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APPROACH AND AVOIDANCE OF FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY IN THE WRITINGS OF FOUR CONTEMPORARY JEWISH THINKERS

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

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DIGEST

This paper is an investigation of the work of four contemporary Jewish thinkers, as seen in the light of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The purpose of the thesis is to ascertain to what degree, if any, these thinkers have been influenced by the writings or the work of Sigmund Freud.

Attention is first turned to Freud's theories concerning the condition of man and the origins, states, and purposes of religion, as he saw them. Specific attention is drawn to the fact that post-Freudian writers are not included in this paper. Drawing on this material as a background for further investigation, the paper discusses and comes to some conclusions about the following men:

1) Eugene Borowitz, an existentialist theologian, whose experience with Freudian thought has been an uneasy one. The bulk of his writings which indicate an awareness of Freud and Freudian thought, (and there are many references to it in his work) are less than totally positive toward it. But this is not surprising, as one learns that Freudians tend to be determinists, positing as one of their major assumptions that many of man's actions are pre-determined by certain events or external conditions, whereas the existentialists, like Borowitz, feel that man is a creature with free will and the responsibility to make meaningful choices concerning the mode of his existence. Naturally some conflict would arise from these opposing viewpoints, and the paper explores this conflict.

2) Richard Rubenstein, a traditional-leaning Jew who is considered a death-of-God theologian. Having gone through psychoanalysis himself (it

is not known whether the others in the paper have done so), he is an ardent advocate of analytic theory, and explains the bulk of his work in Freudian terms. A definite, and almost complete, influence from Freud is obvious here.

3) Arnold Wolf, a former pulpit rabbi turned college Hillel director, who takes the best of existentialism and determinism, of good and evil, and with a heavy dose of psychoanalytic insight, presents a case for an almost mystical unity principle. Certainly influenced by Freud, he is a synthesizer.

4) Levi Olan, one of the great liberal rabbis of the post World War II era, he began his career when sentiment against psychoanalytic theory was quite strong. He felt that modern psychology, what he called the psychology of the unconscious, was a threat to liberal religion, and therefore should be disavowed. With the passage of time, with the holocaust and its disastrous effects, his position changed, and although he did not come to warmly accept analytic theory, he did express an understanding of its potential for good and the necessity of tolerating it in a world which had changed so much from the world which he used to know.

These men, and the things which they have said, will continue to have an impact on Jews and non-Jews in the years to come. And in varying degrees, their attitudes about Freudian theory, as expressed in their work, will continue to have an effect on the way people understand them and learn to live in a world whose basic understanding itself was totally reshaped by Sigmund Freud.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In several of his works[1] Sigmund Freud was concerned with religion in general and with Judaism in particular. It should be noted that when one speaks about religion, one must include under that rubric discussion about the condition of man. And since this subject, the condition of man, is very much influenced by the religion which people practice, Freud found it well within his purview to investigate quite at length the various influences which religion might have on man. In the process of his investigation Freud discusses how he believes that certain concepts of God came into existence, how certain belief structures and ritual practices developed, and consequently, how certain theologies evolved. This is a veritable mine of theory and information.

Religion, to Freud, was "a store of ideas [which] is created, born from man's need to make his helplessness tolerable and built up from the material of memories of the helplessness of his own childhood and the childhood of the human race. It can clearly be seen that the possession of these ideas protects him in two directions--against the dangers of nature and Fate, and against the injuries that threaten him from human society itself."[2]

It was this code of ethics which concerned Freud most when he began to examine the elements which constituted the condition in which man lived. What were the concerns of religion? What were the concerns of man? Were the concerns of man in conflict with those of religion? Were there any real conflicts between the things which man wanted and the

things which he needed? How did religion distinguish between the two, and what steps did religion take to make life more productive, worthwhile, and/or enjoyable? The answers to these and to other questions will be explored in depth in subsequent chapters.

It was my intention to survey the writings of contemporary Jewish theologians, to analyze their work in reference to Freudian theory and to try to see two things: a) to what extent Jewish theology could be explained in terms of Freudian theory, and b) if and how contemporary Jewish theology had, in fact, been shaped by Freudian theory.

It did not take long to see that a work on this pair of topics would be too extravagant an undertaking, that the amount of material that would have had to be covered, and the extent of the coverage, would have been better suited for a doctoral dissertation, if not a whole series of books.

As a result, it became necessary to begin paring down the topics until I reached the present form. What remains of the earlier (and grandiose) beginning is an investigation of the writings of four contemporary non-Orthodox Jewish thinkers with regard to their inclination (favorable or unfavorable) toward psychoanalysis.

It will become clear that the two questions posed above will have been answered partly through the writing of this thesis. Special note should be taken that instead of limiting the topic to theologians, the word was changed to "thinkers." That is not to imply that theologians are not thinkers; rather, that others besides theologians may have an important role to play in shaping the types of theologies which Jews of today may accept.

Also, rather than claiming to understand all theologians of all schools of thought within Judaism, I have limited myself to four thinkers

with whose work I was relatively unfamiliar, but in whose work I had become interested for various reasons. I will explain those reasons during a brief introduction to each man.

In addition, there were many more people whose writings I had considered, and a few whom I am sorry that I could not consider here. But my choices were determined by the desire to present a more unified paper of limited scope than a wandering, diversified paper of less limited scope, which would not have done justice to the eventual topic. As it is, much more could have been written, and some day perhaps I will expand on what follows. But at present the goal of the essay is to discuss at some length the approach and avoidance of Freudian psychoanalytic theory as reflected in the writings of Eugene B. Borowitz, Levi A. Olan, Arnold J. Wolf, and Richard Rubenstein.

Missing from this list are such names as Jakob J. Petuchowski, Alvin J. Reines, Steven Schwartzchild, Roland B. Gittelsohn, Lou H. Silberman, and others. Suffice it to say that their absence from this essay in no way implies that their writings are not important or that those who were included are necessarily more important as Jewish thinkers. Rather, I served my own interest in learning about the thinking of men with whose work I was almost totally unfamiliar.

It may occur to some that there is a vast amount of written material in the field of psychology and religion which I will not have tapped in writing this work. I would be the first to agree. I had thought, at first, of leaving analytic theory unlimited as it applied to the subject under consideration. But even that was too broad an overview. It became obvious to me that since Freud had sparked so much controversy, both during his lifetime, and after, and since he is correctly regarded as

the founder of psychoanalysis, it would be better to stay with his theories. What happened, of course, was that Freud's followers did not reject the idea of psychoanalysis; they rejected elements of his theory, one person or group rejecting one thing and others rejecting other parts. There are still many who might not consider themselves orthodox Freudians, yet whose writings could be called neo-Freudian or simply post-Freudian. It is well-known that Freud admitted that his work was not complete, that it needed constant re-examination and revision and that there were bound to be points which, due to the nature of Freud himself, would be left unemphasized, while other points might be over-emphasized. The theory was not monolithic. It was flexible, open to change, and was, in fact, changed many times during the course of Freud's life. That is the main reason that a simple reading of the Complete Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis was not sufficient for an understanding of Freud's work. That monumental set of Lectures was simply a basic text; the material which I used most for this paper was not included in those lectures. And between the time that Freud wrote the first set of lectures and the time that he wrote the second set, his thinking had undergone some rather radical changes.

Therefore for the sake of clarity, it might have been better to say "some Freudian psychoanalytic theories" rather than "Freudian psychoanalytic theory" in my title. For my purposes, and to avoid confusion, I will refer to the set of Freud's theories as Freudian theory, in the collective singular. That term should then be understood to include the theory which exists in its evolved form as Freud had expressed it, but before it was "interpreted" by others, whether Freudians or non-Freudians. Furthermore, Freudian theory as here expressed, is just that. In

other words, it does not include application of the theory as an analyst would apply it in a therapeutic setting. What I am talking about here is theory, not analysis.

Another factor to be considered was the way in which a given thinker approached or avoided Freudian theory. If one thinker mentioned Freud in a passing remark, did that mean that Freudian theory was part and parcel of his writing? Was the mentioning of Freud's name the same as explaining theology in terms of analytic theory? If a given thinker related only one aspect of Freudian theory to something having to do with Jewish theology, was I to assmue that implicit in this one aspect was the rest of Freudian theory as well?

Still another problem became manifest. Did a lack of use of the specific vocabulary of Freud and the Freudians mean that the particular thinker's work had not been at all influenced by Freud? And conversely, if someone used the special parlance of analytic theory, was that supposed to imply that the writer was consciously using the theory, or even intentionally doing so?

These questions made it possible to focus the inquiry somewhat, and for the purpose of setting basic ground rules, the following decisions were made: a) the simple mentioning of Freud did not constitute awareness or acceptance of his theory, b) mentioning Freud's name in connection with some facet of a theological discussion was grounds for further investigating the degree of influence of analytic theory on the theology of the man in question, c) relating only one aspect of Freudian theory to something dealing with Jewish theology was not sufficient to be able to say that Freudian theory had had an influence on this man's writing. The number of aspects of Freud's theory which were required turned out not to be the issue. What was important was how important the Jewish

thinker felt Freud's theory to be. And as it happened, each of the four thinkers had something to say about Freud and his theories, so that the problem really solved itself. Each man discussed Freud, at least in passing, if not at length, and as a result, it was much easier to gauge the degree of influence each man had felt, since each man actually discussed it to some degree.

One of the most difficult questions was whether someone might be unconsciously using Freudian theory, or if, in fact, what appeared to be the influence of Freud was simply the carry-over into theology of the language of psychoanalysis, without any implication of the use of the theory itself.

I finally decided that, Freudian theory being what it was, I could probably interpret almost anything that anybody might say, if it had to do with the condition of man, in terms of psychoanalytic theory, so that it becomes a moot point as to whether the writer was consciously or unconsiously using that theory or not. After all, there are actually four possibilities. He could be a) consciously using the theory, b) consciously not using it, c) unconsciously using it, and d) unconsciously not using it. From what little one can really gather about what a theologian's motives are, other than through his theology, it would be next to impossible to determine which of the four possibilities fit which man, and when. This also allows for the possibility that in the course of time, a person may suddenly adopt psychoanalytic terminology, or drop it, and so on. What one is then left with is a hopeless confusion. For example, if, in his earlier writings Borowitz says nothing about the analytic theory and does not use its terminology at all, but later begins to use it or to discuss it, and then, finally, ceases using it at the end

of his writings, what would have been gained by pigeon-holing him at a certain point during his years of writing? It is better by far to take each man's work as a whole, to try to see it in its own perspective, and then to relate it to both Freud's work and the work of the other thinkers under consideration.

By taking this latter approach I was able to reach one important understanding even before I began to compile the data, i.e., each man's theology is the result of his own thinking. If it makes sense only to him (even though he attempts to communicate it to others), it appears sufficient. If it makes sense to others and is acceptable to them, so much the better. But simply because one man's way of believing differs from another's I cannot conclude that one way is therefore better than the other. Each case has to be judged on its own merits. Ultimately, therefore, I must admit that my feeling about the following material is one of ambivalence. In the long run, I cannot see that it will make the slightest bit of difference. In the short run, I can see that for some people it is of some comfort to know that their way of thinking is not bizarre, even if uncommon.

What follows, then, is an attempt to ascertain to what degree, if any, the work of four contemporary Jewish thinkers has been, or is being, influenced by Sigmund Freud.

CHAPTER II

SIGMUND FREUD: PERSPECTIVES

Sigmund Freud was born in Moravia in 1856 and lived most of his life in Vienna where he took his medical degree in 1881. From 1876 to 1882 he worked in the Physiological Institute and a hospital in Vienna. In 1885 he went to Paris for five months of study with the famous neurologist, Charcot. When he returned to Vienna, he became lecturer in neuropathology and later professor at the university there. During this period he did research with Josef Breuer on the use of hypnosis in the treatment of hysteria and developed the first psychoanalytic hypotheses. He remained in Vienna until the advent of the Nazis. He then migrated to England, where he died in 1939.[1]

Perhaps it would be wise to remind the reader that the discussion of material which Freud wrote will be limited to his theories of the origin of religion, the relation of man to civilization, and how these two areas interrelate.

