the ego now flatly refuses to see 
anything at all, since the sexual interests in looking 
have so deeply involved the faculty of vision. The 
other presentation of the situation, however, is 
probably closer to the fact, the aspects in which we 
see the active part in the process played by the 
repressed scoptophilia. It is the revenge, the 
indemnification of the repressed impulse, thus 
withheld from further psychical development, that it 
can succeed in so boldly asserting its mastery over 
the organ which serves it.38

The case refers not only to this partial denial, but 
to a more general understanding of relationships or "co- 
existence." Having the visual perception as an important 
vehicle in object relationship, what is really being 

38. Ibid, p. 110.
frustrated here is her "co-existence" with another. This frustration of emotions for one reason or another "elects" the disruption of visual perception as a mode of expression. So the partial loss of "co-existence," i.e., a way of refusing to live a certain reality, fear of breaking the moral laws, is "translated" by the suppression of perception. More generally, we observe a tendency to break away from life itself. To repeat ourselves, thinking psychoanalytically means thinking an "equivocal" verbal or nonverbal language. In other words, what is important is what language refers to.

Carrying on with the language of psychoanalysis, a traumatic experience finds expression in different symptoms. The ego encounters the involvement of the blind id with any perceptual faculty and decides to abandon a conscious control over the situation. A symptom is formed conveying a message of either rejecting reality by blocking the perception of it or rejecting reality by inducing that which fulfills the craving to recapture a dreamy state. Both have one common denominator, i.e., the triumph of the pleasure principle. For example, a person who stops eating symbolizes, as Merleau-Ponty says, the breaking away from life, since the "swallowing symbolizes the movement of existence which carries events and assimilates them; the
patient is unable, literally, to 'swallow' the prohibition which has been imposed on her."  

A parallel to these symptoms of denial can be encountered in gluttons, alcoholics and users of drugs. Injecting food, alcohol or drugs into the body symbolizes the infant's sucking the mother's breast as a prelude to a sleeping state. In his book, The Psychoanalysis of Elation, B. Levin gives us detailed cases on how sometimes a person achieves denial by eating and becoming like the "jolly fat man." In other words, he is like an infant who captures an identical state of infantile narcissism. This "jolly fat man" captures an identical state of infantile narcissism. The French saying "Apres moi le deluge" precisely describes his attitude; an attitude which explicitly uncovers an extreme destructive attitude to the existence of the world of relationships.

Conclusion

Denial is a primitive mechanism. It is that which makes regression, the inexplicable phenomenon, possible. Being primitive means that its existence in the human psyche is prior to the "cleavage" of the ego and the superego. So encountering denial also means encountering

that which causes it, namely, separation, anxiety and perception.

These three important notions are inextricably interwoven. One implies the occurrence of the other. Separateness implies anxiety; and anxiety refers to a threat of an impinging "danger" which starts as the mother being absent. The absence of the mother becomes the "prototype" of all impending danger whether from the external or from the internal world. Experiencing extreme anxiety leads to a distortion in the person's perception. The ego withdraws its control and becomes an instrument of the repressed impulses. Consequently, denial of the so-called dangerous situation is bound to take place.

Now, what is the weapon we need to possess in facing danger? The answer is possessing the virtues. What do we need for this "excellence" to be lived? The answer is: a virtuous life. This implies building the virtuous character. For Freud, attaining a virtuous life is not an easy task,

Actions and consciously expressed opinions are as a rule enough for practical purposes in judging men's characters. Actions deserve to be considered first and foremost; for many impulses which force their way through to consciousness are even then brought to nothing by the real forces of mental life before they can mature into
deeds. In fact, such impulses often meet with no psychical obstacles to their progress, for the very reason that the unconscious is certain that they will be stopped at some other stage. It is in any case instructive to get to know the much trampled soil from which our virtues proudly spring. 41

That said, the purpose we hope to achieve in the next chapter is the answer to the following question: what are some of the virtues implied in Freud's psychoanalysis?

CHAPTER FOUR

Section One

--What thou hast inherited from thy fathers, 
acquire it to make it thine 
(Goethe, Faust, Part One)

Introduction

This chapter is comprised of two sections. The first deals with the notion of common sense, and the second deals with two major issues in psychoanalysis: psychopathology and the theory of cure. In both sections we venture to answer the following question: What are the virtues implied in Freud's psychoanalysis? In order to strengthen our investigation we have decided to draw a parallel or to search for an articulation between what is implied as virtue in Freud's thought and Aristotle's Ethics.

As to the section on common sense, our purpose is to show the profound quality of Freud's thinking which served him well as a means to articulate different disciplines in one discipline called psychoanalysis. To prove our point we are going to consider Freud's way in approaching the subjects of slips, dreams and persons. Reaching a considerable clarity on these issues, we will see what is the virtue in Aristotle's Ethics that qualifies Freud's
This leads us to the second section in which we see how Freud's thought is put in action and verified by human experience as it unfolds in the clinical setting. As we go on with our investigation, we will also observe how Freud's ideas on psychopathology and on the theory of cure have profoundly added a new dimension to the notion of virtue, the unconscious virtues.

**Common Sense**

In this section we are going to consider a direction in Freud's literature which has been overlooked by many researchers. It is a direction we need to see in order to understand how being-in-the-world is so important in Freud's theory. Although it does not obey the method of theoretic speculation; yet it is considered to be an indispensable catalyst for any deliberate methods. This direction is called "common sense," or "good sense," or "native shrewdness." It is, as mentioned earlier in the second chapter, acquired from the experience of mere living. So the major question to be answered is: how does Freud put this "native shrewdness" to use in his psychoanalytic search?

Freud's interest in clinical search did not eclipse his interest in the remarkable resources that human cultures have offered throughout history. In his own production, he reproduces these resources and articulates
them in his psychoanalytic findings. In other words, he makes them relevant as "evidence" and "devices" for an underlying depth and also for "far-reaching" speculations. This is one of the reasons which makes psychoanalysis "intuitively graspable" as we encounter it challenging the logic of the illogic.

Being-in-the-world simply implies not denying the world. On a commonsensical level oftentimes we use what is given to us. Although we reach a point of experiencing overwhelming contradictions and inconsistencies for which we are unable to provide ourselves with intellectual explanations, our "practice" and "experience" serve us as tools by which we come to possess a "felt-meaning" of the context of these situations. Having a comprehension of this context redeems our threatened attitudes by keeping a relationship with the world. It is not uncommon to experience a person who is able to make a desperate situation livable by referring to the proverbial French statement "c'est la vie."

