

# The Myth of God

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**A critical dialogue with Sigmund Freud's text 'Totem and Taboo' concentrating on the boundaries, assumptions and blind spots in his work, opening up the issue of Freud's consistently collusional repression of social analysis of his contemporary society.**

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# **THE MYTH OF GOD: AGENDA TABOO**

## **In Dialogue with Sigmund Freud: A Responsive Analysis of "Totem and Taboo"**

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# THE MYTH OF GOD: AGENDA TABOO

## In Dialogue with Sigmund Freud: A Responsive Analysis of "Totem and Taboo"

### INTRODUCTION

The first stirrings of Freud's renewed concern with religion, which culminated in the writing of Totem and Taboo, can be traced back to the last day of 1909. In a letter to Ferenzci he mentioned that the idea had occurred to him concerning the fundamental meaning of religion that:

"Its ultimate basis is the infantile helplessness of mankind". [Jones, Sigmund Freud: Life and Work, Vol.2, p.393]

At this point Freud shows his closest links with the work of Feuerbach who likewise saw religion as stemming from the alienation experienced in conditions of helpless dependency\*. It is interesting to note that in the finished product of Totem and Taboo Freud traces the psycho-genesis of religion not into infantile helplessness but into the fears, aggression and guilt of the adult son confronting and murdering the primal father. The most natural development of the early idea is to pursue the theme of helplessness back to its roots in the early nursing relationship of the neonate, and further back through the birth process into that safe holding environment of the womb-world. Here man, universally at his most helpless, experiences most acutely the reversal of the holding environment from benignly supportive and containing to malignantly crushing, evicting and threatening. These primal roots of religion were to be traced by later writers, but for Freud they were almost immediately cut off and overlaid by the male dominated castration-anxiety and horror of incest of the Oedipal phase.

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\*"H.B. Acton has called attention to some remarkable similarities between Freud's studies of religion and some suggestions - much cruder, it is true - which the philosopher Feuerbach had put forward fifteen years before Freud was born. He writes: 'There is the suggestion that the ravings of insane people and the beliefs of savages may provide clues that help us to understand the workings of more civilized and normal minds; there is the idea of the satisfaction in imagination of essential desires of which the individual is unconscious; there is the association of this process with dreaming; and there is the governing principle that when someone comes to know himself more fully he will be less obsessed with the thoughts of an imaginary world and will be able to deal more adequately with the real one. Feuerbach's observation (Werke VI, 107) that theology is pathology hidden from itself is most significant in the light of later theories.'" [quoted from H.B. Action, The Illusion of the Epoch, 1955, 120-2, Jones, Sigmund Freud: Life and Work, Vol. 3, p.385 f.]

Diversion from the study of infantile helplessness into Totemism and the father complex appears to have occurred in relationship to the work of C.G. Jung, though not for altogether rational reasons. Jung was concentrating on the classical and comparative religious fields, which lay at the roots of Western civilisation and which handled both male and female archetypes in various forms and combinations. Freud turned his attention to the unfamiliar field of the Australian aborigines, guided by the associational path between the customs of this primitive culture and the analysis of certain obsessive phobias in his own clinical practice. These latter had led him to link the significance of totemic ritual and displaced father complex. There is now considerable evidence to indicate that this choice of material was governed largely by Freud's own unresolved, unconscious fears of castration and murderous rage, displaced first onto his own father and subsequently into a series of substitute figures and symbols.

In his preface, the author describes the purpose of the four essays, originally published in 1912 and 1913, as his first attempt "at applying the point of view and the findings of psychoanalysis to some unsolved problems of social psychology". Other works with the same purpose were to follow, but Totem and Taboo raised the agenda and laid the foundation of Freud's exposition. He brought together insights from the twin nascent disciplines of anthropology and psychoanalysis in an attempt to dissect the roots of the great cultural institutions of the West: religion, monarchy and the penal system.

Freud distinguished his approach from two other schools, represented by the work of Wilhelm Wundt and Carl Jung. He interpreted Wundt's work as an attempt to apply "the hypotheses and working methods of non-analytic psychology" to the same agenda. On the other hand he saw the Zurich school of analytic psychology as endeavouring "to solve the problems of individual psychology with the help of material derived from social psychology". Wundt attempted to solve the right problem with the wrong tools, while Jung reversed cause and effect and treated social archetypes as normative, uncaused causes of individual material. Jung, like Marx, worked with a religious construct. Both re-introjected to individual dynamic that unconscious material previously projected and symbolised in the social map.

The difficulties in communication experienced by the author are still with us. He commented correctly that the material would not be understood and appreciated unless readers had a certain amount of psychoanalytic insight. Conversely, those engaged in the field of individual psychoanalysis rarely had access to the social data which provided the matrix for the macro analytic synthesis of social phenomena. The communications gap between sociology and analytic social psychology, represents the current form of this particular problem.

In a sense Freud perceived the social analysis of totemism as an academic exercise. He argued that although taboos were common experience in Western society, totemism belonged more to the realm of social archaeology.

"Totemism ... is something alien to our contemporary feelings - a religio-social institution which has been long abandoned as an actuality and replaced by newer forms. It has left only the slightest traces behind it in the religions, manners and customs of the civilized peoples of to-day and has been subject to far-reaching modifications even among the races over which it still holds sway. The social and

technical advances in human history have affected taboos far less than the totem." (Totem and Taboo, , Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics by Sigmund Freud, Authorized Translation by James Strachey, pub. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 195t), reprinted in 1961, Preface p.x)

That preface was penned in September 1913, while Freud was in Rome. It was during this period that he became obsessed with Michelangelo's statue of Moses, spending hours each day gazing at it, meditating on its meaning, wrestling and struggling with its riddle, the mystery and management of aggression. Out of this creative encounter was to emerge, his great paper 'The Moses of Michelangelo', finished on New Year's Day 1914. Freud, the Jew, was face-to-face with the father-figure of his father's religion. He was also facing one of the most serious conflicts of his life. Totem and Taboo marked the fundamental cleavage in methodology between Freud and Jung. It was largely a responsive work, a Freudian echo to the Jungian agenda, but it was a thunderous echo. Jung; was still at that time President of the International Psycho-Analytic Association, yet Freud, who saw himself as the "father of Psycho-Analysis" perceived Jung's procedures as an inversion of psycho-analytic method. The approaches were antithetical, yet still Freud hung back from open denunciation. Was Jung the primal father of the Viennese horde? Had this foreigner from the Zurich lake-side been elevated to the post of king, only to be toppled and his place taken by one of the sons? Freud's denial of the place of totemism in modern society rings hollow. Totemic cults abound. He was himself destined to become a totem of the Freudian clan, just as Jung was totem within his tribe. More deeply still, was not Moses a totem? And Christ? And Mohammed? Is not society riddled with totemic divisions and totem figures, and was not Freud's blindness to this social phenomenon a measure of his own intra-psychoanalytic conflict, repressed into unconsciousness behind the circumcised defences of his castration complex?

It seems probable that the analysis of the totemic customs of distant aborigines stands as a mirror, a displacement to the antipodes of the totemic conflicts present in the here and now of the psychoanalytic maelstrom just prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Reality was too terrifying to penetrate with analytic eyes. It was safer not to see.

This paper treats the content of Totem and Taboo as the raw material of social analysis presented by dissociation and displacement and focused around symbols which, while carrying the dynamics of the social context of its time, nevertheless defended them from insight and interpretation. It follows the methodology of Sigmund Freud, but applies it analytically to Freud's own presented material. As the boundaries and defences of Freud's position yield to the analysis, so a greater clarity of intrapersonal mapping is achieved and this in turn has implications for our understanding of the unconscious elements in social process, so following Freud's agenda into realms where Freud himself could not then tread.

# I: THE HORROR OF INCEST

There was a tendency at the turn of the century to regard "savage" or undeveloped tribes as social fossils, representing in their contemporary customs behaviour which lay buried deep in the past of Western civilisation. Freud's hypothesis was that such behaviour emerges through the cracks in the veneer of civilisation and presents itself in the behaviour of neurotics. He therefore postulated that neurotic behaviour within the civilised West and norm behaviour in uncivilised tribes would be comparable phenomena.

This kind of imperial paternalism has since been shattered by the occurrence and effects of two world wars. Modern anthropology tends to view every group as a contemporary form of civilisation with differing cultures, differing technologies, differing histories, and differing environmental conditions. One result of this change is the lessening of interest in the parallels between neurotic behaviour in one culture and norm behaviour in another. There has been a withdrawal from psychoanalytic interpretation of social customs. It would appear however that this represents a natural extension of those very defences experienced by Freud himself. It is comparatively safe to interpret norm customs of a different culture as neurotic manifestations, but the existential interpretation of one's own cultural norms as manifestations of common social neurosis exposes the analyst in his social setting to that rejection and institutional retaliation by which society represses material of which it is communally unconscious. Here lies the fundamental core of Freud's displacement. There are indicators that his underlying agenda was to do with the interpretation of group, institutional, social, religious and political phenomena in contemporary European society, but it was not an agenda which he felt able to name for reasons personal, institutional and social. Associational links were broken, natural points of application remain repressed. In short the social defences against anxiety were mirrored into Freud's analytic construct and preserved.

It is in this light then that we examine Freud's analysis of totemism and taboo in primitive society, perceiving it as a parable or mirror of his own world. Of particular interest are the boundaries, or frontiers, of Freud's analysis which provide pointers for the as yet unhandled agenda, the still unanalysed depths of personal, institutional and social unconscious process.

To be fair to him, Freud was himself aware of some of the difficulties in using 'primitive' tribes as sources of information about prehistoric civilisation.

"... it must not be forgotten that even the most primitive and conservative races are in some sense ancient races and have a long past history behind them during which their original conditions of life have been subject to much development and distortion. So it comes about that in those races in which totemism exists to-day, we may find it in various stages of decay and disintegration or in the process of transition to other social and religious institutions, or again in a stationary condition which may differ greatly from the original one. The difficulty in this last case is to decide whether we should regard the present state of things as a true picture of the significant features of the past or as a secondary distortion of them." [op. cit. p.4, footnote]

Freud's description of totemic customs was largely based on the four volume work of J.G. Frazer (Totemism and Exogamy, 1910), supported by a wide selection of other writers in the field. His purpose in using atavistic material was to show that those racial archetypes of the

common unconscious used by C.G. Jung to interpret and stabilise neurotic and psychotic conditions in his patients were themselves the symbolised and reified projections of hysteric, obsessive and paranoid material emanating from the intrapersonal unconscious within the context of common historic happening. They handled by displacement therefore the common neurotic defences of the group, tribe, clan, society or civilisation concerned.

Freud sought to derive a definition of totem from this background material.

"It is as a rule an animal (whether edible and harmless or dangerous and feared) and more rarely a plant or a natural phenomenon (such as rain or water), which stands in a peculiar relation to the whole clan. In the first place, the totem is the common ancestor of the clan; at the same time it is their guardian spirit and helper, which sends them oracles and, if dangerous to others, recognizes and spares its own children. Conversely, the clansmen are under a sacred obligation (subject to automatic sanctions) not to kill or destroy their totem and to avoid eating its flesh (or deriving benefit from it in other ways). The totemic character is inherent, not in some individual animal or entity, but in all the individuals of a given class. From time to time festivals are celebrated at which the clansmen represent or imitate the motions and attributes of their totem in ceremonial dances." [op. cit. p.2]

He described the Australian aborigine's relation to his totem as "the basis of all his social obligations: it over-rides on the one hand his tribal membership and on the other hand his blood relationships". But it is the social norms or regulations relating to members of the same totemic group which Freud saw as the most significant aspects of the phenomenon.

"In almost every place where we find totems we also find a law against persons of the same totem having sexual relations with one another and consequently against their marrying. This then, is 'exogamy', an institution related to totemism." [op. cit. p.4]

The totem is the symbol used to define and impose the boundaries of permitted sexual relationships. Transgression of totemic customs carries severe penalties, but these appear to serve the purpose of preserving the totemic custom and are comparatively light when contrasted with the severity of punishment for violation of the fundamental totemic boundaries of remitted sexual intercourse.

"The violation of the prohibition is not left to what might be called the 'automatic' punishment of the guilty parties, as in the case of other totem prohibitions, such as that against killing the totem animal. It is avenged in the most energetic fashion by the whole clan, as though it were a question of averting some danger that threatened the whole community or some guilt that was pressing upon it." [op. cit. p.4]

Here then is the origin of 'taboo', the prohibitory regulations associated with the totem or symbol used to define the boundaries of the prohibition. After supporting his descriptions with case material drawn from anthropologists, Freud proceeds to analyse the purpose or function of totem and taboo within their social context.

"Since totems are hereditary and not changed by marriage, it is easy to follow the consequences of the prohibition. Where, for instance, descent is through the female line, if a man of the Kangaroo totem marries a woman of the Emu totem, all the

children, both boys and girls, belong to the Emu clan. The totem regulation will therefore make it impossible for a son of this marriage to have incestuous intercourse with his mother or sisters, who are Emus like himself. [op. cit. p.5]

"On the other hand, at all events so far as this prohibition is concerned, the father, who is a Kangaroo, is free to commit incest with his daughters, who are Emus. If the totem descended through the male line, however, the Kangaroo father would be prohibited from incest with his daughters (since all his children would be Kangaroos), whereas the son would be free to commit incest with his mother. These implications of totem prohibitions suggest that descent through the female line is older than that through the male, since there are grounds for thinking that totem prohibitions were principally directed against the incestuous desires of the son." [op. cit. p.5, footnote 1]

Freud concludes that the effective function of totem and taboo is the suppression of incestuous activity within the tribal group. The symbols and prohibitions are not consciously associated with incestuous wishes, but are reified displacements of defences designed as social buttresses of intrapersonal defences, themselves serving to repress unconscious incestuous drives. Similar defensive repression of incestuous desire is firmly in place in 'non-neurotic' civilised society. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that mention of the material meets with social disbelief and ridicule. The function of such a reaction is to preserve the social defences intact and so to prevent the repressed unconscious material from irrupting into social consciousness.

