

Kant and Freud

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Freud gave us not just two theories of the psyche but two *kinds* of theory of the psyche. One is about the structure and function of its subsystems. The other is about the nature and management of its contents. Freud's model of psychic structure and function is closely parallel to Kant's in a number of respects. (Equally, much in his theory of psychic content was anticipated by Schopenhauer. We have explored this relationship elsewhere (Young and Brook, 1994).)

Even though not just Freud's model of the mind but the model adopted in psychoanalysis long after Freud's death, the model adopted for example by ego psychology, was deeply Kantian, this feature of Freud's thought has never received much attention. The influences on Freud of German *naturphilosophie* and Helmholtzian mechanistic materialism has received attention (Holt 1963). *Geisteswissenschaft* (the intentional, teleological study of culture) has been discussed and so has Darwin. The role of Machian positivism in Freud's thought has been explored. But Kant is seldom mentioned.¹ Yet Kant's models and methods dominated the German-speaking world in the nineteenth century.

Moreover, Freud referred to Kant very frequently, more frequently in fact than to any other philosopher.² In the form of 19th century Neokantianism, Kant's views gained their maximum prominence just at the time when Freud was thinking through his own model of the psyche in the 1890s (Freud 1895 and Chapter VII of 1900), the model that would guide him for the rest of his life. Herbart,

¹ Another major influence on German-speaking intellectual life in the latter part of the nineteenth century was the Romantic idealism of Hegel and his followers. Interesting, this school of thought seems to have had almost no influence on Freud. Hegel and Hegelian philosophy are only mentioned twice in the entire *Standard Edition* (S.E. 4:55 & S.E. 22:177), and the only obviously Hegelian idea in Freud's work is the idea of projection. German intellectuals seem to have roughly divided into a Kantian camp and a Hegelian camp: science-lovers and speculators. In such a split, Freud would clearly have been a Kantian, despite a strong speculative streak in both his youth and his old age.

Freud's library, the part of it he took with him to London, is interesting with regard to the influences on him. (What information we have about the part he left behind is not reliable (Trosman and Simmons 1973; Bakan 1975).) He took Darwin's *Gesammelte Werke* (a translation), and most of Mach's works but, curiously, only one late work by Helmholtz and only two by Meynert. No Hegel, no Fichte, no Schelling, only one early work of Schopenhauer's. However, he took Nietzsche's *Gesammelte Werke* in 23 volumes and two books of Kant's, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, and *Short Writings on the Philosophy of Nature* (both in German, of course). The significance of the first of these will emerge shortly.

² Here are the figures: Plato (17), Aristotle (19), Schopenhauer (25), Lipps (26), Nietzsche (17), and Kant (28+, 16 by name plus at least a dozen more to his doctrines). Lipps is included, though he was a psychologist, because he was a prominent Kantian. Appendix A provides a complete list by subject of Freud's references to Kant or his doctrines. Many of them are not mentioned in Strachey's indexes, which are not entirely reliable.

Helmholtz, Meynert and even Lipps considered themselves to be Kantians.³ For all these reasons, Freud must have been influenced by Kant. Yet Holt (1963), for example, does not even mention Kant or Kantianism. Nor does the influential Panel on The Ideological Wellsprings of Psychoanalysis (1973).⁴

Immanuel Kant was the most important philosopher in the German-speaking world from the end of the 18th century until at least the end of the 19th. His model of the mind and its knowledge was particularly influential. The parallels between Kant's and Freud's model of the structure and function of the mind run very deep. Like Kant's, Freud's model is tripartite. The three elements in Kant are Reason, Understanding and Sensibility. The first two can be readily mapped onto Freud's Superego and Ego and there is even a connection between the third and Freud's Id – to show all this in some detail is a major goal of the current paper. Freud's theory of the relation of consciousness and language and therefore his demarcation of the unconscious is Kantian. Like Freud, Kant thought that a large and in many ways the most important part of the operation of the mind is 'unconscious' – not open to introspection, not conscious in Freud's sense of the term. For Kant as for Freud something can be or become conscious only if it is described, captured in language. Freud shared Kant's interest in how the mind can tie experiences together, and even used Kant's term, 'synthesis', as his name for the process. Finally, as Freud himself was well aware, his doctrine of the unconscious (its timelessness, etc.) resonates with Kantian noumenalism (1915b, p. 171). To all of this we will return.

Freud never mentioned Kant's view of the psyche. This is intriguing but perhaps less significant than might at first appear. Freud certainly knew about Kant's model. One would expect as much on general grounds but there is also have direct evidence. Freud owned a copy of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/7). I have examined it in the Freud Museum in London. It has some marginal markings running through the first 100 pages or so. The markings are neither extensive nor especially profound but Freud seldom marked his books at all, so the presence of any marginal notes is significant. He bought it in 1882 (Trosman and Simmons (1973, pp. 654 and 651), exactly the year in which he first began to think about models of the psyche. Also, in his writeup of the Schreber case (1911a, p. 34),

³ See Beck (1967b). Jones (1953, I, 375) indicates that Meynert in particular was well-known as a Kantian. Meynert was one of Freud's principal teachers (Amacher 1965). Beck (1967a and especially 1967b) gives a good description of Neo-Kantianism in the German-speaking regions in the late nineteenth century.