First, in terms of civilization, Freud made the basic point that "human life in common is only made possible when a majority comes together which is stronger than any separate individual and which remains united against all separate individuals. . . . This replacement of the power of the individual by the power of a community constitutes the decisive step of civilization. . . . The essence of it lies in the fact that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction, whereas the individual knew no such restrictions."[2] Freud made the idea of renunciation one of the most important

in his whole scheme of things, as exemplified in his statement that "a good part of the struggles of mankind centre around the single task of finding an expedient accommodation--one, that is, that will bring happiness--between this claim of the individual and the cultural claims of the group; and one of the problems that touches the fate of humanity is whether such an accommodation can be reached by means of some particular form of civilization or whether this conflict is irreconcilable."[3]

It seems that one of the yardsticks by which one can know if someone is adjusted to society is whether the person under scrutiny feels guilty about certain things. I will elaborate on this point later in discussing Freud's theory on the origin of religion. For the time being, let is suffice to say one reason that man may have felt guilt in his earliest history, according to Freud, is that he may have killed a primal father-of-the-horde and later felt remorse for it. Freud ties this theory of religion together with his theory of civilization in the following way:

> Now, I think, we can at last grasp two things perfectly clearly: the part played by love in the origin of conscience and the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt. Whether one has killed one's father or has abstained from doing so is not really the decisive thing. One is bound to feel guilty in either case, for the sense of guilt is an expression of the conflict due to ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between Eros and the instinct of destruction or death. This conflict is set going as soon as men are faced with the task of living together. So long as the community assumes no other form than that of the family, the conflict is bound to express itself in the Oedipus complex, to establish the conscience and to create the first sense of guilt. When an attempt is made to widen the community, the same conflict is continued in forms which are dependent on the past; and it is strengthened and results in a further intensification of the sense of guilt. Since civilization obeys an internal erotic impulsion which causes human beings to unite in a closely-knit group, it can only achieve this aim through the ever-increasing reinforcement of the sense of guilt. What began in relation to the father is completed in relation to

> the group. If civilization is a necessary course of development from the family to humanity as a whole, then--as a result of the inborn conflict arising from ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between the trends of love and death--there is inextricably bound up with it an increase of the sense of guilt, which will perhaps reach heights that the individual finds hard to tolerate.[4]

Guilt is the main point here, and as Freud continues to demonstrate, religion, as a civilizing element of civilization becomes one of the main producers of guilt. He categorically states: "It corresponds faithfully to my intention to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization and to show that the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt."[5] And he continues, "Religions, at any rate, have never overlooked the part played in civilization by a sense of guilt. Furthermore--a point which I failed to appreciate elsewhere--they claim to redeem mankind from this sense of guilt, which they call sin. From the manner in which, in Christianity, this redemption is achieved--by the sacrificial death of a single person, who in this manner takes upon himself a guilt that is common to everyone--we have been able to infer what the first occasion may have been on which this primal guilt, which was also the beginning of civilization, was acquired."[6]

Before moving entirely into Freud's analysis of religion, a rather lengthy, but important, summary of his position on what constitutes civilization would be in order. It is likewise important to remember that the Jewish thinkers whom I shall discuss later in the paper will be commenting, either directly or indirectly, on this very issue. Often their choice of words will mask the fact that they are all talking, generally, about the same thing, but inevitably, and once the excess verbiage is stripped away, all will be seen to be speaking about man, civilization,

religion, and God, and the interaction of these four elements.

The best summary about the opposite pulls of man and civilization that I have found by Freud is as follows:

> In view of its exceptional importance, we must not long postpone the mention of one feature which distinguishes between the two processes. In the developmental process of the individual, the programme of the pleasure principle, which consists in finding the satisfaction of happiness, is retained as the main aim. Integration in, or adaptation to, a human community appears as a scarcely avoidable condition which must be fulfilled before this aim of happiness can be achieved. If it could be done without that condition, it would perhaps be preferable. To put it in other words, the development of the individual seems to us to be a product of the interaction between two urges, the urge toward happiness, which we usually call 'egoistic,' and the urge towards union with others in the community, which we call 'altruistic '. Neither of these descriptions goes much below the surface. In the process of individual development, as we have said, the main accent falls mostly on the egoistic urge (or the urge towards happiness); while the other urge, which may be described as a 'cultural' one, is usually content with the role of imposing restrictions. But in the process of civilization things are different. Here by far the most important thing is creating a unity out of the individual human beings. It is true that the aim of happiness is still there, but it is pushed into the background. It seems almost as if the creation of a great human community would be most successful if not attention had to be paid to the happiness of the individual. The developmental process of the individual can thus be expected to have special features of its own which are not reproduced in the process of human civilization. It is only in so far as the first of these processes has union with the community as its aim that it need coincide with the second process.[7]

This summarizes several aspects which Freud had had swirling around in his writing up to this point. What comes across most strongly is that man seems to be forced by the need to survive to form communities, almost in spite of the fact that it can mean nothing other than renouncing an ever-increasing portion of his own happiness. Of course, no one forces man to live in groups. But the difficulties accompanying the other alternatives really do not leave much of a choice. Granted, the

choice is up to the individual, but generally, his choice is very predictable.

At this juncture Freud has not painted a very rosy picture. Unfortunately the gloom only deepens as he broadens his understanding of things and ventures into the realm of religion. For Freud, religious ideas are born of the need to make tolerable man's helplessness in his environment and are conceived in man's memories of the helplessness of his own childhood and the childhood of the human race. They owe their vitality to mankind's hostility to culture and the instinctual renunciation that culture demands. The questions then arise: What are religious ideas in the light of psychology? What is their real worth? Are they in fact illusions, unrelated to reality and motivated by wish fulfillment? Freud's answer, which arises from his deepest scientific convictions, is that there is no appeal beyond reason, and that since all cultural phenomena have purely human origins they must therefore have a basis in the human mind.

It is, according to Freud, not impossible to get at the source of religious needs, but at the same time, it is equally important to be alert to the possibility that what may seem to be a source, or even a basic need, is not necessarily one. His main point of emphasis in terms of religion seems to be that of dealing with the feeling of helplessness. This is quite different from the idea of renunciation which characterized Freud's attitude toward civilization. But with religion, the way to overcome the feeling of helplessness was to integrate oneself into the religious system (whatever that might be) and that, by its very nature, generally required some sort of renunciation at least equal in intensity to that required by civilization. Freud said, "the derivation of reli-

gious needs from the infant's helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it seems to me incontrovertible, especially since the feeling is not simply prolonged from childhood days, but is permanently sustained by fear of the superior power of Fate. I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection."[8]

The problem which Freud raises is that actually there seems to be an ambivalence toward the father which is difficult to explain. Freud works backward from the ambivalence and arrives at a much-doubted theory which says that in pre-history people lived in male-dominated primal hordes. The dominant male had exclusive sexual rights over the women of the horde, and this situation eventually aroused the envy, jealousy, and hatred of the sons enough that they killed off the father and took over the horde collectively. In Freud's words, "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."[9] After all, the father <u>was</u> their protector, and he was the "mighty one" of the horde. So it was easy to see why he was enviable. But the envy gave rise to both a closeness and a distance. Thus, the ambivalence. Freud adds that "the ambivalence implicit in the father-complex persists . . . in religions generally."[10]

Freud bases his conclusions on later religions on reasonable assumptions that he was able to make about earlier religions. These earlier forms of religion he called "totemic," this name coming from the notion that the sacred thing of the religion was the totem, which was defined as "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."[11] The important

thing about this information is not what the totem was, or even what totem religion was; rather, both for Freud's purposes and for our own it was important to understand how the religion came to grow and develop. If Freud's theory about the origin of religion is even close to correct, then what he builds upon it is virtually unshakable. "Totemic religion," he says, "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."[12]

Previously Freud had said that community spelled renunciation for the individual. The basis now becomes clear: "complicity in the common crime; religion was based on the sense of guilt and the remorse attached to it; while morality was based partly on the exigencies of this society and partly on the penance demanded by the sense of guilt."[13] In order to fit into, or to remain a member of, society an unconsciously internalized guilt became a common possession for everyone. The guilt made it easier to renounce certain satisfactions, supposing that such renunciation would eventually bring some greater security and satisfaction to the individual. This was rarely the case. But then, no one ever claimed that the reality of the situation would have to measure up to the fantasy possibilities.

Another interesting idea of Freud's was an outgrowth of what has been mentioned so far. Since Freud bases his assumptions on the original patricide, he then states that "the psychoanalysis of individual human beings . . . 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."[14] The assumption, of course, is that the reason the father eventually becomes exalted is that the sons are trying to work out their unconscious guilt. And as can be seen from the development of religion, "the primal father was the original image of God, the model on which later generations have shaped the figure of God."[15] It is not hard to see that the ambivalence of which Freud spoke before in terms of the relation of the sons to the father is manifest in current religious forms. Why do people pray to God? Is it to obtain something? Something material or something immaterial? Do people want a piece of goods or peace of mind? Are people still trying to assuage the original guilt of patricide through prayer? Does it not seem that the father whom the sons killed is actually more powerful dead than he was alive? When he was alive, he was a threat to the sons only if they "got out of line" and tried to gain mastery over the father or the women. Otherwise there was no problem. Once the enviable father was dead, killed by the hands of his own sons, he could follow them anywhere to seek revenge for his untimely death. The power which he had, however, was the power which the sons thought he had, and nothing more. Neither they, nor anyone else, had any proof that the spirit of their dead father was "coming to get even with them." But through an irrational process based on guilt, they imputed to the father the awesome power which today we associate with God.

Freud also speaks about illusions. He differentiates them from simple beliefs, and finally decides that religions are really constituted of just so many illusions. "What is characteristic of illusions is that they are derived from human wishes,"[16] Freud said. "Thus we call a belief an illusion when a wish-fulfillment is a prominent factor in its

motivation, and in doing so we disregard its relations to reality, just as the illusion itself sets no store by verification."[17]

With respect to the idea that religion is constituted of illusions, the curious reader might well be tempted to ask why, as long as we know that they are illusions, do we not shatter the illusions and learn to live with reality. A partial answer might be that the original problem of the primal patricide was never completely resolved. What remained unresolved was the guilt for having perpetrated the murder, even if the murder had been generations before. Since it was patently impossible to undo the murder, and at the same time, most desirable to do so, mankind was faced with an insoluble problem. Psychologically it was then possible to behave as though something which was actually not the case, actually was the case, i.e., that the father, even though dead, still exercised great power over the sons. As far as it went, it did no real harm that the sons believed this and behaved this way. Today, we would call this sort of behavior neurotic. It does not mean that the neurotic person is incapable of functioning in society; it does mean that every time the "make-believe" doesn't work or doesn't come true, the neurotic person has to scramble just that much harder or faster to make it appear to not be untrue. Often he will repeat the same ruse that he used before in trying to make something possible which was not possible, and each time that it does not succeed, he will try harder. It becomes of the utmost importance to him that he not let on that it is all make-believe, and quite soon, he really comes to believe it himself. Then, the shock of the truth would be too much for him to bear. The neurotic becomes obsessed with the idea which he has created, even if it is irrational, even if it is in no way susceptible to rational proof, and he defends

it to the death. Freud called such a person an obsessional neurotic.

To bring home the point, Freud then suggested that since religions were based on what he had posited previously; and since their "truths" were not susceptible to rational proof; and since, it seemed, everyone, as far as he could tell, claimed some sort of religion as his own; and since these believers were willing and ready to fight and die for their "truths," Freud found that he could call "religion . . . the obsessional neurosis of humanity."[18]

Obviously mankind could continue to exist and to function even with the kind of obsessive neurosis which Freud had described. And it has, of course, done so. What this means is that religion is really not in the position to claim that it has all the answers any more. Freud would never have said that he had exposed religion as a fraud. He had not. But he had shown it to be what it was: the end product of millenia of developing systems of thought and belief, all generally based on similar beginnings. Perhaps it is not an end product. Perhaps it is, instead, a by-product, still being shaped and formed by those who continue to speak in the name of religion. Religion was shown, in much the same light as civilization was shown, to be a way of controlling the behavior and the thoughts of people all over the world. Religion, like the civilization in which it would exist, would require certain sacrifices and/or renunciations in order that its adherents remain in good standing. Happiness was rarely guaranteed by religions for this life. They knew better. They knew that in order for their believers to live together they would have to give up some of their instinctual gratifications. Accommodation was the only way. And that meant less happiness, at least in the short run. And, for most religions, the long run was whatever

the religion claimed it to be, since the long run took place after death, and no one ever came back from there to dispute what the promoters of religion were saying about it.