How does Freud defend this commonsensical stance? The intellectual scientific circles of Freud's time accused his psychoanalysis of being nothing but "mere talk" or "exchange of words." To this he responds,

Words and magic were in the beginning one and the same thing, and even today words retain much of their magical powers.... Words call forth
emotions and are universally the means by which we influence our fellow creatures.¹

What Freud implies is not the needless use of words but communication, relationship and uncovering of attitudes. Communication is crucial to analysis. In this regard, Freud maintains that the patient "will make the communications necessary to the analysis only under the conditions of a special affective relationship to the physician; in the presence of a single person to whom he was indifferent he would become mute."² Freud continues to defend himself by saying that the importance of psychological attitude in which resides an important development of a complicated organism is "foreign" to those scientists who are accustomed to give anatomical, chemical or physical explanations to phenomena. He says to those scientists, "for this reason a psychological attitude of mind is still foreign to you, and you are accustomed to regard it with suspicion, to deny it a scientific status, and to leave it to the general public, poets, mystics, and philosophers."³

The underlying crucial point emphasized is that relationships are pivotal in the process of comprehending

² Ibid.
³ Ibid., p. 21.
and living in the world around us. But, sometimes, words used in communication seems to be unintelligible. Their occurrence gives the impression of an accidental happening stemming from no apparent beliefs, attitudes and conscious intentions. As mentioned earlier, for Freud there is an inherent readiness to achieve or to express something. This is to say, there is an "idea of design," i.e., a tendency which has to achieve its purpose. R. Audi says, "there can be unconscious wants and unconscious beliefs in a sense at least very close to the ordinary sense of 'want' and 'belief'.... These can figure in motivational explanations in fundamentally the same way as conscious 'beliefs' and 'wants.'" These unconscious beliefs and wants are not strangers to our everyday life experiences. It needs no hard proofs to see that what seems to be an accidental utterance shows to every common person that there is a disguised intention underlying it. We, oftentimes, hear children exposing a teasing tone to each other when indirectly a child unconsciously substitutes a word for another. Detecting such unconscious intention is something we experience and understand from our everyday common sense experience, and Freud uses these experiences as evidences to his theory. How?

In his article "Freudian Commonsense", Adam Morton

---

maintains that Freud allows in his explanations the contributions of the everyday experiences to his theory: "the way in which Freud applies the theory give us some idea of how to expand commonsense so as to obtain our intuitive..."  

In his "Psychology of Errors", Freud encourages us to learn from phenomena which are frequent and observed not only in neurotics but in very healthy individuals. More precisely, he makes us aware that there is a kind of knowledge which is non-theoretical. In this connection, he makes use of it and gives what it deserves of intellectual explanations. Working with what is given is an important step in every scientific investigation. Freud maintains, "Anyone thus breaking away from the determination of natural phenomena... has thrown over the whole scientific outlook on the world (Weltanschauung)."  

He substantiates this attitude by referring to the religious outlook on the world and how it is more articulate than the attitude of a scientist who believes that physical science is the only form of scientific knowledge, "One may point out to him how much more consistent is the religious outlook on the world, which emphatically assures us that not one sparrow shall fall to


6. S. Freud, Introduction to Psychoanalysis, p. 27.
the ground except God wills it."\(^7\)

**Slips**

Experiences such as "slip of the tongue" or "slip of the pen" are a kind of such recurrent natural phenomenon which show slight "disturbances" and "inaccuracies" of the mental performance. Usually they happen when a person is "tired," "excited" or the person's intentions are "absorbed" in other things such as wishes, hopes, desires, etc.... In "The Psychology of Errors" Freud uses the works of the two philologists Meringer and Mayer to identify these slips. The distortions are differentiated as 1) interchanges, 2) anticipations, 3) perseverations, 4) compoundings, and 5) substitutions. In the same essay Freud gives an example to each one of these slips.

**Interchanges** - the hotel-boy knocking at the bishop's door, nervously replied to the question "who is it?" "The Lord, my boy."\(^8\)

**Anticipations** - "the thought lies heartily" instead of: "the thought lies heavily on my heart."\(^9\)

**Perseveration** - "A member of the House of Commons referred to another as the 'honourable member for Central Hell,' instead of 'Hull.'"\(^10\)

---

7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 31.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
Compounding - A gentleman asks a lady if he may "insort" her on her way instead of "escort" her.\textsuperscript{11} 

Substitutions - "Amongst those present was His Highness the Clown Prince" instead of the "Crown Prince"\textsuperscript{12}

According to Freud, unconscious mental processes seek to find their purposeful expressions. In other words, what is absent to the conscious mind disrupts it and makes itself present in a disguised way. From this we come to understand that there is "meaning" behind what seems to be unintelligible. The meaning lies in the "intentionality" or the "tendency" of the mental processes. As we have already observed, a person shows a tendency to say the opposite of what is to be said. As such we can also assume the position that there is in the core of the human psyche a readiness for self-correctiveness or a tendency for negations. In other words, there lies a tendency for an unconscious honesty.

\textbf{Dreams}

The difficult theory of dreams shows the impasse Freud faced in connection with the scientific circles of his time. During those hard times, researchers concerned themselves with the object of dreams only for the purpose of explaining and interpreting their "physiological theories."

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 32. 
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 30.
philosophers like Wundt and Jodl, as Freud refers to them in his "Difficulties and Preliminary Approach to the subject," concerned themselves not with dream interpretations but with descriptions of how dreams diverge from the waking life. This divergence show itself in the suspending of the critical judgment of the person. In spite of this impasse, Freud pursued his search for the hidden meaning which lies within this natural phenomenon of sleep.

Freud believes not only in the perseverance of scientific research but also in the perseverance of the wisdom inherited throughout the ages. For Freud, a true scientific method contains the use of all forms of knowledge as given to us in the assumptions of science, philosophy, mythology, literature, traditions, etc.... "Let us adopt the assumption of the ancients and of simple folk, and follow in the footsteps of the dream-interpreters of old." In this sense, Freud uses what has become of rudimentary knowledge as a fertile soil for intellectual elaborations and explanations. How?

In tackling dream interpretations he had to clarify his stand on the notion of sleep. As mentioned earlier in the first and the third chapter, sleep is a way of warding off external reality, i.e., a suspension of the person's

13. Ibid., p. 78.
interest in the external world. In this respect, according to Freud, being in the world is a state of existence which "unwillingly" happened to us. But with a lived experience this world becomes endurable by periodically withdrawing from it. So, in order to give meaning to this withdrawal, he resorts to what is said in everyday life. For example, a working person may say at the end of a laborious day, "Leave me in peace, for I want to sleep." The response of a young child is different. It seems that Freud was aware of the difficulties mothers face during the sleeping time of their children. A child says, "I won't go to sleep yet; I'm not tired, I want more things to happen to me!"