⁴ The situation with respect to Schopenhauer is different. Parallels between Schopenhauer's views and Freud's have been known for a long time. Freud himself was aware of them. One of the things that make the study of *these* correspondences interesting is that Freud denied that he read Schopenhauer until late in life (for both points, see Freud 1925).

Freud referred to the work, the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/7), by name in which Kant laid out his model (the comment Freud cites is on p. A58=B83).

The reason that Freud's never mentioning Kant's model of the psyche may not be very significant is this. In Freud's time, the Kantian model of the mind was so dominant that it was the universal view of the mind in German intellectual life. On this issue, hardly any German-speaking intellectual was *not* a Kantian. The Kantian foundation of his model of the mind may never have struck Freud as worth pointing out. Marie Bonaparte once said to him that he was a combination of Kant and Pasteur, apparently intending to pay him an enormous compliment (Jones 1955, II, p. 415). This makes it clear that Kant was not just well-known to Freud's circle, he was a name to conjure with. The truth of Kant's model of the mind is not exactly self-evident to us now, however, so for us there is a need to lay out its role in Freud's thinking.

The study to follow will be hermeneutic rather than historical. That is to say, it will concentrate on relationships among texts, on drawing out parallels in doctrine and conceptual framework, rather than documented historical fact. I will not go very far into the question of why the relationships are there – whether, for example, they reflect direct influences or were just a matter of similar doctrines being developed independently. The relationships are interesting in their own right.

1. Kant's Tripartite Model of the Psyche

Here is a sketch-map of Kant's position.⁵ One can be aware only of one's own conscious states (phenomena). In order to be aware of even these, one must perform a number of intellectual operations on the raw material of them, which Kant called intuitions. First, intuitions must be 'run through and held together', which includes locating them in time and (some of them) in space. (The spatial part will appear to be external to oneself.⁶) Second, earlier ones must be retained in the present so that they can be set beside current ones. Third, they must be organized under concepts (including the famous

⁵ This sketch is drawn from sections called 'Transcendental Aesthetic', 'The Pure Concepts of the Understanding, or Categories', and 'The Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding', especially the latter, in (1781/7). Kant's views on Reason are not well-represented in these sections, but they are not completely presented in any other single place either. The Introduction and Book I. The Concepts of Pure Reason of the part of the work called the Transcendental Dialectic discuss it in more detail. For a thorough exploration of Kant's model of the mind, see Brook 1994.

⁶ There is an interesting problem about what the word 'external' in 'external world' can mean in Kant. It cannot mean 'located outside me' because for Kant the whole of space is a state *of the mind*; intuitions are not spatial when they arrive in Sensibility but have spatial location imposed on them. (Kant says the same thing, even more bewilderingly, of time.) So 'external' can only mean 'not states of myself'. The notion cannot have any spatial connotation.

categories of the understanding). All of this yields ‘representations’ (*vorstellungen*). Finally, one must tie whole groups of these representations together into a system of representations, using for example causal concepts to do so. Only at this stage does one have experiences, at least of the full-blown conscious variety. The general name for these intellectual operations is synthesis.

The higher levels of synthesis are performed by a faculty called apperception. Apperception must be unified in the ways required for it to operate as a single subject of experiences and for it to become aware of itself as a single subject of experience. Apperception, its being unified and the possibility of it becoming aware of itself were extremely important to Kant, but apperception plays only a minor role in Freud, so we will say no more about it. (The minor role is in Freud’s description of ‘*double conscience*’, splits of consciousness, and multiple personality (1915b, p. 170-1, and elsewhere).)

Kant called the system which contains intuitions Sensibility. It has two subsystems, inner sense (roughly, intuitions of one’s own psyche and soma) and outer sense (the intuitions which can be spatially organized.)

Understanding is his name for the system which works up these intuitions into representations. It is the language-using system which does the thinking.

The Understanding in turn is governed by Reason. Kant assigned two functions to Reason. One was to generate the regulative principles which the Understanding needed to govern its operations. The other was to house the fundamental principles of morality, which could not be derived from experience. The most fundamental of these was of course the categorical imperative. This part of Kant’s Reason is a precursor of Freud’s superego. In Kant’s system reason is not a system like the other two and its status is always a bit murky. The same was true of Freud’s view of what underpinned morality.

2. Freud’s Kantian Model of Psychic Structure and Function

Freud’s model of the structure of the psyche is strikingly like Kant’s. Recall the distinction between theory of the structure and functions of the psyche – its main subsystems, driving principles, etc. – and theory of its content – phantasies, affects, dreams, introjects, character, etc. – and of how such contents are managed, the primary and secondary processes.

How different the two kinds of theory are in Freud is never clearer than in (1923). There is a remarkable shift between Chapters I and II and Chapter III. Chapter I gives a list of ego functions and Chapter II (simplifying) a theory of how the system that performs these functions works and how it

relates to perception. This is all structure and function. However, at the end of Chapter II something new suddenly appears, the claim that the ego is first of all a bodily ego, a projection (a model) of the surface of the body. This is *not* a point about ego functions. It is a point about the *contents* of the ego, specifically, about the representations or images (*vorstellungen, bildes*) it contains. Chapter III then articulates a full theory of contents, perhaps Freud's first full theory, beginning with the idea that a key part of content, namely character, is "a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes". Clearly, the two kinds of theory differ radically.