"... the importance of incest in neurosis is naturally received with universal scepticism by adults and normal people. Similar expressions of disbelief, for instance, inevitably greet the writings of Otto Rank [e.g. 1907 and 1912], which have brought more and more evidence to show the extent to which interest of creative writers centres round the theme of incest and how the same theme, in countless variations and distortions, provides the subject-matter of poetry. We are driven to believe that this rejection is principally a product of the distaste which human beings feel for their early incestuous wishes, now over-taken by repression." [op. cit. p.17]

Here Freud begins to encounter the boundaries of his own displacement and indicates that he is very much aware of holding up a mirror to his contemporary society and yet for reasons as yet not fully exposed he dare not be too explicit.

"It may begin to dawn on us that the taboos of the savage Polynesians are after all not so remote from us as we were inclined to think at first, that the moral and conventional prohibitions by which we ourselves are governed may have some essential relationship with these primitive taboos and that an explanation of taboo might throw a light upon the obscure origin of our own 'categorical imperative'." [op. cit. p.22]

Freud's unwritten agenda becomes clearer. If the origin and roots of totem and taboo in primitive cultures can be demonstrated to be neurotic, then, by inference, those social constructs which perform a similar function in contemporary Western civilisation may be presumed to have similar neurotic roots. It was tragically an agenda to which Freud could only point in part, never really grapple in person. The experienced social constraints were too intense and his own intrapersonal defences and collusional motives so deeply bound up



with the roots of Western religion and civilisation that his analytic objectivity was itself both clouded and castrated.

## II: TABOO AND EMOTIONAL AMBIVALENCE

Freud devotes the next few pages to an exposition of Wilhelm Wundt's attempt to trace the roots of taboo prohibitions among Australian aborigines [Myths and Religion, 1906,; Teil II (Volkerpsychologie, Band II), Leipzig]. Wundt asserts that taboos "have their origin in the source of the most primitive and at the same time most lasting of human instincts - in fear of 'demonic powers'". All taboo prohibitions then are reduced to nothing more than injunction 'beware of the wrath of the demons'. As society developed, so Wundt alleges, the overt demonic connections were severed, leaving taboo customs in place. But as Freud points out the analyst cannot regard demons as the cause of the taboo, since demons themselves are constructs or projections of the human mind. They are caused effects which serve some defensive purpose. Wundt has simply replaced one level of problem by an unanalysable uncaused cause. This is essentially a religious compensation for ignorance rather than a scientific procedure. Freud comments, "Neither fear nor demons can be regarded by psychology as 'earliest' things, impervious to any attempt at discovering their antecedents". So Freud turns disappointed from Wundt's analysis and has to seek the causal origin of the phenomena of totem and taboo elsewhere.

His own approach is beautifully summarised in the words:

"Anyone approaching the problem of taboo from the angle of psychoanalysis, that is to say, of the investigation of the unconscious portion of the individual mind, will recognize, after a moment's reflection, that these phenomena are far from unfamiliar to him. He has come across people who have created for themselves individual taboo prohibitions of this very kind and who obey them just as strictly as savages obey the communal taboos of their tribe or society. If he were not already accustomed to describing such people as 'obsessional' patients, he would find 'taboo sickness' a most appropriate name for their condition. Having learnt so much, however, about this obsessional sickness from psycho-analytic examination - its clinical aetiology and the essence of its psychical mechanism - he can scarcely refrain from applying the knowledge he has thus acquired to the parallel sociological phenomenon." [op. cit. p.26]

Freud is, however, acutely aware that the occurrence of parallel phenomena does not necessarily imply common causal dynamic. He therefore seeks to probe below the surface of the two behaviours to see whether or not the similarities break down at depth.

"The most obvious and striking point of agreement between the obsessional prohibitions of neurotics and taboos is that these prohibitions are equally lacking in motive and equally puzzling in their origin. Having made their appearance at some unspecified moment, they are forcibly maintained by an irresistible fear. No external threat of punishment is required, for there is an internal certainty, a moral conviction, that any violation will lead to intolerable disaster." [op. cit. p.26]

The second similarity he draws out concerns the tendency of both taboo and obsessional prohibitions to accrete secondary prohibitions around them. The obsessional energy is displaced from one prohibition to another, since the actual conscious foci of prohibition are not causal, but simply carriers of the unconscious energy vested in them. The point is

supported by evidence from customs in the life of the Maoris and from clinical analysis of Freud's own patients. He summarises the four main points of agreement:

"(1) the fact that the prohibitions lack any assignable motive; (2) the fact that they are maintained by an internal necessity; (3) the fact that they are easily displaceable and that there is a risk of infection from the prohibited object; and (4) the fact that they give rise to injunctions for the performance of ceremonial acts." [op. cit. p.28]

## **a) AMBIVALENCE**

There follows a careful exposition of the origin of obsessional prohibitions in neurotic illness, demonstrating that the behaviour stems from fundamental ambivalence, i.e. both deep seated fear and desire directed to the same object, person, or action. One side of the ambivalence has been repressed, so that the neurotic is deeply unconscious of the desire, but the unconscious repression is maintained by acting out its equivalent fear, expressed in obsessional prohibition. Freud summarises the findings of analytical study of obsessional acts,

"We found that they showed every sign of being derived from ambivalent impulses, either corresponding simultaneously to both a wish and a counter-wish or operating predominantly on behalf of one of the two opposing trends. If, now, we could succeed in demonstrating that ambivalence, that is, the ascendancy of opposing trends, is also to be found in the observances of taboo, or if we could point to some of them which, like obsessional acts, give simultaneous expression to both currents, we should have established the psychological agreement between taboo and obsessional neurosis in what is perhaps their most important feature." [op. cit. p.35 f.]

It should be noted that Freud does not claim that if he could find coincidence of ambivalence in both taboo and obsessional neurosis he would have substantiated the hypothesis of common causality. But he does claim that such a finding would indicate very close parallelism between the two phenomena in their most deep and fundamental characteristics, so heightening the probability of parallel causality. It is with this agenda that he then proceeds to examine the material of primitive customs of totem and taboo and succeeds in piling up evidence of ambivalence from source after source.

The totem is not only the protector to be worshipped but also the potential persecutor to be appeased. Conversely, if in inter-tribal fighting the totem is victorious and enemies are slain, ambivalence then arises in guilt and consequent appeasement rites seeking the forgiveness of the dead warriors. People who while living have been enemies, after death are transmuted into guardians. If expiatory rites have to be carried out for infringement of taboo restrictions, conversely purificatory rites are also appropriate for the carrying out of the totem's injunctions. Freud concludes from his study that the apparent contradictory nature of the rites and ceremonials are transformed from unresolvable paradox into understandable unity only if the whole construct of totem and taboo and its associated rituals is seen as emanating from the underlying emotional ambivalence.

## b) MONARCHY

There would appear to be an easy interchange between the position taken by the totem in some aborigine tribes and that of the king or chief in other contexts. In the light of this, Freud next examines monarchy for the traces of similar ambivalence. He quotes Frazer's comment that "a ruler must not only be guarded, he must also be guarded against" [op. cit. p.41]. So the monarch is the most powerful, yet is guarded as if the most impotent and vulnerable. Conversely, the monarch is beneficent and yet to be feared as if persecutory. His touch may bring healing to the sick or death to the unwary. The prohibitions, rituals and constraints concerning both the conduct of the monarch and also the regulation of contact with the monarch multiply to quite extraordinary depths in some cultures, but at each point paradox re-emerges, betraying the underlying ambivalence of the position. The ruler becomes the focus or symbol of projection of unconscious material, much as the totem did in other contexts. Not least he is the focus of paranoid delusional projection.

"Another side of the attitude of primitive peoples towards their rulers recalls a procedure which is common in neuroses generally but comes into the open in what are known as delusions of persecution. The importance of one particular person is immensely exaggerated and his absolute power is magnified to the most improbable degree, in order that it may be easier to make him responsible for everything disagreeable that the patient may experience. Savages are really behaving in just the same way with their kings when they ascribe to them power over rain and sunshine, wind and weather, and then depose them or kill them because Nature disappoints their hopes of a successful hunt or a rich harvest. The model upon which paranoiacs base their delusions of persecution is the relation of a child to his father. A son's picture of his father is habitually clothed with excessive powers of this kind, and it is found that distrust of the father is intimately linked with admiration for him. When a paranoiac turns the figure of one of his associates into a 'persecutor', he is raising him to the rank of a father: he is putting him into a position in which he can blame him for all his misfortunes. Thus this second analogy between savages and neurotics gives us a glimpse of the truth that much of a savage's attitude to his ruler is derived from a child's infantile attitude to his father." [op. cit. p.50]

It is however, to the ceremonials associated with taboos that Freud looked for his most deeply confirmatory evidence of the presence of ambivalence.

"But the strongest support for our effort to equate taboo prohibitions with neurotic symptoms is to be found in the taboo ceremonials themselves, the effect of which upon the position of royalty has already been discussed. These ceremonials unmistakably reveal their double meaning and their derivation from ambivalent impulses, as soon as we are ready to allow that the results which they bring about were intended from the first. The taboo does not only pick out the king and exalt him above all common mortals, it also makes his existence a torment and an intolerable burden and reduces him to a bondage far worse than that of his subjects. Here, then, we have an exact counterpart of the obsessional act in the neurosis, in which the suppressed impulse and the impulse that suppresses it find simultaneous and common satisfaction. The obsessional act is ostensibly a protection against the prohibited act; but actually, in our view, it is a repetition of it. The 'ostensibly' applies to the conscious part of the mind, and the 'actually' to the unconscious part. In exactly the

same way, the ceremonial taboo of kings is ostensibly the highest honour and protection of them, while actually it is a punishment for their exaltation, a revenge taken on them by their subjects." [op. cit. p.50 f.]

It is comparatively easy to name the dynamics of projection, paranoia and scapegoating with respect to the procedures of primitive tribes. It is another thing to draw attention to the unconscious dynamics which empower the priests and kings, presidents and prime ministers of the more 'advanced' Western industrial nations. It would, however, seem clear that the same fundamental processes underlie social behaviour whatever the context.

The larger the social group involved in the common projectional mechanisms, the more intense the process involved. When the monarchs are replaced by the gods and the gods reduced to one, the ambivalence shows itself in the desire to crucify or exalt, to attribute omnipotence or the impotence of a gurgling neonate and to ascribe to the deity both infinite love and everlasting wrath. Such conclusions may well have been in Freud's mind, though in practice his writing is inhibited precisely at this point.

"The question of why the emotional attitude towards rulers includes such a powerful unconscious element of hostility raises a very interesting problem, but one that lies outside the limits of the present study. I have already hinted at the fact that the child's complex of emotions towards his father - the father-complex - has a bearing on the subject, and I may add that more information on the early history of the kingship would throw a decisive light on it. Frazer (1911a) has put forward impressive reasons, though, as he himself admits, not wholly conclusive ones, for supposing that the earliest kings were foreigners who, after a brief reign, were sacrificed with solemn festivities as representatives of the deity. It is possible that the course taken by the evolution of kings may also have had an influence upon the myths of Christendom." [op. cit. p.51]

Freud's failure to make the associational links of application to the experience of monarchy, political leadership and religion within his own culture is marked at this point. He speaks of his self-imposed "limits of the present study" and yet those very limits serve the purpose of preserving contemporary social constructs from analysis and interpretation. For a variety of reasons Freud was not prepared to expose himself to the social wrath which would have followed an analytic exposition of the unconscious dynamics which energise the social institutions of his day. Such an agenda would have exposed the norms of society as fundamentally neurotic in essence. Throughout Freud's work, neurosis is given only the attenuated meaning of deviation from the norm engendered by unconscious material. Norm behaviour engendered by common unconscious process is precisely not "neurotic" only because it is common and in that common defence lies the silencing of Freud's social analysis.

### **c) DEATH**

Some of the most powerful taboo rituals are associated with the dead. There are widespread prohibitions of touching the dead body, which give evidence of the unconscious desire to do precisely that. The friend in life, once dead, may be transmuted into an enemy. The impulse to care for the beloved changes into the irrational desire to mutilate the corpse. Conversely,

the feared enemy in life becomes in death the great protector, to be worshipped, cared for, or even mummified.

Taboos are also associated with the mourners, both in terms of what they themselves may or may not do, and also of what kinds of relationships other people may or may not have with them. But at every point the rituals give evidence of underlying ambivalence. The taboos associated with the dead person are also subject to displacement, shifting not only to those persons most closely related to the deceased, but also to objects of clothing, possessions, places of habitation, the name of the person and other associated items, each, or any of which may stand in for the corpse and generate the same constellation of taboo prohibitions and ceremonial practice.

Freud asserts that it is the ambivalence of the relationship with the living that gives rise to the taboo construct associated with the dead. Thus in so far as a conscious relationship with a living person carries certain connotations and represses others, on the death of that person it is the unconscious material which irrupts requiring the controls and management provided by the taboo rituals.

#### **d) PROJECTION**

The primitive defences against anxiety later elaborated by Melanie Klein are brilliantly outlined in a passage in which Freud compares mourning reactions of obsessional patients with the taboos, rituals and ceremonials of the primitive tribe.

