

FREUD AND FREUDIANISM:
IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL THOUGHT

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

It will be the purpose of this paper to critically
examine those aspects of Sigmund Freud's thought which seem relevant
to the concerns of political philosophy by virtue of their ability
to shed new and different light on such perennial problems as
human nature, equality, authority, and freedom.

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WHY FREUD?

In a world of scarce resources where priorities are debated with vigor it is generally assumed that any expenditures of time, money and energy will be defended and justified.

Authors are not exempt in this regard. They are expected to advance convincing arguments on behalf of the significance of their work.

In regard to this thesis, it may be asked why anyone should bother studying Freud's ideas when there are so many very obvious, pressing problems clamouring for our attention. What makes Freud's ideas sufficiently important to merit our consideration?

Unlike Karl Marx, Freud did not found a political movement. There never has been, and it is extremely unlikely that there ever will be, any political party professing its firm and unshakable adherence to the principles of Freudian psychoanalysis. Yet, it is possible to say that none of us, whether we are familiar with the actual writings of Freud or not, can entirely escape the intellectual impact of his ideas upon our lives. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to make the claim that today we are all Freudians to a greater or lesser degree. Certainly, it is difficult to think of anyone else, with the possible exception of Marx, whose ideas have come to permeate our present intellectual environment to such a great extent in so short a

period of time. Many of the words which he either coined by himself or helped others to coin have become quite regular parts of our language while still retaining in actual use the technical meanings he had assigned to them. A whole host of terms such as defence mechanism, projection, repression, sublimation, reaction-formation, rationalization, displacement, identification, Freudian slip, transference, libido, cathexis, Oedipus and Electra complexes, ~~id, ego and superego~~, etc., all bear the stamp of the Freudian mint.

Since the kinds of edifices, intellectual or otherwise, that can be constructed are dependent on the variety of building materials available it is only reasonable to expect that the Freudian influence has altered our perspectives and produced shifts in our manner of thinking although we may not be entirely aware of the specific forms the process has taken at various times and under differing conditions.

Even if we could discover no other reason for studying Freud's works besides that of trying to gain additional insight into the nature of the foundations upon which a substantial amount of our present thinking rests our efforts would still be amply justified.

~~There are other reasons, however, for studying Freud.~~

reasons which it is hoped will become increasingly apparent in the course of the reading of this thesis.

It should be pointed out, however, that a particular dilemma arose in regard to this attempt to take a few of the ideas which Sigmund Freud evolved in the course of his discovery and development of psychoanalysis and to consider what contributions they might make toward the formulation of possible solutions to some of the traditional problems of political thought.

Freud was a scientist and not a philosopher or, still less, a political thinker, although he had a strong interest in these areas all his life and exhibited an increasing preoccupation with philosophical and political questions towards the end of his life. The language he uses, however, in discussing his ideas is that of a medical doctor, and in particular, that of a neurologist and psychiatrist rather than that of a political theorist.

Seeking an analogy to clarify the situation, the problem can be compared to the one faced by a translator who is attempting to take ideas expressed in one language and state them in a second, all the while, trying to preserve as much as possible, the nuances, the subtleties and the delicate shadings of meaning which they possessed in their original form.

No translation, of course, can ever be entirely perfect. Every language contains certain idiomatic words and expressions that defy translation and the more dissimilar the two languages one is working with the more idioms one is likely to be confronted by. In such cases where no equivalent expression exists in the second language the translator is forced, relying on his own knowledge of both, to choose a word or expression in the second language that most closely approximates the meaning of the original.

If the translator does not possess a sufficient level of fluency in both languages then he is apt to pick inappropriate words or expressions so that the ideas that are being conveyed by them will suffer a distortion of meaning and as a result the translation will be a poor one.

When a student of political theory finds himself dealing with the ideas of a thinker from a different discipline such as Freud he invariably experiences a strong temptation to squeeze them into the familiar little pigeonholes that have been developed by political philosophy no matter how poorly they seem to fit. He must not succumb to such a temptation, however, since Freud's ideas like those of any other thinker suffer a distortion and loss of meaning when they are torn from their proper context.

HUMAN NATURE

All social and political philosophies are based on some theory of human nature. Thus, we find that the concept of human nature constitutes a major recurrent problem in political theory. As Sir Isaiah Berlin has pointed out, political theory is vitally interested in

such questions as what is specifically human and what is not, and why; whether specific categories . . . are indispensable to understanding what men are; and so inevitably, with the source, scope and validity of certain human goals.¹

He asks us, . . . who will deny that political problems, e.g., about what men and groups can or should be or do, depend logically and directly on what man's nature is taken to be?²

How we conceive of human nature drastically affects our views of what we feel to be humanly possible. It exerts the strongest influence on the kinds of laws we see fit to enact, the responsibility we expect citizens to assume, and our attitudes toward all relationships involving authority. In short, our evaluation of human nature determines to an overwhelmingly large extent our relative optimism or pessimism about the feasibility of establishing and maintaining any number of social and political systems.

¹ Sir Isaiah Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist", in Philosophy, Politics, and Society, ed., Peter Laslett and W.G. Runciman, ed., p. 47.

² Ibid., p. 28

What makes Freud particularly relevant and challenging to political theory is that he presents an original, systematic and internally consistent theory of human motivation. This theory, according to Freud, has a firm basis in reality, as it stemmed from empirical observations obtained through clinical work with actual human beings rather than being the product of mere armchair speculation.

In his clinical work Freud developed a body of interrelated theory to which he referred as metapsychology. Contained in this metapsychology are four distinctive ways of approaching the problem of understanding the self: the economic, the topographical, the structural, and the dynamic.

According to the economic viewpoint, the ~~id~~ is the main reservoir of libido which is an emotional or psychic energy coming from primitive biological urges. The ego cathects or invests this energy in various persons, objects or ideas.

In the topographical model, the human psyche is depicted as consisting of the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious.

The conscious contains that of which one is at present aware, while the preconscious contains that of which one is at present not aware but which can readily come into awareness

without encountering any kind of inner resistance or repression. The unconscious also contains that of which we are not at present aware, but it can be differentiated from the preconscious because its contents are actively held back from awareness by the presence of various psychical forces that must be overcome if the contents are to enter either the preconscious or the conscious.

It is possible for a given thought to move from the conscious through the preconscious into the unconscious. This movement can also occur in the opposite direction.

Another view of the human psyche is the structural one, in which it is postulated that the mind can be divided into three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego.

Certain processes in both the ego and the superego take place unconsciously. The ego is usually unaware of the existence and mode of operation of the defence mechanisms and the superego often unconsciously harbours guilt feelings and a longing to be punished.

When we turn to the id, however, we are confronted with a structure that is totally unconscious, one that existed prior to both the ego and the superego and out of which they gradually developed. According to Freud, the id

is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality; . . . The logical laws of thought do not apply in the id, and this is

true above all of the law of contradiction. Contrary impulses exist side by side, without cancelling each other out or diminishing each other: at the most, they may converge to form compromises under the dominating economic pressure towards the discharge of energy.³

The id is unorganized, chaotic, filled with energy drawn from somatic sources, and it provides psychical expression for instinctual needs. In the id we find raw, primary, instinctual strivings and, as it works on the so-called pleasure principle, it makes ceaseless demands on the ego in order to secure the total, immediate, and unconditional gratification of its own strivings without the slightest regard to external limitations and obstacles. Thus, the id is the repository of anti-social tendencies in human behaviour. It is totally unaware of any judgements of value; the concepts of good and evil are meaningless to it. Unhampered by any sort of moral consideration or concern with external reality, it follows the pleasure principle and is guided only by the economic of tension release, that is, frustration of strivings produces painful tension, while satisfaction produces a reduction of tension which is experienced as pleasurable.

A further characteristic of the id is its timelessness:

"There is nothing in the id that corresponds to the idea of time; there is no recognition of the passage of time."⁴ Urges and

desires residing in the id retain full strength throughout the

³ Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis pp. 73-74.

⁴ Ibid. p. 74.

desires residing in the id retain full strength throughout the life of the individual. Even the passage of decades does not diminish their original energy. The only way to divest them of their energy and reduce their importance to the individual is to bring them into consciousness by overcoming the psychical forces that have kept them trapped in the id and hence unconscious. This liberation of repressed wishes and feelings is the basic aim of psychoanalysis.

In the case of the ego, we find that it gradually arose out of the id and that it is not sharply separated from it; in fact, we can consider the ego as merely a specially differentiated part of the id. This differentiation sets in as the individual's awareness of the existence of an external reality and the dangerous threats inherent in it grows: "the Ego has developed out of it (the id) through the influence of the outer world as the bark develops around a tree."⁵ The ego assumes the responsibility of representing external reality to the id. If the ego did not do this, the id, in its blind strivings for instinctual gratification, would inevitably meet with destruction. Just as the id is dominated by the pleasure principle, so the ego is controlled by the reality principle.