This fundamental distinction between structure and function, on the one hand, and content of representations, on the other, does not begin in 1923. Here is a clear instance of it from (1900). Freud has just warned against the dangers of picturing the psyche topographically:

We can avoid any possible abuse of this method of representation by recollecting that ideas, thoughts and psychical structures in general must never be regarded as localized in organic elements of the nervous system but rather, as one might say, *between* them, where resistances and facilitations provide the corresponding correlates. Everything that can be an object of our internal perception is *virtual*, like the image produced in a telescope by the passage of light-rays. But we are justified in assuming the existence of the systems (which are not . . . accessible to our psychical perception) like the lenses of a telescope, which cast the image. And, if we pursue the analogy, we may compare the censorship between the two systems to the refraction which takes place when a ray of light passes into a new medium [1900, p. 611].

This distinction between representations and the structures and functions which produce and contain and manage them (via the primary and secondary processes) had to wait until 1923 for clear elucidation but it was already clearly present in 1900. The Kantian antecedents are to Freud's theory of psychic structure, i.e., of the systems and forces and functions which generate and manage content.⁷

Although Freud's view of the structure of the psychic system underwent some shifts, it remained fundamentally the same from 1895 to 1938. He never abandoned the essentials of the model that he first laid down in 1895. Every subsequent model had a drive system like the endogenous Q of

⁷ The distinction between structure and content should not be pushed too far. Character is a case in point. Though it was for Freud an entrée into content theory, it actually has a foot in both camps. It is a matter of contents, representations – what else would abandoned object-cathexes be? Yet it is more than just content, because character shapes and controls how content (experiences, thoughts, desires) is managed. Perhaps a computer analogy might be helpful. Computers have not two main elements but three. They have data (the analogue of content) and they have hardware (the analogue of structure). But they also have programming. This programming gives the hardware its functions, its capabilities. But it is also content. Character seems in a similar way to be both function and content.

1895 (libido, the Id) and an ego system like the ego of 1895 (the ego of 1911b and 1917, the Ego of 1923). All of them also had a self-judging element, though it only took its final shape as the Superego in 1923. And all of them remained drive-discharge theories. Though the third part of his model was fully articulated only in 1923, Freud's image of the psyche was fundamentally tripartite from start to finish. As, of course, was Kant's.

3. Freud's Model Face to Face with Kant's

Tripartite models of the psyche have been around at least since Plato but it was Kant who brought tripartite modelling to prominence in German thought. Few models of the psyche have ever been more influential. Freud's tripartite model, especially the final model of 1923, corresponds to it in detail. Figure 1 lays out the structure of Kant's model and shows how it relates to Freud's. The two psyches are facing each other. The arrows link each element of Freud's model to the element in Kant's to which it corresponds most closely. Not all the correspondences are perfect, of course, a matter to which we will return. From top to bottom, here is how the two models relate to one another.

Noumena-Unconsciousness: The section labelled 'Noumenal self' has been left blank because Kant taught that we cannot say anything about it. Though Freud's notion of the unconscious was certainly influenced by Kant's doctrine, he never thought it to be either as mysterious or as opaque as Kant held the noumenal to be (Freud 1915b, p. 171). We will return to this topic in Section 6.

Phenomena-Preconscious: Though Kant did not explicitly distinguish representations that one is aware of having (consciousness) from those one is not but could become aware of having (preconsciousness), he knew of the distinction (1781/7, pp. A103, A117fn., B132), and like Freud contrasted both with something vastly larger of which we cannot become aware, namely the noumenal self. While he certainly believed that there is a great deal about psychic structure of which we are and must remain unconscious, he never spoke about whether there are *representations* which are not just pre-conscious but truly unconscious. (Preconscious representations that can be made conscious at will, unconscious ones cannot be).