"Let us suppose that the emotional life of primitive peoples is characterized by an amount of ambivalence as great as that which we are led by the findings of psychoanalysis to attribute to obsessional patients. It then becomes easy to understand how after a painful bereavement savages should be obliged to produce a reaction against the hostility latent in their unconscious similar to that expressed as obsessive self-reproach in the case of neurotics. But this hostility, distressingly felt in the unconscious as satisfaction over the death, is differently dealt with among primitive peoples. The defence against it takes the form of displacing it on to the object of hostility, on to the dead themselves. This defensive procedure, which is a common one both in normal and in pathological mental life, is known as a 'projection'. The survivor thus denies that he has ever harboured any hostile feelings against the dead loved one; the soul of the dead harbours them instead and seeks to put them into action during the whole period of mourning. In spite of the successful defence which the survivor achieves by means of projection, his emotional reaction shows the characteristics of punishment and remorse for he is the subject of fears and submits to renunciations and restrictions, though these are in part disguised as measures of protection against the hostile demon. Once again, therefore, we find that the taboo has grown up on the basis of an ambivalent emotional attitude. The taboo upon the dead arises, like the others, from the contrast between conscious pain and the unconscious satisfaction over the death that has occurred." [op. cit. p.61]

In relationship with the living, internal repressive defences are in place. On the termination of that living relationship, these defences crack and the person or group is in danger of being overwhelmed by the unconscious material. In consequence the unconscious content is

projected into the dead, his ghost, his belongings, his relations, etc. and the protective rituals designed to preserve the living from the persecution of the dead mirror, post-mortem, the repressive defences previously existing intrapersonally.

Understanding of the process of projection by which repressed unconscious material is externalised and managed at a distance is fundamental for both individual and social psychology.

"The projection of unconscious hostility on to demons in the case of the taboo upon the dead is only a single instance of a number of processes to which the greatest influence must be attributed in the shaping of the primitive mind. In the case we have been dealing with, projection served the purpose of dealing with an emotional conflict; and it is employed in the same way in a large number of psychical situations that lead to neuroses. But projection was not created for the purpose of defence; it also occurs where there is no conflict. The projection outwards of internal perceptions is a primitive mechanism, to which, for instance, our sense perceptions are subject, and which therefore normally plays a very large part in determining the form taken by our external world. Under conditions whose nature has not yet been sufficiently established, internal perceptions of emotional and intellectual processes can be projected outwards in the same way as sense perceptions; they are thus employed for building up the external world, though they should by rights remain part of the internal world. This may have some genetic connection with the fact that the function of attention was originally directed not towards the internal world but towards the stimuli that stream in from the external world, and that that function's only information upon endo-psychic processes was received from feelings of pleasure and displeasure. It was not until a language of abstract thought had been developed, that is to say, not until the sensory residues of verbal presentations had been linked to the internal processes, that the latter themselves gradually became capable of being perceived. Before that, owing to the projection outwards of internal perceptions, primitive men arrived at a picture of the external world which we, with our intensified conscious perception, have now to translate back into psychology." [op. cit. p.64]

Careful study of that passage reveals a paradoxical break in Freud's argument. Initially he describes "the projection outwards of internal perceptions" as a primitive mechanism which nevertheless plays a very large part in shaping perception of the external world. He ascribes the word "normally" to this process. By the end of the paragraph, however, he has delimited the mechanism of projection of internal perceptions to the realm of primitive men, with the implication that Western civilisation with its 'intensified conscious perception', is much more sophisticated and is therefore quite immune from this process (particularly in respect to intellectual perception). Denial is the worst form of defence. The individual or society that presumes it is completely free from projectional distortion of reality is subject to delusions of objectivity. Centuries of scientific 'reality-testing' may have made considerable inroads into the distortion of environmental signal, generated by re-introjection of previously projected internal material, but distortions nevertheless remain firmly embedded in Western political, religious, scientific and cultural perceptions. Once again we find Freud colluding with the repression of analytic examination of the unconscious social processes within his own immediate context.

His blind spot becomes clearer two pages later when he asserts that it is,

"... obvious that there has been an extraordinary diminution in ambivalence. It is now quite easy to keep down the unconscious hostility to the dead (though its existence can still be traced) without any particular expenditure of psychical energy. Where, in earlier times, satisfied hatred and pained affection fought each other, we now find that a kind of scar has been formed in the shape of piety ... It is only neurotics whose mourning for the loss of those dear to them is still troubled by obsessive self-reproaches." [op. cit. p.66]

Perhaps it is only neurotics who present themselves to analysts seeking assistance in handling their mourning reactions. The ambivalence of which Freud speaks is, however, repetitively presented to the priest. The unconscious material shows itself in the rigid defences of the funeral rituals, the obsessive ceremonials of the undertakers' profession, and the host of legal restrictions associated with the effects of the deceased's estate. Denial of ambivalence in Western society at this point is a fundamental blockage to the analytic examination of the unconscious processes of contemporary institutions.

## e) CONSCIENCE

Freud traces the origin of conscience and of its reification into social conscience in the penal system to the same origins as those of the more primitive taboo.

"Conscience is the internal perception of the rejection of a particular wish operating within us. The stress, however, is upon the fact that this rejection has no need to appeal to anything else for support, that it is quite 'certain of itself'. This is even clearer in the case of consciousness of guilt - the perception of the internal condemnation of an act by which we have carried out a particular wish....

"Thus it seems probable that conscience too arose, on a basis of emotional ambivalence, from quite specific human relations to which this ambivalence was attached; and that it arose under the conditions which we have shown to apply in the case of taboo and of obsessional neurosis - namely, that one of the opposing feelings involved shall be unconscious and kept under repression by the compulsive domination of the other one." [op. cit. p.68]

Freud notes intensification of conscience together with associated guilt and anxiety in neurotic, particularly obsessional patients. He traces the anxiety to an intense unconscious dread of the consequences of carrying out a particular action, the desire to carry out which may also be intense and unconscious. Conscience and its associated guilt represent the conscious tip of the iceberg of this unconscious agenda. The presence of a taboo conscience is therefore evidence of the unconscious drive or desire to transgress the prohibition. (It must be remembered that the prohibition may well be attached to a displaced object, person or action, carrying with it the unconscious energy originally associated with something quite different). Since the underlying positive drives are completely repressed and unconscious, it is hardly surprising that such an interpretation meets with strong denial.

"... there is no need to prohibit something that no one desires to do, and a thing that is forbidden with the greatest emphasis must be a thing that is desired. If we were to



apply this plausible thesis to our primitive peoples, we should be led to the conclusion that some of their strongest temptations were to kill their kings and priests, to commit incest, to maltreat the dead, and so on - which seems scarcely probable. And we should be met with the most positive contradiction if we were to apply the same thesis to instances in which we ourselves seem most clearly to hear the voice of conscience. We should maintain with the most absolute certainty that we feel not the slightest temptation to violate any of these prohibitions - the commandment to 'do no murder', for instance - and that we feel nothing but horror at the notion of violating them." [op. cit. p.69]

Freud argues cogently both from the social function of conscience and taboos, as well as from the psychoanalysis of both normal and neurotic people that,

"... we ourselves are subject, more strongly and more often than we suspect, to a temptation to kill someone and that that temptation produces psychical effects even though it remains out of sight of our consciousness. Suppose, again, that we were to recognize the compulsive observances of certain neurotics as being guarantees against an intensified impulse to murder or as being self-punishments on account of it. In that case we should have to attach still greater importance to our thesis that where there is a prohibition there must be an underlying desire. We should have to suppose that the desire to murder is actually present in the unconscious and that neither taboos nor moral prohibitions are psychologically superfluous but that on the contrary they are explained and justified by the existence of an ambivalent attitude towards the impulse to murder." [op. cit. p.70]

One of the implications of Freud's understanding of taboos as indicators of their unconscious antitheses is that we can utilise the great law codes of the ancient and modern civilisations as evidence of the common unconscious aggressive drives. Supremely, of course, we can take the two great commandments of the New Testament, to love God with all one's heart and soul and mind, and to love one's neighbour as one's self as indicating that the most fundamental drives seething in the unconscious of mankind are the motive to annihilate, in retaliatory rage, the almighty ground of being, followed by the desire to destroy both self and peers. Christianity, as a construct, institutionalises the fundamental splitting off and denial of these aggressive impulses, dealing with them by displacement and projection. So it is that a society whose conscious construct is ordered by the commands to love (i.e. the taboos on harming the Godhead, the self and the peer group) unconsciously acts out the antithesis in cathartic reversals of the command. It is the repressed material that dominates the dynamic.

In the light of this it would seem that the maintenance and intensification of the Christian construct is one of the key factors in sustaining and intensifying human aggression. The realities of Christian civilisation reveal a wanton destruction of the environment, (the ground of being), a nihilistic self-destruction of society and individuals and a psychotic intensification of mutual paranoia reflected into the arms race, draining resources from human development and facing mankind with the potential for racial suicide. Awareness of such dynamics is, of course, fundamentally resisted by those most deeply embedded in the collusional systems of religious structures. It is, however, beginning to surface among such writers as Ashley Montague:

"We talk a great deal about love in the Western world but we do very little about it. We treat the golden rule as if it were the exception rather than the rule. We pretend to a creed in which most of us do not believe, reserving its ritual celebration for those occasions when collectively we ostentatiously burn our particular brand of incense before our empty shrines. This is nihilism, it is hypocrisy. It represents the abdication from humanity which leads to de-humanisation." [The Nature of Human Aggression, New York, Oxford University Press, 1976]

As has already been noted the object or action towards which conscience or taboo is directed may not have an immediately obvious relationship with the underlying ground of ambivalence. The phenomenon of displacement is widespread and since its processes are unconscious, retrieving the lost linkages is extremely difficult.

"An unconscious impulse need not have arisen at the point where it makes its appearance; it may arise from some quite other region and have applied originally to quite other persons and connections; it may have reached the place at which it attracts our attention through the mechanisms of 'displacement'. Owing, moreover, to the indestructibility and insusceptibility to correction which are attributes of unconscious processes, it may have survived from very early times to which it was appropriate into later times and circumstances in which its manifestations are bound to seem strange. These are no more than hints, but if they were attentively developed their importance for our understanding of the growth of civilization would become apparent." [op. cit. p.70 f.]

Here again, the psychoanalyst poses the agenda for social analysis and then frustratingly drops it. Only in so far as the institutions and social processes of the civilisation become dangerously dysfunctional is sanction given for social analysis, interpretation and intervention, with a view to social catharsis, therapy and change towards more healthy institutional performance. In the idealistic atmosphere prior to the First World War, such conditions were not in place. The psychoanalyst had no social sanction to expand his examination to the unconscious dynamics of his contemporary culture. Today, conditions are different and the agenda which was, for Freud, taboo is now, for us imperative.

## **f) JUDICIARY**

In the closing pages of his second essay Freud drops a few hints as to what that agenda might involve. For instance he traces the penal system back through social conscience and taboo to its roots in ambivalence.

"If one person succeeds in gratifying the repressed desire, the same desire is bound to be kindled in all the other members of the community. In order to keep the temptation down, the envied transgressor must be deprived of the fruit of his enterprise; and the punishment will not infrequently give those who carry it out an opportunity of committing the same outrage under colour of an act of expiation. This is indeed one of the foundations of the human penal system and it is based, no doubt correctly, on the assumption that the prohibited impulses are present alike in the criminal and in the avenging community." [op. cit. p.72]

Punishment may well be seen as ritually regulated, ceremonially applied and ethically rationalised retaliation. The 'criminal' has broken the taboo, and thereby abrogated the social defences of repression which hold out of consciousness the underlying desire enacted in the so-called crime. The social task of the penal system is to repair the breach in the social defences, to reinforce the denial and repression of the unconscious desires in the rest of the community, while focusing repressive measures onto the 'guilty' party. These dynamics of denial, projection, scapegoating, abdication of responsibility and the elevation of certain boundary managers within society to the position in which they are charged with the task of defence maintenance, can also be observed within the complexities of industrial relations, the political institutions and educational establishments, quite apart from the judiciary and its associated penal institutions.

### **g) MARRIAGE**

Freud refers to the neurotic intensity of unconscious hostility directed towards a loved person, transformed into fear that the beloved might die. The neurotic denies the unconscious hostility, projects it out into some displaced malignant agent, whose attack on the beloved is the cause of fear. The implications of the material are not drawn out, but we may well find that the institution of marriage is itself a neurotic attachment, rooted in ambivalence. The 'lover' finds in the 'beloved' a person appropriately receptive of unconscious projection, onto whom the deeply unconscious ambivalent feelings of the first person are focused. The hostile side of the ambivalence is repressed, leaving the person concerned aware of overwhelming affection, love and care. In so far as the neurotic process is reciprocated the pair are said to have 'fallen in love'. Provided the defences are maintained collusionally, the pairing is stable. If in one or other party the defences break down and the hostility becomes conscious, a conversion reaction may set in in which the partner becomes the focus of the aggressive impulses while the caring pole of ambivalence becomes repressed. Ambivalence is fundamental to marriage. Again we see the religious, social, legal, ceremonial and ritual behaviour associated with the control of the ambivalence (controls which become particularly marked at its onset or breakdown) accreting over time into the most complex social institutions. The description of marriage as essentially a collusional neurosis does not exactly meet with universal acclaim, particularly when it is made by a priest !

### **h) REPRESSION OF SOCIAL ANALYSIS**

Freud was aware of the agenda and put his finger, accurately, on the appropriate methodology. He was, however, subject to intense personal and social repressive defences in applying the methodology to certain aspects of the agenda.

"... comparison between taboo and obsessional neurosis is enough to enable us to gather the nature of the relation between the different forms of neurosis and cultural institutions, and to see how it is that the study of the psychology of the neuroses is important for an understanding of the growth of civilization.