Sleeping is the royal road to dreaming. Dreams are the language of sleep. In order to interpret this language, Freud also refers to the cultural heritage given to us on a silver platter. In other words, Freud uses what people in their everyday life understand without being formally taught anything about it. In "Symbolism in Dreams", he maintains, "we derive our knowledge from widely different sources: from fairy tales, and myth, jokes and witticisms, from folklore, i.e. from what we know of manners and customs, sayings and songs, of different peoples, and from poetic and colloquial usage of

15. Ibid., p. 79.
16. Ibid.


language."⁴¹⁷ So in the use of these different sources, we notice how parallel the content of these sources is to dream symbolisms. In the same essay, Freud gives us the evidence.

The human body is usually symbolized in a dream by a house. This is to say, windows, doors, and gates are symbols of entrances to cavities in the human body. Freud uses colloquial expressions to prove his point, e.g. saying someone who is not quite right that he is living in the "upper storey." Or, the openings of the body are referred to as "portals." Moreover, he makes use of proverbs in order to prove the same point, such as referring to a woman with a "developed bust": "She has plenty of wood in front of her house" (Die hat viel Holz vor dem Hause)⁴²⁸

Freud's intellectual excellence goes deeper than the use of sayings as evidences of proofs. He oftentimes refers to the etymology of words in order to uncover the hidden meaning of a word. For throughout history, words have undergone different transformations without losing their essential meaning. With such a context we come to realize why "wood" comes to be a symbol of a woman or a mother. For Freud, Holz (wood) is derived from a Greek word which means raw material. He compares the German word with how it came to be in Latin and later in Portuguese.

⁴¹⁷. Ibid., p. 142.

⁴²⁸. Ibid., p. 142.
The latter shows that "madeira" means wood which is a modified version of the Latin word "materia" which means material in general. In the same framework "materia" comes from the word "mater" which means mother who conceives and gives birth.19

So the "dream work" undergoes the same transformational process as language in the process of cultural usage. This means that the unconscious wants and wishes retain their urge for self-expression. But due to the resistance of the "censor" the original meaning which expresses itself in different shapes and forms waiting to be deciphered. In "The Dream Work" he says,

But the peculiar thing about the way in which the dream-work proceeds is this: its material consists of thoughts, some of which may be objectionable..., but which nevertheless are correctly formed and expressed. The dreamwork transmutes these thoughts into another form, and it is curious and incomprehensible that in this process of translation - of rendering them, as it were, into another script or language - the means of blending and combining are employed.20

In addition to the different derivations which unfold in the process, there lies a sort of "ambivalence." This

19. Ibid., pp. 144-45.
means that in a certain aspect of language formation the word carries within itself its own opposite. Freud gives us these examples:

1. Latin:
   altus = high or deep
   sacer = sacred or accursed

2. German:
   stimme = voice, stumm = dumb

3. English:
   Without: "with" has the "signification" of "adding to" and to "depriving of."  21

Persons

Freud's characterization of people he encountered in a clinical setting and in everyday life situations shows his remarkable ability to use common sense description. His description is designed in such a way that none of these persons is to be looked at as strange or weird no matter what the sickness was. It is as if Freud wants to give us the impression that behind these common sense descriptions lies a great power of psychological insight informally developed in a cultural setting. How is this evident in Freud's writings? To answer this question two examples are going to be considered: one from a clinical setting and another from an average life situation. We start with the latter.

21. Ibid., p. 159.
In the third chapter we showed how Freud describes Sophie's son as a "good boy." In this respect, it is evident in the literature that Freud does not resort to a conceptual analysis as it is argued in R. Straughan's book *Can We Teach Children to be Good?* of what it means to be a "good boy." Freud simply encourages the use of what is normally considered as a good boy. Sophie's son might have broken his mother's vase, but this does not make him a bad boy neither to his parents nor to Freud nor to his neighbors. In other words, the general perspectives in virtue of the boy's behavior dilute his wrong doing and make it normal to a boy of his age. All in all Sophie's son is a good boy. Freud's intellectual observation shows how this little boy was mastering in a playful way the tragedy of separation from the mother; and in virtue of this activity this boy is leading himself to a good life; and therefore, he is a good boy. This is to say, this boy performed his first "civilized" act. Intuitively, we come to grasp the significance of the validity of this commonsensical description. It shows that there is a perspective guided by its context -- practice and experience -- and systematically developed with an informal and insightful flexibility. In our colloquial language we describe a person who possesses this quality as a person who "knows what's what."

Now, let us move to a situation in which Freud
characterizes a woman who caused an embitterment to her family by her nonsensical ideas. In his "Psycho-Analysis and Psychiatry" Freud describes her as follows:

I found her a well-preserved lady, fifty three years old of age, of a friendly, simple disposition, who gave without hesitation an account of herself. She is most happily married and lives in the country with her husband who manages a large factory. She cannot say enough of her husband's kindness and consideration....

In spite of his complicated theory of personality, Freud describes this woman in a way which makes her "intelligible" as a person. He introduces her in terms of manners as a person we should know with certain lasting characteristics rather than the way she appears in a clinical situation, i.e. the temporary attacks of jealousy. What Freud is trying to convey is that a person's "character" traits are more rooted than some transient neurotic attacks. This means that after therapy she falls back on what was a stronghold in her style of action, i.e., "friendly" with "simple disposition." This is to say, she falls back on her modesty, kindness, and other virtues which constitute her character. These character traits refer to a system of values prized by her culture, and Freud does not hesitate to articulate these values in his

22. Ibid., p. 221.
intellectual pursuit.

Now let us pose this question: What are the virtues implied as Freud tackles some major issues in psychoanalysis? We would like to remind the reader that we do not intend to emphasize the virtues in Freud's character. What we really intend to emphasize is how psychoanalysis, the product of Freud's thought, is a school of thought in which the virtues are descriptively implied.

Considering this, let us begin with the virtue of "high-mindedness" or "magnanimity" as discussed in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. One of its main characteristics is that "magnanimity seems, even going by the name alone, to be concerned with great things." In spite of his early concern in the physiological understanding of the human self Freud never concealed from his close friend Fliess that philosophy was his main objective. Thomas Nagel in his essay "Freud's Anthropomorphism," quotes Freud,

I see that you are using the circuitous route of medicine to attain your first ideal, the physiological understanding of man, while I secretly nurse the hope of arriving by the same route at my own original objective, philosophy.24


And what is greater than wisdom, the sole search of philosophy and the desired "love" of a philosopher?