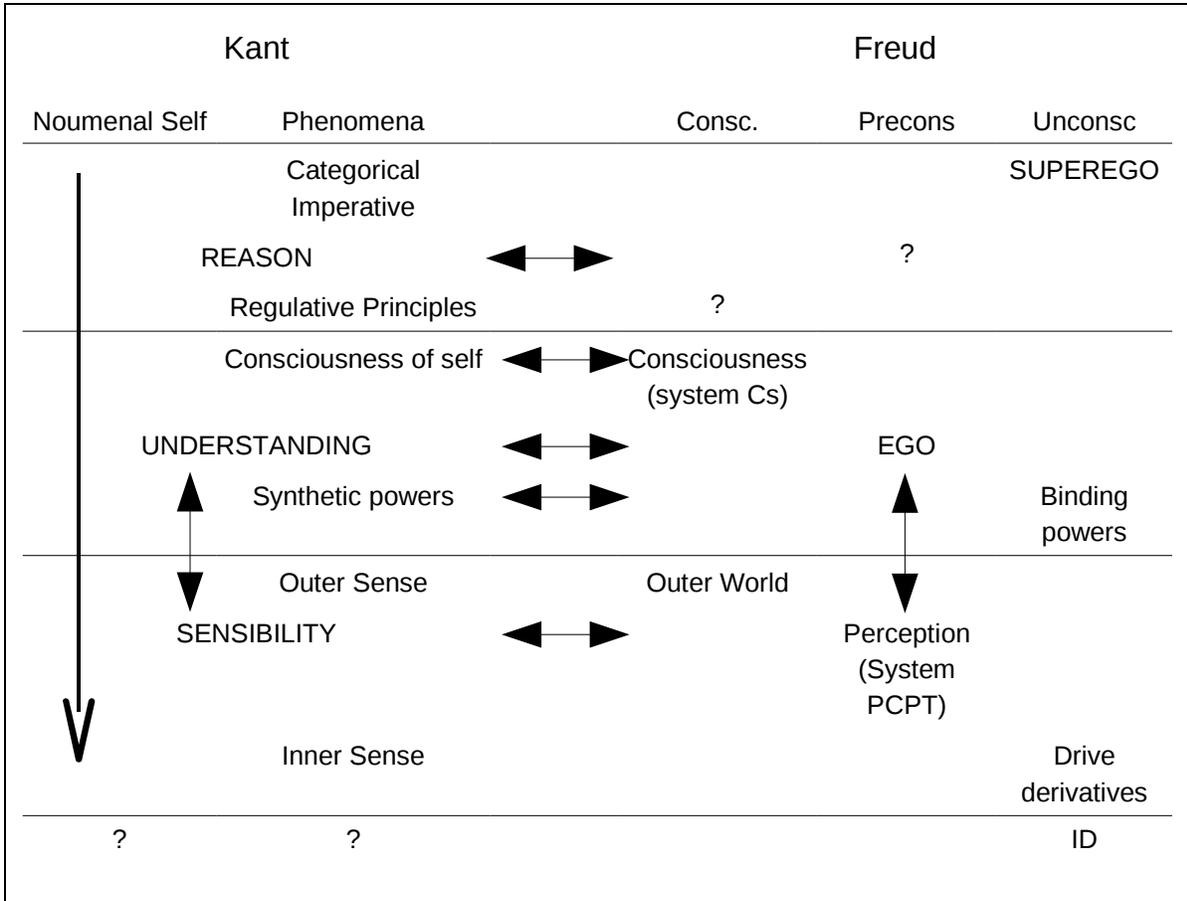


Figure 1: Kant's model face to face with Freud's.

Question marks indicate that the one model contains nothing comparable to something in the other model. The lines connecting Understanding and Sensibility in Kant's model and the Ego and Perception in Freud's indicate that these subsystems are very closely related to one another.

Categorical Imperative-Superego: Freud himself saw his Superego as closely related to Kant's categorical imperative. As he once put it, "Kant's categorical imperative is ... the direct heir of the Oedipus complex." (1924, p. 167, see also 1923, 35, 48). The Superego goes far beyond the categorical imperative, of course. Kant would never have dreamt that there even are such things as parental introjects, let alone that they could have anything to do with the categorical imperative. But it is also less than the categorical imperative. Kant used the notion to attempt to ground a certain ethical theory, namely, the deontological theory that we can deduce what we should do from extremely general first principles such as the categorical imperative. Not only did Freud not follow him in this; Freud paid little attention to the issue of *justifying* moral beliefs in any form.

For Kant, the principles with which Reason deals are necessary or could not be otherwise and therefore are inescapable for any rational being. Freud was also impressed by the inexorability of moral duty. Of course, his account of this inexorability was completely different from Kant's; to say the least, Freud did not think that it was a purely rational matter. Nonetheless, the fact that he mentioned the categorical imperative a number of times shows that he saw a connection.

I have shown the Superego as extending into the Unconscious. This seems to have been Freud's dominant view. Nevertheless there is a problem here, as Freud himself came to recognize. The contents of the Superego are retained and expressed in concepts, word-presentations. But association with word-presentations is Freud's leading way of demarcating the Preconscious from the Unconscious (see Section 4). Thus the contents of the Superego should be Preconscious. When Freud finally got the problem clearly into focus, here is how he resolved it:

large portions of the ego, and particularly of the superego, which cannot be denied the characteristic of preconsciousness, none the less remain unconscious in the phenomenological sense [1938b, p. 162].

By "unconsciousness in the phenomenological sense", Freud must have meant what he also called the 'descriptive' unconsciousness – states that as a matter of fact cannot be brought to consciousness but that lack the usual trappings of the unconscious: timelessness, absence of conceptualisation ('word-representations'), and so on .

Regulative Principles-?: Kant's regulative principles of Reason have to do with a drive to completeness and generality. Freud seems never to have discussed this function of Reason, to provide rules of rational thought. That is what the question-mark is meant to indicate.

Self-Consciousness-Cs: Probably the most complicated aspect of both these models is how consciousness appears in them. For in both of them it appears twice – in Kant as a heading (in the form of Phenomena; phenomenal states are conscious states) and as an aspect of the Understanding, and in Freud's as a heading and as a subsystem of the Ego. This confusing parallel is interesting.

Freud first. As is well-known, he treated consciousness as both a subsystem of the Ego (Cs; the T (omega) system of 1895), and also as a quality that some of the contents of any system can have. Though he was never very clear about the matter, he seems to have held that a representation gains the quality of being conscious by becoming available to the system Cs, the system which is sensitive to this quality.

Consciousness as a quality is in a direct line of descent from Kant's phenomena as conscious states. It contrasts with representations of which one is not aware (Freud's preconsciousness) and of course with noumena or the nonconscious. Since items in any system can have or lack the quality of consciousness for Freud, it and preconsciousness must go at the top as a heading, as with Kant's phenomena.