One area which Freud looked into more deeply just prior to his death was Judaism. Born a Jew, his most notable Jewish affiliation was with the B'nai B'rith lodge in Vienna. Granted, most of the early analysts were Jews, but they were, for the most part, as non-observant as was Freud. Dr. Freud had taken the time to study about Judaism; he had learned what it was to be a Jew when the universities began the systematic exclusion of Jews from their faculties; ultimately he had fled Austria because he knew that he, even as a non-practicing Jew, would no longer be safe there.

And so, the mind which had contributed so vastly already to the understanding of the way humankind operates began to probe the depths of his own religion, or at least that of his co-religionists.

His conclusions were tentative. They still are. They have been hotly disputed, probably with as much fervor as the rest of his theories, but by a different group of angry scholars this time, who felt that their sacred turf had been invaded. Formerly Freud had encountered resistance from psychologists who were not only in disagreement with what Freud said; they were embarrassed by it. What did he, a biologist with a little training in neurology, know about psychology? And now, with even less training, he was writing about things in the territory of theologians and historians! It was one thing to write about the possible sources of religion in general, but to draw such radical solutions as he did, using the method which he espoused, raised more than a few eyebrows, and more than most tempers.

Without going into his procedures, I believe that I can state briefly what his conclusions were in regard to Judaism. In his book, Moses and Monotheism, which came to light only in parts, and was not printed in full until after Freud's death, Freud postulates that Moses probably was an Egyptian, that in fact there were more than likely two Moseses, that the Egyptian Moses was a follower of an already existing monotheistic Egyptian religion, with which some, if not most of the Hebrews of Egypt, had at least a passing acquaintance, and that the Father who was Yahweh, God of the Hebrews, was certainly nothing more than a conglomerate of a couple of familiar gods of the fertile crescent area whose combination was not impossible.

The problem had been that Freud had applied analytic theory in an area where it had never been tried before. His results were, of course, not refutable, but they were not provable either, and that gave most scholars the room that they felt they needed to severely criticize this applied theory.

For the purposes of this paper, it should be noted that Freud's venture into historical probability had little, if any effect, on the writings of the men whose work I have researched. His revealing work in the other areas of religion and civilization, on the other hand, seems to be reflected in varying degrees in the work of these men.

Each of the men whom I have selected to investigate have spoken about Freud and his theories to some extent. No two say the same things. No two approach either Freud or Jewish thinking (or theology) in the same way. In some cases the views of the men overlap. In others, they are poles apart. And it is not because they mention Freud that I have chosen them. I had expected that one of the four would have purposely

left him out altogether. But that was not what happened. So I was left with the task of seeing whether these men, who were explicitly aware of the man, Freud, were equally aware of his theory. One way of ascertaining that was through their theological writings, and in the cases where they spoke of the man but not of his work, I was challenged to uncover whether they were unconsciously using his theory as well as his name. The results of the study will speak for themselves.

There is one other thing to consider. It was not Freud alone who shaped the thought of the twentieth century. The men whose work is discussed here have also taken part in that shaping. They, like Freud, continue to do so. Certainly the modern writers could not have influenced Freud. The question is: has Freud's work influenced them enough so that the theology of liberal Judaism as it exists in the present and the future will clearly reflect the work of Sigmund Freud?

The answer to this, and to the other questions raised will hopefully be answered by the chapters to follow.

CHAPTER III

RABBI EUGENE B. BOROWITZ

The first thinker to be examined is Eugene B. Borowitz. Ordained a rabbi from the Hebrew Union College after graduating from Ohio State University, he holds doctorates from both the Hebrew Union College and Columbia University. He was formerly Adjunct Professor of Religion at Temple University, is Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies at City College of New York, and Visiting Professor of Religion at Princeton University. He is Professor of Education and Jewish Religious Thought at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. He is the founder and editor of the bi-weekly magazine Sh'ma, a Journal of Jewish Responsibility. He is the President of the Jewish Book Council of America, Vice President of the Religious Education Association of America, and a trustee of the Center for Ecumenical Research of the Benedictine Order. He is an associate editor of Worldview, the monthly magazine of the Council on Religion and International Affairs.

It is important to know something else about Borowitz too. In 1961 he was the first Jewish theologian, and perhaps the first theologian anywhere, to use the term "Covenant Theology."[1] He formulated a system, not so very different from theological systems which were already in existence. The difference was in the emphasis, and the emphasis was on the Covenant. Basing the whole thing on the concept of sin and its opposite, good deeds, Borowitz's system is one more way of analyzing the condition of man. He begins this examination as follows:

> . . . it seems clear that centuries of Jewish devotion and observance have conditioned his (man's) psyche so thoroughly that virtually no amount of rebellion, flight, and camouflage has been able to purge him of the conviction that a man is capable of knowing and doing the good.[2]

He also draws the parallel to our religious offspring, Christianity. "Traditionally it is Christianity which has been most preoccupied with the problem of sin, for to Christianity the most basic and overwhelming fact of human experience is man's sinfulness before God's law."[3] But at this point he feels that he must demonstrate the contrast between the two faith systems. This, of course, has implications concerning not only religion, but the psychology of religion as well.

> Judaism knows sin and sinfulness, but understands them within the context of mitzvah, not vice versa. . . . When the Jew sins, he is not overwhelmed by the event, nor does he anticipate that God will be. The Jew knows that he is but an animal. Surely this cannot come as a surprise to God, his creator, who fashioned him of dust. Hence He will understand the lapse; and because what He wants more than punishment, is the righteous act, He will allow man to turn from his evil and pursue righteousness again. Even in his sinfulness, the Jew does not simply wait for God to act. . . . The Jew acts. He does t'shuvah, he turns his life to righteous living with an immediate act of repentance.[4]

What Borowitz was responding to with these statements was a spirit of the times. There was a question about the appropriateness of Jewish theology in terms of the way men could be expected to behave. According to Jewish theology, the God to whom we prayed expected us to behave in certain ways toward our fellow men. And now these modes of behavior were being questioned, and with that questioning came a questioning of the theology which had existed up to that point.

> It is not especially difficult to understand why the demand for a new Jewish Theology, the Jewish theology of man's sinfulness, has had little effect. Instead there has been another concern, which arose from within the Jewish community, based upon its commitments, and one which Judaism has always

> considered more elementary. To this theology of mitzvah, Jewish thinkers, particularly the younger ones, have increasingly given their attention . . . and . . . the broad outlines of one emerging system can be sketched. This system might be called 'Covenant Theology,' for it rests upon a reaffirmation, in contemporary terms, of the Covenant of Sinai and its renewal during the centuries of prophetic leadership. It seeks to explore and understand the implications of defining religion as a covenant relation, and specifically to make manifest the nature and meaning of the Jewish Covenant with God. . . . Covenant Theology, then, understands Judaism in frankly existential terms.[5]

In other places as well, Borowitz clarifies his stand as an existentialist covenant theologian. But at this point, he summarizes his thinking and posits a task. "The central task of modern Judaism, according to this theology, is to win the conscious, willed loyalty of the modern Jew to the Covenant."[6]

It should be noted here that a new term, "existentialist," has entered the picture. Borowitz is an existentialist, and this is important in terms of the contrast which this will show between the existentialist and the determinist. Most strict Freudians are, to a degree at least, deterministists. That means that they believe that if man has any freedom to choose what he will do or not do in and with his life, these choices are, to a large extent, determined in advance by other people, other events, or prior events or choosings in the life of the individual. This contrasting way of perceiving things, i.e., existentialism versus determinism, will become more manifest as Borowitz's attitude toward psychology in general and psychoanalysis in particular comes out in his references to these subjects.

Borowitz, as an existentialist, believes that the individual is free to make any choices he desires, and that the individual must ultimately take full responsibility for those choices. The determinist, on

the other hand, (and for our purposes, let us say, the Freudians) holds that man's choices are pre-determined, and therefore man is not fully responsible for them. In fact, if he were, he might make entirely different choices. Borowitz seems to question the validity of science in general, and since, to some, psychoanalysis falls into the category of science, it, too, falls under his relentless scrutiny. "Psychology may help us with dynamics, pedagogy with efficient mehods, sociology with descriptions of community. No science, no technical craft, can answer the questions about the meaning of Jewish religious identity. Judaism as a religion must explain itself, and when such answers are thought through seriously and in relation to one another they become theology."[7]

Since theology, like the social sciences, is concerned with the condition of man, only with the emphasis on his relation to God, the question of knowledge, of things and of God, is bound to be raised. Borowitz, very early in his post-graduate career, involved himself with the work of gathering and disseminating knowledge, the philosophy of education, and related fields. In one early article which he wrote he discusses the relationship between knowledge, action, Jewish tradition and psychiatry.

> In the post-Freudian world there is often considerable doubt as to the efficacy of knowledge in influencing action. So much of motivation is unconscious that rationality seems to play but a modest part in shaping behavior. No one can claim that the older Jewish tradition knew of emotional education or re-education as a primary means of producing the healthy act. As in so many life-centered religions it had its occasional intuitions and insights. Today the psychiatric understanding of behavior is largely accepted within the context of Judaism, as the large number of Jewish psychiatrists would indicate. . . .
>
> Though the efficacy of knowledge has been qualified in our time, it has not been denied. Indeed, psychiatry is the effort to translate the realm of the intuitive and

emotional to a rationally ordered form and thus bring it under man's control. To the extent that man is healthy, to the extent that he is man, it is knowledge which is his main tool to guide his purpose.

As a matter of fact, the Jewish tradition not only considered study a positive guide, it thought of it also as a form of therapy. The Jewish tradition knows the problem of sin well, not only because of its candor toward its own leaders (as witnessed by the honesty of the Biblical accounts of the sins of some of its greatest personalities) but because of what the Jewish group has been made to suffer through the sinfulness of others. How can evil behavior be avoided, if not entirely, then in significant part?--through the study and knowledge of what the universe calls one to be and do.[8]

Observance of Jewish law, and Jewish law itself, are bound to be in trouble in such a system. Where a standard is set, but the foundation is questioned, there one hesitates to build. Very much bound up with this, too, is the idea of human freedom. As I mentioned before, existentialism is a philosophy which emphasizes freedom of choice. Choice, for Borowitz, is not at odds with the concept of Jewish law, even if it might seem to be so at first glance.

> This . . . would seem to indicate that, in whatever form, the contemporary Halachic process does not resolve but itself reflects the problems raised by personal freedom and Jewish emancipation. At the heart of each Halachic venture lies modern man's crisis of value. No fully objective set of standards is possible; no simply subjective set will do. The former demands the renunciation of our freedom. The latter is blasphemy and consequently self-destruction. We must affirm our freedom or lose ourselves; but we cannot fulfill our freedom without a standard which transcends us. Jewish law is not a refuge from this paradox of human-ness but rather its most appropriate expression. For here the free and even willful people meets the demanding God and covenants ever new to serve Him. The explication of that process is the theological task posed by the dialectic of freedom and order that is to be found in Halachah.9

From time to time Borowitz is critical of his fellow thinkers. In the passage immediately above, he is somewhat objectively discussing subjectivity and the Halachic process. In the passage which follows, he

attacks two of his colleagues, one of whom I will deal with at great length in the next chapter. He attacks Richard Rubenstein for attempting to justify religious practice on the grounds of psychoanalytic need and finally practically labels him as a heretic. His statement is as follows: "Yet the strategic retreat within can be matched by the radical stride without. Both Zalman Schachter and Richard Rubenstein seem bent on showing that they can be more secular, more modern, more nonconformist than their supposedly tuned-in reader. Judaism need not be squarely bourgeois for it is really the revolution beyond all other revolutions. For Schachter that not only means that Buddhism and Judaism are finally one, but that any means of attaining this transcendent sense of unity, including drugs, must be considered legitimate. Rubenstein's radicalism is comparatively staid, resting as it does on the death of God with a concomitant attempt to justify religious practice on the grounds of psychoanalytic need. . . . The latter two positions have gone so far to try to appeal to the outsider that one might reasonably inquire whether they have not begun to step beyond the bounds of Judaism."[10]

One might conclude several things about Borowitz's attitude from this last statement. Without going into his personal feelings about either Schachter or Rubenstein, it becomes rather evident that at this point in his career, he found neither man's approach to Judaism compatible with his own. What stands out most of all is his dismissal of Rubenstein's justification of religious practice on the grounds of psychoanalytic need. This speaks very clearly of the way Borowitz felt about justifying Judaism in terms of psychoanalytic theory at this point in his writing. It will be interesting to see if he mellows on this position as time passes.