The function of the ego is essentially that of trying to

5 Sigmund Freud, Moses and Monotheism, p. 123.

achieve some kind of a synthesis, of producing the unification and integration of the personality. The ego may be thought of as a kind of middle man or broker trying to reach some satisfactory compromise between the shifting, conflicting demands of both the primordial id and the inflexible superego, while constantly attempting to make accurate appraisals of a complex, changing external reality. According to Freud, the ego is weak since the only energies available to it are those that it can persuade or trick the id into surrendering and allowing the ego to use for its own purposes. Freud describes the relationship between the ego and the id in the following way:

The ego must on the whole carry out the id's intentions, it fulfils its task by finding out the circumstances in which those intentions can best be achieved. The ego's relation to the id might be compared with that of a rider to his horse. The horse supplies the locomotive energy, while the rider has the privilege of deciding on the goal and of guiding the powerful animal's movement. But only too often there arises between the ego and the id the not precisely ideal situation of the rider being obliged to guide the horse along the path by which it itself wants to go.⁶

To a large extent the ego must serve the id, carry out its orders, and satisfy its demands. It is, however, aware of the external realities of every situation, and whenever the id makes demands that are unrealistic, or whose fulfilment would require actions fraught with risks and dangers that the ego evaluates

6 Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, p. 77.

as being intolerable then all its influence will be brought to bear directly on the processes occurring in the id.

In a similar way in which the ego arose out of the id, the superego arises out of the ego. Freud saw the basis for the development of the superego in the prolonged period of helplessness which every human being experiences during infancy. During this time the infant is completely dependent on others for the satisfaction of many of his needs. At birth an infant is a seething bundle of almost pure id. Gradually the ego develops and makes it possible for the infant to learn to manipulate the external world in an increasingly more efficient manner and secure the gratification of his instinctual cravings. He soon comes to realize, however, his dependency on others and their ability to place limits on the satisfaction of his wants. He develops feelings of affection and love for those who satisfy his needs, but he also experiences intense feelings of frustration and hostility towards them whenever they are slow in fulfilling his desires, fulfil them only partially, or even refuse to fulfil some of them at all. He deeply resents the growing number of restrictions placed on his behaviour and the instinctual renunciations that he is forced to make. His mounting frustration may at first cause him to respond to the curbs on his behaviour with violent outbursts.

He quickly learns, however, that these violent outbursts will usually not be tolerated and, in fact, will often be met with the imposition of negative sanctions such as the withdrawal of manifestations of love and the threat, or even the actual use, of physical punishment. "At the beginning, therefore, what is bad is whatever causes one to be threatened with a loss of love. For fear of that loss, one must avoid it."⁷

As a result, the child hides its feelings of hostility from the authority figure. The child is still aware that he has such feelings but he does not experience any anxiety over them except in relation to the possibility of these feelings being discovered by the authority figure. The child's attitudes toward the authority figure are highly ambivalent, that is, he experiences strong feelings of both love and hate toward this figure. A state of tension is engendered in the child by the existence of these mixed emotions which proves painful to him. He seeks to escape this painful tension by identifying with and by internalizing the values of, the authority figure. The superego represents this internalization of the values of the authority figure. As Freud explains it, this development of the superego inhibits the child's aggressiveness:

His 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

7. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 71

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.⁸

Freud likens the process of superego formation to that of setting up "a garrison in a conquered city."⁹

With the internalization of the values of the authority figure the original conflict between child and parent or parent surrogate becomes one of conflict between ego and superego. As the superego comes into being we find that the distinction between contemplating doing something bad and actually doing something bad disappears, since the superego is aware of what the ego is thinking at all times. ". . . the external restraint is internalized and the superego takes the place of the parental agency and observes, directs, and threatens the ego in exactly the same way as earlier the parents did with the child."¹⁰

Originally, the child's inhibition and renunciation of sexual and aggressive drives were the direct result of fear of an external authority, and the child sacrificed his desire for instinctual satisfaction so as not to offend that authority and lose its favour.

With the development of the superego, however, we find that mere renunciation is not sufficient. Although we refrain from

~~renouncing the prohibition and the ego still behaves the same~~

8 Ibid., p. 70.

9 Ibid., p. 71.

10 Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, pp. 73-74.

committing the forbidden act, the ego still harbours the desire to commit it and thus satisfy the id. The superego is, of course, aware of the presence of such forbidden wishes in the ego and the resulting tension between the two is experienced as a sense of guilt.

The chronological sequence then is as follows:

First comes renunciation of instinct owing to fear of aggression by the external authority. (This is, of course, what fear of the loss of love amounts to, for love is a protection against this punitive aggression.) After that comes the erection of an internal authority, and renunciation of instinct owing to fear of it¹¹ owing to fear of conscience. In this second situation bad intentions are equated with bad actions, and hence come a sense of guilt and a need for punishment.

The dynamic view of the mind centers around the plethora of existent psychical forces, their relative strengths, the struggles which rage between them and the strategies employed by the ego to resolve them. This dynamic point of view stresses the importance of gaining an understanding of how the ego uses various so-called defence mechanisms such as repression, rationalization, projection, identification, sublimation, and displacement to accommodate the conflicting claims made upon it by the id, the superego, and the external world.

Our examination of Freud's metapsychology indicates that for him, the question of whether man is basically a social (good) or anti-social (evil) being is a pseudo-question. According to

¹¹ Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 75.

his tripartite conflict model of the human mind man has in him elements of both. In any given individual one or the other, may predominate in a particular situation owing to a whole complex of shifting factors, but both elements are present in all of us.

Freud accepted the apparent contradictions inherent in human nature and built his psychology on them.

In every person there is an id, an ego, and a superego engaged in a perpetual battle to direct his behaviour. The id is constantly demanding the instantaneous, complete, and unconditional satisfaction of all its wishes and desires and, therefore, constitutes an anti-social, anti-political force. The superego, more frequently referred to as the conscience, represents the internalized values of external authorities and, therefore, is a pro-social, pro-political force. The ego attempts to mediate between and in one way or another accomodate the conflicting claims made upon it by both the id and the superego while at the same time taking into consideration the limitations imposed in any given situation. Thus, it is essentially an asocial, apolitical, neutral force.

Freud would have cautioned us, however, not to make the mistake of thinking that the id, the ego, and the superego are all of equal strength. The id is undoubtedly the strongest of the

three, and it requires the efforts of both the ego and the superego to keep it in check; even then, the ego and the superego occasionally fail to do so.

An interesting comparison can be made between Freud's conception of the human mind and that of Plato. Plato in Book IV of his Republic¹² also divides the mind into three parts on the basis of the functions they perform. They bear a resemblance to Freud's three "agencies". Plato has an agency of bodily appetite (id), an agency of reason or wisdom (superego), and a broker or mediator (ego) called thymoiides which holds the balance of power between the first two and is usually translated as "spirit" or "passion".

Paul Rieff, however, warns us that we must not carry this comparison too far and calls our attention to an important difference between the two conceptual schemes: ". . . for Plato the ruling principle, reason (logistikon), is also the source of moral evaluation. Freud, however, locates reason in the ego, in the middle position separating appetite (id) from conscience (superego)."¹³

Freud firmly insisted on keeping reason separate from morality.

It was Freud's tripartite division of the mind into the id, the ego, and the superego, and his conception of the self as consisting of three warring factions in permanent conflict with

12 Plato, The Republic, Book IV, p. 157.

13 Phillip Rieff, Freud: The Mind of the Moralist, p. 63.

one another, that allowed him to accept and understand a seemingly paradoxical quality of human nature, namely, the simultaneous existence in each individual of both social and anti-social tendencies. It provided him with insight into the essential ambivalence which the individual displays in his attitudes and actions towards his fellow man and towards society in general.

Those thinkers who see the self as being an indivisible unit, that is, a single harmonious whole, cannot tolerate the dynamic tension inherent in any attempt to construct a model of human nature that acknowledges and incorporates within itself both man's social and anti-social tendencies. They invariably seek release from this tension by either positing man's essential wickedness (his anti-social tendencies), as has been the case among many Christian theologians, or they take the diametrically opposite view and assert man's basic goodness (his social tendencies), as has been the case among liberal and socialist thinkers.

The former view held practically undisputed sway in Western thought for many centuries. The latter view first gained an appreciable degree of popularity at the time of the Renaissance and had become quite prominent by the time of the Enlightenment.

The members of both schools of thought tended to ignore, if at all possible, any elements that they observed man manifesting

in his behaviour which ran counter to what they had originally posited, or if this was not possible, they regarded them as being alien to man's true nature and merely due to the interwoven influence of forces entirely external to him.

The theologians, who are assured of man's essential wickedness stemming from the original sin, tend to attribute to supernatural causes any demonstration of human inclination or ability to turn swords into plowshares and to live in peace and harmony.

In much the same way, those liberal and socialist thinkers who assert the essential goodness of human beings tend to write off the numerous observable examples of human aggressiveness, brutality, and sadism as not being natural manifestations of human nature at all, but rather unnatural corruptions of it produced by external forces, such as faulty forms of social, economic, and political organization and hence, subject to eradication by modification or abolishment of those institutions responsible.

If we turn to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Discourse on Equality, we find ourselves face to face with perhaps the best formulated statement of what might be called the "doctrine of original goodness".

According to Rousseau, man is by his very nature good. Any

evil (anti-social) behaviour which we can observe in man must be the product of a faulty social environment, which has perverted and corrupted his true nature. The two major social institutions responsible for this unfortunate state of affairs are private property and the state..