Moreover, the scope of magnanimity according to Aristotle is "honour" which is qualified as "the prize for the finest [achievements]." To ask the question about these finest achievements Freud honoured and diligently used, the answer is in what we already discussed in this section, namely, traditions as they are implied in fairy tales, the proverbs of the common people, the mythologies of ancient cultures, the insights of the religious traditions, the understanding and reasoning of philosophy and mathematics, and finally, the methods of the physical sciences. At the extreme level Freud did not hesitate to make "great claims" in order to reflect the "worth" of his attitudes, discoveries, challenges and contributions. If pronouncing his "great claims" and giving "worth" to his discoveries are "rightly" done, then he is an "intermediate" in Aristotle's language. This is because of "what he thinks he is worthy of reflects his real worth, while the others are excessive or deficient."26

But for things to be rightly done persons need to be committed and "faithful" to their convictions. These characteristics imply a sense of confidence which is rooted in the virtue of courage. In the Rhetoric, Aristotle

defines confidence as "the hope accompanied by a mental image, of things conducive to safety as being near at hand, while causes of fear seem to be either non-existent or far away. Confidence is inspired both by the remoteness of calamities and by the proximity of sources of encouragement." 27 What concerns us in this definition is the notion of safety as it is related to courage and confidence. This means that persons should utilize all available resources to defend themselves as well as to defend their ideas. In this connection, it is evident how Freud brought psychoanalysis as a new language to this present century. Using his already mentioned resources, he also brought a new method to hermeneutics; 28 he articulated the language of science and mysticism with psychoanalysis; 29 and he contributed new perspective to morality and ethics. 30 With such high quality achievements it is very difficult to deny the confidence, courage and faithfulness which armed his character.


To conclude this section, Freud's use of common sense as a device and evidence is understood in connection with other forms of knowledge. He interlocks different disciplines, stretches them out and strives for clarity, demonstration, explanation and differentiation. He relates and embraces what is considered as opposites, and puts them in a context nourished by practice and experience which guides understanding to the enigmatic world of the mind.

Having this reconciliatory style, Freud teaches us the appreciation of great things not only as something worth having, but something we already possess as people who belong to a culture and able to stretch out to other cultures. In order to retain and value what we have we need faithfulness; a quality rooted in confidence and courage. In other words, being-in-the-world a person needs the building of character; and the vehicle is the building of the virtues.

Our purpose is not to go in details on those issues. Suffice to say that in Freud's thought there is an articulation between what has become a common sense knowledge with what is intellectual. Both alter each other as if Freud, for practical reasons, employs principles derived from common sense as well as principles derived from intellectual scientific investigation. He artfully alternates them to make psychoanalysis intuitively as well as rationally intelligible.
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,  
And vice sometime's by action dignified.  
Within the infant rind of the weak flower  
Poison hath residence and medicine power;  
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;  
Being tasted, slays all sense with the heart.  
Two such opposed foes encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will,  
And where the worser is predominant,  
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.  
--Shakespeare  
Romeo and Juliet,  
Act II, Sc. III

Two important notions are going to be considered in this section: psychopathology and the theory of cure as Freud introduces them in his psychoanalytic literature. Since our purpose is the notion of virtue as it is descriptively implied in psychoanalysis, we are going to try to explore the general framework by which Freud and Aristotle's perspectives can be articulated. This is to say, we are going to consider the disposition which makes a human being capable of functioning well. Considering this, we need to remind ourselves that functioning well is a matter of degree.

To begin with, let us consider Aristotle's general definition of virtue. In his *Ethics*, Aristotle says,

Our proposition, then... enables us to say that
virtue in a man will be the disposition which (a) makes him a good man, (b) enables him to perform his function well."\(^{31}\)

It is evidently clear that for Aristotle living a good life is synonymous to living a virtuous life. The question we would like to pose is, how can we see in Freud's understanding of psychopathology this disposition which enables a person to "perform his function well?"

**Psychopathology**

To a large extent we can consider Freud a dialectician. Having a look at the structure of the psyche we cannot but observe the "antithetic" intentions of the agents, thanks to the temperate state of the ego which exercises a control over the distressing promptings of the id and the superego. Using the appropriate resources, the ego from time to time rightly suppresses these distressing promptings in order to retain a certain degree of confidence.

But in certain situations this confidence is weakened as it becomes overridden by these "antithetic ideas" and gives in to an unbalanced struggle of the extreme demands of the id, superego, and the external world. This stressful situation leads a person to situations of

---

uncertainty, fear and anxiety accompanied by an inner desire to recreate the lost balance. How? By sending a message to the external world called "symptom." What does this tell us? It tells us that there is a sort of "intelligence" in the psyche which enables the psyche to perform its function well by disclosing a "compromise" achieved by all the agents in a form of a "symptom."

In the second chapter we mentioned that according to Philip Rieff, psychonalysis teaches us the virtue of compromise and the virtue of prudence. How do we understand this perspective? Briefly we will sketch how the process of compromise takes place. In the *Ego and the Id*, Freud maintains that neurosis is rooted in an unresolved Oedipal complex.\(^{32}\) Having in mind the mechanism of "compulsion to repeat"\(^{33}\) as Freud exposes it in details in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the repressed material, e.g., "I want to get rid of my father" has never been sublimated or anticathected. The individual continues to repress these murderous wishes by using energy from the ego and the superego. This is to say, the id lustfully desires and the superego counteracts these wishes with a tyrannous "Thou shalt not." These antithetic intentions confront each other at the unconscious level. With both mechanisms

---


the "return of the repressed" and the "compulsion to repeat" the promptings of these repressed wishes come close to invade the boundaries of the conscious mind.

As these opposed intentions -- id desiring and the superego commanding -- keep straining each other the individual starts to experience a break-down in the defense mechanism. Consequently, this conflict has to show itself in a way not known to the conscious ego, and the process of "compromise" starts to maneuver itself. This means that the three agents reach an agreement by which each one obtains a certain satisfaction. This agreement is expressed in a physical symptom.

The significance of this compromise lies in the fact that a murder does not happen. In the same context the superego punishes the person with the physical symptom and the unconscious ego uses this disturbance in order to gain the affection of the desired object, the mother.