Of major interest in the works of Covenant theologians in general is

the theophany at Mount Sinai, or as most people call it, the revelation. It is natural for these theologians to find points of difference in the interpretation of this event, for the revelation is considered by them to be of the greatest importance. Therefore, when someone whose views differ from theirs speaks about the events at Sinai, these thinkers tend to be quick to criticize. Borowitz is no exception, as the following passage shows:

> A 'modern' historian cannot tell us about what happened at Sinai because his very methodology prevents him from knowing a God who acts in history. But because he cannot detect this reality with his specialized instruments does not yet mean that what the texts say took place did not take place. . . . The same is true of the contributions of the psychologist, the anthropologist, and other social scientists. They may tell us much about religious behavior; what they cannot assess is whether religion is true. Their very methodology (since it is empirical) prevents them from seeking to know God and hence they are incompetent to deal with the most vital of religious questions. They don't know what is 'real' because they cannot know it until they forsake scientific method for metaphysics.[11]

In his later writings, beginning noticeably in the late 1960's, Borowitz begins to use Freudian terminology with more regularity. I noticed a lessening of disparaging remarks, with more attention being paid to the sexual aspects of the work of Freud. Perhaps Borowitz was merely responding to things he heard around him as he had done a decade before. It was what attracted the attention of the public which also attracted the attention of Borowitz. By the late 1960's, in addition to the fact that psychoanalysis was a well-accepted phenomenon by Jews all across the country, there was an increasing degree of openness about and willingness to talk about sex. Since sexuality was a major concern of Freud, and had become a major concern of many Americans, it is not surprising at all that it should become a topic with which Borowitz was involved.

Whatever his motivation was, his attention turned more toward psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and ultimately he published a book on sex ethics[12] which was permeated with references to Freud, with very few of the references as negative or hostile as they had been in his earlier work. He himself speaks about shifting the focus. He is still not at ease with the social sciences and their work, but at least he is discussing them.

> To shift the focus from social to individual forces will not help. Psychiatry, the most helpful of the personal sciences, is having enough difficulty meeting its therapeutic responsibilities to be burdened with promoting ethics. Besides, its very methods militate against such a success. Behind the fearsome standards of human conduct, it discloses, is the fear of father. Let the neurotic subservience to a despotic superego dissolve, and authority can nevermore claim an unquestioned obedience. So today when men become emotionally involved in moral matters they wonder what unconscious factors have reasserted themselves and made them 'lose their cool.' True, now an autonomous devotion to ethics would be created that would be the most appropriate foundation for ethical living. That task, however, is more metaphysical than psychodynamic, and as much beyond the practical scope as the intellectual competence of psychiatry.13

In Choosing a Sex Ethic, rather than being the abstract existential theologian, he becomes the sex educator with a bias. Perhaps he feels that there is as much need for discussion of sexual mores and values as there is for discussion of theology. And perhaps he feels equally qualified to speak about both. It should be kept in mind that I am not discussing Borowitz's views on sex. It just happens that in discussing sexual ethics as a theologian, he bases much of his work on acceptance and rejection of Freudian theories. What becomes evident is that Borowitz feels that a vague reference to Freud will be sufficient to inform the reader of exactly what elements of Freud's thinking Borowitz is referring to. It is not so. His basic bone of contention would seem to

be with what he calls Freudian permissiveness. For example:

> The new, unanticipated social setting of the issue endows it with an immediacy our forefathers could not have known. The old fears connected with unrestricted sexual intercourse have now been substantially removed. Technology has conquered the threat of unwanted pregnancy or venereal disease, and changing values have made the loss of virginity less damning. Our culture is permeated on many levels with a Freudian interest in sex and the permissiveness of pleasure.[14]

Though it must be admitted that he qualifies this statement in the following footnote:

> . . . the statement by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, (entitled) Sex and the College Student, . . . faces the various problems of late adolescent sexual experience in a sensitive and responsible way. Yet the permissiveness potentially involved in the Freudian or post-Freudian understanding of man is subtly affirmed: 'Maturity of personality enhances the freedom both actively to enjoy sexuality and to choose and bear abstinence when it is necessary' (p. 110). Note that, while recognizing the alternatives available to freedom, it contrasts the positive 'enjoy' of the one with the 'bear' and 'when it is necessary' of the other. The point is slight but indicative. The assumption is that sexual activity is always desirable, though the social context is left open. That such an attitude is in evidence even here explains, a fortiori, why, among those who are less careful and far less responsible, Freud--generally unread and even more unheeded--becomes an excuse for urging more sexual activity of every sort.[15]

Borowitz's use of the terms "unheeded" and "unread" seems to imply that while he feels that he understands Freud, there are many who use and abuse Freud's theory, making it appear that they are giving license to promiscuous behavior. To my understanding Freud never states that simply because we recognize the existence of certain drives, we will act upon them. Even if we are fully aware of what drives, urges, and instincts we have, (which is rarely, if ever, the case), we are still subject to the laws, customs, and mores of the groups with which we live, and very few of these tend to be particularly permissive.

Borowitz continues with his exposition of what we have learned from Freudian psychology. "One of the things Freudian psychology has taught us is the extent to which sexual energy is linked to a person's childhood experiences. Maturity in other aspects of personality does not guarantee maturity in sexual reaction or desire. When we confront our sexuality, an otherwise well-hidden neurotic nature may emerge. As a result, if we find ourselves being tied in knots as we grow into an adult sex life (whether they take the form of a powerful push toward great indulgence or an equal impulse for complete withdrawal), we are not ready to discuss the ethics of sex."[16]

The first sentence of the preceding quotation is correct, and perhaps the next two as well. But how Borowitz draws the conclusion that, based on the information which he had just outlined, "we are not ready to discuss the ethics of sex" I do not understand. A total understanding of Freudian thought would not lead Borowitz to that conclusion. Rather, he would probably have decided that a person finding himself "tied in knots" would, indeed, be "ready" and would profit most from such a discussion while the matter was most important to him. The only qualification would be that someone competent ought to be present, if needed, to help the individual to confront the difficulties. That resolution of the problem is certainly not what Borowitz is suggesting. This is one area where it would appear that Borowitz and Freud are poles apart in their ways of solving such a problem.

This leads me to wonder, then, whether Borowitz might not have different perspectives on other elements of Freudian thought as well. He continues, in his book on sex ethics, by listing and discussing various alternative ethics, the first of which is "the ethic of healthy orgasm."

He says, "Some generalized Freudianism of this kind often serves as the theoretical basis for this first ethic. It might then go on to argue, in a step far beyond Freud, that adults need the continual experience of satisfying orgasm, which is the culminating expression of all man's sexual urges and desires."[17]

Since Borowitz says that it is a step far beyond Freud, it need not be discussed. But he has not made clear his understanding of what Freud said and meant. The implication of this is that what Freud wrote could well have had some influence on what Borowitz wrote. But just what that influence was, and how it was expressed, and even if there is anything recognizable from Freud's work in the things Borowitz discusses, are questions which, to me, remain unanswered.

He continues by saying, "Freud taught us there are no mistakes, only the expression of unconscious desires."[18] And that there is more sexual energy in our unconscious than our conscious selves perceive. Perhaps Freud was the first man in the social sciences to point this out. And perhaps not. But as Borowitz himself makes quite clear, "One does not have to be an orthodox Freudian to understand why there are always a certain number of people, married and unmarried, who claim to have used contraceptives, yet have unwanted pregnancies. . . ."[19] If one does not need to be an orthodox Freudian, (and I suspect that one need not be a Freudian at all in this case), then why does Borowitz bring him up? Freud did not invent sex. And he was not the only psychologist who ever talked about it. I would conclude then, that Borowitz feels that Freud has something important to say. The problem comes in Borowitz's interpretation of what Freud meant by much of what he said. It is true that Borowitz attacks those who, he feels, misinterpret Freud. But at the

same time, there appears to be an ambivalence on his own part which makes it rather difficult to judge the degree of real influence which might be present.

The last point that Borowitz makes with regard to Freud in the book on sex ethics sounds unambiguous. It may be, in fact, the most straightforward and unconfused statement that he has made so far. He says, ". . . (this) close indentification of human health with vigorous intercourse is certainly not Freud's idea. Despite the truth of the criticism that he tended to look at man almost exclusively in a biological way, he still knew that man was far more than a creation of sexual intercourse. Freud saw personality as a far broader phenomenon than that which genital activity indicated. The libido--basic source of sexual energy--may be channeled most directly into intercourse, but not to see it as the fundamental life-seeking drive which properly flows out into all man's activities is not to understand it at all. Thus, to place so much emphasis on direct sexual fulfillment is to make too much of the sex act as such and to see too little of what it means to be a whole human being."[20] Here Borowitz seems to be in full agreement with Freud, both literally and in terms of interpretation.

It is obvious that Borowitz is familiar with Freud's work. But it should also be obvious that Borowitz has very serious reservations about it. In an article on what Borowitz called the theology of pornography, he speaks of Philip Roth's book, Portnoy's Complaint, and the general gist of the book.

> In an age when discipline cannot be the major response of most people, when psychoanalysis cannot save though it can ennoble, Roth refuses to abandon man to feeling and drugs; to annihilation and Zen; to irresponsibility and pleasure chasing.21

Borowitz's attitude is quite clear. Psychoanalysis has its limits. I am not sure that he would say the same thing about theology. And, of course, there are bound to be psychoanalysts who would like to see limits put on theology too, just as there are even psychoanalysts who see limits in psychoanalysis. It would seem that (not unlike others), when it is convenient for Borowitz to use certain elements of the work and thought of Freud, he does so, assuming that his reader will acknowledge an expertise in the field of analytic theory. But when analytic theory does not suit his purposes, he not only chooses not to use it, but he disparages it as well. For example, the tone of the passages previously quoted has rarely been warm toward analytic theory. Occasionally it has been openly hostile. But in the material which follows, the tables are turned. Suddenly, Borowitz finds some, if not much, of analytic theory acceptable. A few examples should suffice to make the point:

> To get to know someone these days means to pay as much attention to his emotions as to his ideas, if not more. Experience and the psychologists have taught us that people are far more likely to act in terms of their childhood fantasies and youthful associations than in terms of their philosophy. We see that most clearly when they undertake a role such as teacher, parent, or rabbi. Now they are expected to say certain things--for example, that they love children, believe in experimentation and want to be flexible. We will worry about their competence if we do not hear them utilize some of the concepts we associate with the role. But a listener does not have to give a Rorschach test or conduct a psychoanalytic interview to be aware that there are varying emotional realities behind these phrases. Some possibilities move and arouse the person. Others are firmly shut off or are expressed only with resentment. One quickly learns to listen to professional people less in terms of what they say than in terms of what excites them. They may know all about what someone in their role should do, but one may count on their doing effectively only that which touches their emotions.
>
> The same is true in our personal life. Largely it is emotions that determine what we will do. My favorite current example--perhaps because it is so dramatic--is of

> a young Maoist friend. I came to know him in his Jewish period, when his devotion and piety were quite extraordinary for one brought up in a family estranged from Judaism in the usual middle-class way. However, his personal problems were sufficiently great that, despite his Jewish spiritual satisfactions, he undertook psychoanalytic treatment. He came to realize that he had espoused Judaism so seriously only as a morally acceptable means of unconsciously killing off his father, while creating in God the good father he felt he had never had. . . .[22]

Here, even though he says that one need not conduct a psychoanalytic interview to know certain things, he is not dismissing the procedure altogether. And granted, the young man in question became a Maoist. But rather than blaming psychoanalysis for the transition, as I would have expected him to do, Borowitz simply reports the findings of analysis, as objectively as an analyst would have done. At this point it would seem that Borowitz has made some sort of peace with psychoanalytic theory, or he may be mocking psychoanalysis, but, lest the reader think that the leopard has lost its spots, Borowitz appears, to my mind, to show his true colors in a statement which explains why he cannot ever totally reconcile his personal philosophy or theology with the analytical ones. He does so without apology, which is as it ought to be. He takes a position not unlike that of the behaviorists of today who find themselves at odds with the old school analysts. In effect he is saying that his school is new and is still defining its terms; that his school has marked some great successes, and that if we will just be patient, then in time, all the other schools will be shown to be hopelessly out of date.