The development of private property led to the rise of inequality and the exploitation of man by man. It also necessitated the establishment of the state to maintain by force this inequality and exploitation. The two institutions -- private property and the state -- are the source of most human misery. Fourier, Saint-Simon, Proudhon, Marx, and Engels, all echo Rousseau.

To all of them, man is the product of his social environment. If we observe some manifestation of evil (anti-social conduct) in human behaviour such as war or crime, it is merely the logical and inevitable result of some defect in the institutions which make up man's social environment. Since society is the creation of human intelligence, all that will be necessary to set things straight is a little redesigning. Perhaps it will be necessary to reform an institution here, or to abolish an institution there, but when these adjustments have been made, man will be back in that original state of grace and happiness that is natural to him.

It was Karl Marx who considerably amplified and remoulded

Rousseau's theory by the introduction of Hegelian dialectics and economic materialism to it. Marx agreed that man was naturally good but had been corrupted by social institutions. Marx argued that the social, political, and even the cognitive aspects of existence, as well as the relationships between members of any given society, were conditioned by the prevailing mode of production of the material means of life and the distribution of land ownership.

As long as private ownership of the means of production continues to exist, society will remain bifurcated between the "haves" and the "have nots", the "exploiters" and the "exploited". Like Rousseau, Marx claimed that the state was established to protect and maintain the institution of private property. Marx declared that all history must be seen as a struggle between these two groups, and all wars understood in terms of the exploiting class's efforts to safeguard and further its own economic interests. Marx insisted that the sheer dynamics of industrialization would inevitably lead to periodic and ever-worsening economic crises, increasing poverty of the working class, a growing hostility between the two classes, as well as a sharpening awareness of the oppressed masses of the true nature of their exploited position in capitalist society. Thus, "contradictions" in the

capitalist system between the forces of production and the relations of production would sooner or later drive the workers to rise and seize political power. This, in some rare instances might take place peacefully, but, in all probability, it would occur violently by revolution, since the exploiting class could not be expected to renounce its prerogatives and would resort to force and repression when threatened.

Once the proletariat gains political power, it will do away with private ownership of the means of production. The class struggle, the propelling power of history, will no longer exist, and the state, for which, there no longer is any raison d'être, will gradually wither away. Man's good nature will reassert itself, and all manifestations of human aggressiveness, such as war and crime, will disappear.

A third school of thought has arisen to challenge the views of human nature held by the two preceding schools. For want of a better name it might be called the school of "infinite malleability". Its members maintain that man has no innate disposition toward any particular kind of behaviour, that basically man is a "lump of putty" and, therefore, infinitely malleable, thus, allowing him to be shaped and moulded into any desirable form. Again, we are told that man is a product of his social environment

and that, if we observe him behaving in a way that we find objectionable, all that is necessary to eliminate it is to restructure society. If, for instance, we want man to become more peaceful, it can be done with a little social engineering; if, on the other hand, we want him to be more aggressive and warlike, that, too, can be arranged. There is nothing in man's nature to prevent him from becoming one or the other.

Freud, as we have seen, constructed, on the basis of his psychoanalytic investigations, a model of human nature which differed in many important respects from the three previously discussed views of human nature. He regarded the view of man's having some kind of moral disposition towards either good (social behaviour) or evil (anti-social behaviour) as highly naive and simplistic. He felt that such extreme formulations were too biased and one-sided to do full justice to the complexity and multi-faceted quality of human nature.

Freud was particularly scornful of romantic and idealistic conceptions of man such as Rousseau's which depicted man as inherently good but corrupted by society. In one memorable passage in Civilization and Its Discontents Freud points out the existence of strong aggressive tendencies in human nature:

. . . men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved,

and who at most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensations, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him. Homo homini lupus. ¹⁴

Under normal conditions the superego is able to persuade the ego to join forces with it and restrain the id. Sometimes, however, the mental counterforces, which ordinarily hold the ego in check, are put out of action, and then the aggressive streak will come to the fore and reveal "man as a savage beast to whom consideration toward his own kind is something alien."¹⁵

Freud insisted vigorously on the existence of biologically rooted psychological drives in human beings, and thus gave us an image of human nature in which there is present a hard core that is for all practical purposes invulnerable to moulding and shaping by any sort of manipulation of the social environment.

It is for this reason that Freud could not share the optimism of the communists, socialists, and anarchists about the liberating effect of institutional change, whether social, economic, or political. According to Freud, the psychological premises on which these intellectual systems are based are an untenable

14 Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 58

15 Ibid., p. 59.

illusion:

In abolishing private property we deprive the human love of aggression of one of its instruments, certainly a strong one, though certainly not the strongest; but we have in no way altered the differences in power and influence that are misused by aggressiveness, nor have we altered anything in its nature. Aggressiveness was not created by property.¹⁶

Even after the abolition of private property, human aggressive drives would find other ways of expressing themselves.

Although one cannot help detecting a strong Hobbesian flavour in some of Freud's writings, especially when he deals with anti-social qualities of human nature, it must be recognized that Freud also acknowledges the natural sociability of man, his strong and enduring emotional need for a sense of community.

If Freud at times tends to dwell somewhat on the theme of man's aggressiveness and, according to some critics places an unhealthy emphasis on it, it must be remembered that Freud was highly aware of man's tremendous capacity for self-deception and the creation of comforting illusions to which he would cling with a blind and often hysterical tenacity. Any attempt to destroy those illusions whose destruction would result in the undermining of man's cherished self-image would invariably meet with strong resistance.

Freud had found himself in an uncomfortable situation very early in his career when he had set forth his doctrine of infantile sexuality, which challenged one of the major illusions carefully

nurtured by Victorian society, namely that children were totally devoid of erotic feelings. Sex was considered to be something dirty and degrading indulged in only by adults out of the necessity of perpetuating the human race, while children were regarded as pure and innocent.

Although even the most unobservant nursemaids and schoolteachers were aware that children were sexual beings, the so-called learned men (medical doctors and academicians) of the time chose to close their eyes to a reality which they found distasteful, and instead embraced an illusion which fitted their preferences.

Therefore, when Freud announced that

The child has his sexual impulses and activities from the beginning, he brings them with him into the world, and from these the so-called normal sexuality of adults emerges by a significant development through manifold stages,¹⁶

he became the object of unbelievable hostility. He found himself the victim of professional ostracism, had his name removed from the rolls of various learned societies, and was subjected to repeated vicious, personal attacks.

It is not surprising, therefore, that, when Freud started to encounter the same sort of unwarrantedly hostile and unreasoning attacks in relation to his pronouncements about human aggressiveness, that he had once again touched a raw nerve, a truth that a great many people found particularly unpalatable and wished to deny.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis, p. 49.

For this reason, he apparently decided to emphasize, and elaborate on, the presence of aggressive drives in human beings, in just as forceful a manner as he had previously done with sexual drives. He evidently hoped that sooner or later his critics would be forced to challenge his ideas on purely intellectual grounds rather than trying to ignore them or reacting emotionally towards them. Freud had great faith that reason, even if temporarily overwhelmed by emotion, would in the long run emerge triumphant:

In such a case a person would hear of something new which, on the ground of certain evidence, he is asked to accept as true; yet it contradicts many of his wishes and offends some of his highly treasured convictions. He will then hesitate, look for arguments to cast doubt on the new material, and so struggle for a while until at last he admits it to himself: 'This is true, after all, although I find it hard to accept and it is painful to believe in it.' All we learn from this process is that it needs time for the intellectual work of the Ego to¹⁷ overcome objections that are invested by strong feelings.

Freud was convinced of the necessity of sweeping away all illusions, that veil and distort reality, no matter how comforting they might be. Man must acknowledge the presence in himself of both sexual and aggressive tendencies. He must explore their nature and learn how to control them, so that their enormous energies can be channeled into constructive and healthful directions rather than deny and repress them, driving them underground where they will smoulder, only to burst forth one day in a destructive manner.

¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, Moses and Monotheism, pp. 83-84.

Freud recognized that human nature was malleable to a considerable extent as opposed to being fixed and immutable. He, as a result of his years of clinical work, was profoundly aware of the amazing plasticity that sometimes characterized human drives particularly sexual and aggressive ones and permitted them to find gratification and fulfillment in a number of diverse ways, some of which were so subtle that they nearly defied detection.

What Freud insisted, however, on continually pointing out was that the plasticity exhibited by these drives was definitely not without limits, although they might vary from individual to individual. Any attempt to exceed those limits would invariably prove to be a procrustean exercise and would result in harm to the persons involved.

It is possible, for instance, for men and women to adapt to, and to function more or less adequately in, a society which severely restricts and frustrates the normal sexual drives of its members. Whenever such extreme restrictions are imposed, however, there is a price to be paid, and the price is that of neurosis and even psychosis for a considerable number of persons in that society.

Freud was convinced that there was an universal human nature. He thought that there were certain common experiences and basic human needs that underlied all cultures no matter how diverse the

forms these cultures might assume.