Cs, the system, is something quite different. Compare Kant's consciousness of self. For Kant, the apperceptive function of the Understanding gives us consciousness of self. Apperception is the application of concepts to intuitions of objects. To get consciousness of self, apperception must make one aware not just of some thing but also of one's being aware of it. Awareness of the thing would be Freud's perception. Awareness of being aware of it would be Freud's consciousness. What Freud called 'consciousness' is really consciousness of self. Since for Freud the system Cs is what perceives perceptions and other psychic states (1915b, p. 171), the system Cs is exactly like the aspect of apperceiving that in Kant makes us aware of ourselves.

Kant and Freud both distinguished representing the inner (one's states) and the outer (the external world), on the one hand, from awareness of having them, on the other. And they made the distinction in a similar way. Kant distinguished between experiences making us aware of objects and being aware of having the experience. For Freud, only awareness of mental states, not simply having mental states, counted as (the quality of) consciousness. All other representations were merely preconscious. Kant used the terms differently; what Freud called perception, he called consciousness and what Freud called consciousness, he called consciousness of self. This difference in terminology should be allowed to mask the deep similarity in underlying picture.

Neither Freud nor Kant ever got clear about what more than simple perception is involved in consciousness of self. Both hinted that attention might be involved. In Freud, (self-) consciousness arises as follows. We have perceptions of the external world and representations of inner states – affects, drive representatives, representations of the soma and of course beliefs, desires and thoughts. When the system Cs, which is distinct from all of them, is 'turned on them', we become conscious of them. Otherwise, they are merely preconscious.

Actually, his picture is a bit more complicated than this. For Freud changed his mind about perception in the early 1900s and as a result left us two views on how it relates to Cs. In his earlier view (1895 and 1900, Ch. VII), the T system or Cs is one system and the M (phi) system or Pcpt. is another. But later he connected the two and called the resulting notion Pcpt.-Cs. (The first occurrence of this new term is probably 1920, p. 24, but the idea and even a possible version of the term occurs in

1917, p. 232.) This however was not so much a change of mind about how perception relates to consciousness as it was a change of mind about what the word ‘perception’ is to mean. In the earlier view, what Freud called perception (the M system), and also representations of the ‘inner’, were prior to consciousness (preconscious) and needed extra processing in the Q (psi) system to take on the quality of consciousness. All this corresponds closely to the outer and inner senses of Kant’s Sensibility. In this earlier view, the T system is a separate system, one related to Kant’s self-consciousness. In some works, Freud also calls this the system Cs. In the later account, ‘perception’ becomes the name not just for preconscious inner representations and access to the outer world. It now includes *awareness of* these representations. It becomes the term for both. In short, Freud came to use the term ‘perception’ for both inner and outer representations and, in the form ‘Pcpt.-Cs.’, for self-consciousness, perception of those representations, too.

Understanding-Ego: We have shown Freud’s Ego as corresponding both to Understanding and to Sensibility in Kant. The reason is that Freud included direct sensible experience, both inner and outer sense, in the Ego while Kant treated them as a separate system, Sensibility, not as part of the Understanding. We have already discussed the perceptual side of Freud’s ego. The cognitive side, what he called the ego-functions, corresponds quite closely to Kant’s Understanding, though Kant’s theory of these functions is fuller than Freud’s. These functions are what allow the ego as system to manage representations. (For Freud, prior to the growth of the ego and such secondary processing, representations are unbound, manifest the primary process.) Freud talked about ego functions a number of times, including in (1923), p. 17 and (1926), p. 196. In computers, these functions would be the programming which allows the hardware to manage the data.

In (1926), p. 196, and other places, Freud describes the ego as “an organization characterized by a very remarkable trend towards unification, towards synthesis”. Synthesis is the central notion in Kant’s account of the Understanding. Freud not only retained Kant’s concept but even his term. Freud’s interest in it was lifelong. As early as 1895, he had noted that acts of judgment bring about a “psychological unity” by synthesizing stimuli into experience of objects (p. 384) and over forty years later this fact still interested him (1938a, p. 276).

Outer Sense-External Perception: Here we will add only one comment to what we have already said – Freud did not ever develop a complete theory of perception, either of the inner or the outer. In 1895, he treated outer perception as a separate system, the system, distinct from both consciousness and the ego. This is what we have reflected in Figure I. Later, the only sort of perception he explicitly distinguished was the sort which involved (self-) consciousness, the system Pcpt.-Cs., though he seems

to have continued to use the term to cover preconscious access to the external world, too, as we have seen. To the extent that he did have a theory of outer and inner perception, it was like Kant's Sensibility.

Inner Sense-Drive Representatives: What we have called 'drive representatives' are representations of drive-derivatives, i.e., desires. Freud also called them psychical representatives of the drives (1915a, p. 122). Together with affects, proprioceptive representations, beliefs, thoughts, etc. (which are not specifically identified in Figure I), they correspond in Kant to inner sense.

?-**Id:** Nothing in Kant's models compares directly to Freud's notion of the Id. We will return to this issue at the end of the paper.