"The neuroses exhibit on the one hand striking and far-reaching points of agreement with those great social institutions, art, religion and philosophy. But on the other

hand they seem like distortions of them. It might be maintained that a case of hysteria is a caricature of a work of art, that an obsessional neurosis is a caricature of a religion and that a paranoiac delusion is a caricature of a philosophical system. The divergence resolves itself ultimately into the fact that the neuroses are social structures; they endeavour to achieve by private means what is effected in society by collective effort." [op. cit. pp.73]

Here Freud exhibits his most fundamental lacuna or blockage. Essentially, psychoanalysis is concerned with the effects of unconscious process in human behaviour. Now some of those processes are common within a given culture. In such a context, deviance from the social norm is designated 'neurotic'. The result is that therapeutic psychoanalysis treats as 'significant' only that unconscious material which generates deviant behaviour, or in other words, unconscious processes which generate 'neurotic' presentation. This leads to the limiting of the field of attention of psychoanalysis to those unconscious phenomena which generate deviation from the norm. Inevitably, the most fundamentally 'normal' processes receive least attention and remain most fundamentally unconscious. It is as if the field is undergoing a solar eclipse. Attention is focused on the corona, while the generating core of the phenomenon remains hidden from view.

Against this background it is inevitable that the neuroses are seen as caricatures of social institutions. Freud's basic error is to assume that social institutions have to do with reality while the neuroses alone are distorted by unconscious content. It would have been more appropriate, though less acceptable, to define the whole field of unconsciously generated behaviour as 'neurotic' and then to distinguish between 'common neurosis' (the basis of social institutions) and 'deviant neurosis' which requires therapeutic analysis in order to return the deviant to the social norm. Freud's failure at this point, understandable though it is in the light of the enormous social and personal collusion pressures upon him, has blocked the application of psychoanalytic method to norm social institutions. Parallels can be drawn between the neuroses and those institutions of social cultures which differ from those of the analyst, but the analyst operating with this set of assumptions remains blind to the unconscious distortions of reality embedded in the processes of his own society.

The position is supremely illustrated by the closing paragraph of Freud's second essay.

"The asocial nature of neuroses has its genetic origin in their most fundamental purpose, which is to take flight from an unsatisfying reality into a more pleasurable world of phantasy. The real world, which is avoided in this way by neurotics, is under the sway of human society and of the institutions collectively created by it. To turn away from reality is at the same time to withdraw from the community of man." [op. cit. p.74]

If by definition the world of reality is the world of common neuroses then the analyst is caught in his own tautology in total collusion with the social defences.

### III: ANIMISM, MAGIC AND THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THOUGHTS

Drawing on a wide range of the contemporary standard works of anthropology Freud drew together a summary of the main characteristics of animism. He described it as that

"... highly remarkable view of nature and the universe adopted by the primitive races of whom we have knowledge, whether in past history or at the present time. They people the world with innumerable spiritual beings both benevolent and malignant; and these spirits and demons they regard as the causes of natural phenomena and they believe that not only animals and plants but all the inanimate objects in the world are animated by them. A third, and perhaps the most important, article of this primitive 'philosophy of nature' strikes us as less strange, since, while we have retained only a very limited belief in the existence of spirits and explain natural phenomena by the agency of impersonal physical forces, we ourselves are not very far removed from this third belief. For primitive people believe that human individuals are inhabited by similar spirits. These souls which live in human beings can leave their habitations and migrate into other human beings; they are the vehicle of mental activities and are to a certain extent independent of their bodies." [op. cit. p.75 f.]

The author's purpose is to trace to its roots the origin of animism, using insights from psychoanalysis and then to see whether this procedure brings any light to bear upon the origin and functioning of the social processes of his own civilisation. Contemporary writers taught that the idea of a soul was the nucleus of the animistic system, once man had developed the concept of his own being as an embodied soul (possibly through the influence of dreams and an attempt to handle the state of sleep, death, etc.) then he projected the capacity to have a soul or spirit into every other object or being in his environment. Souls were deemed to be indestructible and therefore after death roamed free, inhabiting objects, animals and persons as they pleased. He quotes Hume (Natural History of Religion, Section III):

"There is a universal tendency among mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object those qualities with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious." [op. cit. p.77]

Freud traces the three great ages of development in systems of thought which he describes as: "... three great pictures of the universe: animistic (or mythological), religious and scientific. Of these, animism, the first to be created, is perhaps the one which is most consistent and exhaustive and which gives a truly complete explanation of the nature of the universe. This first human Weltanschauung is a psychological theory. It would go beyond our present purpose to show how much of it still persists in modern life, either in the debased form of superstition or as the living basis of our speech, our beliefs and our philosophies." [op. cit. p.77]

Once again Freud balks at the application of his insight to his contemporary society and yet tantalisingly names the agenda.

One of the needs faced by primitive man was the management of his environment, which in an animistic frame required the manipulation of the spirits with which all the objects and phenomena of his environment were imbued. It was to this end that the magical techniques for affecting the spirits were derived. If the spirits could be appropriately manipulated then the environment would change in a favourable way. If they were offended the environment became persecutory. It is not difficult to trace the evolution from such primitive magical manipulation to religious rituals and ultimately to the practice of prayer. Freud's examples are all taken either from primitive tribes or from comparatively distant and alien religious constructs. He avoids drawing the parallels with his own contemporary culture. He quotes with affirmation Frazer's summary [from *The Magic Art*, 1911, Vol.1, p.420] that,

"Men mistook the order of their ideas for the order of nature, and hence imagine that the control which they have, or seem to have, over their thoughts, permitted them to exercise a corresponding control over things." [op. cit. p. 83]

Frazer's hypothesis is a satisfactory description of the phenomenon but is lacking in terms of its causal understanding. Freud searches for that dynamic which sustains the misperception and energises the animistic system.

Freud understands animism as a way of treating the environment as if it were somehow internal to the human mind. Magic represents the myth that: "if I change my thoughts I change the world". Magic is a work of the imagination, of that part of man's mental process which generates a projected environment mirroring internal psychic reality into a phantasised world within which the person then lives and moves and has his being. There are, of course, deep similarities between this position and the imaginative play of children in whose minds' world thought is omnipotent. Freud concludes,

"By way of summary, then, it may be said that the principle governing magic, the technique of the animistic mode of thinking, is the principle of the 'omnipotence of thoughts'." [op. cit. p.85]

Moving on from the study of childhood imagination Freud focuses on the analysis of neurotics.

"It is in obsessional neurosis that the survival of the omnipotence of thoughts is most clearly visible and that the consequences of this primitive mode of thinking come closest to consciousness\*. But we must not be misled into supposing that it is a distinguishing feature of this particular neurosis, for analytic investigation reveals the same thing in other neuroses as well. In all of them what determines the formation of symptoms is the reality not of experience but of thought." [op. cit. p.86]

[\*A statement only possible if 'normal neuroses' are treated as insignificant. The role of omnipotence of thoughts in the myth and ritual of religion is thus left masked.]

Freud summarises the processes laid bare by the psychoanalysis of hysteric and obsessional patients.

"What hysterics repeat in their attacks and fix by means of their symptoms are experiences which have occurred in that form only in their imagination - though it is

true that in the last resort those imagined experiences go back to actual events or are based upon them. To attribute the neurotic sense of guilt to real misdeeds would show an equal misunderstanding. An obsessional neurotic may be weighed down by a sense of guilt that would be appropriate in a mass-murderer, while in fact, from his childhood onwards, he has behaved to his fellow-men as the most considerate and scrupulous member of society. Nevertheless, his sense of guilt has a justification: it is founded on the intense and frequent death-wishes against his fellows which are unconsciously at work in him. It has a justification if what we take into account are unconscious thoughts and not intentional deeds. Thus the omnipotence of thoughts, the over-valuation of mental processes as compared with reality, is seen to have unrestricted play in the emotional life of neurotic patients and in everything that derives from it." [op. cit. p. 86 f.]

The triggering experiential core of neurotic behaviour gives rise to intolerable destructive or hostile impulses which are subsequently repressed, although continually pressing back up into consciousness through the repressive defences. The neurotic behaviour represents the continued energy vested in the strengthening and maintenance of the repressive defences, so protecting the person concerned from the irruption of unconscious material. The behaviour is "designed to ward off the expectations of disaster with which the neurosis usually starts" [op. cit. p.87]. The fundamental question concerns the origin of this expectation of disaster. Freud comments,

"Whenever I have succeeded in penetrating the mystery, I have found that the expected disaster was death. Schopenhauer has said that the problem of death stands at the outset of every philosophy." [op. cit. p.87]

Two strands of primal origin of neuroses stand uneasily side by side in Freud's writing. We have already seen that he refers to anxiety about castration emerging from the Oedipal phase of development as the origin of all psycho-neuroses. Here in a parallel position he notes the fear of death as the nexus of neurosis. These two nuclei persevere in paradoxical parallel in Freud's later writings and he appears to have been unable to make the fundamental connections between them, largely because he was unable to ascertain the origin of primal fear of death or to penetrate behind his own fears of castration to make the connections with deeper levels of psychotic terror. This is an element in the analysis of Freud to which we must return later in the paper. It is important to note here, however, that he moves almost immediately from noting the fear of death as the origin of neuroses to interpreting that fear of death as terror of retaliation for indulging in the forbidden sexual act. In this way by implication he earths the fear of death within Oedipal material, specifically as a secondary form of castration anxiety.

Freud apparently perceived the pre-historic development of human consciousness in three stages. Initially there was the completely unconscious instinctive phase, with minimal intellectual process and activities simply geared to survival as in an animal. Secondly came the dawning of awareness of the external world as other than the self, representing the beginnings of self-consciousness and the need to distinguish and differentiate between inner and outer reality. This led to the pre-animistic phase, dominated by projection and introjection. [This account of the process of evolution of consciousness in proto-history may also represent a projection into the dawn of racial history of the emergence of individual consciousness within the primal (intrauterine) field.]

Beyond this Freud summarises three further levels of development.

"If we are prepared to accept the account ... of the evolution of human views of the universe - an animistic phase followed by a religious phase and this in turn by a scientific one - it will not be difficult to follow the vicissitudes of the 'omnipotence of thoughts' through these different phases. At the animistic stage men ascribe omnipotence to themselves. At the religious stage they transfer it to the gods but do not seriously abandon it themselves, for they reserve the power of influencing the gods in a variety of ways according to their wishes. The scientific view of the universe no longer affords any room for human omnipotence; men have acknowledged their smallness and submitted resignedly to death and to the other necessities of nature. None the less some of the primitive belief in omnipotence still survives in men's faith in the power of the human mind, taking account, as it does, of the laws of reality." [op. cit. p.88]

In the beginning, man was an unconscious being. As he developed, the necessity of relating in ever-more sophisticated ways with the reality of his environment led through a long process of reality-testing to the interfacing of his unconsciousness with a consciousness both of self and environment. Unconscious material, however, perseverated in an increasingly repressed form, decreasingly accessible to the conscious mind and yet at the same time increasingly dominant in determining his psychic processes. Projection, denial, idealisation, reification, manipulation, were some of the techniques used to handle the internal unconscious content, displaced into the external world. The process generated social and religious myths, elevated gods and social institutions, within which the slowly developing scientific reality-testing process gathered energy. Once again we are left staggered at Freud's denial of these unconscious processes in his own society, confining to the comparatively non-threatening field of art the perseverance of unconscious processes in modern civilisation.

"In only a single field of our civilization has the omnipotence of thoughts been retained, and that is in the field of art. Only in art does it still happen that a man who is consumed by desires performs something resembling the accomplishment of those desires and that what he does in play produces emotional effects - thanks to artistic illusion - just as though it were something real." [op. cit. p.90]

Freud speaks of art serving impulses which "are for the most part extinct today". In that sentence is revealed the annihilation of contemporary unconscious behaviour which represents Freud's own omnipotence of thought at work, denying at a stroke the unconscious factors shaping and energising the social system of which he was a part.

Man persistently seeks the safety and security of a system, a Weltanschauung, deemed to be absolute and ideally held universally, within which he knows his place. Every such system is generated from a mixture of reality-testing and unconscious projection. Systems are therefore more or less dominated by unconscious material.

"There is an intellectual function in us which demands unity, connection and intelligibility from any material, whether of perception or thought, that comes within its grasp; and if, as a result of special circumstances, it is unable to establish a true connection, it does not hesitate to fabricate a false one. Systems constructed in this



way are known to us not only from dreams, but also from phobias, from obsessive thinking and from delusions. The construction of systems is seen most strikingly in delusional disorders (in paranoia), where it dominates the symptomatic picture; but its occurrence in other forms of neuro-psychosis must not be overlooked. In all these cases it can be shown that a rearrangement of the psychical material has been made with a fresh aim in view; and the rearrangement may often have to be a drastic one if the outcome is to be made to appear intelligible from the point of view of the system." [op. cit. p.95]

Freud's persistent reliance on 'neurotic' material for his analysis leads him again to treat as significant only that material which, in the unconscious life of his patients, generates systems which diverge from the commonly accepted Weltanschauung in place within their society. He is able to account for the deviation of system on the basis of unconscious projection and displacement. Again we are dealing with the corona alone, the role of unconscious projection in generating the norm system (deviation from which constitutes 'neuroses') is blotted out as in a total eclipse.

## INTERLUDE

### a) BACKGROUND TO THE FINAL CHAPTER

Freud wrote the fourth and final essay in April 1913. It was a turbulent period in Freud's life, matching the political and social turbulence of Western Europe as it lurched towards 'the Great War'. The split with Jung was now imminent and Freud's ambivalent feelings of rage, fear and protection are reflected in his work. His attitude to the finished product varied between acclamation and repudiation. At one point he wrote of the chapter :

"It is the most daring enterprise I have ever ventured. On Religion, Ethics and quibusdem aliis. God help me!" [Jones, op. cit. Vol.2, p.396]

In a letter to Ferenzci on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1913 he commented:

"I am writing Totem at present with the feeling that it is my greatest, best, perhaps my last good work." [Jones, op. cit. Vol.2, p.396]

However by the time the galley proofs were available in early June his mood had reversed to one of rejection.