A resolution such as this shows how the extreme wishes of the id and the extreme commands of the superego give in to an extreme compromise called neurosis. In other words, the individual experiences an extreme-mean, i.e. a less extreme function to perform a less dangerous act. In our understanding, the purpose of this compromise is the expression of the inner conflict which shows itself in the form of psychological illness. It is an unconscious "prudent" expression of a tactful manifestation of the
psyche. For example, having a paralyzed arm is better than committing a murder. How similar this is to the biblical saying about lusting which states that it is better for a person to pluck his eye out rather than his or her whole body burn in the eternal fire of hell. What seems to have happened on the unconscious level is a comparison between most extreme consequences, i.e. putting the promptings of the desire into action -- killing the father, or the choice of falling sick. Obviously, the latter is chosen.

What becomes evident in this discussion is that for Freud, building the virtues is a process with a muddy trail. The process of conscious deliberation as Aristotle teaches us is, in Freud's perspective, paralyzed by these inner unconscious disruptions. This implies that the unconscious "structure" is not taken into account by Aristotle. As W. Richardson puts it, "Here, indeed, one must admit the discovery of something specifically new by Freud that does affect profoundly the field of ethics."^34 Also, R. Audi says that persons have conscious beliefs and wants as well as unconscious ones. In the same line, we assume that persons have a sort of unconscious deliberation. This must not surprise us since, according to Freud, part of the ego is linked to the unconscious. In

---
34. William Richardson, "Ethics and Desire," paper delivered at a meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Loyola University of Chicago, 1986.
other words, the interrelated activities of the agents of
the psyche facilitate and give way to such an unconscious
constellation of mental activities. This perspective shows
that Freud's contribution to the field of ethics is the
existence of unconscious virtues by which the psyche
desires to regain its homeostatic function.

What we already discussed shows that for Freud there
is a deeper underlying discourse (logos); a logos deeply
interconnected with the power of myth. The myth is that of
Oedipus Rex. In this regard, logos is confined neither to
consciousness nor to logic. It allows myth to encompass,
to articulate, to express and to recollect in an enigmatic,
interlocking and elusive way. It relates, connects and
reconciles opposites. It desires coherence rather than
fragmentation, expression rather than repression. The
message sent by the neurotic is an unconscious message to
the conscious minds of the other persons in the external
world. It says, "I have a problem! Please help." Thus, a
compromise which expressed itself in sickness now becomes a
healthy compromise. The latter is facilitated by an
external agent. More precisely, there is a deep underlying
structure which performs its function well; and Freud
psychologically explains, analyzes, and demonstrates the
existence of these unconscious performances. It is a vital
and a vigorous virtue. It has its own logic and style of
deliberation. Now, the question we would like to answer
is, how do we see this process in Freud's theory of cure?

**Theory of Cure**

The process starts with free-association, reenactments and then deliberation. The purpose is coherence and the power to articulate. It answers the unconscious message the neurotic sends to the external world. How? The therapist develops an "insight" into the patient's problem. Insight becomes the means by which the interplay of opposites is perceived and understood. In order to gain this insight the therapist first employs the technique of "free association."

In a clinical setting Freud allows the analysands to speak whatever comes to their minds whether relevant or irrelevant thoughts. The reason for employing this technique lies in the fact that patients come to get therapy with two opposing motives: the first is to get help, and the second is to resist therapy, as they tend to be afraid of being discovered. The technique of free association helps the patients to relax their resistance by lowering the level of "censorship." These spontaneous verbal expressions give the psychoanalyst the opportunity to collect much material until the whole picture falls into place. Waiting to build insight into the repressed wishes, the therapist remains passive using some tactful feedbacks whenever the patient fails to get started again. What does

this attitude permit us to understand?

By allowing the patients to freely express themselves, the therapist acts as a watchful testing ego to the reality of the "upward drive" of the desiring id. This means that patients act as if they were id and the therapist takes the role of the patient's ego in order to deliberate on the causes of illness. That said, we would like to pose this question. What are the attitudes a therapist must have to achieve the competency to cure? To answer this question we must consider Freud's recommendations on the method of treatment. His recommendations cluster around one important characteristic. It is the self-controlled characteristic. How does he go about these recommendations? He goes about them by emphasizing that therapists must not exceed their means nor impose on the patients what is not within their capacity.

The first recommendation given is that a therapist must avoid the excess of attention on the patient's problem; for one begins to select from the material before one; one point will be fixed in the mind with particular clearness and some other consequently disregarded, and in this selection one's expectations and one's inclinations will be followed.\textsuperscript{36}

What Freud is suggesting is an "evenly-hovering attention." It is this sort of attention which makes meaning recognizable not on the spur of the moment, but later. This is to say that, for Freud, one has to listen without being troubled by the efforts "to keep in mind anything in particular." By this attitude the therapist allows the "unconscious memory" to act in "full play" and also allows oneself to give way to any emerging surprises. With such an attitude the therapeutic session comes to possess a high degree of freedom from the biases and the expectations of the therapist. This is why Freud advocates that therapists must undergo psychoanalysis in order to exercise self-control over their complexes and resistances. More precisely, he advocates that the therapist must possess an "approximate normality." Freud maintains,

Whoever knows how to appreciate the high value of the self-knowledge and increase in self-control so acquired will afterwards continue the analytic examination of his own personality by a self-analysis, and willingly recognize that, in himself as in others, he must always expect to find something new.

Self-control is exercised in the clinical setting by not getting "too intimate" with the patient. The therapist should be like a mirror which reflects what is projected on

37. Ibid., p. 325.
38. Ibid., p. 325.
it. But using the expression "too intimate" does not mean for Freud not to "afford" the patient glimpses of the therapist's defects and misgivings. On the contrary, the relationship must be given a moderate intimacy. Freud says, "One confidence repays another, and anyone demanding intimate revelations from another must be prepared to make them himself." 39

In addition to this moderate and intimate exchange the therapist should "restrain himself and take the patient's capacities rather than his own wishes as his standard." 40 Ambitiousness, for Freud, is an undesirable element. Patients should be respected for their weaknesses and for their "moderate worth." They should not feel compelled to go beyond their natural capacity.

All in all, we notice that Freud mostly considers what is conducive to health. He urges students of psychoanalysis to assume a self-controlled and a moderate attitude. What goes beyond the natural means of the person is considered by Freud as unhealthy. How similar is Freud's position to Aristotle's definition of the self-controlled person:

If something is pleasant and conducive to health or fitness, he will desire this moderately and in the right way; and he will desire in the way anything else

40. Ibid., p. 331.
that is pleasant if it is no obstacle to health and fitness, does not deviate from what is fine, and does not exceed his means.\textsuperscript{41}

With such recommendations it becomes evident that acquiring insight into the patient's problem depends on a moderate and a prudent clinical relationship between the patient and the therapist. This shows the importance of the communal aspects of psychoanalysis. Interdependence is necessary for building the autonomy of the individual. For this reason abstract intellectuality does not override the personal experience in the world. Freud defends this position. He says,

I dislike resorting to analytical writings as an aid to patients; I require them to learn by personal experience, and I assure them that in this way they will acquire wider and more valuable knowledge than the whole literature of psycho-analysis could afford them.\textsuperscript{42}

Exercising the proper practice and experience, the therapist out of a "calm" and a "quiet" attentiveness develops in a later time the insight proper into the client's problem. Having this insight at hand, the time is ripe to provide it to the patient.