4. Kant and Freud on Concepts and Percepts

Another significant correspondence between Kant and Freud concerns their view of the relationship between perception and description. They viewed the relationship in much the same way. Moreover, Freud used this relationship to define the unconscious. Just about the most famous remark Kant ever made was this:

Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind [1781/7, p. A51=B75].

I want to focus on the second half of this saying, that intuitions (percepts) without concepts are blind. Freud held precisely the same view. He put it this way. A 'thing-presentation' (a percept, a representation of an object or a state of affairs) cannot become conscious unless it is linked to 'word-presentations'. "A presentation which is not put into words . . . remains . . . in the Ucs." (1915b, p. 202). Thus this view of how percepts relate to concepts also defined the unconscious for him. He gave the same account, more plausibly and with arguments, in 1895 (pp. 364ff.). More plausibly because he there made clear something that he did not even mention in 1915, that it is only memories that require words to become conscious. We can be aware of perceptions of the outer, sensations of pain or unpleasure and current bodily movements, it is there quite clear, without putting them into words. (Kant would not have agreed to this exception, but here Freud has the more plausible view.)

In 1915, Freud did not argue for the link he claimed between language and consciousness. Nor is it easy to find an argument for it in Kant, plausible though it is. So the fact that Freud does argue for it in 1895 is noteworthy. His argument is complicated, but worth the effort needed to untangle it.

Freud takes cognizing, coming to understand something we perceive, as the example with which to begin. To cognize, he says, we must pay attention to (hypercathect) the perception in question and then see to which mnemic images its energy (Q) flows. Put less mechanistically, to recognize what qualities we are perceiving, we must compare the perception to our memory of qualities we have encountered before and so can recognize. The process Freud is describing here of coming to recognize by comparing what is seen to memories of what was seen earlier is very much like Kant's Synthesis of Recognition in a Concept (1781/7, pp. A103-6).

Reverting again to Freud's mechanistic jargon, to compare a perception to memory requires that the energy from the perception select (cathect) a mnemic image of a quality. But it must select the right mnemic image, one that is actually similar to the qualities of the perceived object. Just any old image won't do. Thus we have to be able to discriminate one mnemic image from another. This in turn requires that the images themselves be recognizable, that is, trigger conscious states (his qualities; qualia in more modern jargon). But this does not happen automatically; in fact, most memory-traces do not enter consciousness at all. So what is required for a memory-trace to become conscious?

The next couple of moves are important but their importance is matched by their obscurity. For energy from the perception to be directed to the right mnemic image, namely one similar to it, the mnemic image must itself be perceptible, enter consciousness (p. 364). In addition, the information from the image thus perceived must be discharged back to the Ego, to the mechanism of attention which guides the flow of energy from the original perception to the correct memories. So far there is no reason to think that language is required.

Now comes the move that brings language in. The correlation between what is perceived in the memory image and what is discharged about it to attention (the 'indication of quality') must be tight and reliable. Input and output are systematically and tightly related in this way only in language. Only with speech is what we discharge (what we say) correlated in a systematic (Freud says exclusive) way with what we perceive (what we hear). With all other forms of perception, no such correlation exists. So if memories are to help us recognize what we see, we must recall them in the form of descriptions of what is remembered, which "have the closest association with motor speech-images" (1895, p. 365).

Note what this argument actually does and does not claim. It does not claim that language is necessary for all forms of conscious recall of memories. But it does claim that language is necessary for conscious recall in any form which could be used by the secondary process. Perhaps the best way to put the point is this: a memory can only be consciously *managed* if what is remembered can be described. (Freud saw implications in this point for the nature of the processes underlying repression and splitting

(Brook 1992).) But Freud thought he had proven more. Certainly by (1915b) he felt that he had established the stronger claim that memory-traces without associations to words can never enter consciousness at all. To be sure, even this stronger claim is still weaker than Kant's. Freud applied even his stronger claim only to memory, not to perception, unpleasure and bodily/motor sensation. Kant's claim was that *all* 'intuitions without concepts' are 'blind'. Freud's weaker claim is clearly the more plausible of the two. Nonetheless, a line of descent seems very likely.⁸

In fact, the element of disagreement between them may be more apparent than real. For Freud, even if we can *have* such psychic states without having words for them, we cannot *think about* any of them without words (1895, p. 367). That is to say, we cannot focus on them, relate them to other psychic states, identify them as instances of already-familiar experiences and so on. But it is not clear where merely being aware of an experience stops and thinking about it begins. Since it is also not clear that Kant would have denied that one can be merely aware of a psychic state without concepts, it is not clear if he and Freud really disagree.

Freud's argument would probably not stand up to scrutiny. For one thing, it seems to require that even *thinking* of a word discharges a small quotient (a very small quotient (1895, p. 367)) of energy from one psychic system to another. But it is an argument. And that is noteworthy. Few views of Kant's are more plausible or have had more influence than the view that thinking and self-aware experiencing (consciousness in Freud's sense) necessarily involve the use of language. Yet very few arguments for the view exist, in Kant or elsewhere. The fact that Freud actually had an argument for the view is noteworthy.

The idea that consciousness requires language is connected to one further Kantian strain in Freud. Like Kant but unlike most psychologists, Freud put memory front and centre in his theory. He even used Kant's terminology, speaking for example of 'reproductive' thought (1895, p. 319) (Kant: 'reproductive imagination' (1781/7, pp. A100-2)). Freud's theory of the nature of memory richly deserves a proper study in its own right.