Recognizing the crippling and warping nature of his own society in its attitudes toward sexuality, Freud raided the standard of human health and happiness and argued eloquently for reform and liberalization:

A certain part of the suppressed libidinous excitation has a right to direct satisfaction and ought to find it in life. The claims of our civilization make life too hard for the greater part of humanity, and so further the aversion to reality and the origin of neuroses, without producing an excess of cultural gain by this excess of sexual repression. We ought not to go so far as to fully neglect the animal part of our nature, we ought not to forget that the happiness of individuals cannot be dispensed with as one of the aims of our culture.

Freud knew that most men are able to adapt their behaviour to fit a large number of different cultural patterns, but in so far as any of these are contradictory and diametrically opposed to their nature, they will suffer mental and emotional disturbances which will sooner or later force them to modify their social conditions, since their ability to alter their basic nature is strictly limited.

The conservative looks upon human nature as something fixed and immutable with no capacity for change and regards cultural patterns and social institutions as the inevitable and permanent expression of human nature.

To the liberal or radical, however, who believes in the extreme malleability of human nature, social institutions are primary and human nature is regarded as a product of the social environment.

Freud's view of human nature as semi-malleable prevents him from sharing either the pessimism of the conservatives or the optimism of the liberals and radicals. Such a view neither lets us accept and be content with the status quo, nor does it allow us to engage in the construction of "utopias" into which we shove our fellow men, in a procrustean manner. Instead, it encourages us to reopen debate on the question of human nature, to indulge in further speculation, and to embark on new empirical explorations in this area.

AUTHORITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

One of the major themes to be found in the writings of Freud is that of the irreconcilable antagonism existing between the instinctual demands of human nature and the restrictions that civilization sets on the time, place, manner, and the extent to which these demands can obtain satisfaction.

According to Freud, man has a strong tendency towards aggressive behaviour and egoistic self-indulgence. Civilization is made possible only through continual acts of instinctual renunciation. The instinctual drives which must be controlled if civil society is to exist are, of course, those of a sexual and aggressive nature. The id, with its insistence on the total, immediate, and unconditional gratification of these strivings must be considered an enemy of civilization. In every society some direction must be given to the expression of erotic and aggressive feelings, or else, chaos and disruption will result.

In order to live together in a community, men must be willing and able to control their instinctual impulses.

As Freud expresses it,

Human life in common is only made possible when a majority comes together which is stronger than any separate individual and which remains united against all separate individuals. The power of the community is then set up as 'right' in opposition to the power of the individual which is condemned as 'brute force'. This replacement of the power of the individual

by the power of the community constitutes the decisive step of civilization. The essence of it lies in the fact that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction, whereas the individual knew no such restrictions.¹⁹

If this attempt to regulate social relations were not made, Freud argues, then any serious conflicts between two persons or two groups of persons would invariably be settled by either threat or actual use of physical force.

The Hobbesian elements in Freud's thinking are apparent here. We would contend, however, that the similarity between some aspects of Freud's thought and that of Hobbes is of a superficial nature. Although, both Freud and Hobbes might agree that "men have no pleasure but, on the contrary, a great deal of grief, in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all,"²⁰ they arrive at this point by different paths.

As far as Freud is concerned, Hobbes's view of human nature is just as limited, one-sided, and unrealistic as Rousseau's. The Hobbesian description of the state of nature and of the origins of civil society is entirely too rational and undialectical a formulation to suit Freud.

In Hobbes's writings as well as in those of other social and political thinkers who seek to explain the origins of society and

19 Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 42.

20 Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 99.

and the sources of social cohesion we find constant recourse to what might be termed "pragmatic covenant theory".

According to "pragmatic covenant theory", men come together to live in a community because they have rationally calculated that such a move is in their self-interest, that is, they anticipate certain mutual advantages from living and working together. The advantages expected to be gained from group living may vary considerably, but, usually they include such things as better protection from enemies, security and support in times of illness, of accident, of old age or natural disaster, greater productivity through occupational specialization and division of labour, etc. In short, it is expected that the pooling of individual efforts and resources in the pursuit of commonly desired objectives such as freedom from fear, pain, and want, will result in their being attained much more easily and quickly than would be the case under conditions of individual isolation.

In addition, according to "pragmatic covenant theory", men soon come to the realization just as rationally as before that some kind of supreme authority possessing a monopoly of physical force must be set up to settle disputes and resolve conflicts arising between members of the community.

If and when, members of any given community rationally calculate that their membership has become a definite liability

to them instead of the asset it was originally intended to be, that is, they no longer think that their interests are being served by continued membership in that community given its present form then they have two major courses of action open to them. Either they can band together and attempt to affect whatever changes are necessary to make membership in that society worthwhile again or, failing in the first, they can leave that society and seek membership in another society which, they think, will more adequately meet their expectations.

Although Freud accepted the pragmatic covenant argument to a large degree as valid, and resorted to it himself in his book Totem and Taboo, he eventually came to realize that in many respects it was inadequate to explain the dynamics of social cohesion and stood in need of considerable amendment. As a number of theorists have pointed out, the social contract argument is an exercise in circular logic. The very kinds of acts which it posits as prerequisite to the establishment of civil society already indicate the existence of various, rather complex social skills which could be learned only in a previously existing civil society.

An even more devastating criticism of the "pragmatic covenant" theory may be made, however, by citing various instances of men coming together to form communities*, or willing to maintain already

* The term is being used in a very wide sense. A community may consist of only two persons and exist for only a very short time.

existing communities even when there is no evidence or anticipation of any possibility that such action will be in their interest, or when, it may actually be evident that such action will result in hardships, sacrifices, and perhaps even the loss of lives.

One example of this is to be found in wartime, when men occasionally perform acts of self-sacrifice, such as that of a soldier who throws himself on an enemy hand grenade to smother the blast with his body and save the lives of his comrades. Another example is that of a parent who rushes into a burning building in order to rescue his trapped children.

Freud's awareness of these shortcomings in the "pragmatic covenant" theory led him to consider the problem further, and eventually resulted in the development of an original theory of his own, which he set forth in detail in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.

Freud points out that the development of a superego makes possible the restriction of gratification of such strong drives as sex and aggression with all their accompanying potentiality for anti-social behaviour.

The superego develops out of the long period of dependency of child upon parents or parent surrogates that every human being invariably passes through. It is this period of development that

gives the individual his capacity for group living. The child feels love for his parents because of their satisfaction of his physical and psychological needs. The parents demand of him instinctual renunciations of an increasingly difficult and complex kind. He feels frustrated and develops feelings of aggression towards his parents, but is reluctant to express these feelings for fear of losing their love, which would be a painful event for him. In order to cope with his feelings of aggression and the accompanying anxiety, he learns to identify with the parental figures and to incorporate their values and standards within himself in the form of the superego. His aggression, which was previously directed outward, against the parents, is now redirected back, against himself (the ego), and assumes the form of guilt feelings whenever he is tempted to violate the internalized values and standards of his parents.

The relationship which exists between parent and child, and which allows the formation of a superego, becomes the prototype for all other social relationships involving authority. What originally developed in relation to the parents is later transferred or carried over to other authorities, social and political: "What began in relation to the father is completed in relation to the group."²¹

21 Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 80.

Paul Roazen aptly points out the implications of such a viewpoint:

However rationalistic Freud might sound because of his use of covenant theory, in the last analysis he belongs in the tradition of those thinkers who reject a belief in the possibility of a state of nature. The essence of this trend is the belief that society is not willed into being by man's rationality, but that it is a given, natural phenomenon. To the extent that family life is the model for authority relationships, we are born political creatures.²²

Thus, Freud sees the family as the primary agency of socialization, political and otherwise. It is in the family that the potentially destructive egoistic instincts are, in a sense, defused and transmuted into social ones by virtue of their being joined with erotic components.

Freud accepts to a certain degree the idea of mutual self-interest and expediency as factors promoting social cohesion and obedience to authority figures, but argues that, in the final analysis, what really holds society together is libidinous ties. These ties, it is true, are often desexualized, that is, aim-inhibited, but nonetheless quite clearly erotic in both origin and nature. Freud, in short, replaces logos with eros as the basis of civil society.

It is possible, of course, that superego formation in a given individual may go astray or never take place at all. The person may never have received as a child the necessary amount of affection and love required to effectively transmute his egoistic instincts into social ones. Instead of the ego and superego joining forces to hold

22 Paul Roazen, Freud: Political and Social Thought, p. 157.

the id in check the ego becomes the willing and eager servant of the id and seeks to fulfil its anti-social desires. The person with a weak superego will almost certainly indulge in anti-social behaviour if an appropriate opportunity presents itself.

A person may have a very strong superego and still commit anti-social acts. If his parents taught him that it is right and even a duty to steal he will do so whenever he can with a clear conscience. In the same way a modern state may teach the citizen that it is right and also a duty to fight and kill other men whom it regards as enemies so that he can commit these acts of violence and even take considerable pride in the proficiency he displays in doing so.

Freud also thought that the individuals attitudes toward authority were shaped by his childhood experiences. In the eyes of the weak, helpless, dependent child, his parents (and, in particular, the father) are possessed of strength, wisdom, ability, courage, and all other desirable qualities, and they possess them in overwhelming abundance. The child feels secure in its state of dependency, completely assured that no matter what terrible threats there may be in the dangerous external world to his safety, to his happiness and general well-being, there will always be an all-good, all-powerful, and all-merciful father to protect him from harm.