The principal point is that I should guess the secret

\textsuperscript{41} Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, III, 1119a, 17-20.

and tell it to the patient straight out; and he is then as a rule obliged to abandon his rejection of it.43

This insightful feedback given to the analysand by the therapist becomes the possession of the client. The reality testing ego restores its articulating power. This fruitful relationships shows another important point in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis being faithful to its premise that the human being is a social creature teaches us that there is an underlying unity in what is considered to be separate.

From all that has been discussed in this section we need to ask this question: what does psychoanalysis teach us about character? We notice that self-control is exercised in order to get the best out of the client, i.e., "honesty"; honesty about what the client wants to say and also honesty about what the client resists saying. To get honesty out of another person for healthy purposes means that the person concerned is not being exploited, but helped in developing an awareness for a basic strategy for adaptation and for survival on virtuous foundations. But, in order to be a helper, one must have certain character traits by which he is distinguished from other types of personalities. How can we detect this character trait?

In the second chapter we used the insights of Jody

Palmour in drawing the parallel between Aristotle's "generous man" with Freud's "genital man." Having this similarity at our disposal we would like to resume our investigation in order to show that being a helper is the power in the character behind the "generous man." In this regard, we will come to conclude that psychoanalysis teaches us the virtue of being a helper. Aristotle defines the generous man:

Whatever has a use can be used either well or badly; riches are something useful; and the best user of something is the person who has the virtue concerned with it. Hence the best user of riches will be the person who has the virtue concerned with wealth; and this is the generous person.44

Although generosity is concerned with the proper dealing with wealth, one must not overlook the fact that the more a person tends to be generous, the more this virtue fits the mold of a more general framework of virtues. A generous person "will give to the right people, the right amounts, at the right time, and all the other things that are implied by correct giving."45 The general mold is that a generous person could be "prudent," "temperate" and "just." This is to say that a generous person gives for the purpose of promoting the proper development of the taker that he or

45. Ibid., pp. 25-29.
she might become virtuous. Aristotle says

For it is more proper to virtue to do good than to receive good, and more proper to do fine actions than not to do shameful ones; and clearly [the right sort of] giving implies doing good and doing fine actions....

That said, we find that a temperate character with a generous character in action forms a constellation of deeds which renders help to the person concerned and to others. In other words, a virtuous person is the one who tactfully helps with a benevolent attitude and with refined manners. This is parallel and articulate with how a proper helpful relationships is built in a psychoanalytic session.

Our discussion about developing an insight into the patient's problem shows that deliberation on the part of the therapist takes place. We also come to realize that the therapist deliberates on what is to be the cause of the problem. In this process the therapist takes over or adopts the patient's ego in order to choose what is really linked to the problem as the patient discloses in a free situation. In other words, there are efforts on the part of the therapist to find an answer to the question of how the patient acts in response to his or her desire. This question brings us closer to Aristotle's stand in regard to the object of choice.

We have found, then, that what we decide to do is whatever action among those up to us we deliberate about and desire to do. Hence also decision will be deliberative desire to do an action that is up to us; for when we have judged [that it is right] as a result of deliberation, our desire to do it expresses our wish.47

In chapter two we discussed that the notion of desire is a common for Freud and Aristotle. But in our understanding, psychoanalysis reveals to us two orders of desire: first, the unrequited desire, i.e., the desire for the mother as a lost object, and secondly, the desire which the message of illness sends, i.e., the desire of the ego to regain its diplomatic artful role between the two masters and the external world. The similarity between Freud and Aristotle lies in what facilitates the "art" of living. For both Aristotle and Freud, we come to desire in accord with our deliberation. This is the sole function of the ego and the purpose of psychotherapy.

Our aim will not be to rule off every peculiarity of human character for the sake of a schematic "normality," nor yet to demand that the person who has been "thoroughly analyzed" shall feel no passions and develop no internal conflicts. The business of the analysis is to secure the best

possible psychological conditions for the functions of the ego...\textsuperscript{48}

What is really obvious in Freud's position is that the desire for the lost object will never stop its pursuit of its object. But what is really the crucial issue in this matter is what is conducive to health, moderately desired and in the right way; for too much id desiring is extreme sickness, too much of the laws of the superego is also an extreme sickness. What is really conducive to health is the mean reached upon the deliberation of the ego. This means settling down for what is realistic and healthy.

But to achieve the crucial aim of analysis by securing the best possible conditions for the functions of the ego, the usual free-association techniques will not suffice. As we have seen, it is a technique by which the client spontaneously reports relevant or irrelevant thoughts. This disclosure may help in developing the therapist's insight into the patient's problem, but it is not sufficient for achieving the cure pursued by analysis. Why?

Having in mind the conflicting and disruptive powers of the agents of the psyche, we come to realize that the free-association technique is also disrupted by an unconscious resistance which Freud described as a process of regression to the unconscious regions of the mind.

Whenever in our analytic delving we come upon one of the hiding-places of the withdrawn libido, there ensues a battle; all the forces which have brought about regression of the libido will rise up as resistance against our efforts in order to maintain the new condition.  

It is a mechanism which accompanies every step of the treatment.

Every step of the treatment is accompanied by resistance; every single thought, every mental act of the patient's must pay toll to the resistance, and represent a compromise between the forces urging towards cure and those gathered to oppose it.

Here the picture comes to be clear that resistance is the process which interrupts the progress of the therapeutic session. It also shows the "ambivalence" the patient carries to the analytic session. What emerges next?

According to Freud, the exploration done by the analyst as it conflicts with the resisting unconscious urges of the patient brings the flow of free-association to cessation. Entering into this scene, resistance draws out one of its own "weapons" which Freud calls "transference." Transference is the mechanism by which the analysand

50. Ibid.
"merges the physician with the object of his emotions."\textsuperscript{51}

How does this serve our investigation?