> Normally we can tell what a person truly cares about by noting the emotional freight it carries in his life, what the psychiatrists call <u>affect</u>, . . . The distinction in the levels of selfhood shows up quite clearly as a modern psychiatric problem: the patient who has no desire to get well. . . . Our psychiatry, therefore, depends upon a com-

> mitment to a certain sense of life. It can work only if the patient, like the doctor, already values a self-affirming, world-accepting style and for the sake of better achieving it, is willing to undertake the arduous discipline of psychiatric analysis. . . . Gaining access to such depths in ourselves is not easy. Even on the first two levels, most people try to avoid thinking about their lives with any degree of rigor, and breaking through the defenses we erect against psychological insight is a major part of the psychiatric healing process. Yet philosophy is an old and honored activity, and in recent decades, Freud's teaching has been considered an invaluable therapy for the emotionally ill. By contrast, the existentialist analysis of what it means to be human is still coming into its own, having been established more as a literary than as an intellectual movement until our own time.[23]

And that is what the difference is. Borowitz himself put his finger on it. The difference lies in the fact that Freudian theory is generally strictly a deterministic one, whereas existential philosophy is primarily the opposite. It is reasonable to assume that this difference in approach to things in general could, and in this case, did, mark the line of division in the two men's approach to the condition of man.

Borowitz's final word on the subject seems to be one of paternalistic resignation. He speaks as though Covenant theologians en masse have broadened their perspectives to the point where they can say that psychoanalysis is not so bad--as long as the people who practice it and believe in it don't get too pushy. In other words, since it is so blatantly obvious as to just what the shortcomings of analytic thought are, and analysis itself is still struggling for success, we (the Covenant theologians), must be tolerant. After all, he, implies, it's really quite harmless anyway.

> Perhaps, then, instead of dealing with the factors which affect man en masse, we should look to the life of the individual for hope. Psychiatry has for some decades now been a major tool for freeing men from the crippling fanta-

sies of their infancy or rebuilding their lives shattered by later trauma. Today, with the old Freudian approaches expanded to include speedier and less impersonal forms of treatment, psychiatry may be even more effectively able to help the individual cope with the trials of contemporary existence. Yet, even if it could do that with reasonable consistency--although, alas, it apparently cannot--that is a far cry from providing men with ethical values that our society throws into question.

> The older psychiatry sought to adjust man to reality, generally the reality of his culture transformed by the psychiatrist's vision of what human nature was. But reality is just what is not clear to us. It is precisely the society and its values that need transforming. And it is certainly not clear that expertise in the dynamics of inner bondage equips one to deal with moral goals. Rather, many classic Freudians insisted that their work and theory were, as regards ethics, value-free. For them guilt existed only as a neurotic symptom. They did not believe there was such a phenomenon as responsible sin, and hence healthy, moral guilt. Anyone who can live in our society without a substantial sense of remorse--that is, anyone who is well adjusted and reasonably happy in our world--is, by that token, ethically deprived. Psychiatry would already be doing wonders for us if it could set us free from our emotional shackles. Considering the problems it has doing that, its proper therapeutic task, we should not expect it to go on to tell us what we should do with our maturity and freedom once we achieve them.[24]

I cannot help feeling that Borowitz wants and expects psychology, or psychiatry, or psychoanalysis, (he uses the terms interchangeably), to do things which they do not, by their nature, do. His field is theology, philosophy, and education. My question is whether, in a round about way, Borowitz isn't saying that philosophy, theology, and education have not succeeded in doing what he would like to see, i.e., the enactment and enforcement of a moral society, and therefore he is casting the challenge at the mental health sciences. Perhaps in a way, he is admitting defeat, or perhaps, possibly, that he knew from the beginning that his abstract venture could not succeed. In any case, it is clear that his use of Freud is based on a conception of what the average man thinks that analysis and analytic theory can do, whereas, in fact, these expectations are

neither realistic or true. My criticism is that any interpretation which Borowitz gives of Freud, and any influence which we might suspect in Borowitz's writings from Freud reflects the bias of a Covenant theologian. And whatever similarity they might have to the realities of Freudian thought is not much more than a cultural accident.

CHAPTER IV

RABBI RICHARD L. RUBENSTEIN

I could not think of a better introduction for the next thinker than one given by our last one. In 1967, addressing a group in London, Rabbi Borowitz spoke on the death-of-God theology which was currently being tossed around in theological circles. His description of the man's position was eloquent, if not very complimentary, and far exceeds anything I could have hoped to put into words about Rabbi Richard Rubenstein. Biographically first, the reader should note that Rubenstein has been the Charles E. Merrill Lecturer in the Humanities at the University of Pittsburgh, director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and chaplain to Jewish students. He is a contributing editor to Commonweal magazine and was a contributor to Commentary's Symposium on Jewish Belief. He was ordained a rabbi and received the M.H.L. (Master of Hebrew Literature) at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He received the degrees of S.T.M. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is currently on the faculty of the University of Florida at Tallahassee.

> . . . One Jewish spokesman has followed neither the approach from modern philosophy nor given us some mystic notion of history, nor tried to argue for a new humanism. I connect this distinctive stance with his Judaism. When one argues Death of God theology with a Jew, one soon hears a word which has not been mentioned so far--holocaust. Its symbol is: Auschwitz. . . . One learns a good deal about the difference between Jewish and Christian religious concerns when one recognizes that in all the writings of Mr. van Buren, Mr. Altizer, and Mr. Hamilton (until it was called to his attention by Rabbi Richard Rubenstein) the holocaust under Hitler was not mentioned. For a Jew, obviously, history, not philosophy, is the problem. Not some mystic notion of what happens in history but what

really happened; not some humanistic notion of what men might do, but what men really have done in this century is the Jewish starting point. Having seen what men can do to the point where we're not willing to trust God, are we going to welcome the end of ethics, are we going to trust men? That is why it seems to me that Rubenstein is yet a Jew, a Jew in the tradition of Job, though unable to carry on with Job's strength. Job believed in God. He didn't understand Him and wanted to argue with Him, but he remained engaged with Him. He remained involved and was finally, as many of us cannot yet be, penitent, humble and moved by the God who in all his trouble he came newly to know. Rubenstein cannot end that way, for in the course of the intellectual autobiography which he gives us in his treatment of this theme, he denies the God of the Bible. Jews, he notes, have always found God in history. Can we find God in the history which overtook our people in our time? Need I now repeat to you what must have been the history of your own life or those of your friends? How then can one believe in a God of history? So Rubenstein gives up believing in such a God. Perhaps he believes in something, but that is not something in itself. Rather it must be called a no-thing, an emptiness, a void which lies under all existence. He tries to find some comfort for this 'faith' in the fact that the Jewish mystics used to speak of God as 'Ayn Sof'--the endless. Of that which has no end, you cannot say anything, all of which sounds very much like Tillich and linguistic analysis, though in accents of an era long before either came upon the intellectual scene. Rubenstein is satisfied in all humility to rest there with his holy nothingness, yet follow much of Jewish law as a psychoanalytic desideratum for fallible man facing a demanding existence.

I confess I have certain respect for the courage of Rabbi Rubenstein's position. This is no cheap atheism, no sophomoric agnosticism which because of some professional sneer goes running to give up Jewish tradition. This believing unbelief comes out of the life blood of the Jewish people and its broken heart. Intellectually it is unanswerable. To the Jews who raise this question to you, can you respond? Can you say anything at all? Will any epistemological or metaphysical analysis, no matter how bright, mean anything? A Jew is too wise in life for that sort of thing.

And there we are, caught and locked in a paradox. If such terrible things happen, how can we believe in God? But if we do not believe in Him as the standard which transcends our human, bestial, animal inclinations and requires us to be much more than we would like to be, then why do we protest so much? We protest because we know we are more than what we see ourselves to be, that we must ever strive to be more than what we are, that human history cannot be allowed to go on as it has. God requires this of us, even that we

> quarrel with Him. Without God, we cannot explain our indignation. With God we cannot explain what happened. But given the choice, a Jew will give up explanations and prefer indignation, righteousness, challenge and action.[1]

With these words as an introduction to Richard Rubenstein, I hasten to point out that no other contemporary Jewish thinker of whom I am aware, has come out as this strong a Freudian. Beginning with an article in 1960 in The Reconstructionist, he has written autobiographically and lucidly of the influence which analysis and Freud's thought has had on him.

Rubenstein wrote his first article, entitled "Psychoanalysis and the Origins of Judaism" in 1960. It was through this article that he began what later became an irreversible trend in his writing, and which marks him as a true Freudian.

Many times in his writing, Rubenstein discusses anti-Semitism. One such statement is that "Sigmund Freud has suggested in Moses and Monotheism that envy of the Jew as the chosen of the Lord is an important component in anti-Semitism. This envy would seem to be exemplified in the Church's claim to be the true Israel."[2]

Another area which Rubenstein rehearses frequently is that of the primal crime.

> In our own times, the deicide theme has been examined by Freud, Dostoevsky, Sartre and others who have understood that the murder and/or displacement of God is mankind's most demonic fantasy.
>
> According to Freud, civilization and religion began with a 'primal crime' in which the father of the original human horde was cannibalistically murdered by his sons, in order to gain sexual possession of his females. The father proved more potent dead than alive. His son-murderers experienced intense regret at their terrible deed and tried consciously to suppress its memory. The unconscious memory of the deed continued to agonize the sons and their progeny, thereby causing the murdered father to be imagined as the Heavenly Father. For Freud, the supreme object of human worship is none other than the first object

> of human criminality. Freud maintained that a great deal that is irrational and opaque in the ritual and myth of both Christianity and Judaism can be traced back to mankind's unconscious memory of its earliest patricide and to the contradictory feelings of guilt and promethean self-assertion which the criminal deed engendered. In the sacrificial death of Christ, Freud saw a 'return of the repressed.' Mankind was compelled to repeat, at least symbolically, its original crime against God, while attempting to atone for the continuing feelings of guilt which that unconscious memory sustained.[3]

It is true that all Rubenstein does here is to paraphrase the material which Freud wrote. But the approach to it is quite different, as you can see already from the approach of Borowitz. Rubenstein is relating this material in a manner which leads me to believe, from the beginning, that Rubenstein believes that what Freud wrote was, and is, true.

As a contemporary Jewish thinker who is concerned with the condition of man, Rubenstein draws heavily on Freud for explanations of everything. Every conceivable area of concern and interest, as far as Rubenstein was concerned, could be located and examined in the light of Freudian thinking.

> Freud's myth of the origins of religion is less important in terms of what it tells about human history than in what it suggests about the agonies and conflicts which continue to beset mankind. Adult maturity is bought at a terrible price. Control of one's deepest instincts is the precondition for all men of their continuing participation in the social order. This is brought about with neither ease nor good will. Every society hangs precariously over the precipice of mankind's conflicting feelings concerning its instinctual life. There is something in all men which would destroy the slender fabric of personal and social control that makes civilization possible. If Freud's myth of original parricide tells us little about human origins, the myth intuits a great deal concerning the awesome ambivalence men feel toward those who symbolize authority and civilization. <u>The murder of God is an immensely potent symbol of man's primal desire to do away with his impediments to instinctual gratification</u>.[4]

As noted in the last chapter, Rabbi Borowitz was the man who coined

the phrase "Covenant Theology." It would not be correct to say that Rubenstein was the first Jew to be a death-of-God theologian. But his major premise is based on death-of-God theology, as the last sentence of the preceding quotation would indicate. It will become apparent that an approach to theology of this sort is not out of keeping with Freudian thought, and, in fact, fits in with it rather well, as will be shown later.