As he grows older, however, and comes into repeated, intimate contact with the external world, he starts to encounter one situation after another that is subversive to this illusion of his, and ultimately undermines it completely. At the same time he is starting to perceive more clearly the full extent of the dangers to himself present in the universe. He is also starting to realize that the powers of his parents are considerably more limited than he had earlier suspected. He is aware now, that his father and mother cannot protect him from such things as earthquakes, hurricanes, war, droughts, disease, death, etc. He still longs, however, for the sense of assurance and security that he experienced as a child, dependent on an all-powerful parent. In order to assuage the anxiety he feels when confronted by a hostile and threatening universe he seeks parent surrogates which he can endow with all the ideal attributes which he once assigned to his real parents. The surrogates or ego-ideals may be flesh-and-blood persons, mythical beings, assuming either animal or human form, or collections of abstract ideas. Persons of limited intellectual ability will tend to choose live persons or anthropomorphic deities, while those with greater intellectual gifts will tend to embrace more abstract notions such as the empire, the nation, the race, the party, non-anthropomorphic deities, etc.

Freud argues,

that the great majority of people have a strong need for authority which they can admire, to which they can submit, and which dominates and sometimes even ill-treats them. We have learned from the psychology of the individual whence comes this need of the masses. It is the longing for the father that lives in each of us from his childhood days.²³

Men, according to Freud, have the tendency

to fall into the two classes of leaders and followers. The latter constitute the vast majority; they stand in need of an authority which will make decisions for them and to which they for the most part offer an unqualified submission.²⁴

Thus, the condition under which obedience is given to an authority is essentially erotic as opposed to being rational. Men obey an authority basically not because they have rationally calculated that it is in their self-interest to do so, or out of fear that they will be physically punished, but because they love the authority and are fearful of giving offence and losing its love.

If we turn to everyday language, we find a number of clues which all tend to confirm Freud's hypothesis in regard to the erotic nature of political authority and the importance of the parental figure. In many languages it is common to speak of one's native land as being the fatherland or the mother country. The word "patriot", defined as "one who loves his country and zealously supports its authority and interests",²⁵ was originally derived from the Greek patriōtes, meaning

²³ Sigmund Freud, Moses and Monotheism, pp. 139-140.

²⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Why War?" in his Collected Papers, Vol. 5, James Strachey, ed., p. 284.

²⁵ Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam Company, 1963)

"of one's father"

If we accept as valid the assumption that in any society the social and political authorities represent love-objects to the individuals residing in it, then perhaps we will be in a better position to understand the processes by which men become tractable and ready to submit to authority.

Perhaps the most puzzling phenomenon to be explained, however, is the propensity of individuals to engage in extreme acts of self-sacrifice, which sometimes include the actual annihilation of the self. Recalling the tripartite division of the self discussed above and the various functions assigned to each part, we cannot help wondering why the ego did not rebel against the suicidal promptings of the ego-ideal, which may be differentiated from the superego proper by thinking of it as representing the aspirational aspects of conscience, as opposed to the superego which represents the restrictive aspects of the conscience.

The ego is the part of the mind charged with maintaining the existence of the organism by keeping aware of external reality. To achieve this end, it constantly strives to differentiate between what is actually a part of the organism and what is separate from it and whose destruction would not entail any threat to the physical existence of the organism.

The development of an erotic bond between the ego and an

external object prevents the ego from performing this function in the normal manner:

At the height of being in love the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evidence of his senses, a man who is in love declares that 'I' and 'you' are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact.²⁶

The inability to distinguish between the self and an external love-object, whether it is a real entity, a fictional one, or merely some abstract idea, renders an individual ready for self-sacrifice on its behalf. From a psychological standpoint, the person involved regards the love-object and himself as one and inseparable. Whatever threatens the well-being or existence of the love-object also threatens the self in exactly the same way.

This Freudian insight into the erotic basis* of politics and the role of the parent as the prototype for all other authority figures allows for a deeper understanding of a number of political phenomena. We begin to see why power tends to become personified and why individual political leaders, such as Caesar, Cromwell, Napoleon, Lenin, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Churchill, were practically deified by their devout followers. Impersonal power becomes transmuted into a "Big Brother" or, as is more likely, a "Big Father".

This desire for the personification of power occurs most frequently in times of crisis when people experience a great amount of personal insecurity. Anxious people seek some superhuman leader,

26 Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 13.

* Herbert Marcuse in his Eros and Civilization explores the possibility of using Freud's ideas to construct a non-repressive society in which all forms of physical coercion will be unnecessary.

a messianic hero, to come forth and make an end to all their problems.

M. D. Eder points out that in phenomena of this kind

we see the need of the father in the call for the strong man, for the return of the omnipotent being of our childhood, In the ultimate analysis the cry for the strong man is but the child's cry for daddy and mummy to kiss the sore place and make it well again - for the soothing words of the magician who has power to charm away all the ills that affect us.²⁷

Freud, however, reminds us that the stronger the emotion we feel towards any object, regardless of whether it is a love-object or a hate-object, the more likely it is that the emotion will be to some extent ambivalent in nature, that is, that what we hate we may also love and what we love we may also hate, although we may utilize either repression or some other defence mechanism, so that we are not aware at all of the presence of these opposing and contradictory feelings.

Considering the ambivalence that can be detected in the original relationship, that of parent and child, it is not very surprising to find similar ambivalence between political authorities and those who are subject to their dictates. Large numbers of people manifest such strong feelings, both those of love and hate, toward political authorities which they attempt to rationalize and justify with the flimsiest of arguments that we can only surmise that those feelings have their origin in the unconscious rather than being the product of any rational process of deliberation.

27. M. D. Eder, "Psychoanalysis in Relation to Politics", in ~~William F. Floyd, ed.,~~ Modern Political Thought, p. 69.

FREEDOM AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Freud was a scientist, a materialist, and a determinist. He believed that all acts of will, occurrences in nature, and social and psychological phenomena are determined by antecedent causes of one kind or another. More specifically, he believed that human behaviour in all its manifestations and aspects is determined by natural causes, whether they be physical, chemical, physiological, social, psychological etc., in the same manner as are the processes of non-conscious, purely physical masses of matter.

Individuals, it is true may appear to be acting "freely" but in reality such an appearance is only an illusion stemming from our ignorance of the fact that our behaviour is determined by a whole multitude of forces which come together and interact with one another in a complex dialectical manner.

Freud points out that

the psychoanalyst is distinguished by an especially strong belief in the determination of the psychic life. For him there is in the expressions of the psyche nothing trifling, nothing arbitrary and lawless, he expects everywhere a widespread motivation, where customarily such claims are not made; more than that, he is even prepared to find a manifold motivation of these psychic expressions, while our supposedly inborn causal need is satisfied with a single psychic cause.²⁸

28 Freud, The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis, p. 43.

A non-determinist, that is, one who believes that individuals are possessed of free will, and hence responsible for their actions, will identify any absence of freedom with the existence of external constraints on behaviour only. These external constraints on behaviour are seen as taking the form primarily of either clear-cut threats or the actual use of physical force. External constraints are employed by a person or a group of persons, on the one hand, either to hinder or entirely to prevent the supposedly autonomous individual from becoming or doing whatever it is that he wants to do, become or do, or, on the other hand, to compel him to become or do something which he would rather refrain from becoming or doing.

This view was described by Sir Isaiah Berlin as the "notion of 'negative' freedom". According to the notion of negative freedom,

I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no human being interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can do what he wants. If I am prevented by other persons from doing what I want I am to that degree unfree; and if the area within which I can do what I want is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved.²⁹

To understand fully what this view of freedom means, let us imagine a hypothetical society in which marriages are arranged between men and women by third parties. Suppose that there is a man who wishes to get married. He is not allowed to choose his own

29 Sir Isaiah Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty, p. 7.

wife. Instead, she is picked for him by some authority which makes the selection either in an entirely arbitrary manner or on the basis of some criteria it uses for this purpose. The man, however, does not find the girl that has been chosen for him either attractive or desirable and wishes to marry someone else whom he finds more appealing. This, of course, is not permitted by the authority, which may either give him the alternative of marrying the girl that it has picked for him or not marrying at all, or it may actually force him to marry the girl in question despite his objections.

In such a situation an advocate of the notion of negative freedom would maintain that there is an absence of freedom. If, however, the man were allowed to marry whomever he felt like marrying, then it would be asserted that a condition of freedom prevailed.

A determinist, however, would argue that the man's behaviour, that is, his so-called "choice of brides is determined in both cases and that, therefore, in the final analysis, he is not really acting "freely" in either instance. In the first example, where an authority picks the man's wife for him and he does not like the choice, he is conscious of constraint upon his behaviour, he feels coerced and is not free. If he is allowed to "choose" his own wife, or if the authority chooses the same girl that he would have selected by himself then there is no feeling of coercion. Does the fact that he now experiences

no feelings of coercion and constraint mean that he is actually "free"? Is it possible that a person may not be "free" and yet be unconscious of the fact of his servitude?