In the second chapter we discussed that one of the common places between Freud and Aristotle is the notion of "activity" which, according to Aristotle, is considered the heart of virtue. For example, a person may act courageously without knowing the conceptual analysis of courage. In this connection, the phenomenon of transference is the process by which the analysand unconsciously acts out the buried vile and unpleasant wishes and brings them out to the open. The question to be addressed is, how are these vile and unpleasant wishes related to an act of virtue?

In our understanding, the virtuous act in this acting out lies in its disclosure. It is this disclosure that really does help the analysis to lead to a fruitful result, i.e., the possible conditions for the proper functions of ego which lead to a proper conscious deliberation concerning the object of choice. We can also express this position in the language of the following middle-eastern proverb which says that one cannot tame a beast without catching it. This is exactly what the analyst tries to do. Freud comments on the importance of transference. He says, As we raise the transference by making it conscious we detach only these two components of

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 318.
the emotional relationship from the person of the physician; the conscious and unobjectionable component of it remains, and brings about the successful result in psycho-analysis....\textsuperscript{52}

Freud continued to assert the values of the results of psychoanalysis as they pertain to health. These values are social in their nature. The autonomy of the person is achieved by being an interdependent being. This is to say that in the therapeutic session the patients' self-knowledge is obtained by another. Freud expresses the goal of therapy as follows,

\begin{quote}
The eventual independence of the patient is our ultimate object when we use suggestion to bring him to carry out a mental operation that will necessarily result in a lasting improvement in his mental conditions.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

In order to obtain this independence the analyst puts certain rational requirements on the analysands. First, their perturbed emotions should fit into their life-history, and second, subject them to rational considerations and evaluate them at "their true psychical values." The transference manifestation proves to be the battle field on which the struggle of opposing forces takes place. It also proves to be a means of uncovering that

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 319.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., pp. 319-20.
which should be tamed by the power of reason.

This struggle between physician and patient, between intellect and the forces of instinct, between recognition and the striving to discharge, is fought out almost entirely over the transference-manifestations. This is the ground on which the victory must be won, the final expression of which is lasting recovery from neurosis. It is undeniable that the subjugation of the transference-manifestations provides the greatest difficulties for the psychoanalyst; but it must not be forgotten that they, and they only, render the invaluable service of making the patient's buried and forgotten love-emotions actual and manifest; for in the last resort no one can be slain in absentia or in effigy.\footnote{Ibid., p. 322.}

Now we would like to pose this question: With what attitude is the activity of transference to be qualified? The answer is truthfulness. According to Aristotle, truthfulness is a virtue. It is the mean between the booster and the self-deprecator. Hence, a truthful person is someone

Who is truthful both in what he says and in how he lives, when nothing about justice is at stake, simply because that is his state of character.
Someone with this character seems to be a decent person. For a lover of the truth who is truthful even when nothing is at stake will be still keener to tell the truth when something is at stake.55

What we gather from this definition is that truthful people show sincerity in both deeds and words. They are "equitable." They give us a sense of confidence since they try neither to exaggerate nor to depreciate.

Relating this characteristic disposition of truthfulness to what is disclosed in a clinical session, we notice that seeking for help the client must possess an inner drive to know about what causes the problem no matter what is really at stake. Asking for help from someone means that people have confidence in the therapists' truthful suggestions as well as in themselves as they strive to regain a realistic sense of their world and of themselves. In spite of the ambivalence they come with, this inner drive for truthfulness speaks in free association and acts out in transference.

Underlying the resistance and the ambivalence of the patient lies a kind of trust in the therapist who acts truthfully, diplomatically and intimately. The therapist is, like the ego, an artful diplomat in giving the opportunity for the hidden truth to slip out of the

client's mouth as well as the opportunity for this hidden painful truth to be acted out. Allowing the concerned impulses the expression they deserve, the therapist uses all the available material to confidently form the insight needed for the diagnosis. Having the insight at hand, the truth is told and the conscious rational ego steps into a safer territory to resume his feeble but persistent function.

**Conclusion**

What does our discussion of the psychopathology and the theory of cure allow us to say? The locus of our discussion points to the idea that there is an articulation between what is pathological and what is healthy. This articulation presupposes that in every psychological sickness there is a healthy message sent to the external world which allows through another the necessary condition for the restoration of health. This healthy message is detected by a certain conscious and unconscious acknowledgement of the patient that there is something wrong going on which leads this patient to seek help.

But to deal with such paradoxical situation, i.e., pathology speaks health and *vice versa*, we come to realize that in the human psyche there are unconscious activities whose aim is health. These activities we call unconscious virtues, e.g., the virtue of compromise, the virtue of prudence and the virtue of truthfulness. Moreover, these
virtues are acted upon consciously by the therapist whom we considered as possessing the virtue of helping another. In order to help another, the therapist must possess the virtue of self-control as well as the virtue of self-knowledge. Both are, to some extent, mediated by the link drawn between the therapist and the client during the therapeutic session. It is a link built by many negative and positive activities, such as, free association, resistance and transference. Through the insight gained by such clinical activities, the patient regains the lost and the desired "approximate normality." More precisely, strengthening the diplomatic functions of the ego is the sole purpose of psychotherapy. This is to say, the more reality testing the less pathology.
Epilogue

Finally, the question we would like to pose is, what sense can we make of Freud's interrogation about denial? More exactly, what is the philosophic perspective we gather from our investigation? The route which Freud attempted to follow is the pathological. It is in this direction that Freud's most daring interrogation turned upon schizophrenia, the most regressive of all pathological illnesses. It is also through schizophrenia that Freud found his way to prove the enigmatic unconscious, and through its excessive regressive mechanism, he came to understand denial as a primitive mechanism.

In spite of being a primitive mechanism, absolute schizophrenia for Freud is an "idée-limite". This is why we emphasized in both chapters one and four Freud's general perspective that whenever there is pathology there is a hidden tendency for articulation. In other words, denial presupposes avowal of the situation denied. It follows that the necessity of articulation demands the necessity of avowal as well as the necessity of denial of the loss which reality affirms.

This manner of interrelating or joining together poses the general context of Freud's interrogation. To understand this context is to understand Freud's
philosophical outlook. With what perspective are we able to see this context? The answer lies in the articulation between the pathological and the normal. This is to say, we see it in the underlying implicit articulation between the normal and the abnormal. But due to the ambiguity in Freud's texts precise definitions of the normal and the pathological are not available. Then, what? How can we allow this ambiguity to feed our purpose in understanding Freud's underlying philosophical perspective?