5. Is the Structure of the Psyche Innate or Acquired?

⁸ Note that the other half of Kant's saying, that thoughts without content are empty, also anticipated a doctrine of Freud's, this time about schizophrenia. In schizophrenia, Freud held, word-presentations have become detached from thing-presentations, that is, from their referents, their content. Moreover, Freud made this claim in the same passage in which he laid out the doctrine of the unconscious which parallels the other half of Kant's famous remark ((1915b), p. 196-204).

One fundamental difference between the Kant's and Freud's models, a difference not reflected in Figure I, concerns innateness. Kant thought that Reason and the Understanding are innate. They must exist fully developed and ready for action prior to the first experience, since the functions they perform (organizing intuitions and capturing them in concepts) are required to have experience at all and so must preexist all experience. For Kant, indeed, more is innate in Reason than its cognitive functions. Its moral side is innate, too. That the categorical imperative, the foundation of all morality, is morally binding is built into us. Freud by contrast held that the Ego and most everything it could do were acquired from experience, specifically from having to defend against conflicts generated by the drives. Morality, the content of the Superego, was similarly not innate but acquired, by introjections and narcissistic projections. For Freud prior to 1920, the only innate element, beyond a general disposition to keep excitation down (the unpleasure principle), was representations caused by the drives. (There is an ironic contrast here: for Kant, representations caused by the drives were the only psychic element other than perceptions that is *not* innate!) In 1920, Freud added Eros as another innate factor. Nonetheless, Freud's view of what is innate and what is acquired in the mind remained radically different from Kant's. Their views would have led to radically different pictures of child development had Kant ever developed such a picture. (Freud of course did; his theory of child psychosexual development is one of the most famous theories he developed (1905a).)

Related to this, Freud thought of his model as something discovered empirically, not derived *a priori* reasoning about the mind and its necessary conditions. Thus, unlike Kant, he had little interest in claims as to how things have to be. He was happy enough if he could discover how they in fact are. On these issues, Kant retained vestiges of the old rationalism while Freud was already completely a child of the new *Weltanschauung* of biological empiricism with us still today.

6. Freud and Kant's Noumena

Earlier we said that, for Kant, all we can be directly aware of are states of our own mind, what he called phenomena. What about everything else? Indeed, is there anything else? For Kant there is. He called it the '*ding an sich*' or the noumenal. 'Noumenal' just means 'unknowable'. Kant held that we cannot know things as they are, just things as they appear to us. Unknowable '*dingen an sich*' underlie two vital aspects of the mind. The source of our intuitions, intuitions both of inner sense (of our own psyche and soma) and of outer sense (of the external world), are unknowable. And the mind as it is, the thing that works intuitions up into experiences, is also unknowable. We know of the mind only as it appears to us in inner sense, not as it is. Thus, both the source of intuitions and actual nature of the

apparatus that works them up into conscious experiences must remain forever beyond experience (in Freud's terms, unconscious). Though they *produce* experience, they can never themselves *be* experienced. (According to Beck, Herbart held the same view (Beck 1967a, p. 305).) This view of Kant's made a profound impression on Freud.

The noumenal is the source of the contents not only of outer sense but also of inner sense. Inner sense is our awareness of our own psyche and soma. Freud was certainly interested in the idea that outer sense (our experience of the external world) had a noumenal, 'unconscious' source, but he had an interesting attitude to Kant's other idea, that inner sense has a noumenal base, too. Here is what he said:

Just as Kant warned us not to overlook the fact that our perceptions are subjectively conditioned and must not be regarded as identical with what is perceived though unknowable, so psychoanalysis warns us not to equate perceptions by means of consciousness with the unconscious mental processes which are their object. Like the physical, the psychical is not necessarily in reality what it appears to us to be [1915b, p. 171].

In this passage Freud recognizes that his ideas about the limits of the knowability of the external world are derived from Kant (see also 1920, p. 28; 1938b, 150, p. 196; 1938c, p. 300), but says that it is *psychoanalysis* that warns us that perceptions by means of consciousness are not to be "equated with the unconscious mental processes which are their objects. Psychoanalysis? Kant had had this idea, too, over 100 years before Freud formulated it. Here is Kant:

inner sense . . . represents to consciousness even our own selves only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves. . . . I . . . know myself, like other phenomena, only as I appear to myself, not as I am . . . So far as inner intuition is concerned, we know our own subject only as appearance, not as it is in itself [1781/7, pp. B152-6].

Kant is saying here that the sources of inner sense are as opaque to consciousness as are the sources of outer sense. That is to say, he held *exactly the same view* about the unknowability of the sources of the internal world as he held about the external world. This thought is a clear anticipation of Freud's notion of the unconscious. Indeed, Freud's Q and M systems of 1895 are pretty much Kant's noumenal psyche under a different name.

Fortunately, Freud did not accept the draconian restrictions that Kant placed on knowledge of the noumenal: for Freud, "internal objects are [merely] *less* unknowable than the external world" (my emphasis). Kant had urged that both the internal and the external world as they really are totally unknowable. All we can be aware of is how they appear to us.

Kant's views on the nature of things as they are in themselves (the noumena) also had a direct influence on how Freud viewed the nature of the unconscious. For Kant, the noumenal cannot be spatial or temporal, space and time being merely forms imposed by the mind on sensible experience. It is notoriously difficult to make sense of these claims but notice what Freud says about them.