If we were to inquire of the man why he preferred one particular woman to all others, he would probably reply that he just liked her better. The question that remains, however, is why did he like her better than any of the other women available to him. The determinist would maintain that he is just simply unconscious of the complex conglomeration of antecedent causes, the vast array of interacting events and situations which have conditioned him to become the sort of individual he is and to hold the kinds of values (aesthetic and otherwise) that he does, and which, in the last analysis, determined whom he would "choose" to marry. In short, a determinist recognizes the existence not only of external constraints but, also of internal restraints, which also determine the behaviour of an individual.

Freud knew that it is not necessary to put a man into prison to deprive him of his freedom. A neurosis can limit human freedom just as effectively, although perhaps not as conspicuously, as iron bars and stone walls. The person who suffers from one of the phobias such as claustrophobia certainly cannot be described as free. Just as it is possible to be a physical captive, so it

is also possible to be a psychological captive. A man can be compelled to think, feel, and act in a certain way owing to either completely random and accidental circumstances or the conscious, deliberate manipulation and conditioning practiced upon him by others who desire him to think, feel, and act in that manner because it suits their purposes.

As Aldous Huxley has pointed out, *ibid.*,

The nature of psychological compulsion is such that those who act under constraint remain under the impression that they are acting on their own initiative. The victim of mind manipulation does not know that he is a victim. To him, the walls of his prison are invisible and he believes himself to be free. That he is not free is apparent only to other people. ³⁰

Subjective experience tends to deny objective fact in this instance.

At Bernheim's clinic in Nancy, Freud had witnessed a number of demonstrations involving the use of hypnosis. In one demonstration that had impressed him greatly a man was hypnotized and given a post-hypnotic suggestion. The man was instructed that upon being awakened he was to engage in a number of trivial, nonsensical acts, but would not remember at all that he had been instructed to perform them. The man was then awakened and he proceeded to perform as he had been instructed while under hypnosis. Bernheim asked the man why he was acting in such a strange manner. The man came up with a number of plausible excuses to explain his behaviour, without, of course, giving the real reason. Freud was intrigued by the

30 Aldous Huxley, Brave New World Revisited, p. 109

demonstration. Here was a man who was totally unaware of what had motivated his behaviour and yet set forth several highly reasonable arguments or "rationalizations" for it which he obviously believed to be true. How much of our thoughts and actions might stem from unconscious sources?

Guided and sensitized by the insight obtained through this early experience, Freud gradually came to realize through his clinical work that man's conscious thought governs his actions to a surprisingly small extent. An overwhelmingly large part of man's behaviour finds its point of origin within the depths of the unconscious portion of his mind. The excuses for, and justifications of, our actions which we present to ourselves and others are very frequently little more than false and fabricated rationalization of processes of whose existence and mechanics we are ignorant.

As E. H. Carr has observed,

Reason is given to us, Freud seems to say, not to direct our thought and action, but to camouflage the hidden forces which do direct them. This is a still more devastating version of the Marxist thesis of substructure and superstructure. The substructure of reality resides in the unconscious: what appears above the surface is no more than the reflexion, seen in a distorting ideological mirror, of what goes on underneath.³¹

The Freudian idea of rationalization is the same as the Marxist conception of ideology for a social group or class: "Ideology is the

³¹ E. H. Carr, The New Society, p. 73-75.

collective rationalization of a group, while rationalization is the private ideology of an individual."³²

In his famous essay entitled "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death", Freud reminds us that

Students of human nature and philosophers have long taught us that we are mistaken in regarding our intelligence as an independent force and in overlooking its dependence upon the emotional life. Our intelligence, they teach us, can function reliably only when it is removed from the influences of strong emotional impulses; otherwise, it behaves merely as an instrument of the will and delivers the inference which this will requires.³³

Freud has shown more than anyone else that the control we have always confidently assumed to have over ourselves is highly limited, extremely fragile, and exceedingly unreliable. Freud noted that the delusions held by paranoic patients on close examination revealed an unsettling similarity, in terms of both outward appearance and internal relationship, to the various systems of thought constructed by philosophers. He also observed that the elaborate rituals, ceremonies, and prohibitions developed by patients suffering from obsessions bore a remarkable resemblance to the practices of organized religion, which made him suspect that what they had in effect done, was to create their own personal religion.

According to Freud,

We cannot get away from the impression that patients are making, in an asocial manner, the same attempts at a solution of their conflicts and an appeasement of their urgent desires

³² Frederick J. Hacker, "Freud, Marx, and Kierkegaard", in: Benjamin Nelson, ed., Freud and the 20th Century, p. 130.

³³ Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death", in his Collected Papers, Vol. IV, pp. 302-303.

which, when carried out in a manner acceptable to a large number of persons, are called ~~rather~~³⁴, religion, and philosophy,

The reductionist aspects of Freud's thought are of course, quite clearly apparent here and the mind-staggering implications are self-evident. Freud's thought reduces philosophy and religion to the status of collective forms of neurosis (paranoical and obsessional, respectively) which, if indulged in by a person in an idiosyncratical manner, will invariably earn him a bed in a mental hospital where, every effort will be made to snap him out of it. Freud's work has shown us that the same mental processes are taking place in both the so-called normal person and the neurotic or psychotic person. They make use of essentially the same sort of defense mechanisms, and attempt to resolve the same kinds of conflicts, although they do so with varying degrees of success. Freud, however, does not present us with sufficient evidence to compel our acceptance of this particular contention of his. It is possible to look at it as an alarming though thought provoking bit of speculation.

Freud, strong empiricist that he was, rejected all forms of teleology. Nothing transcended man and gave purpose or meaning to his life. If life has any purpose or meaning, it is to be found in what we choose to give it. Man makes his own meaning and provides his own purpose. Indeed, Freud would suspect that the raising of such a question is due to human presumptuousness and that it is

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, the Preface to Theodor Reik, Ritual: Psychoanalytic Studies, Douglas Bryan, trans., p. 9.

perhaps indicative of the existence of a pathological mental state.

According to Freud, however, if we observe human behaviour, the purpose of most men's lives seems to be that of satisfying basic human drives and of attaining the maximum amount of individual and/or collective well-being and happiness possible:

What do they demand of life and wish to achieve in it? The answer to this can hardly be in doubt. They strive after happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so. It aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and unpleasure, and, on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure. ³⁵

Where, however, does all of this leave us in regard to the problem of human freedom? Freud, as we have seen, postulates determinism. He rejected emphatically the idea of the autonomous individual possessed of free will. Yet, although our actions are always determined, this does not mean that we cannot free ourselves from a particular instance of determinism.

Freud recognized that "Slavery to an unknown master is slavery still; and not to know that we are in bondage is only to deepen it."³⁶ Freedom is made possible only through acquisition of knowledge, knowledge of those factors that determine and restrict our behaviour and prevent us from being the true masters of our fates and captains of our souls.

This acquisition of knowledge, particularly self-knowledge,

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 23.

³⁶ Abraham Kaplan, "Freud and Modern Philosophy", in Benjamin Nelson, ed., *Freud and the 20th Century*, p. 218.

is the basic aim of the whole process of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalyst seeks to develop in the individual who has placed himself under his care an appreciation of those psychological causal factors that have made him act in a manner that threatens his health, happiness, and general well-being, and as is frequently the case, those of others as well. Every effort is made to bring to the surface what has been repressed, to make the unconscious conscious, and in this way to give the person insight into his condition.

By becoming aware of the factors that have determined our behaviour, we introduce a new factor into the causal equation. The possibility of alleviating a neurosis and eventually curing it entirely comes into being only with an awareness of the source or sources from which it springs.

It is important to remember that Freud was a physician and that to him the paramount value was human life. His system of values sprang out of the fundamental choice that every living entity faces, namely, that of life or death. Once life has been chosen as the standard by which all other things are to be judged, the problem then becomes one of discovering what conditions favour continued well-being and the maintenance, of life and which ones are hostile to this end. Moral actions are those that attempt to secure the life-favouring conditions. What serves the cause of life is regarded as good, what does not is regarded as bad.

Freud did not think that a rational man would ever consciously desire to do anything to jeopardize his health, happiness, or well-being. No one would ever desire to become neurotic. Although Freud never spelled it out, we can infer from some of his statements that he took the position that anytime we find a man engaged in some action that endangers his health, happiness, or well-being, we may assume that he is acting unfreely, regardless of whether the endangering action is the determined result of an accidental combination of factors or is due to psychological manipulation and conditioning by other persons who wish to use him as a means to some end they seek.

Psychoanalysis, it is true, shows us that we are considerably less free than we had previously imagined ourselves to be, but at the same time it gives us insight into our condition and makes it possible for us to obtain a substantially greater amount of freedom than we originally had.

As we have previously seen, Freud pictured the existence of a fundamental conflict between the individual seeking satisfaction of his instinctual needs and society which attempted to regulate, restrict, curb, inhibit, and in general place limitations upon his pursuit of gratification.

In his early clinical work, Freud dealt largely with persons who had become neurotic as a result of their inability to adjust to

the severe restrictions placed upon their behaviour (primarily sexual, but also aggressive, behaviour) by an essentially repressive society.