Freud made mention of the idea of the "return of the repressed" many times in his writings. Rubenstein says, emphasizing the death aspects again, "From a psychoanalytic point of view, the doctrine that the death of Christ atones vicariously for the sins of mankind is an example of the 'return of the repressed.'"[5]

One of the major areas of interest, as recorded by Borowitz in his discussing Rubenstein earlier, was that Rubenstein was very much concerned with the holocaust. In laying the groundwork for this major area of interest, he goes through an analysis of social psychology, using Freudian theory as the proof of his statements. In so far as these concepts are germane to this paper, I include them here:

> Sigmund Freud offered an awesomely prophetic analysis of the way in which groups are formed and individuals surrender their judgement and rationality to an all-powerful leader.[6] Freud pointed out that men permit themselves cruelties and immoralities as members of cohesive groups which they do not normally allow themselves as individuals. He maintained that intensification of affect and diminution of intellectual functioning are traits which radically distinguish the behavior of groups from that of normal individuals. In group behavior, there is a regression to the primitive, illogical, magical thinking and the immediate satisfaction of drives which characterizes the world of the infant. This remains an archaic inheritance of the unconscious throughout life. When the going gets rough, the sleeping infantile monster awakens to its career of destruction and cruelty. Freud maintained that identification with and absolute submission to the will of the leader (Führer) is a third decisive aspect of group behavior. Writing shortly before

> Hitler was to compose the murky pages of Mein Kampf in Landsberg Prison, Freud suggested that unquestioning loyalty to the leader and the identification of moral standards with his will were indispensable features of group behavior. He maintained that the group members identify the leader with their own ego-ideal. Since the ego-ideal is normally regarded as that mental faculty to which is ascribed self-observation, moral conscience, and censorship, the result is the complete suspension of the individual's normal moral judgment and an identification with the morals of the leader. . . . Elsewhere in Freudian literature, the ego-ideal is more or less identified with the superego, the faculty of criticism and moral judgment which makes for moral compliance in the individual. It derives from the introjection of parental authority in the psyche of the individual. For Freud, God is the projected superego of the community. . . .[7]

Likewise, in passages where Freud is not mentioned by name, it is clear that the patterns of thinking and the results achieved can only be products of Freudian thought. In a brief preface to chapter five of his After Auschwitz, Rubenstein speaks of his own feelings about certain elements in religion. I reproduce them here to demonstrate how much his own work sounds like that of Freud.

> I have come to believe that the archaic elements in religion are often the most meaningful. We need not be enslaved to them because we recognize their abiding significance. I do not see man as capable of much improvement through homiletic exhortation, but rather, as a creature of inescapable conflicts which he but barely understands. He cannot abide the very disciplines and limitations he recognizes as absolutely necessary for his own preservation. He needs the drama and the consolation of religion as much to share his inevitable failings as to be encouraged to further striving.
>
> Sacrifice is the drama of man's hatred of God and his ultimate submission to Him. Men cannot come into the sanctuary and declare to God, 'I hate You and would destroy Your order if I could.' They can achieve catharsis by symbolically acting out that hatred through ritual violence against the sacrificial victim without even being consciously aware of what they are doing. I suspect that almost all sacrificial victims are ultimately surrogates for God, if not the symbolic presence for God himself. In sacrifice, we overcome God and, at the very same moment, we submit and recognize his inevitable victory.[8]

Rubenstein also ventures into areas where Borowitz had no interest. Not once did Borowitz ever discuss the Oedipal conflict. But Rubenstein says, "Psychoanalysts have tended to see the Scriptural demand that the first-born of men, cattle, and field be devoted to, or redeemed from, God's grasp, as an example of the acting out of the Oedipal conflict."[9] "This perspective has the virtue of recognizing how deeply rooted the Torah is in the actual dilemmas of personal existence. Nevertheless, in formulating its insights in terms of the Oedipal metaphor, the psychoanalytic school seems to have lost sight of a deeper reality. It is not merely the first-born of men which must be redeemed or devoted; the first-born of all fruitfulness stands in a special relation to the Holy Abyss. (Ex. 13:11-16) Is this not another attempt to appease the Earth-Mother with the first portion in the hope that men will be allowed safely to retain the remainder? The holiness of God knows neither masculinity nor femininity; it knows only life, fecundity, death, mystery, and wonder."[10]

Another area of particular interest to Freud was that of dreams. He wrote a book entitled The Interpretation of Dreams,[11] which was devoted entirely to the exploration of the symbolism and understanding of one of man's most puzzling and ubiquitous phenomena. Rubenstein, as one would by now expect, discusses Freud's findings in this area in terms of religion.

> The insights of depth psychology have been especially helpful in offering us a new understanding of the significance of religion. A century ago the seemingly irrational aspects of religion were either accepted by the faithful without insight or dismissed by the skeptical as meaningless. Today we understand that irrational phenomena in religion, as in other spheres of human activity, are meaningful, purposeful, and goal-directed. They express some of the deepest and most important feelings we

> experience as human beings. The key to our new understanding lies in a distinction implicit in Freud's work on the interpretation of dreams. I refer to the distinction between the latent and the manifest content of fantasy productions. While the manifest content of dreams frequently lacks coherent meaning, an understanding of the associations the dream symbolism elicits usually reveals that its latent content expresses some unconscious fear or wish of the dreamer. Freud's insights about dreams were quickly extended to other types of fantasy production, including myths, legends, and religious beliefs. While their manifest content frequently made little sense, their latent content was understood to give expression to unconscious feelings concerning our most significant life-experiences. Freud had spoken of religion as a group neurosis. He tended to regard religious belief as a group phenomenon which paralleled neurotic strivings in the life of the individual. At one level this disparaged religion; at another level, Freud's suggestion pointed to the degree to which religion reflected the deepest fears, aspirations, and yearnings of the individual and the group. As Ernest Jones has commented, although Freud ceased to believe in the <u>historical</u> truth of religion, he never ceased to believe in its <u>psychological</u> truth. The modern Jew has lost faith in the historical justification of his faith. The psychological justification offers the most fruitful path for a contemporary rationale for Jewish belief and practice.[12]

Rabbi Borowitz had found fault with Rubenstein on the grounds that Rabbi Rubenstein had done away with the historical supports for Jewish belief. It is Rubenstein himself who says that it was not he, himself, but Freud who simply no longer believed in the historical truth of religion. That did not necessarily mean that there was no historical truth in religion; just that Freud did not believe in it. Rubenstein affirms his right to believe the same thing. Evidently, based on something of which I am unaware, Borowitz denies that right.

Rubenstein concentrates his attention on some of the most troublesome problems of the contemporary thinker: guilt, anxiety, and fear, all in terms of the existentialistic-deterministic dichotomy. While it is entirely possible that the conclusions he reaches are confusing and unsettling, he makes clear the problem. And at one point, he makes it

sound almost as though Freud were an existentialist! Rabbi Borowitz would hardly have come to the same conclusion. Rubenstein says:

> Tillich's analysis of anxiety rests on Heidegger and, in the final analysis, on Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard stresses an aspect of anxiety which seems to anticipate Freud. Kierkegaard calls Angst a 'sympathetic-antipathy,' by which he means that we are drawn to the very condition we fear even as anxiety helps us to ward it off. Thus, Urangst is not only man's condition and primordial reaction to his ultimate nothingness. The mystic yearning for a return to the Godhead, Tillich, Kierkegaard, and Freud all point to the same existential condition. Man's selfhood is a delicate fulcrum balancing those forces which would restore him to sameness with the cosmos and those forces which preserve his separate individual identity. The same critique of existence is implied in the mystical creation myth that is found in modern writers. The theme is perennial. The religious myth may lack scientific warrant. Nevertheless, it is, psychologically speaking, very true. As a matter of fact, in its religio-mythic form it calls forth a far greater emotional response than when expressed conceptually in its non-religious forms. The unconscious was not invented by Freud. The basic responses of human beings to their condition were dealt with long before the twentieth century. Religious myth expresses many of the most abiding concerns of human beings in every generation in a form that can be understood by people of all levels of intellectual attainment. In all ages religion has addressed itself through myth and ritual to such questions as 'What is my origin? What is my destiny? How can I be cleansed of my guilt? What are the meaning and purpose of life?' These questions are of ultimate concern. The fact that myth and religious symbol no longer are regarded as true at the manifest level is entirely irrelevant to their central function, which is to give profound expression to our feelings at the decisive times and crises of life.13

Rubenstein evidently also subscribes to Freud's dichotomy of the pleasure principle versus the death principle. He says that "Freud in Beyond the Pleasure Principle stresses the fulcrum character of life which is inextricably bound to the dialectic tensions of eros and thanatos, and in which thanatos is ultimately victorious. There is one vital difference between the mystics and Freud. Freud, and in a sense all moderns, would say that the human predicament has 'no exit' save death. For the

mystic there is always hope for ultimate reconciliation with God by a return to the ground of being. Nevertheless, the critique of life in the here and now is very much the same in the mystics and the moderns. Both see the human predicament as broken and alienated, and destined to terminate in the nothingness out of which it has arisen."[14]

The more one reads of Rubenstein, regardless of whether one agrees with his position or not, the more one comes to feel that if Freud had had any real warmth toward religion, other than in a clinical sense, he might well have said the very things which Rabbi Rubenstein says. Continuing in the same vein, that is, of the two dichotomies: pleasure principle versus death principle, and existentialism versus determinism, he summarizes his work up to this point, and lays the foundation for his later death-of-God discussions:

> As Freud understood in Civilization and Its Discontents, civilization is bought only at the price of an enormous and perhaps an insupportable, degree of repression. Contemporary apocalyptic visions of an end to repression, such as those of Marcuse, Norman Brown, and Altizer, provide no means of altering in adult life those archaic instrumentalities of repression which become operative long before the child is aware of them. Psychoanalysis is non-repressive only insofar as it liberates the individual from neurotic elements of repression which are realistically irrelevant to his adult activities. There is, however, a renunciatory side to psychoanalysis; it arises less from ideology than from a need for realism in meeting the demands of the social process. Psychoanalysis leads to the acceptance of the realistic limitation of infantile yearnings as much as to the rejection of neurotic repression. Altizer must do more than interpret freedom as a dialectic entailment consequent upon the death of the Law-giver. He must spell out what he means by freedom as well as how it becomes operative. At least Cox sees freedom as a potential consequence of the anonymity and mobility of the urban metropolis. However, even Cox refers primarily to adult, conscious freedom of choice. He says little concerning the framework of repression which is built into the human being almost from the moment of birth and which is indispensable in view of the long period of dependence within the bosom of the family required for nurture and growth. It is

> simply not true that if God is not dead all things are permissible. The structure of human reality is itself inherently limiting and frustrating. If there is to be any kind of society, it will have to be a somewhat renunciatory society. One cannot ignore Freud in searching out the meaning of the death of God.[15]

Lest this preceding material not be considered conclusive enough to demonstrate the degree to which Rabbi Rubenstein is, indeed, operating under the influence of Sigmund Freud and his school of psychoanalytic thought, I should like to point to the fact that Rubenstein has written a complete book on the subject of The Religious Imagination, which he has subtitled: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Jewish Theology. Rather than going into this book in detail,[16] an exercise which would be tedious and repetitive, I should like to say that to my mind it is a brilliant work, most of whose conclusions have been presented in Rubenstein's other writings, but never gathered together under one cover as they are in this text. The books of Freud's which Rubenstein refers to in The Religious Imagination, and which cover the gamut in the psychoanalytic approach to religion and civilization are: Totem and Taboo, Civilization and Its Discontents, The Future of an Illusion, Moses and Monotheism, The Ego and the Id, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, The Problem of Anxiety, and The Interpretation of Dreams.[17] In addition, specific themes, such as Freud on Rabbinic legend, on the origins of Judaism, on the Oedipal conflict, on parricide, on castration, on sacrifice, on incest, on dreams, on Adam and Eve, and on sin, are all fully covered by this text. Needless to say, the mere fact that Rubenstein wrote such a book, and the fact that what has been said so far would indicate that Rubenstein is largely in agreement with Freud on most points, would lead me to say that he certainly has been

most strongly influenced by Freudian thought.

The other question which immediately comes to mind is in terms of the extent to which this influence will be felt by those who come into contact with Freud through the writings of Rubenstein.