"There is nothing in these; they belong to the thicket behind which the Princess sleeps. Later on you will get the interesting part, which is also a disturbing one. I have reverted very much from my original high estimate of the work, and am on the whole critical of it." [Jones, op. cit. Vol. 2, p.397]

In response to the reassuring responses from his friends, Freud's ambivalent oscillation soon damped down to a more realistic position. The underlying anxiety to which the behaviour points is not, however, hard to trace. Freud saw this last essay as the instrument of severance between Jung and himself. Freud honed the work with the clear purpose of opening up an irrevocable rift between the two men, based as he saw it on the irreconcilable character of their differing approaches.

"I am working on the last section of the Totem which comes at the right moment to deepen the gap by fathoms ..." [Jones, op. cit. Vol. 2, p.396]

Writing to Ferenzci the day he finished the last section, he commented:

"Since 'The Interpretation of Dreams' I have not worked at anything with such certainty and elation ... In the dispute with Zurich it comes at the right time to divide us as an acid does a salt." [Jones, op. cit. Vol. 2, p.396]

Within a fortnight the other pole of his ambivalence towards Jung had surfaced. Thus he wrote to Abraham,

"Jung is crazy, but I don't really want a split; I should prefer him to leave of his own accord. Perhaps my Totem work will hasten the break against my will." {Jones, op. cit. Vol. 2, p.397]

Under the influence of this reaction Freud inserted some 'softening passages' and the ambivalent attitude became embedded in the text itself. The relationship with Jung was fraught with far more than simply professional disputes about methodology. Jung, like Fliess before him, carried displaced feelings about Freud's own father who had died in 1896. At that time Freud had begun self-analysis, seeking the origins of his own neuroses. He concluded that his close friend Fliess with whom he discussed all his work was central to his problems. He saw him as symbolic of his father. A year later Freud dreamed that he could annihilate rivals with a piercing gaze that made them melt away and in the same dream he had a dispute with Fliess over a breach of confidence. It was about this time that Fliess had undergone a serious operation and Freud had failed to visit him afterwards in Berlin. In 1900 the two men met for the last time in an encounter of which wildly conflicting records exist. Fliess recorded that Freud 'showed a violence towards me' attempting to push him off a cliff into deep lake water below. Freud countered with accusations that Fliess had become paranoid. It would appear that rather than go into analysis of the fundamental relationship to his father, Freud acted out his neurosis in the psychodrama of relationship with the father-substitute. Jung appears to have been caught as victim in a parallel psychodrama in which Totem served as Freud's weapon to dispatch his phantasy father. Otto Rank was to suffer a similar fate over a decade later. Many of Freud's own private papers are sealed in the Library of Congress in Washington until at least the year 2000 and research into this crucial area of Freud's work is hampered by their inaccessibility. Jung's private papers, however, were deposited in the Wicks' collection at Harvard and access was prohibited for only 20 years following Jung's death in 1961. They were made public on 1st January 1981 and throw valuable light on the origins of the Jung/Freud conflict. [For much of this material I am indebted to the article by Oliver Gillie entitled 'The Secret Love Life of Sigmund Freud' which was based on a study of the Wicks Collection. It was printed in the Sunday Times Weekly Review, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1982.]

In 1882 Freud's great friend Ignaz Schönberg was engaged to Minna Bernays. Freud was introduced to her sister Martha and within two months was engaged himself. It was a foursome of crossed opposites whose dynamics were destined to play a decisive role in the development of Freud's personality. Ernest Jones describes Martha and Schönberg as "thoroughly good people" whereas Minna and Sigmund were "wild, passionate people". Freud himself explained his love for Martha as "an attraction of opposites". The parallel between the dynamics of this foursome and Jung's archetypal quadrilateral of the split animus and anima is clear. The figures of mother and mistress allied with father and lover were displaced into the crossed marriages. In 1886, Schönberg died of tuberculosis. Ten years later, the year of the death of Freud's father, Minna moved into residence with the Freud household. At this time the sexual relationship between Freud and his wife Martha appears to have died out completely and evidence now available would appear to confirm that Freud entered on an incestuous relationship with his sister-in-law, at first in phantasy, later consummated (they frequently went on holiday together alone) and eventually leading to the necessity for an abortion in 1900. How far Fliess stood in for the dead husband of Freud's incestuous mistress figure it is hard to say. Certainly at the time of the break in relationship Fliess was developing a theory of universal bisexuality which, if worked through in analysis with Freud, would have uncovered not only Freud's neurotic preoccupation with unresolved father figure material but also the ambivalent and unresolved repressed homosexual relationship between Freud and Schönberg, a position subsequently occupied by Fliess himself, as well as by Jung and Otto Rank:

[November 24th 1912 in the Park Hotel, Munich] "He began reproaching the two Swiss, Jung and Richlin, for writing articles expounding psycho-analysis in Swiss periodicals without mentioning his name. Jung replied that it was unnecessary to do so, it being so well known, but Freud had surfaced already the first signs of the dissention that was to follow a year later. He persisted, and I remember thinking he was taking the matter rather personally. Suddenly, to our consternation, he fell on the floor in a dead faint ..."

[In a letter to Jones of December 8th he explained the attack] "I cannot forget that six and four years ago I suffered from very similar but not such intense symptoms in the same room of the Park Hotel. I saw Munich first when I visited Fliess during his illness and this town seems to have acquired a strong connection with my relation to that man. There is some piece of unruly homosexual feeling at the root of the matter" [Jones, Sigmund Freud: Life and Work, Vol. 1, p.347f.]

Horror of incest, horror of homosexuality, terror of the father and repressed murderous desires toward the father all appear to be converging at this time.

Jung visited the Freud family in Vienna in 1907 and found Martha quite ignorant about psychoanalysis, or the details of Freud's work and concluded that "it was obvious that there was a very superficial relationship between Freud and his wife". In contrast he found that Minna was "very good looking and she not only knew enough about psychoanalysis but also about everything Freud was doing". A few days later Minna took the opportunity of a private conversation with Jung from which he recalled "she was very much bothered by her relationship with Freud and felt guilty about it. From her I learned that Freud was in love with her and that their relationship was indeed very intimate."

Two years later Freud and Jung travelled together to the United States and during the trip analysed each other's dreams. Freud was unaware that Minna had shared confidence with Jung and she effectively split the two men apart. Jung knew more about Freud's affairs than Freud realised. When Freud presented a dream about the triangular relationship and his intimacy with Minna, Jung encouraged him to follow through his associational material. Freud balked and Jung recalled, "He looked at me with bitterness and said: 'I could tell you more but I cannot risk my authority'". Jung recalls several severe neurotic problems which Freud presented during that trip, "I suggested to Freud that he should have complete analysis but he rebelled against such an idea because he would have had to deal with problems that were closely related to his theories. If Freud would have tried to understand consciously the triangle he would have been much, much better off." The incident was for Jung crucial in triggering the break between them.

It seemed to him that Freud was more concerned with sustaining his authority and public image than with the integrity of his analysis and from that point on Jung began to develop his own theory of psychology.

Now far that account is coloured by Jung's retrospective projection it is hard to say. In so far as it is accurate it would indicate that the defensive repression of Freud's incestuous affair with Minna lay at the heart of the split between the two men. Certainly, any serious engagement with Jung's description of the four-fold split of personae into the

father/lover/mother/mistress figures would have compelled Freud to deal with his own unacknowledged dynamics.

This leads to the hypothesis **that the interpersonal and subsequently inter-institutional dynamics of the psychoanalytic community represent reifications of the unresolved anxiety defences of the founding figures.** As a subsidiary hypothesis I would now argue **that these dynamics served not only the task of maintaining intrapersonal defences against anxiety but also had the social task of maintaining the common social defences against anxiety and preserving them from effective analysis and interpretation.** Here lie the roots of the collusional mechanism by which the intrapersonal and the environmental defensive agendas match and so block the process of analytic investigation and synthesis.

## **b) THE SLEEPING PRINCESS**

Totem deals exclusively with male-oriented imagery. The arche of religion is traced to the relation with the primal father. Freud confessed :

"I cannot suggest at what point in this process of development a place is to be found for the great mother-goddesses, who may perhaps in general have preceded the father gods." [op. cit. p.149]

If we are correct in interpreting Totem as an outworking of Freud's own father-complex then we should look elsewhere in his writing for the split off female figures of his neuroses. We do not have to look far.

While engaged on the first two chapters in 1912 Freud was also working on a parallel paper dealing with Mother Goddess symbolism. It was a short study entitled "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" describing a remarkable instance of continuity in religious worship. In it Freud traces the fertility symbolism focused into a Madonna figure from the ancient pre-Ionic cult of the Mother Goddess, transformed after the Ionian conquest into the Artemis, later Diana, of the Ephesian shrine. The violently defensive reaction of this cultus to the evangelism of the Apostle Paul yielded to

"... the gentler John the Evangelist, who, at the request of Jesus, had taken charge of the Virgin Mary and had brought her with him. In the course of the fourth century the first basilica to the Madonna was erected, so the city had its Mother Goddess again. Recently she appeared in a vision to a German girl, Katharina Emmerich, and told her where she had lived and slept when in Ephesus. Both the house and the bed have been found and Ephesus is once more the goal of pious believers in a Mother Goddess" [Jones op. cit. Vol. 2, p.391 f.]

In the next year, Freud published a little essay entitled "The Theme of the Three Caskets" (could this be the princess sleeping behind the thickets of the totem?). Jones describes the essay as, "One of the two most charming things he ever wrote ...". After expressing personal fondness for the writing as his own favourite, Jones went on to comment,

"Its delicacy, combined with the gentle way in which Freud leads the reader from one layer of the mind to a deeper one until he reaches the deepest of all, gives it an attraction that always makes the rereading a pleasure." [Jones, op. cit. Vol. 2, p.404]

The softness and sensitivity of the work is in marked contrast to Totem.

"It begins with a comparison between Bassanio's choice of the leaden one in the scene of the three caskets in *The Merchant of Venice* and Lear's demand for love from his three daughters, the muteness of the lead being equated with Cordelia's silence. Various mythological sources and parallels were drawn upon and a fine analysis made of the underlying themes. Ultimately he concluded that the number three relates to the three chronological aspects of womanhood: the mother who gives one life; the loving mate who is chosen by influences dating from the mother; and Mother-Earth (the Goddess of Death) to whom we return at the end." [Jones op. cit. p.404 f.]

There are two quite extraordinary twists in that analysis. The three chronological aspects of womanhood are surely mother, mate, and daughter (parent, adult, child). There is the mother who gives life and toward whom the son has incestuous desires. There is the mate, the peer group sexual partner, frequently overlaid with mother projection and oedipal material (so generating the split anima of Jung), and the daughter, conceived by the father and towards whom the father has incestuous desires two generations removed from the oedipal drive. Freud displaces and sublimates the daughter figure into the mythical "Mother-Earth". It was not until a year later that Freud confided to Ferenczi that his interest in the theme must have been "connected with thoughts of his three daughters, particularly of the youngest Anna." [Jones op. cit. Vol.2 p.405]. Freud appears to have repressed his identification with King Lear, who also had three daughters, together with his incestuous desires toward Anna. Significantly it was she who "a quarter of a century later was by her loving care to reconcile him to the inevitable close of his life." [Jones op. cit. Vol. 2, p.405]

The second reversal concerns the identification of the goddess of Mother-Earth as the goddess of death. The great mother figures of primitive religion are presented time and again in the form of fertility symbols. In so far as Mother-Earth is the receptor of the dead, the dead are buried in foetal position, committed again to the womb in hope of resurrection or rebirth. The myths of the dying and rising vegetation are enacted in relationship to symbols of intercourse, pregnancy and birth, in which death is overcome. The totem at the heart of the female religion is the mother-goddess whose womb is the ground of being, not the sarcophagus of the dead. Freud thus indicates his denial and repression of primal material and its projection to the other end of life, a displacement and reversal of birth and death which is commonly met in primal analysis (see for example M.L. Peerbolte, *Psychic Energy*, Wassenaar 1975, p.3). [compare also the quotation from the *Sunday Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> March 1982]

So the sleeping princess is identified with the youngest daughter, incestuous access to whom is rendered taboo by the thickets of the Totem. The three corresponding chronological aspects of manhood are the father who begets, and forbids incestuous relationship with the mother; the peer adult or homosexual partner, who forbids intercourse with his wife; and the son, whose oedipal drives threaten the father, in a process two generations removed from the first oedipal dynamic. Freud was unable to overview this six-point matrix, taking his position in the role of adult male, splitting off the female and denying and repressing the murderous and incestuous drives associated with various other roles in the matrix. Synthesis of the material would have required lengthy and painful analysis of Freud's own defences, during which he would have been able to come to terms with Jung's more overarching viewpoint while at the same time throwing light on the dynamic development of the reified splits and

projections which combine to shape the static patterns, or racial archetypes, of the Jungian construct.

Needless to say, analysis of the fundamental dipolar ambivalence originating in the primal, intrauterine, and perinatal field to which Rank subsequently pointed was utterly taboo. Further engagement with the material raised anxieties emanating from the repressed primal engram, so blocking both analytic insight and conceptual development, shattering the interpersonal relationships and effectively preserving the common social defences against primal anxiety embedded in the cultural symbols, norms, rituals, religions and structures of contemporary society. It is against this background that we turn now to a study of the text of Freud's fourth essay.

## IV: THE RETURN OF TOTEMISM IN CHILDHOOD

The title does not do justice to the content of the paper. To be sure, Freud draws parallels between the totemic customs of the aborigines and certain phenomena presented in the analysis of children with symptoms of obsessional neurosis. The grand theme of the chapter is however the psycho-genesis of religion itself. The author's ambiguity serves to hide and yet express the ambivalent feelings he had both in writing the paper and also in reaction to its finished form. The ambivalence showed itself as far back as that letter to Ferenczi at the end of 1909 in which he described the ultimate basis of religion as being the "infantile helplessness of mankind". Having named the genesis of the gods, in the very next sentence he added "I don't intend to elaborate it" [Jones, op. cit. Vol.2, p.393].