Appalled by the growing realization that the patients he was encountering in his clinical work were persons who had been crippled, stunted, and warped by severe guilt and anxiety feelings arising out of their pathetic struggles to adhere to rigid social directives which were totally opposed to the demands of human nature,,Freud began to lay heavy stress on the severe damage done to the development of the individual by the repressive aspects of society.

Freud pleaded for a relaxation of the pressure, for more tolerance, understanding, and flexibility. Above all he pushed for acceptance of the fact that there were certain real human needs that must be satisfied by every society. Any society that fails to meet these needs either because of ignorance of their existence or through sheer arbitrariness is basically a sick society and will invariably create a large number of sick people.

Freud points out that there are certain limits to human plasticity: "Experience teaches us that for most people there is a limit beyond which their constitution cannot comply with the demands of civilization."³⁷

Freud realized that society had a certain tendency to make, and, indeed, often did make excessive demands on the individual which,

³⁷ James Strachey, ed., The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 9, p. 191.

if he attempted to meet conscientiously, would prove detrimental to his development and well-being. Freud challenged society when it did this and argued for liberalization. He recognized, however, that there was another side of the coin to be taken into account. While it is true that social controls can stifle and even destroy the individual, especially when they are diametrically opposed to the satisfaction of basic human needs, they can also serve the function of liberating him from the frenzy of his own, at times, overpowering, emotions which, if indulged in without restraint, would very likely prove harmful not only to himself but quite possibly to others as well. External restraints can serve to free the individual from internal restraints. This, of course, is nothing new. The ancient Greeks had maintained that one of the purposes of the polis was that of freeing a man from being a slave to his passions. The same idea was later echoed by the British political philosopher Edmund Burke, who argued that

Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom. Among these wants is to be reckoned the want, out of civil society, of a sufficient restraint upon their passions the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection.³⁸

Freud saw society as possessing a Janus-like quality. Social controls may oppress, but they may also liberate.

38. Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France p. 57.

As Paul Roazen has pointed out,

Freud's description of social restrictions, of the coercions of life, is so intensely real because he sees the extent to which outer authority is linked to our inner needs. Society is coercive precisely because its rules are internalized, are taken into the self; and at the same time society is useful in helping to keep some sort of balance between various forces.³⁹

Social controls allow men to cope with their aggressive drives, both by providing alternative, non-destructive channels into which they can be directed, and by strengthening and reinforcing already existing inner controls over these drives.

The child with its undeveloped superego is often overcome by strong emotions, such as anger, hate, and fear, and is highly dependent on the parents who must step in and restrain him before he realizes the exact nature and intensity of these feelings as well as his helplessness in controlling them. Such a realization would produce a harmful degree of anxiety in the child.

When normal social controls cease to operate in the usual fashion, as occurs in time of war, it should be no surprise that men suffer moral regression.

Freud commented bitterly on the propensity of societies in times of war to commend and reward persons for the commission of the most atrocious acts of inhumanity towards their fellow men who have been designated as the enemy, acts which, if committed against members of their own society, would be looked upon with

³⁹ Paul Roazen, Freud: Political and Social Thought, p. 158.

the greatest imaginable horror and speedily punished. According to Freud,

our conscience is not the inflexible judge that ethical teachers are wont to declare it, but in its origin is 'dread of the community' and nothing else. When the community has no rebuke to make, there is an end of all suppression of baser passions; and men perpetrate deeds of cruelty, fraud, treachery and barbarity so incompatible with their civilization that one would have held them to be impossible.⁴⁰

Freud thought that it was possible to prevent all forms of human violence including war by directing aggressive drives into non-injurious and perhaps even constructive channels. He came to the rather pessimistic conclusion, however, in his famous exchange of letters with Einstein, that

Wars will only be prevented with certainty if mankind unites in setting up a central authority to which the right of giving ⁴¹ judgement upon all conflicts of interest shall be handed over.

⁴⁰ Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" in James Strachey, ed., Collected Papers, Vol. IV, p. 294.

⁴¹ Sigmund Freud, "Why War?" in James Strachey, ed., Collected Papers, Vol. V, p. 278.

FREUD'S POLITICAL PRESCRIPTION

Having considered in some detail Freud's views concerning human nature and society we may now consider his political prescription.

It is in Freud's Future of an Illusion that he sets forth most clearly and in a rather polemical fashion his ideas about what he considers to be the most practical political order and the conditions that make it so.

Freud argues that,

It is just as impossible to do without control of the masses by a minority as it is to dispense with coercion in the work of civilization. For masses are lazy and unintelligent; they have no love for instinctual renunciation, and they are not to be convinced by argument of its inevitability; and the individuals composing them support one another in giving free rein to their indiscipline. It is only through the influence of individuals who can set an example and whom masses recognize as their leaders that they can be induced to perform the work and undergo the renunciations on which the existence of civilization depends. All is well if these leaders are persons who possess superior insight into the necessities of life and who have risen to the height of mastering their own instinctual wishes. But there is a danger that in order not to lose their influence they may give way to the mass more than it gives way to them, and it therefore seems necessary that they shall be independent of the mass by having means to power at their disposal.⁴²

Freud states that one is given the

impression that civilization is something which was imposed on a resisting majority by a minority which understood how

⁴² Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion, pp. 5-6.

to obtain possession of the means to power and coercion.⁴³

Once again in a later work Freud touches on the subject where he asserts that

more care should be taken than hitherto to educate an upper stratum of men with independent minds, not open to intimidation and eager in the pursuit of truth, whose business it would be to give direction to the dependent masses. . . . The ideal condition of things would of course be a community of men who had subordinated their instinctual life to the dictatorship of reason.⁴⁴

It is no great secret that Freud regarded himself as being a member of this elite group. The individuals in this proposed guardian class would be characterized by their ability to sublimate, that is, to renounce satisfaction to a large degree of various basic drives and to turn this saved energy toward cultural activities. In one of his letters to his future wife he expresses the idea in the following words:

The mob give vent to their impulses, and we deprive ourselves. We do so in order to maintain our health, our capacity for enjoyment, our forces: we save up for something, not knowing ourselves for what. And this habit of constant suppression of natural instincts gives us the character of refinement. We also feel more deeply and therefore dare not demand much of ourselves.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁴ Freud, "Why War?" in James Strachey, ed., Collected Papers, Vol. V., p. 284.

⁴⁵ Letter to his fiancée of August 29, 1883, quoted by Jones, The Life and Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. I, p. 190.

Although Freud never went into extensive detail concerning the actual mechanics of his proposed political order we can get enough of a glimpse of it from his writings to appreciate its main features. The great mass of humanity would be without political influence or power of even the most rudimentary sort. In his extreme pessimism Freud saw most persons as dominated by the forces of their id. As a result, they were unable to think or act rationally and needed the sense of purpose and emotionally security that could be provided by illusions. Freud distrusted illusions of all kinds because he felt that they often led men to commit acts that were harmful to themselves and others as well. If the ultimate expression of self-interest is self-preservation and maintenance of a state of well-being, then Freud argues that the great mass of humanity has always demonstrated its inability to act in its self-interest.

Freud would like to see the formation of an elite group or guardian class which would possess all political influence and power. This elite group would consist of persons who had been carefully initiated into the mysteries of psychoanalysis. This small handful of Nietzschean supermen would be psychologically mature enough to dispense with all reliance on illusions. They would be able to accept and affirm life even though they knew that

the universe was devoid of meaning and purpose. Completely rational and unencumbered by any illusion such as religion, nationalism, Communism, Nazism, racism, liberalism, capitalism, progress, etc. they would be able to rule benevolently on behalf of the common good. The elite would, of course, still have to manufacture illusions for the masses who cannot do without them. These illusions, however, would be life-serving rather than life-destroying. Personal happiness and enjoyment of the pleasures of life would be encouraged. Harmony and political unification of the planet would be promoted by means of illusions rather than divisiveness and war.

Are we compelled, however, to accept Freud's political prescription? Are his arguments put forth with the required degree of logic and clarity? Are they based on evidence, that is, sufficiently conclusive both in terms of quantity and quality?

There are many who would respond to any of these questions with an emphatic "No!" It should not really be surprising that Freud's work, like that of Marx and other builders of great intellectual systems, has received a substantial amount of criticism. Complete acceptance of Freud's social and political ideas would result in serious and drastic changes in our society and our way of life. It is only natural that these ideas should be subjected to the most careful probing and analysis before they are even tentatively accepted and used as a basis for action of any consequence.

Every general theory starts off with certain basic assumptions or premises which are regarded as being more or less self-evident. Upon these basic premises is constructed the theoretical framework. Of great interest to us is the degree of internal coherence that the theory possesses. Are the threads of the argument tightly woven together throughout like a mathematical system such as geometry, in which a number of axioms and postulates carefully connect with, and rest upon, one another to form a logically cohesive whole.