First, it must be realized that Rubenstein is still alive and writing. But he is not an ivory tower scholar. He is actively involved in the academic community, where his work is constantly read and re-read. He is lecturing and counseling, preaching and teaching, so that his word and thought reach many more than would be reached by the work of a man long since dead.

Second, his work does not cover only theology. While it is true that his earlier work dealt mostly with theology and psychoanalysis, he, like Borowitz later, must have decided to apply the information which he had amassed to very contemporary and pressing social and political issues. The material which follows is based on later material of Rubenstein's, material which is itself based on his earlier theological and psychoanalytic writings. The areas in consideration will be sex and culture, civilization in general, and Jewish-Christian political and religious considerations.

Beginning with the basic questions of morality in terms of sexuality, Rubenstein returns to the theme of the repressive nature of society. He questions some of Freud's observations, but, not unexpectedly, returns to the fold quite quickly.

> Contraception has also rendered questionable some of Sigmund Freud's most important observations on the relation between sex and culture. In Civilization and Its Discontents Freud expressed the belief that the growth of a complex social structure would probably lead to a heightened individual repression. Freud tended to regard the demands of civilization as inimical to human biological and psychological fulfillment. He feared that the

> repression induced by civilization might lead to a destructive explosion of the frustrated energies and the possible destruction of the social order. Today this thesis appears doubtful. Sexual hedonism has not been frustrated by civilization. On the contrary, technology has made sexual freedom practically if not psychologically feasible for the first time in human history. It is altogether likely that no human invention will have so revolutionary an impact on personal existence as the pill and the coil. No technology can abolish the psychological ground for sexual repression. Nevertheless, no religious community can ignore the overwhelming fact that medical technology has largely abolished the most important practical justification for the postponement of sexual gratification by consenting adults.[18]

It should well be noted here that in the last chapter, Rabbi Borowitz had called Freud's ideas permissive. It seems clear that in reality just the opposite was true. As Rabbi Rubenstein shows, Freud had indicated that man's desires are for a free expression of his sexual urges, but that society generally effectively prevents this free expression from taking place. Freud also indicated that he expected this to continue, whereas Borowitz seemed to feel that Freud meant that it should not continue, and that Freud was advocating irresponsible and loose living. From what Rubenstein gleans of Freud's writings, it seems most unlikely that this was the case.

Rubenstein draws a comparison between Thomas J. J. Altizer and Norman Brown in their responses to contemporary culture, not agreeing totally with either one, but not completely disagreeing either. Following are some important excerpts from the passage in Morality and Eros where this comparison takes place. Notice that Rubenstein, a death-of-God Freudian theologian, sides at times with both men, and at times with neither. What ties them together is the Freudian way in which Rabbi Rubenstein examines them in light of his own thinking.

> If Camus represents an apollonian response to contemporary culture, Thomas J. J. Altizer and Norman O. Brown

represent dionysian responses. Altizer is a death-of-God theologian. Brown utilizes psychoanalytic categories to express his meanings. Altizer claims the death of God is implicit in the original message of Christianity and that Christianity's greatest promise is a humanity free of every repressing moral limitation. . . . Altizer's theological exploration of radical freedom has been strongly influenced by Brown. There is one crucial difference. Brown utilizes the insights of Sigmund Freud in his call for a total end to sexual repression. He has written what the editors of Time have called one of the 'in' books ot the sixties, Life Against Death. Few contemporary thinkers have been as influential as Brown in encouraging the new sexual permissiveness. Brown's Freud is not the apollonian Freud. His is the dionysian Freud who celebrates the passion and even the madness of bodily craving. As Marx sought to turn Hegel on his head, Brown would assuredly turn Freud upside down. Unlike Altizer, Brown has little to say about the death of God. He is convinced that nonrepressive freedom, especially in the sexual sphere, would involve practically no limit were it not for human neurosis. Brown is the intellectual apostle of unrestrained sexual freedom. . . . The human infant is exempt from the harsh limitations of reality far longer than any other animal. This moratorium exaggerates and distorts its contradictory tendencies toward loving union with the world and toward individuation and separateness. As a result, the natural balance between life and death is upset. The child is unable to accept his own death. Elsewhere in nature the hour of birth is truly the hour of death. Animals are able to live and finally succumb to death without agonizing, neurotic conflict. Human existence is characterized by futile attempts to create institutions which offer men the illusion they will not die. No other source finds death a source of conflict. Only man is neurotically discontent with himself. Animals can, of course, be made neurotic by man. In nature ripeness is all. Scarcity may impede gratification among animals, but animals exhibit no counterpart of man's nonfunctional self-repression. . . . To Brown, the true Garden of Eden is our infant paradise of polymorphous perverse sexuality. . . . He would reverse Freud. Instead of saying, as Freud did, where the id is there the ego shall be, Brown insists that the ego must be dissolved in the id.[19]

Again turning his sights toward the opposing pulls of eros and thanatos, Rubenstein shows why aggression has been considered undesirable by some thinkers. At the same time he shows how it is inevitable, a necessary byproduct of the civilization in which we live. "Sigmund Freud believed that aggression is a derivative of the death instinct. The origi-

nal objective of the death instinct is to return the organism to the inanimate state that preceded existence. The death instinct is countered by the life-preserving instincts. These deflect the death instinct. They turn it outward, away from the self. According to Freud, aggression is the death instinct externalized and directed toward the outside world. The Freudian perspective implies that aggression is ineradicable, that the individual has only the melancholy choice of aggressing against himself or finding suitable external targets. Freud's view, linking agression to thanatos, also leads to the conviction that aggression is largely pathological and destructive. This is not a necessary consequence of Freud's position. Nevertheless, his conception of aggression has led some of his followers to regard aggression as fundamentally undesirable."[20]

Aggression, as everyone knows too well, is one of those words which inflame the patriotic zeal of thousands. It is often a political word, used as a rallying cry about a geopolitical neighbor who may have encroached on a border. To Freud, as to Rubenstein, aggression meant something else. That is not to say that the first meaning of the word was not part of their vocabularies too. Rather, they expanded its meaning, trying to take in other shades of meaning of the word aggression. At stake was Freud's view of civilization, and the future of civilization. Rubenstein draws a clear distinction between the conception of what civilization is and what it should be, both for Marxists and for Freudians. The conceptions are quite different, and quite interesting. In particular, they shed some light on how Rubenstein understands Freud, and on how this understanding shines through in Rubenstein's own writings on the future of civilization as we know it.

> The vision of the utopians is in sharp contrast to both the experience of biblical man and the insights of Sigmund Freud. Biblical man did believe that human existence

> could be qualitatively restructured--but never by unaided human efforts. By insisting on God's decisive role in ultimately changing the human condition for the better, biblical man was also asserting that men could not by themselves abolish the negativities of their condition. That is precisely what contemporary secular utopians hold as an article of faith.[21]

One of the most important differences which Rubenstein points out is that between the goals of the Marxists and those of the Freudians. Even though they had much in common, says Rubenstein, ultimately they were poles apart. Stated in a very simplistic way, Marx was an idealist and Freud a realist. Differences of approach had to come from such differences.

> Freud's influence on contemporary thought has had a phoenixlike capacity to endure. He was never very hopeful about ameliorating the human condition. He saw man as a creature of conflicts, drives, and memories which could never be entirely resolved. He regarded the tension between the individual and society as to a degree irreconcilable. Freud's view of man was ultimately tragic. He regarded man as beset by his own compulsions and alien to a social fabric he could never dispense with. He viewed psychoanalysis less as a cure than as a way of insight into human limitation. The only salvation he offered was the salvation of insight and renunciation. He was a true heir to the Delphic Oracle. The spirit which enjoined men 'Know thyself' has always been at the heart of the psychoanalytic enterprise.
>
> For all their overlapping concerns, Freud and Marx represent two polarities within the modern sensibility. Marx, in spite of his searching analysis of alienation and political disorder, was largely a prophet and a dreamer. Unlike Marx, Freud was more interested in insight than change. Freud was profoundly anti-utopian. Although some change can occur in the insightful individual, Freud's expectations were exceedingly modest. Freud was also more interested in the past than in the future. He sought to help men diminish the crippling power of childhood conflicts so that they could realistically meet current needs. Freud's vision of the future ultimately holds only oblivion. Man is an offshoot of a process which will eventually dissolve the human adventure without a trace. For Freud, life possesses neither ultimate meaning nor hope.[22]

Rubenstein explains that this message of Freud is valuable only to men who are concerned with restructuring their own lives <u>before</u> they at-

tempt to transform society. He indicated that the psychoanalytic process attempts to elicit from the individual insight into how he can best meet his real needs in the world as it is. He said that psychoanalytic thought recognizes that many distortions of personality are socially determined. In this Freud's analysis is not far removed from that of the Marxists. Nevertheless, Rubenstein claimed that "the central thrust of psychoanalysis is toward personal insight rather than direct political action."[23] To pursue this point somewhat further might seem somewhat less than an absolute necessity. But I would submit that it is exactly this area of consideration which most seriously demands our consideration. For it is the application of Rubenstein's theology, combined with applied analytic theory, which is being spoon-fed to many Jews today, and which will most likely have a considerable effect on Jews in the years to come.

> Extended exposure to psychoanalysis is always a humbling experience for those who believe their first concern is to change the world rather than themselves. Psychoanalysis does not lead to unquestioned submission to society. It is more a question of starting with the one domain over which a man may have some real power--himself. By emphasizing the tension between man and society, as well as the human need for social structure, psychoanalysis leads men to recognize and, if possible, reconcile the profound conflict between individual desire and social constraint. Such recognition involves paying one's dues to society with least emotional cost so that one can carve out a sane private life in a not always rational world. Very seldom does an analyzed person become a political revolutionary. Normally he learns how to meet his own needs and the needs of those he loves as discreetly and realistically as possible. Obviously few people can submit to a course of therapy as protracted and as expensive as psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, one does not have to be analyzed to profit from Freud's insights.
>
> The Marxists claim that a sane private life is impossible under conditions of social alienation. They regard private solutions as immoral evasions. Freudians usually reject the Marxist attempt to change the individual by changing society as psychologically unsophisticated and, in any event, questionable.[24]

Basically, Rubenstein has been saying what he, having been influenced by Freud, thinks it takes to live in the world as we have it today. He said that "when Sigmund Freud was asked what he considered the most important capacities of the mature individual, he replied with deceptive simplicity that such an individual would have the ability to love and to work. By love Freud meant orgastically potent, mutually fulfilling genital love. By work he did not mean repressive labor or infantile games disguised as 'hard work.' The work Freud had in mind was non-compulsive, expressive labor. Most work can be expressive only when it is meaningfully integrated into the totality of one's life situation. Such work need not be uninterruptedly pleasant or even exciting. Few things in life are. It will, however, be understood by the worker to be in the service of his life and those he loves. In all likelihood no single formula can guide all men in determining the expressive labor uniquely appropriate to their life situations. Nevertheless, work is more than the way we 'make a living.' It is in very large measure our living."[25]

A final note from Rubenstein which combines the death principle with the long-term perspective on civilization, and still does not lead one to the conclusion that suicide is the only answer, seems almost impossible to expect. But this is what Rubenstein leaves us with.

> Sigmund Freud rejected faith in any unique goal or meaning to human existence. He saw organic existence as primordially inclined to seek a return to the inanimate condition out of which it had arisen. According to Freud, both the animate and the inanimate realism are ultimately linked by the common tendency of all things in the universe to return to the simplest equilibrium of the total cosmic system within itself. This meant that the universe would ultimately 'run down.' Freud observed that the goal of all life is death. Freud's doctrine in Beyond the Pleasure Principle is unrelieved by even a shred of Biblical hope. Nevertheless, as Norman O. Brown and others have noted, the Freudian

> doctrine has deep affinities with the great mystical systems in which the goal of all existence is to return to the divine ground out of which it has arisen.[26]

Attention now shifts to the last area of concern which has occupied Richard Rubenstein in his writings to date. He writes about the area of Jewish-Christian relations as seen in a psychoanalytic perspective. This, in itself was not a major concern of Freud directly, although Freud did comment on what he felt the relationship between Judaism and Christianity to be. Rubenstein's most recent book, entitled My Brother Paul, flies in the face of much that has been preached over the years, in that it discusses much more of what we have in common than of what separates us. The basis of comparison is, as might be assumed, Paul and the relationship which he and his teachings have had on the Jews until the present time.