The opening paragraph appears to contain a paradoxical refutation of the conclusion reached some sixty pages later in which he boldly asserts:

"At the conclusion then of this exceedingly condensed inquiry, I should like to insist that its outcome shows that the beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge in the Oedipus complex". [op. cit. p.156]

Yet he opens the chapter with the words:

"There are no grounds for fearing that psycho-analysis ... will be tempted to trace the origin of anything so complicated as religion to a single source. If psycho-analysis is compelled - and is, indeed, in duty bound - to lay all the emphasis upon one particular source, that does not mean that it is claiming either that that source is the only one or that it occupies first place among the numerous contributory factors." [op. cit. p.100]

Having first denied that the conclusion would seek to trace the origin of religion to a single source and then, having admitted the possibility that it might just do that, Freud goes on to say that even so, the claim must not be interpreted to mean that there are not other sources and contributory factors which may indeed be more important than the psychoanalytic insight. He goes on to assert that assessment of the relative strengths of the differing factors requires a much more comprehensive synthesis than was then possible. However the synthesis was not only impossible because of the current state of the art, but by definition lay beyond the ability of the psychoanalyst and then even if he was able he should not do it.

"Only when we can synthesize the findings in the different fields of research will it become possible to arrive at the relative importance of the part played in the genesis of religion by the mechanism discussed in these pages. Such a task lies beyond the means as well as beyond the purposes of a psycho-analyst." [op. cit. p.100]

The reader is left with the impression of hysterical dither as if Freud had taken flight at the sight of this child he had brought untimely to birth. He denies its conclusion and then qualifies his denial, outlaws it on the basis of timing, then of ability, and finally renders the whole field taboo. These underlying feelings surfaced again some forty-six pages later in the words, "A great number of powerful motives restrain me from any attempt at picturing the further development of religions from their origin in totemism to their condition today". As analysis of the paper proceeds we shall seek to discover the roots of those 'powerful motives'



in Freud's own intrapersonal taboos generated by father-complex, castration anxiety, oedipal material and horror of incest. The fundamental agenda could be named but not engaged. The princess slept on, undisturbed behind the thickets of Freud's taboo totem.

The opening words may well have been one of the "softening passages" inserted during Freud's ambivalent reaction to the completed work. Certainly, the beginning of the second paragraph reads like the start of the paper proper.

## **a) ORIGINS OF TOTEM**

The next eight pages were taken up with a careful summary of the characteristics of totemism, followed by a review of contemporary theories of the origin of the phenomena. Freud concludes his restatement of material dealt with in the earlier papers with a study of the origin of exogamy and its relation to totemism, again earthing the discussion with reference to the current literature. The complex systems of taboo appear to centre around the prohibition of incest, fundamentally incest between son and mother. The totem serves as a marker symbol denoting the boundaries of the group, clan or tribe within which the taboo structures apply. Freud concludes that it is the dread, or horror, of incest which lies behind the behaviour complex, but summarises his survey of non-psychoanalytic attempts to discover the origin of the material in the words:

"Nevertheless, at the end of our inquiry, we can only subscribe to Frazer's resigned conclusion. We are ignorant of the origin of the horror of incest and cannot even tell in what direction to look for it. None of the solutions of the enigma that have been proposed seems satisfactory." [op. cit. p.124]

Freud then turns to the psychoanalysis of children in an attempt to solve the problem. In particular he presents analytic case histories of children suffering from animal phobias, which show extremely marked resemblance to the taboo-ridden relationship of a primitive tribe to its totem symbol. From his own work he concludes, "It was the same in every case ... their fear related at bottom to their father and had merely been displaced onto the animal" [op. cit. p.127]. So also Dr. M. Wulff, writing in 1912 is quoted as concluding, concerning animal phobias, "In analysis they almost invariably turn out to be a displacement on to the animals of the child's fear of one of his parents". [op. cit. p.128]. Two instances are singled out for special study, one published by Freud himself four years previously (Little Hans), the other an account provided by Ferenzci (Little Arpad). In view of the importance with which Freud treats these two case studies and their significance for subsequent development within the paper, they are here reproduced at length.

Little Hans "had a phobia of horses, and as a result he refused to go out in the street. He expressed a fear that the horse would come into the room and bite him; and it turned out that this must be the punishment for a wish that the horse might fall down (that is, die). After the boy's fear of his father had been removed by reassurances, it became evident that he was struggling against wishes which had as their subject the idea of his father being absent (going away on a journey, dying}. He regarded his father (as he made all too clear) as a competitor for the favours of his mother, towards whom the obscure foreshadowings of his budding sexual wishes were aimed. Thus he was situated in the typical attitude of a male child towards his parents to which we

have given the name of the 'Oedipus complex' and which we regard in general as the nuclear complex of the neuroses. The new fact that we have learnt from the analysis of 'little Hans' - a fact with an important bearing upon totemism - is that in such circumstances children displace some of their feelings from their father on to an animal." [op. cit. p.128 f.]

The role played by displacement in generating such phobic relationships is crucial and it is in the study of what is displaced and how it becomes displaced that psychoanalysis provides the most powerful insight into the origin of totemic symbols and their associated systems of taboo.

"Analysis is able to trace the associative paths along which this displacement passes - both the fortuitous paths and those with a significant content. Analysis also enables us to discover the motives for the displacement. The hatred of his father that arises in a boy from rivalry for his mother is not able to achieve uninhibited sway over his mind; it has to contend against his old-established affection and admiration for the very same person. The child finds relief from the conflict arising out of this double-sided, this ambivalent emotional attitude towards his father by displacing his hostile and fearful feelings on to a substitute for his father. The displacement cannot, however, bring the conflict to an end, it cannot effect a clear-cut severance between the affectionate and the hostile feelings. On the contrary, the conflict is resumed in relation to the object on to which the displacement has been made: the ambivalence is extended to it. There could be no doubt that little Hans was not only frightened of horses; he also approached them with admiration and interest. As soon as his anxiety began to diminish, he identified himself with the dreaded creature: he began to jump about like a horse and in his turn bit his father." [op. cit. p.129]

Where the emotions of terror or retaliatory rage associated with the father are too intense to be held together and integrated with the antithetic emotions of trust and love, splitting occurs and one side of the emotional polarity is repressed in relationship to the father and projected, or displaced, onto some suitable symbol. The displacement is normally triggered by some traumatic encounter in which the child experiences fear and rage, or in which the child concerned was subjected to the same experience as he unconsciously wished to subject his father. The "totem" or object of the phobia is thus at times identified with the feared father, while at other times the child himself may identify with the animal (cf. Freud's lifelong ambivalent struggle with the figure of Moses). The ambivalence, displacement and identification emerged particularly clearly in Ferenczi's report.

Little Arpad "The same part is played by the father alike in the Oedipus and the castration complexes - the part of a dreaded enemy to the sexual interests of childhood. The punishment which he threatens is castration, or its substitute, blinding.

"When little Arpad was two and a half years old, he had once, while he was on a summer holiday, tried to micturate into the fowl-house and a fowl had bitten or snapped at his penis. A year later, when he was back in the same place, he himself turned into a fowl; his one interest was in the fowl-house and in what went on there and he abandoned human speech in favour of cackling and crowing. At the time at which the observation was made (when he was five years old) he had recovered his

speech, but his interests and his talk were entirely concerned with chickens and other kinds of poultry. They were his only toys and he only sang songs that had some mention of fowls in them. His attitude towards his totem animal was superlatively ambivalent: he showed both hatred and love to an extravagant degree. His favourite game was playing slaughtering fowls. 'The slaughtering of poultry was a regular festival for him. He would dance round the animals' bodies for hours at a time in a state of intense excitement.' [Ferenczi, 1913a (English translation 24b)]. But afterwards he would kiss and stroke the slaughtered animal or would clean and caress the toy fowls that he had himself ill-treated.

"Little Arpad himself saw to it that the meaning of his strange behaviour should not remain hidden. From time to time he translated his wishes from the totemic language into that of everyday life. 'My father's the cock', he said on one occasion, and another time: 'Now I'm small, now I'm a chicken. When I get bigger I'll be a fowl. When I'm bigger still I'll be a cock.' On other occasion he suddenly said he would like to eat some 'fricassee of mother' (on the analogy of fricassee of chicken). [Ibid., 249] He was very generous in threatening other people with castration, just as he himself had been threatened with it for his masturbatory activities.

"There was no doubt, according to Ferenczi, as to the sources of Arpad's interest in events in the poultry-yard: 'the continual sexual activity between the cock and hens, the laying of eggs and the hatching out of the young brood' gratified his sexual curiosity, the real object of which was human family-life. [Ibid., 250] He showed that he had formed his own choice of sexual objects on the model of life in the hen-run, for he said one day to the neighbour's wife: 'I'll marry you and your sister and my three cousins and the cook; no, not the cook, I'll marry my mother instead.'" [Ibid., 252] [op. cit. p.130 f.]

The correspondence between animal phobias in children and taboo-ridden totem customs in "primitive" tribes is demonstrated by the child's identification with the totem animal, the use of fear of totemic retaliation as a block on the incestuous desires of the Oedipal position and finally the ambivalent attitude between the child and the object of his fear. In the light of these correspondences Freud argues for a common causal origin of totemism and animal phobia. He concludes, "These observations justify us, in my opinion, in substituting the father for the totem animal in the formula for totemism". [op. cit. p.131] Confirmation of the displacement is seen in the fact that a totem is described as a common ancestor or primal father of the group or tribe.

"If the totem animal is the father, then the two principal ordinances of totemism, the two taboo prohibitions which constitute its core - not to kill the totem and not to have sexual relations with a woman of the same totem - coincide in their content with the two crimes of Oedipus, who killed his father and married his mother, as well as with the two primal wishes of children, the insufficient repression or the re-awakening of which forms the nucleus of perhaps every psychoneurosis." [op. cit. p.132]

## **b) SACRIFICE**

Having established this foundation, Freud then makes an important excursus dealing with the origin and nature of sacrificial rituals. He traces the complex evolutionary path of

displacement and sublimation, following the linkages back from modern sacramental consumption of wine and cereal produce through the burnt offerings of blood and flesh to the primitive shared meal in which the worshippers consumed the actual flesh and blood of the sacrificial victim, so incorporating new life, reinforcing the commonality or kinship of the group, and redefining its boundaries in terms of the common participants within the sacrificial meal (communicants). He argues that the earliest form of sacrifice was totemic, representing the solemn ceremonial breaking of the taboo, the slaying of the group totem, followed by the group's incorporation of the life of the totem. The occasion was fraught with guilt for the crime committed, mourning for the loss of the revered totem as well as festive rejoicing on the occasion of the corporate transgression of the taboo.

Once it is understood that the totem animal itself is a displacement or substitute for the father, the emotional ambivalence associated with totemic sacrifice is understandable (even more so once it is realised that a totemic sacrifice was itself in some instances a displacement of the yet more primitive practice of human sacrifice). The horror of incest represents terror of paternal retaliation, displaced into the system of taboos. The totem itself is a displacement of the retaliatory father, towards whom the sons feel ambivalent emotions of loyalty and care, together with murderous hostility and terror. Freud therefore faced the problem of the origin of the twin drives of the Oedipus complex, namely incestuous desire directed toward the mother and murderous rage focused on the father.

At this point and face-to-face with the taboo agenda, Freud took flight into the realm of aetiological myth.

### **c) MYTH OF THE PRIMAL HORDE**

Freud based his 'solution' on material drawn from Darwin's theory of the earliest state of human society, the "primal horde". Darwin postulated the earliest human grouping as consisting of a "violent and jealous father who keeps all the females for himself and drives away his sons as they grow up". [op. cit. p.141] The picture is of a powerful, bull-male, with an all-age-group troupe of females, together with their children, but excluding mature males, who might be seen as threatening rivals to the position of the "primal father". Freud admits that "this earliest state of society has never been an object of observation". [op. cit. p.141] He adds, "The most primitive kind of organisation that we actually come across - and one that is in force to this day in certain tribes - consists of bands of males; these bands are composed of members with equal rights and are subject to the restrictions of the totemic system ..." [op. cit. p.141]

The scene is set. All the elements of the Greek tragedy are in place. The hero, the chorus of women and children and the assailant gang.

"One day the brothers who had been driven out came together, killed and devoured their father and so made an end of the patriarchal horde. United, they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually. (Some cultural advance, perhaps, command over some new weapon, had given them a sense of superior strength.) Cannibal savages as they were, it goes without saying that they devoured their victim as well as killing him. The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers :

and in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength. The totem meal, which is perhaps mankind's earliest festival, would thus be a repetition and a commemoration of this memorable and criminal deed, which was the beginning of so many things - of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion.

"In order that these latter consequences may seem plausible, leaving their premises on one side, we need only suppose that the tumultuous mob of brothers were filled with the same contradictory feelings which we can see at work in the ambivalent father-complexes of our children and of our neurotic patients. They hated their father, who presented such a formidable obstacle to their craving for power and their sexual desires; but they loved and admired him too. After they had got rid of him, had satisfied their hatred and had put into effect their wish to identify themselves with him, the affection which had all this time been pushed under was bound to make itself felt. It did so in the form of remorse. A sense of guilt made its appearance, which in this instance coincided with the remorse felt by the whole group. The dead father became stronger than the living one had been - for events took the course we so often see them follow in human affairs to this day. What had up to then been prevented by his actual existence was thenceforward prohibited by the sons themselves, in accordance with the psychological procedure so familiar to us in psycho-analysis under the name of 'deferred obedience'. They revoked their deed by forbidding the killing of the totem, the substitute for their father; and they renounced its fruits by resigning their claim to the women who had now been set free. They thus created out of their filial sense of guilt the two fundamental taboos of totemism, which for that very reason inevitably corresponded to the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex. Whoever contravened those taboos became guilty of the only two crimes with which primitive society concerned itself." (op. cit. p.141 - 143]

It is indisputable that Freud intended the saga as an historic explanation for the otherwise inexplicable father-complex and horror of incest which he saw as providing the basis of all subsequent psycho-neuroses. Freudian fundamentalists have since treated the material in similar vein, an error emulated by biblical fundamentalists in the interpretation of the parallel primal myths of Genesis.