As a result of certain psychoanalytic discoveries, we are today in a position to embark on a discussion of the Kantian theorem that time and space are [merely] 'necessary forms of thought'. We have learnt that unconscious mental processes are in themselves 'timeless'. This means in the first place that they are not ordered temporally, that time does not change them in any way and that the idea of time cannot be applied to them On the other hand, our abstract idea of time seems to be wholly derived from the method of working of the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* and to correspond to a perception on its own part of that method of working I know these remarks must sound very obscure [1920, p. 28].

Curiously, Freud himself did not take the timelessness of the unconscious literally. Freud did not ever deny, for example, that unconscious processes start (in time), can be modified by psychoanalysis (in time), and end with death (in time). By their timelessness he seems to have meant that these processes tend not to change over time, in particular are not modified by maturation, and they can appear out of 'normal' temporal sequence in bizarre ways. However, *Kant* would have taken the timelessness of the unconscious literally. He would have held that any idea of unconscious processes even beginning or ending would be nonsense, that the concept of time quite literally cannot be applied to them.

What Freud says here about time he later said about space. In one of the last pieces he wrote, he said this: "Space may be a projection of the extension of our psychical apparatus. No other derivation is possible." (1938c, p. 300). This is simply Kant's idea that space is imposed on reality by the mind. (Apparently Helmholtz, the founder of the school of medicine in which Freud was trained, also held this view of space (Beck 1967b, p. 469)). In sum, Freud's notion of the unconscious psyche corresponds quite closely to Kant's doctrine that we cannot know the psyche as it really is.

7. The Id

So far we have said nothing about Freud's Id. 'Id' was a term that Freud began using in 1920. Before that, he talked about libido, the unconscious source of what he called our 'drive derivations' – our conscious desires, fears, loves, hates, and so on. There is no anticipation of this notion in Kant. To

find its antecedents, we would have to turn to Schopenhauer. Unfortunately, we cannot do so here (see Young and Brook 1994, where the doctrinal links between Freud and Schopenhauer are examined). If we push the notion of the Id far enough back in Freud, we can eventually find a link to Kant, however. Freud developed the Id from his notion of libido, which in turn he had developed from what he called the endogenous sources of quantity of 1895. This latter notion does have a parallel in Kant. It corresponds to Kant's notion of the noumenal sources of (represented) desire, inclination and affect in inner sense. However, the first full-blown precursors of the notions of libido and the Id occur only with Schopenhauer. Starting from Kant's view of the world and self as noumenal, i.e., unknowable, Schopenhauer developed a largely new notion, his notion of the Will. To simplify, Kant provided the 'representation' part of Schopenhauer's world as will and representation, Schopenhauer the will part. There is even a loose Freudian parallel here: The *Project* of 1895 provided the ego in Freud's model and other works, especially the *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905a), provided the libido or Id.

8. Coda on Freud's Attitude to Philosophy⁹

Given that Freud was well aware of major philosophers who not only knew about unconscious mental life but put it at the centre of their systems, philosophers as major as Kant and Schopenhauer, some of the things he said about philosophy are surpassingly strange. For example,

To most people who have been educated in philosophy the idea of anything psychical which is not also conscious is so inconceivable that it seems to them absurd and refutable simply by logic Their psychology of consciousness is incapable of solving the problems of dreams and hypnosis [1923, p. 13].

This from somebody whose youth was steeped in German romanticism! As Ellenberger notes,

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the philosophical concept of the unconscious, as taught by Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, was extremely popular, and most contemporary philosophers admitted the existence of an unconscious mental life [1970, p. 311].

Freud had to have been aware of this. For example, we know that he read von Hartmann, who had popularized Schopenhauer in his widely read *The Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869) and works of the 1870's (Brandell 1979, 93). Moreover, Brentano, Freud's teacher, discussed von Hartmann at length and on precisely the question of unconscious mental states in his 1874 book, finished at exactly the time Freud was attending his lectures. So what is going on?

⁹ My thanks to Chris Young for his central contribution to this coda.

Perhaps something like the following. One philosopher who did deny even the possibility of unconscious psychic states was the aforementioned Franz Brentano. While a student, Freud attended his lectures for at least two years, and at just the time, as we said, that Brentano was finishing his famous 1874 book in which an equation of the psychological with the conscious is central. Indeed, Brentano was the only philosopher under whom Freud studied. Though Freud referred to him only once in any of his works and even then only to a riddle (1905b) (curious in itself), Brentano may have been Freud's image of the philosopher ever after. Some of what Freud attributes to philosophers in 1923 even echo passages in the 1874 book (see pp. 101-4 for examples). Brentano was not the only nineteenth century philosophers who equated the psychological with the conscious, but he was the only one known to have influenced Freud. If Brentano was Freud's image of philosophy, this might explain how he could overlook the views of philosophers such as Schopenhauer, von Hartmann and Nietzsche, the impact they had had on him in his youth notwithstanding.

To conclude. The burden of our argument has been that the model of the structure and function of the psyche that governed Freud's thought throughout his whole career was through and through Kantian. On the question of what actual historical influence Kant's thought had on Freud, we have offered some tentative suggestions but many questions still remain open.

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