If this is the case, then the conclusions drawn from the theory can be invalidated simply by demonstrating that one of the basic assumptions upon which the theory is grounded is false or that there is some break or weak link in the chain of logic stretching between the basic assumptions and the final conclusions. Freud's theoretical system, however, does not exhibit a high enough degree of internal coherence to make this possible. A number of students of Freud have devised various schemes for dividing up his work into different categories and grouping together in them certain of his hypotheses which show common characteristics. Some students are motivated by a desire to treat Freud's work in a particular way dictated by their interests and devise a classification scheme which, they feel, will help them to do so most efficiently. Others

arrange their schemes around natural gaps or breaks which they perceive to exist in his work. Still others resort to schemes which attempt to incorporate both approaches. An example of the first kind of scheme is provided by Eliseo Vivas who maintains that

Freudian doctrine can be divided into a body of medical theory and a therapeutic technique, a philosophical anthropology, and a philosophy of culture. Of course, no such organization, no organization whatever, I dare say, of a mass of hypotheses of so heterogeneous a nature, although devised by as systematic a mind as that of Freud, would be fully adequate.⁴⁶

Vivas finds this scheme useful for his purposes, which are those of a student of philology.

An example of the third kind of scheme is set forth by J.A.C. Brown who finds it convenient

to regard the total body of Freudian thought as falling into roughly three categories: its basic psychological concepts ... the theories based on clinical observations and described in terms of this conceptual scheme... and the essentially philosophical conclusions on such subjects as the nature of society and civilization, war and religion, which Freud drew from his own thought and experience.⁴⁷

The particular value of Brown's scheme is that it reminds us, as Freud himself does, from time to time in his writings, that not all of his ideas and hypotheses are related to one another to the same degree, nor are they equally well-grounded from an empirical standpoint. There are many who would find his basic approach to psychological problems quite valid and useful while vigorously

⁴⁶ Eliseo Vivas, the introduction to Sigmund Freud, The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis, p. ix.

⁴⁷ J.A.C. Brown, Freud and the Post-Freudians, p. 1.

rejecting, many, if not all, of his specific theories. Still others would accept both his basic approach and his psychological theories while denying any validity to his philosophical conclusions.

It is possible, for instance, to accept the idea of infantile sexuality while remaining skeptical about the supposed sexual origin of all neuroses. One can accept the idea of sexual and aggressive drives in human nature, Freud's model of the human mind, defense mechanisms, etc., and still reject Freud's political prescription, his views on women, and mental telepathy, and the results of his attempts to apply psychoanalysis to Leonardo Da Vinci and Woodrow Wilson.

The point that must be made is that despite a tenuous over-all unity Freud's work really consists of a number of clusters of logically related hypotheses that form, as it were, water-tight compartments. One of the compartments under stress may develop leaks but the others may remain completely intact and untouched. This compartmental quality of Freud's work makes his political and social prescriptions considerably less compelling than they would be if they were based on a tightly integrated and cohesive general theory. It also makes it more difficult to totally refute them.

Freud had an immensely fertile mind and a natural speculative bent. It was these qualities, perhaps as much as anything else, that

allowed him to formulate his brilliant theories and make his great discoveries. These same qualities, however, often led him into the wildest kind of speculation based on flimsy and insubstantial evidence. Freud's soundest work was done in the area of clinical psychoanalysis, where his imagination and speculative bent were restrained by actual observations of human behaviour, which helped to place limits on the interpretive range. When he ventured outside clinical psychology and tried to apply psychoanalysis to individuals and groups about whom he had information from secondary sources only, the usual checks were gone. The results of these efforts remind one of the work of an artist more than that of a scientist. With no fetters on his imagination, Freud was more likely to create something than try to discover something that was already in existence. As a result, much of what Freud has written on political and social topics tends to be a curious blend of some hard fact, a great deal of speculation, and often nothing more than plain personal prejudice.

Freud was aware of his tendency in this direction and was fearful that critics would seize on some of his more outlandish and eccentric notions and use them to discredit psychoanalysis. He went to some effort on various occasions to point out the relation between his social and political theories and psychoanalysis. In regard to the ideas he set forth in The Future of an Illusion Freud wrote to an acquaintance of his that they "form no part of

analytic theory. They are my personal views. . . . if I draw on analysis for certain arguments -- in reality only one argument -- that need deter no one from using the non-partisan method of analysis for arguing the opposite view.⁴⁸ Thus, we see that Freud did not argue that acceptance of psychoanalytic theory necessitated acceptance of his political and social ideas, on the contrary, he tried to impress on others that they should not be associated with one another. While Freud quite clearly felt that his psychoanalytic theories and discoveries tended to support his social and political ideas to some extent, he realized that in the last analysis those theories and discoveries could not be used as proof of the correctness of his social and political ideas. The value of these ideas must be judged separately from those concerned with psychoanalysis and psychology.

A few words may be said, however, regarding Freud's methodology and the criticisms directed against it. Freud relied primarily on clinical observation, deductive reasoning, and case histories. These techniques, when employed by a superior mind such as Freud's, were able to produce a number of highly useful discoveries. Logical positivists, however, have consistently denied any sort of scientific status to Freud's work, arguing that it does not meet certain rigorous

48 Sigmund Freud, Psychoanalysis and Faith, p. 92.

methodological criteria which they have taken from the physical sciences. ~~Freud knew~~

Freud answered the logical positivist critics by saying that: "those critics who limit their studies to methodological investigations remind me of people who are always polishing their glasses instead of putting them on and seeing with them."⁴⁹ Freud knew that there were problems so vital and important that they could not be pushed aside and ignored until techniques were developed to deal with them that conformed to contemporary canons of methodological respectability. Such problems must be attacked with whatever weapons we have at hand. Psychoanalysis, for instance, developed out of Freud's efforts to alleviate the misery of patients suffering from nervous disorders and to whom no standard method of treatment could bring any relief.

In opposition to the logical positivists, Freud asserted that problems should take precedence over methodology. When they do not, a condition of sterility develops. According to Eliseo Vivas,

One of the results of the application of the rigoristic criteria to all disciplines is worthy of note. It leads to the abandonment of all those problems that cannot be handled by methods that meet the criteria, however, important and urgent, ~~urgent,~~ theoretically and practically, these problems may be. Thus in the pursuit of methodological respectability we are presented with quantified trivia and mountains of pseudo-rigorous observations of the obvious. ⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Theodor Reik, From Thirty Years with Freud, p. 138.

⁵⁰ Eliseo Vivas, the introduction to Sigmund Freud, The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis, p. xv.

In addition, it might also be argued that there is a danger that if we decide to wait until we develop the necessary techniques to deal with the problem in as sophisticated a manner as we would like, those techniques may never come into existence. It may very well be that only under the strain and stimulus provided by working with a serious and pressing problem will we lose our self-consciousness and become sufficiently desperate and daring to try any and every approach no matter how absurd any particular one might seem at the time. Hopefully, in such an extremely receptive state we will eventually come across an approach that turns out to be fruitful.

In short, available methodologies should not dictate to us which problems we may deal with. Instead, we should attack serious and pressing problems and develop methods with which we can deal with them as effectively as is possible given present limitations.

This thesis is not intended, however, to be a "depth" critique of Freud's methodology nor an extensive catalogue of every flaw in his thinking. Other authors have dealt in great detail with the shortcomings of the clinical approach and deductive logic. They have pointed out and discussed Freud's penchant for Lamarckian theories of evolution, his tendency to think in phylogenetic terms rather than ontogenetic ones, his views on feminine inferiority, his aristocratic biases, his anthropological fictions, etc.

The basic purpose of this thesis is to explore Freud's social

and political ideas, to examine their validity, and to evaluate their significance for political thought. The basic concern throughout this thesis has been that of attempting to identify and examine the pro-political and anti-political aspects of Freud's thought. Which aspects of his thought tend to support politics as an ongoing activity and contribute to its viability, and which tend to undermine it and render it moribund?

Of course, the answer to this question depends on how one defines politics. The term "politics" is used here to refer to any state of conflict between two or more persons over which values, goals, or ends, should be pursued. Furthermore, the author shares the belief of Sir Isaiah Berlin that not all of the values deemed good by men necessarily entail one another or even prove to be compatible with each other, such as, ~~freedom and order~~. Politics is, therefore, looked upon as an activity which ~~can have no termination~~. It becomes a chronic condition. Sir Isaiah Berlin argues that

the belief that some single formula can in principle be found whereby all the diverse ends of men can be harmoniously realized is demonstrably false. If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict ~~is~~ and of tragedy -- can never be wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social. The necessity of choosing between absolute claims is then an inescapable characteristic of the human condition. ⁵¹

51 Sir Isaiah Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty, p. 54.

Thus, given such a view of politics and a belief in the incompatibility of some human values, final solutions of all social and political problems are rejected as impossible. There is to be no ultimate perfection in the order of things, no utopia.

In the end, perhaps the strongest criticism to be made of Freud's political prescription is that it is an attempt to impose cloture on a debate that must be interminable. In a Freudian political system ends would be agreed upon (at least among the members of a small ruling elite), and the only questions still open for discussion would be technical ones concerning how to obtain the agreed-upon ends. Freud, who placed his faith in the power of human reason, believed that political and ethical problems could be turned into technical ones and solved by technical means. This belief, as well as the political prescription based upon it, cannot be substantiated.

Despite Freud's shortcomings as a social and political thinker, we must give credit to him for discovering a new dimension of conflict between the individual and society and for the many useful insights which have been gained as a result of that discovery. Also, we must pay tribute to his courage as a man, as a doctor, and as a thinker.

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