The original conditions are pre-historic. They have "never been an object of observation". The scene is therefore a phantasy construct, a projection onto the archetypal tapestry from Freud's imagination, channelled, to be sure, by history and anthropology, but symbolically informed by his own unconscious phantasy.

There is the isolation of the central character, his lifting out of time, space and company, which characterise myth formation. Adam was alone in the garden, the son of no father, the brother of no sibling. How had he reached this position other than, in Freud's terms, by murdering his own father and then presumably despatching all his brothers as well? Which came first, the father or the son? Human society did not emerge as a single group, full-formed at a given point in space and time, a kind of generation ex nihilo of homo sapiens. Freud's construct does not bear analysis as a socio-historical event. It does, however, yield to a different approach.

Freud's myth of the primal horde has the quality of dream. It is a symbol construct, holding for him in complex, displaced images and events the core of as yet unanalysed unconscious material. As such, it performs for Freud the task for which Jung utilised his racial archetypes. It is a religious construct, brought in to man the boundaries of scientific psychoanalysis [cf. quote from page 95]. Tragically, like religion, it effectively blocks further progress. Attention is diverted from further analytic research into the unconscious repressed origins of incestuous desire, murderous rage, and castration anxiety and is displaced instead as far as possible from the here-and-now, spatially to the antipodes and temporally to the dawn of history.

If the myth is treated as literal, socio-historical event, then the "Freudologist" must interpret the revolution of the brother-band in terms of "fall" followed by eviction from Eden representing the prohibition of incestuous relationships with the female troupe. The original sin provides the aetiology of experienced guilt and the primal event is passed down through the racial memory, preserving its energy from generation to generation, even though the precipitating event is never repeated. This theological mistaking of projected symbolism and ascribing to it the quality of historic reality is a symptom of social psychosis (treating the symbol as if it were the thing symbolised).

#### **d) SOURCES OF SYMBOLISM**

Freud interpreted the writing of Totem and Taboo as a totemic sacrifice. If the fourth chapter was the heart of the work, then the myth of the primal horde was the heart of the fourth chapter. He saw this material more than any other as standing over against the Jungian "errors" and Jung was still the President of the International Psycho-Analytic Association. Contrasting the book with his The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud wrote, "Then I described the wish to kill one's father, and now I have been describing the actual killing. After all, it is a big step from a wish to a deed" [Jones, op. cit. Vol.2, p.397]. Significantly, Jones responded with symbolism drawn from the displaced father-slaying of the bull sacrifice of Mithraism, "You have chosen the path of Mithras and must play it with your usual courage" [Jones, op. cit. Vol. 2, p.397]. Freud identified with one of the murderous, incestuously motivated sons, yet also at the same time and ambivalently, identified with the father-figure. His obsession with Moses climaxed concurrently with his writing of Totem and Taboo. His concern was not the Moses as antagonist to Pharaoh, but Moses the lawgiver, Moses the founder of religion, Moses the primal father of the Jewish nation, Moses the totemic figure whom Freud phantasised as being slain in a re-enactment of the myth of the primal horde. This ambivalent oscillation between being the murderous son or the dominating father underlay his own ambivalence about the drama.

There may also be shadows in the mist of the contemporary political context in Vienna, where the ageing Austrian Emperor held court, still deeply shaken by the suicide of his eldest son and shortly to face the shattering assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, the next in line, which was to trigger the First World War. Bismarck's downfall in the Berlin of 1890, the ascendance of the Emperor William II, the escalating arms race, the struggle for power, resources, raw materials and markets, driven by the exponential demands of industrialism, all presaged imminent political instability. How far Freud's myth symbolised and pre-figured the downfall and annihilation of the Fatherland at the hands of the Allied brotherhood in the coming conflagration it is hard to tell. Perhaps even more significant were the rising

revolutionary dynamics of nascent communism. With the failure of the Paris Commune in 1871, the seeds had been widely spread and were germinating in little cells and groups throughout the capitals of Europe. The movement, already latent, was to emerge in the Russian revolution of 1917, and lead to the annihilatory execution of the totemic figure of Tsar Nicolas II.

For those with eyes to see there was also writing on the wall for the Jews, that ancient people with whom Freud so deeply identified [see Preface to the Hebrew Translation of Totem and Taboo. Freud described himself as one "Who is ... scientific mind" (op. cit. p. xi), and who were destined within his lifetime to suffer the fate of a racial scapegoat as a result of social processes already in play.

In terms of his immediate familial relationships, we are now aware of Freud's suppressed incestuous relationship with Minna Bernays, always haunted by the ghost of the dead Schönberg. Freud's fear of the retaliatory father-figure, suspended over his incestuous drives like the sword of Damocles, was transferred first into his relationship with Fliess, then onto Jung, and eventually to the younger Rank. It was the latter's work on Birth Trauma in 1924 which threatened to break through Freud's defences and lay bare the roots of his Oedipal drives.

The symbols and form of the myth itself were generated out of material already close at hand. There were Frazer's four volumes on Totemism and Exogamy, Robertson-Smith's work on the Religion of the Semites, and Charles Darwin's imaginative reconstruction of conditions at the dawn of social history. From these materials and in this familial, professional, social, political and religious context the symbols of Freud's primal myth were forged.

Significantly, on June 30th 1913, Freud's friends celebrated the occasion of the publication of Totem and Taboo by giving the author a dinner, which they called "A Totemic Festival ... Loe Kann presented him with a Egyptian figurine which he adopted as his totem". [Jones, op. cit. Vol. 2, p.398] The symbolism is strange. Jones recalls that when he and Ferenczi read the proofs of the book together they had suggested that Freud "had in his imagination lived through the experiences he described in his book, that his elation represented the excitement of killing and eating the father and that his doubts were only the reaction". [Jones, op. cit. Vol.2, p.397] On that interpretation, the totem figure whose slaying and cannibalistic incorporation were represented by the act of writing, represented for Freud his father, yet the totemic symbol provided at the celebratory meal would appear to have been a female goddess. If so, it could hardly be described as a totem, but rather as the reward to the victorious son, now that the father was dead. The desired sleeping princess could at last be awoken with a kiss and owned. The incestuous implications are, however, completely repressed from consciousness and the desired mother is identified as "a totem" in place of the destroyed father. This double-image totem provided in the psycho-drama of celebration carries the ambivalence of Freud's anxiety about death. Jones recalls, "Freud always had a double attitude or phantasy about death, which one may well interpret as dread of a terrible father, alternating with desire for reunion with a loved mother". [Jones, op. cit. Vol. 3, p.302] It would seem that once Mithras had emerged victorious after slaying his feared father, he was to be rewarded symbolically with the satisfaction of incestuous wishes for the desired mother.

Freud's underlying purpose was to lay bare the roots of the Oedipus complex, displaced into totemism with the twin taboos against murder and incest. His primal myth purports to provide such a foundation, but the material is now understood as a symbol construct, a reification of defences against the discovery of unconscious material lying behind the Oedipal drives within Freud himself. The interpretation of the material would have raised for Freud an agenda taboo. He was also inhibited in the task by potent social taboos on the exploration of the roots of contemporary institutions in terms of their unconscious content. Under the collusion pressure of these twin constraints, the symbolic displacement occurred. The material cries out for interpretation, but that exercise must be delayed until after the review of Freud's application of the myth to the psycho-genesis of religion.

Freud devotes the last 16 pages of his work to a seminal treatment of the origins of religion, traced back through the Oedipal material to the primordial parricide.

"Features were thus brought into existence which continued thenceforward to have a determining influence on the nature of religion. Totemic religion arose from the filial sense of guilt, in an attempt to allay that feeling and to appease the father by deferred obedience to him. All later religions are seen to be attempts at solving the same problem. They vary according to the stage of civilization at which they arise and according to the methods which they adopt; but all have the same end in view and are reactions to the same great event with which civilization began and which, since it occurred, has not allowed mankind a moment's rest." [op. cit. p.145]

Once Freud had reified his primal myth into an actual socio-historic event, he was bound to introduce a strand of non-analytic material into his understanding. From then on we find the two causal strands running uneasily in parallel, namely the psychoanalytic and the socio-historic. For Freud, religion originated in the actual events of protohistory. Memory and emotional reaction to those events were carried forward across the multi-generational continuum of human consciousness. The evolution of religion represents a history of repression, projection, displacement and manipulation of the fundamental material, triggered by the primal event, but always carrying unconscious reinforcement from the Oedipal drives of contemporary society.

Underlying the evolution of religious systems is the energy of ambivalence. In so far as a given object or totem is used to focus by displacement the hostile and aggressive drives, inevitably the same object eventually picks up the repressed affectionate and caring emotions as well, so requiring another stage of splitting, projection and displacement in order to reduce to within tolerable limits anxieties generated by juxtaposition of strong ambivalent feelings towards the same object.

"There is another feature which was already present in totemism and which has been preserved unaltered in religion. The tension of ambivalence was evidently too great for any contrivance to be able to counteract it; or it is possible that psychological conditions in general are unfavourable to getting rid of these antithetical emotions. However that may be, we find that the ambivalence implicit in the father-complex persists in totemism and in religions generally. Totemic religion not only comprised expressions of remorse and attempts at atonement, it also served as a remembrance of the triumph over the father. Satisfaction over that triumph led to the institution of the memorial festival of the totem meal, in which the restrictions of deferred obedience



no longer held. Thus it became a duty to repeat the crime of parricide again and again in the sacrifice of the totem animal, whenever, as a result of the changing conditions of life, the cherished fruit of the crime - appropriation of the paternal attributes - threatened to disappear." [op. cit. p.145]

So, Freud perceives religion as carrying not only the twin drives of the Oedipus complex (incestuous desire toward the mother and murderous rage toward the father), but also the condition of ambivalence. If in Oedipal material love and hate are separated in the objects or persons to which they are directed, ambivalence represents the unifying of the object or persons toward which the conflicting emotions of love and hate are felt. So God is to be feared and adored. The religious festival is both remorseful and triumphant, the Christ is both victim and victor, impotent yet omnipotent. Dread is the appropriate response to the holy.

### **e) ENCOUNTERED CONSTRAINTS**

In applying the myth of the primal horde to the study of evolution of religious systems, Freud faced the task of disentangling the displacements, projections, splits, denials, symbolic shifts and sublimation of the three underlying factors. At this point, however, the exercise moved from the comparative safety of academic exposition and proto-historic speculation into that violently threatening field of the interpretation of unconscious behaviour in contemporary religious systems. Freud was face-to-face with the taboo of social analysis. If religion is a common social defence against the intolerable anxieties evoked by the fundamental ambivalence, incestuous desire and murderous rage in the heart of man, then any attempt to disturb the defences is confronted by a second order reaction. This defence preservation dynamic is terror-driven and builds a powerful collusional process between the social defences and those intrapersonal processes used to repress the as yet unresolved ambivalence and Oedipal drives of the investigator. Caught in this trap, Freud was unable to carry through the application of his insights with anything approaching systematic thoroughness.

Any analyst is subject to extreme social pressures insofar as he attempts to provide either a socio-historic or a psychoanalytic causal explanation of the origins of human behaviour and institutions, previously deemed to be divinely initiated. Insofar as believers depend upon religion for the management of psychotic anxiety, just so far is the God-slayer, or underminer of religion, the recipient of psychotic retaliation. It is not long since the end of a witch-hunt or heresy trial was a violent death. Only comparatively recently has it been possible for a person to challenge the heart-land of religious belief and live. Reactions may no longer be quite so threatening physically but Freud was acutely aware of the oppression to which any psychoanalytic interpretation of the process of religion would expose him.

"A great number of powerful motives restrain me from any attempt at picturing the further development of religions from their origin in totemism to their condition today. I will only follow two threads whose course I can trace with especial clarity as they run through the pattern: the theme of the totemic sacrifice and the relation of son to father." [op. cit. p.146]

The nature of Freud's inhibition at this point is nowhere spelt out. He describes the problem as motivational, as distinct from one of actual ability. It was not that he was intellectually

incapable of making the connections, he experienced rather, an array of potent, vested interests and social forces blocking his path in response to which he was reduced to impotent passivity. He was restrained and could not even attempt the task. This phenomenon of the withdrawal of motivational energy for the solving of a particular problem points to the crippling sense of personal threat to which such a solution would have exposed Freud himself. It is probable that the perceived threat, while inevitably having some element of reality, was dominated and given power to inhibit by his own projected fears and phantasies. The exercise would have exposed his incestuous desires, his deep murderous rage toward the father and the roots of ambivalence in the depths of his own unconscious. Analysis of that material would have required a recovery of the precipitating traumata, together with a capacity to tolerate the levels of terror, rage, love, loss and ambivalence, which would have emerged during the analysis. The process would also have required exposure of the intra- and inter-personal processes utilised defensively as displaced carriers and repressors of the material by Freud, within his family, and in the circle of his working colleagues. Such a breakthrough would have exposed not only for Freud but for each and every one of his friends and associates, and eventually for every man, the terrifying primordial drives, in collusion flight from which the common social defences are reified. It was this pressure which had already displaced Freud's investigation of the origin of the Oedipal drives and their expression in systems of totem and taboo away from the field of psychoanalysis into the proto-historic myth of the primal horde. It was these same pressures which prevented clarity of perception in all but two small areas of Freud's insight into religious evolution. The disruption of clarity, the experience of confusion and the inability to understand are all related to the irruption of unconscious anxiety, triggered associationally by the material under investigation.