In the first chapter we stated that sleep is denial of the external reality. Also the psychotic phenomenon of dreaming is common to the pathological as well as to the normal. What we come to understand is that the normal and the pathological are interrelated in a dialectical fashion. It is also worth noting that Freud came to understand the normal from explicating the pathological. In chapter four we mentioned that Freud recommends that a therapist does not have to be fully healthy; a therapist must have an "approximate" health. So, it is in terms of the dialectic that Freud comes to understand normality. Normality in a person is that which combines certain neurotic and psychotic features. This is fully understood in the purpose he prescribes to therapy; i.e., the well functioning of the ego as it faces the disruptions of the id, the superego and the external world. Even in the most extreme psychological illnesses we find that the tendency
lands safely on the right track. So, what really gives meaning is neither the normal nor the pathological considered separately, but as they are conducive to the dialectic process.

It is in relation to this context that denial could be considered as that which ruins, i.e., vice. It is a vice because the dialectic process which articulates, moderates, interlocks, and gives the hidden implicit meaning is disturbed by the excessive or deficient manifestation of denial. It is in the dialectic that we come to understand that, in case of illness, what is normally considered healthy becomes hidden and unseen. This is to say, that when vice is overriding there is an unconscious virtuous activity which intends to recover the lost harmony.

What does this dialectic process mean for persons as beings-in-the-world? It is that progressive movement which is concerned with becoming. It leads persons from what they are to what they are meant to become. It encompasses a "totality" in which people experience that which is explicitly present and also that which is implicitly present somewhere, i.e., they experience "presence-absence" as well as "absence-presence." This is the kernel point we discussed in chapter three. It is the notion of separation which signifies the human presence in the world. In the same chapter we came to conclude that denial of separation means denial of relationships. The person regresses to a
stage where the external world, to a large extent, is
warded off; a condition which satisfies the infantile I,
i.e., "I am it" rather than "I am not it."

Acknowledging the separation is the first achievement
by which persons relate to what is external to themselves.
This includes culture, institutions and persons. It is
through separation that they become related to a world
which they acknowledge as an entity out there. This world
has its own communal demands. It robs people of their
individuality; and it is through this world that
individuals search and refined themselves as independent or
autonomous individuals. It is similar to the relationship
the therapist develops with the patient. This is also well
expressed in the biblical tradition which emphasizes that
one must lose himself or herself in order to find it. In
the language of psychoanalysis what is found is only found
as something that was lost.

Finding oneself in an indeterminate world with a
multitude of beings, the "split" or the separation from
others is what really "defines" the person as a social
being who acts not only as a separate individual, but as a
separate individual who is linked by the dialectic movement
to the "totality" to which he or she is open as a means for
self fulfillment. While people avow their individuality,
in the same movement they deny it as they tend to encounter
the world in its totality. It is a to and fro movement.
Appropriate as it is, this to and fro movement makes of denial a part of the dialectic which leads to articulation. But this should not divert us from our consideration of denial as vice as discussed in the second chapter. Since the dialectic process is what gives the underlying meaning of what are considered opposites, or implicit and explicit, or conscious and unconscious, denial as vice is subjugated to this dialectical process by evoking that which functions well to make the person as a person with a link to other beings; and, consequently, to the world as a totality in general. It is separateness which is presupposed in order to establish the link with another. That said, separation becomes the signification of being-in-the-world.

This general dialectic process is what enhances the individuals' progressive walk towards their inevitable death. It is not regressive as it is observed in schizophrenia. It is what really articulates opposites, e.g., the regressive psychotic mechanism of sleep as it is connected to the progressive activities of our everyday life. This, according to Freud, proves that absolute normality or absolute pathology is a "cas-limite." Within this context we come to understand Paul Ricoeur's description of psychoanalysis as a new language; a language which conceals that which is revealed in it and vice versa: implicit/explicit, conscious/unconscious, hidden/manif...
pathological/normal, real/unreal, logical/illogical, known/unknown etc. It is a language which feeds and is fed by ambiguity, understood dialectically and comprehended in its progressive revelation.

As much as this dialectical process is actualized the human being is, according to Lacan, the "discourse of the other." Being as such, the person is open to a "totality" which is revealed as absent/present; a reality which conceals in order to reveal and vice versa. Guided by this context the human development is understood as a discourse between the pathological and the normal. Human nature, as we understand Freud's outlook, is patho/logical.

The early loss the infant experiences is primarily a traumatic incident to be avowed; an avowal for which the infant as a growing being is expected to pay a high price. This is understood in terms of suffering the unrequited desire for the lost object, i.e., the mother. As a result of avowing this inevitable traumatic situation, the infant is recognized by another and also, growing to be a child, he or she is bound to recognize the other. Only through this tragedy, according to Freud, does the infant become a social being. In the peek-a-boo game the child comes to reconcile himself or herself to this tragedy—absent/present. In this situation the child does not

impart knowledge, nor tries to inform, but "evokes" a relationship with another. This also applies to the "Fort-da" game through which the child evokes a relationship with what is absent/present. In this regard, a language is not only a vehicle of information, but an instrument to evoke relationship whether in words or in actions. More exactly, language is the acknowledgement of another; and by the fact of this acknowledgement the child steps into a community of humans.

Within this context we considered denial in its extreme or less extreme case as vice. The schizophrenic or the neurotic refuses to acknowledge the tragedy of separation, and in the same line refuses to acknowledge himself or herself as a person belonging to a community of humans. In the state of a pathological denial the world does not exist independently of oneself because that which overrides his or her being is a regressive rather than a progressive movement, i.e., the triumph of the pleasure principle.

What Freud invites us to understand is that living the drama of life needs endurance. Endurance is achieved by building the character; a character neither dominated by the laws of morality nor the blind desires of the id. Freud implies the art of living which is acquired by practice and experience.

What makes us endure? What is the form that shapes
practice and experience? The answer to these questions is the building of the virtues. By the virtues we build proper relationships and also by the virtues we bravely succeed and we bravely fail. Learning the virtues as we already implied in our investigation is by formal or informal teaching; a teaching which is primarily achieved by "relationship", not only by passing on information.

Psychoanalysis is never considered by Freud an educational theory for the classroom. But, undoubtedly, it is educational if we consider the assumption that Rousseau gives us which says that the best educated person is the one who lives the joys and the sorrows of life.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Books


Secondary Sources

Books


Straughan, Roger. *Can We Teach Children to be Good?*

Strauss, Leo. *Persecution and the Art of Writing.*


**Articles**


**Unpublished Manuscripts**


APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Youssef Yacoub has been read and approved by the following committee:

Rev. Walter Krolikowski, S.J., Director
Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola

Dr. Thomas Wren
Professor, Philosophy, Loyola

Rev. Michael Perko, S.J.
Associate Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

14 March 1990
Date

[Signature]
Director's Signature