It is at this point, more clearly than at any other within his work, that we meet the boundary within which Freudian psychoanalysis was contained. Freud experienced powerful social taboos, resonating with deep personal defences, which effectively deflected him from the task of analysing the origins and effects of unconscious material in both intrapersonal and social behaviour. Further progress in handling this taboo agenda requires the capacity to tolerate the psychotic anxiety released during the process of analysis and abreaction of those traumata which generated the fundamental splitting into love and hate, and which in turn constitute the ground of ambivalence and emerge by displacement in the Oedipus complex. Such analysis also requires a familial, institutional and social milieu in which such progress is motivationally acceptable. In other words, breakthrough requires a context in which the anxieties generated by the perseveration of social psychosis are greater than the precipitating anxieties which laid down the psychotic defences. There are many indications that the appropriate conditions for breakthrough at this frontier have now been met.

Actual analysis of the collusion constraints which Freud met must be deferred until examination of his application of the myth of the primal horde has been completed.

## **f) APPLICATION OF THE MYTH**

In the closing pages Freud turned to those two areas of analysis in which motives for examination of the material outweighed the powerful constraints encountered. It has already been noted that one of the prime motives for engaging in the work at all was the 'methodological' conflict with Jung. The dynamics of that split have been traced to Freud's

defensive repression of his own incestuous material, together with the displacement of the fear/rage against the father-figure. At this point in the text Freud indicates his achievement of 'especial clarity' in dealing with the theme 'of the totemic sacrifice and the relation of son to father' and then in a footnote relates precisely that material to their discussion by C.G. Jung with whose views Freud begged to differ. It will be remembered that in face-to-face conflict with Jung, Freud had fainted, overwhelmed by uncontrollable psychotic emotion. It would seem that the split between Jung and Freud served to preserve intrapersonal defences, so repressing the disturbing material. In so far as the myth of the primal horde and its application served the task of differentiating between Freud and Jung, and therefore of reifying that split, the material also served the task of defence preservation. The study of Freud's application of the myth of the primal horde is also a study of those defences employed to maintain repression of the psychotic levels of loss, love, rage, terror and ambivalence, both intrapersonally and socially.

Freud turns first to the evolution of totemic sacrifice. He notes with Robertson-Smith the link between the ancient 'totem meal' and primitive sacrificial ritual. If the sacrifice re-presents the primal parricide then it re-evokes primal guilt. The totem meal involves every member of the group or clan partaking of the results of the sacrifice. In this way solidarity in guilt is established, so removing any sense of mutual retaliation between members of the group, who are thus bound in social collusion of guilt-denial. The psychological effect of the process is common repression of guilt, with its concurrent sense of release, freedom, pardon, forgiveness and sanctification. Significantly, anyone absent from the meal retains the guilt and is used as a scapegoat for projection of common guilt feelings, since the absentee raises to consciousness that which has been repressed by the common activity. The guilt-raiser is therefore perceived as the guilty party and retaliation, in the form of excommunication or even physical annihilation, may follow, so preserving the group defences.

The totem meal consists in the consumption of the remains of the sacrificed totem. The totem is itself a re-presentation of the primal father, or clan deity, before whom and in whose supposed presence the sacrifice is performed. We thus have the anomalous situation of a dual presentation of the deity both as propitiated presence and also as consumed victim. Freud sees the origin of the Godhead in the projected father-complex of the individual unconscious.

"The psycho-analysis of individual human beings, however, teaches us with quite special insistence that the god of each of them is formed in the likeness of his father, that his personal relation to God depends on his relation to his father in the flesh and oscillates and changes along with that relation, and that at bottom God is nothing other than an exalted father." [op. cit. p.147]

The splitting off and denial of female aspects of Godhead at this point is consistent with Freud's suppression of the part of the women in the myth of the primal horde. The female is reduced to the role of mutely passive onlooker, having no part in the psychodrama and no correlate in the subsequent dynamics of religion. This splitting off of female imagery from totem and taboo is quite consistent with the understanding of the text as an outworking of Freud's struggle with his father-figure projected onto Jung. The split serves the task of repressing the incestuous desire toward the mother, leaving only the murderous rage toward the father as the presenting problem. The attempt to resolve the ambivalence by splitting fails, and Freud subsequently has to deal with the issues of guilt and ambivalence generated

by the emergence of the caring, trusting positive emotion also and at the same time felt toward the hated father.

In attempting to resolve the paradox of the dual presentation of the God as both ground and victim, periphery and centre, Freud investigates the many facets of relationship between the God and the sacred animal. He noted that the God was often worshipped in the shape of an animal and that the sacred animal was precisely that which was slain in the worship of that God. He also drew attention to the frequent transformation in myths in which the God presents himself as an animal, often precisely that animal which is sacrificed to him as God. The dual symbolism of the Lamb in Christian mythology is a case in point. It is the Lamb who sits upon the throne, and yet it is the Lamb of God who is also slain.

Freud puts forward the supposition that:

"... the God himself was the totem animal and that he developed out of it at a later stage a religious being ... the totem is nothing other than a surrogate of the father, thus while the totem may be the first form of father-surrogate, the God will be a later one in which the father has regained his human shape. A new creation such as this derived from what constitutes the root of every form of religion - a longing for the father - might occur if, in the process of time, some fundamental change had taken place in man's relation to the father ..." [op. cit. p.148]

So if the totem represents the father, feared, hated, destroyed and cannibalised, the God represents the father, desired and preserved. The need is apparently to have one's father and eat him. (Cf. Freud's "unruly homosexual phantasies vis-à-vis Jung.) The two representations of Godhead within primitive sacrifice, namely circumference and centre, therefore correspond to the two poles of ambivalence, focused now onto fatherhood in the absence of denied motherhood.

It is significant that it is precisely at this point in the argument that Freud confesses his complete inability to deal with the female elements of religion.

"I cannot suggest at what point in this process of development a place is to be found for the great mother-goddesses, who may perhaps in general have preceded the father-gods." [op. cit. p.149]

Any unification of the ground of origin of both Mother-Goddess and Father-God would have required a level of analysis pressing behind the Oedipal drives of incestuous desire and murderous rage (within which the two poles of ambivalence are split between relationships with mother and father), to that fundamental and more primitive ground in which the conflicting emotions of loss, love and hate are directed in ambivalence toward precisely the same holding environment. The ambivalence was, however, so intolerable that the splits could not be integrated sufficiently to allow the analysis to proceed. As a result, the ground of ambivalence was cleft and one side annihilated, leaving the father alone on the stage. Inevitably, the ambivalence was displaced into the male imagery of Freud's religion, splitting the father into two representations, namely the God and the totemic victim. With his depth analysis displaced into historic sequence, Freud erroneously interprets subsidiary displacement as chronological succession.

"The two-fold presence of the father corresponds to the two chronologically successive meanings of the scene. The ambivalent attitude towards the father has found a plastic expression in it, and so, too, has the victory of the son's affectionate emotions over his hostile ones. The scene of the father's vanquishment, of his greatest defeat, has become the stuff for the representation of his supreme triumph. The importance which is everywhere, without exception, ascribed to sacrifice lies in the fact that it offers satisfaction to the father for the outrage inflicted on him in the same act in which that deed is commemorated." [op. cit. p.149 f.]

So religion evolves as a way of handling the polar emotions of love and hate, together with the intolerable anxieties generated by the ambivalent juxtaposition of the paradoxical emotional attitude toward a single object or person and the consequent levels of neurotic guilt involved. The material is repressed at an intrapersonal level, but projected into the interpersonal and social field within which it undergoes a refining, evolutionary process of symbolic and ritual development.

"As time went on, the animal lost its sacred character and the sacrificed lost its connection with the totem feast; it became a simple offering to the deity, an act of renunciation in favour of the god. God himself had become so far exalted above mankind that he could only be approached through an intermediary - the priest. At the same time divine kings made their appearance in the social structure and introduced the patriarchal system into the state. It must be confessed that the revenge taken by the deposed and restored father was a harsh one: the dominance of authority was at its climax. The subjugated sons made use of the new situation in order to unburden themselves still further of their sense of guilt. They were no longer in any way responsible for the sacrifice as it now was. It was God Himself who demanded it and regulated it. This is the phase in which we find myths showing the god himself killing the animal which is sacred to him and which is in fact himself. Here we have the most extreme denial of the great crime which was the beginning of society and of the sense of guilt." [op. cit. p.150]

Religious complexification proceeds by the splitting of the ground of ambivalence and the denial of one pole, followed by the resurgence of the denied emotion in the remaining side of the split field. When the ambivalence again becomes intolerable there is a further split, followed by dissociation, displacement, denial and the re-emergence of ambivalence. So the common, or social, defences against psychotic anxiety evolve through a convoluted tree-like process of splitting, projection, denial, displacement and re-introjection. The requirement being that the defence structures employed at any given point within social space and time serve the task of common collusion repression of psychotic anxiety. The negative emotions of loss and retaliatory rage are successively displaced and disowned until eventually deposited within the metaphysical system, correct manipulation of which absolves man from all guilt and releases him from his intolerable ambivalence and grief. Anxiety about the potential irruption of the psychotic material back into human consciousness is dealt with by successive displacement of the deity and his elevation to the greatest possible distance from humanity. The cleft itself is sub-divided and managed by layers of intermediaries or orders of priesthood. Eventually the retaliatory rage against the father, projected into the Godhead, is enacted by Godhead upon Godhead, represented in Sonhood, who is then himself elevated into Godhead. With the talion sacrifice safely carried out at a distance, it remains only for man to re-introject the desired divine attributes.

Freud summaries his survey of the development from primitive human sacrifice to contemporary religious ritual in the words:

"The object of the act of sacrifice has always been the same - namely what is now worshipped as God, that is to say, the father ... The original animal sacrifice was already a substitute for a human sacrifice, for the ceremonial killing of the father so that when the father-surrogate once more resumed its human shape, the animal sacrifice too could be changed back into a human sacrifice." [op. cit. p.151]

Having denied the dynamic origin of the material in the depths of the intrapersonal unconscious, Freud is forced to rationalise the process as perseveration of racial memory of proto-historic event.

"The memory of the first great act of sacrifice thus proved indestructible in spite of every effort to forget it and at the very point at which men sought to be at the farthest distance from the motives that led to it its undistorted reproduction emerged in the form of the sacrifice of the God... In the course of the later development of religions the two driving factors, the sons' sense of guilt and the sons' rebelliousness never became extinct. Whatever attempt was made at solving the religious problem, whatever kind of reconciliation was effected between these two opposing mental forces, sooner or later broke down ..." [op. cit. p.151 f.]

There follows a single paragraph summarising the fertility religions of the agricultural period in which the incestuous libido 'found symbolic satisfaction in the cultivation of Mother Earth'. The young male divinities, spirits of vegetation, satisfied their incestuous desire for the Mother-Goddess, yet themselves soon suffered annihilation or castration at the hands of the angered Father-God, or his representative. In this connection Freud mentions the myths of Adonis and Attis. For this material he was probably dependent on Frazer's 'Adonis, Attis, Osiris', published in 1907. The mythology of the agricultural cycle was not, however, limited to the male form. Freud's omission of the female counterpart is significant, therefore, at this point. He records only the symbolism of earth as the Mother-Goddess with fertile vegetation represented by the youthful incestuously driven son, who penetrating the mother with roots, springs up in potent life, only to be castrated and destroyed by the angered Father-God who banishes the son to the underworld. From here, after a period of months the Mother-Goddess recalls her son and the process is started again. So the cycle of seedtime and harvest, summer and winter is recapitulated in the mythology. The material carries the projected incestuous desire and murderous retaliation of the Oedipal material from a male perspective.

We do not have to look far to the split off female counterpart. One of the clearest examples is the myth of the Goddess Demeter, the goddess of agriculture among the ancient Greeks. In the beginning there was no winter, and the earth was green and fruitful all year round. One day, while Demeter's daughter Persephone was gathering flowers in a meadow, the earth opened and Pluto, the god of the dead, appeared and carried her off to be his queen in the world below. Demeter was inconsolable and sought her missing child throughout the world, refusing to allow the earth to produce any of its fruits until her daughter was restored. All that year not a stalk of grain grew and man would have died of hunger if Zeus had not persuaded Pluto to let Persephone go. There was one condition, however. She must not have eaten anything during her stay in the underworld. Unfortunately, she had eaten a

pomegranate seed and so could not stay away forever. In the end it was arranged that Persephone should spend nine months of every year with her mother and the gods and the three wintry months with Pluto in the world of the dead (see *The Book of Knowledge*, Volume 3, p. 69, article: Demeter).

Here the desolation of winter is explained in terms of overwhelming grief and loss associated with the death of the daughter. The seasons are the outplaying of the battle between Zeus and Pluto, the King of the Gods and the God of the underworld. Pluto desires Persephone for his wife, Zeus, brother of Demeter, rescues her from the world of the dead. Here then we find female symbolism in place of Freud's male imagery. The negativities emanate from unmanageable grief instead of retaliatory rage. These gaps or lacunae in Freud's use of mythical symbolism are pointers toward the areas of unresolved unconscious material within Freud himself. If analysis of father material is tolerable, but the mother figure is denied and if the handling of castration anxiety is tolerable, but not that of loss and grief, then it is to the unresolved separation anxiety in relationship to the mother that we must look if further progress is to be made in disentangling Freud's collusional repression of the taboo agenda of social analysis.

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