Again, I stress the importance of material of this kind. In an age when ecumenism is preached and hatred is practiced, when war is still the norm and peace is light-years away, when Judaism is still persecuted by its daughter religion, Christianity, it is altogether fitting that close attention should be paid to any spokesman who would try to decrease the distance between the opposing groups. It is not idle ivory tower scholarship which prompts people like Rubenstein to pursue this kind of investigation. It seems reasonably clear that in time, the differences may, indeed, begin to fade, even if they do not disappear completely. And it is with such a thought in mind that I include his writing on this subject. All the more so, as well, because of the obvious and important influence of Freud which can be seen here too.

> According to Freud, the most influential Jew of the twentieth century, Paul, one of the most influential Jews of all time, 'was a man with a gift for religion,

> in the truest sense. . . . Dark traces of the past lay in his soul ready to break through into the regions of consciousness.'[27]

Anticipating the difference in the way the Jew believes and the Christian believes, and how this is reflected in outward behavior, Rubenstein becomes somewhat autobiographical. He says, "Freud has observed that 'even those who do not regret the disappearance of religious illusions from the civilized world of today will admit that so long as they were in force they offered those who were bound by them the most powerful protection against the danger of neurosis.' I came to the religious group as a solitary individual seeking a way out of personal distress. Freud's observations on the difference between the neurotic and the member of the religious group are very applicable to what happened to me: 'If he is left to himself, a neurotic is obliged to replace by his own symptom formations the great group formations from which he is excluded. He creates his own world of imagination for himself, his own religion, his own system of delusions, and thus recapitulates the institutions of humanity in a distorted way. . . .'"[28]

Rubenstein also calls Freud the twentieth century's most important secularized Jewish mystic, and claims that Paul prepares the way for him and anticipates his work.[29]

One of the most characteristic differences between Judaism and Christianity is in the celebration of the Eucharist. This element of ritual is a reflection of the psychoanalytic term "identification" and is related to it in the following way. "The 'corporeal solidarity' that Schweitzer described as the essence of Paul's Christ mysticism is analogous to identification as understood in psychoanalysis. Freud described identification as 'the earliest expression of an emotional tie with an-

other person.'[30] Freud also regarded identification as 'a derivative of the first oral phase of the organization of the libido, in which the object we long for and prize is incorporated through eating.'[31] In a certain sense all identifications have an element of psychic cannibalism about them. When we identify with a person for whom we long, that person is taken in and becomes a part of our ego."[32] Without calling Christians cannibals, Freud makes it quite clear that the celebration of the Eucharist is simply a symbolic form of cannibalism. This is not to say that Jews do not have rituals which could be interpreted in the same way, such as the eating of highly symbolic foods like bread and wine. But at this time, Rubenstein has nothing to say about that.

The concept of God in both Judaism and in Christianity is that of a caring and loving God. "In The Future of an Illusion, Freud interpreted the God-who-cares largely as a projection of the child's encounter with his parents at a time when they were regarded as extremely powerful. There is, however, an element in the construction of the image of the God-who-cares that Freud neglected but that is crucial to an understanding of Paul's interpretation of baptism. Freud also alluded to the 'family romance' in which a person has the fantasy that he is not really the child of his parents but the orphaned child of parents of higher estate."[33]

This leads to the question of taking into oneself more than just the Eucharist. "Freud argued that there was a profound psychological truth embedded in (the) conception . . . that the Lord's Supper as interpreted by Paul was in fact a dramatic reenactment of the moral catastrophe with which human civilization, religion, and morality commenced. Freud's attempt to reconstruct the origins of religion through a casual myth of

original parricide is enormously enlightening without necessarily being literally true. Freud's theory can help to illuminate our understanding of Paul, especially his interpretation of the Lord's Supper."[34]

Rubenstein tells us that "the distinction between Judaism and Christianity (is) in terms of 'the return of the repressed.'"[35] But he says, "It is my opinion that Freud was in error when he interpreted Christianity as a religion in which the father is displaced once again. Certainly in Pauline Christianity no such displacement takes place. As we have noted, the Jewish strategy of obedience to the Father has been altered to identification with the obedient older brother as Christianity's way of achieving a right relationship to the Father. Nevertheless, the fundamental issue remains the same in both religions: How does man achieve the right relationship with the Father? We are therefore compelled to seek for a somewhat different psychoanalytic understanding of Holy Communion than that suggested by Freud, although our explanation will be along Freudian lines."[36]

In an attempt to summarize Rubenstein's understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, his conception of the Eucharist within Christianity, and how psychoanalysis correlates with both, I quote three short statements from Rubenstein:

> There were, of course, major areas of disagreement between Freud and Paul, the most important being Freud's conviction that the Christian solution to mankind's religious problem was ultimately as illusory as was the Jewish solution. Nevertheless, by permitting the hidden memory of mankind's oldest and most intolerable offense to resurface, Christianity brought the possibility of the self-understanding of man a step closer to realization. Like other forms of revolutionary Jewish mysticism and messianism, the Christian 'return of the repressed' was a further stage on the road to psychological man, which culminated in the psychoanalytic revolution.[37]

> Freud regarded Holy Communion as a resurfacing of the archaic totem sacrifice within Christianity. Nevertheless, it is not at all certain that Freud's insights into the nature of the Eucharist apply to the ritual as it was understood by Paul.[38]

Rubenstein's final comment on Freud, Paul, and the Eucharist are as direct an interpretation of religious symbolism in terms of psychoanalytic theory as anything discussed thus far in this paper. It is interesting to note that, even when Rubenstein disagrees with Freud, either in whole or in part, he still uses Freudian theory as the basis for his disagreement.

> The perceptions of Freud and Paul concerning the Eucharist can be unified if we interpret the consuming of Christ's substance as the believer's way of uniting with the Son-as-victim in order to share in the Son's obedience unto death for the original crime against the father. . . . If Freud's myth presents an accurate psychological portrait, it was Paul's achievement to bring to the surface the persistent, latent sense of intergenerational strife and fear of retaliation that plagued Biblical man.[39]

Finally, Rubenstein brings up a question which I had never heard asked before. What was the possibility that the deity who really was important in these faiths was not the Father, but the Progenitrix? Taking this into consideration, Rubenstein concludes his current writing involving theology and Freudian thought. He says:

> Both Paul and Freud agree that civilization as we know it began with an original act of rebellion and that the deed was an attempt to snatch the prerogatives of the father. Freud is more specific than Paul in insisting that the sons desired to eliminate the Father altogether. Freud and Paul differ on the nature of the original crime. Freud maintained that the sons sought the sexual prerogatives of the Father; Paul insisted that Adam sought the omnipotent condition that belonged to the Father alone.
>
> Or did the prerogatives belong to the Father? Both Freud and Paul stress mankind's rebellion against the Father. Both have little or nothing to say about the strife with a female Progenitrix. Could it be that Freud and Paul were participants in a Jewish culture that maintained as

> one of its abiding elements of millenial continuity a fear of the female element in religion and culture which was so immense that both were silent about the religious significance of their feelings toward the parent who is the source of the oldest and most consuming of anxieties, the mother? Paul's silence is perhaps stranger than Freud's because he labored in a pagan world that had yet to suppress its female deities. Although Paul and Freud both avoided the religious problems involved in mankind's exceedingly complicated feelings about female deities and the human mothers they presuppose, Paul's analysis of the motives for mankind's original disobedience (i.e., the quest for a god-like omnipotence), uncovers an older and deeper level of reasons for intergenerational strife than does Freud's hypothesis that the rebellious sons were moved by sexual rivalry.[40]

Rubenstein concludes that Paul's final vision transcended even his own faith and offered a universal vision that was parallel to if not identical with the culminating wisdom of Freud's metapsychology, Jewish and Christian mystical theology, and oriental religion.

It is reasonably clear that one would have trouble finding a Jewish religious thinker today who was as deeply influenced by Freudian thought as is Rubenstein. While it is also true that already the death-of-God theology has fallen more and more out of favor, still there are enough people who see it in its broader perspectives that the vital parts of Rubenstein's message will not be lost. It is unlikely that people will distinguish from whom the thoughts have come, whether from Freud or from Rubenstein. Regardless, for the purpose of this paper, it is sufficient to know that the influence is felt and acknowledged, and will undoubtedly be carried on through time as long as the writings of Richard Rubenstein are on the shelves of libraries.

CHAPTER V

RABBI ARNOLD J. WOLF

Both this chapter and the next one deal with men whose work has been geared more toward people in congregational settings. Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf was, for some time, the spiritual leader of Congregation Solel in Highland Park, Illinois, and now serves as the director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. His congregational work in Highland Park was marked by exceptionally high enthusiasm from his congregants, more because Wolf served not as a preacher, but as an exemplar. Almost requiring participation as the dues one paid for membership in the congregation, he had a very active pulpit there which was known to be a bee hive of Jewish religious activity.

Now at Yale University he has taken it upon himself to bring the same approach to younger Jews, those who, for whatever reasons and for so many years, have felt themselves to be either above Jewish practice or simply not interested. It is my understanding that Wolf has almost singlehandedly sparked a Jewish renaissance on that campus.

Asked several questions about contemporary Jewish theology, Wolf's answers were as enlightening as they were provocative. To give some insight into the thinking of the man, and a perspective for his relationship to Freudian thought, I will restate these few questions and the general responses which Wolf gave.

The first question was "Are there basic theological criteria for

being a Jew? If so, what are they?" Rabbi Wolf contends that it is false to establish criteria for being a Jew. The essential criterion, he claims, is the existential act of <u>living</u> Jewishly. "The Jew is as the Jew does," and any "criteria that precede experience" are meaningless. His approach to the question is that of the religious existentialist.[1]

The second set of questions were as follows: "Are there practices which are incumbent upon the Jew? Can one validly draw a distinction between ritual and ethical commandments? Just what do we mean by mitzvah--commandment?" The key statement in Wolf's response to this question is ". . . the need of our time is the ethicizing of the apparently ritual and the ritualizing of the ethical." The commandments, he says, are functional in that they channel our deepest feelings and basic emotions. Whatever serves a human need and mitigates feelings of guilt is valuable, be it ethical or ritual.[2]

The third question was "What is the source, scope, and validation of religious authority in Judaism?" Wolf considers authority to be disclosed in the relationship between God and man expressed in prayer, study, and doing. He states that the Torah is not an ultimate authority in terms of literal imperatives but "a record of the Great Relationship." In this divine-human relationship, or encounter, we learn the will of God and respond to His will by the performance of <u>mitzvot</u>. To achieve genuine response, the Jew must be willing to involve himself in everything Jewish, and this includes <u>Halachah</u> and the <u>mitzvot</u>.[3]

With this brief background in mind, one can easily get the flavor of the kind of thinking which Wolf brings to a discussion. In a discussion on how to be a Jew, Wolf contributed, "Where Freud could point him (the Jew) ruthlessly back to Jewish anthropology, he (the Jew) prefers

the sentimental optimism of Erich Fromm."[4]

Wolf's interest in psychoanalysis is seemingly as clinical and objective as that of Borowitz. Both are existentialists, and both examine or relate to Freud and his thought on that level. But Wolf tries to explain, why "psychoanalysis is widely thought of as a 'Jewish science.' Indeed, Freud took pains to avert such a notion,[5] though he himself was, of course, the chief reason for it.[6] The enemies of depth psychology still dismiss it as peculiarly relevant to Jews. . . not only are many practitioners of the art, like the very first analyst, Jews by descent if not conviction, but there is a widespread conviction that the method, the spirit, and even the conclusions of psychoanalysis are para-Judaic."[7]

There have been writers who have claimed, as Freud himself did not, that Freud was a more self-identifying Jew than we are commonly led to believe. But it is a moot point. As Wolf says, "The Jewishness of Freud himself is debatable only by unnecessarily reductive definition. His ancestry and the impact of his ancestry on his deepest feelings are clearly and profoundly Jewish. His affinity for the Jewish style both mystical and rationalist is unmistakable. His newly emphasized prudishness together with his pioneering honesty in sexual matters is Talmudic.[8] To his fiancée, Freud promised that 'something of the core of the essence of this meaningful and life-affirming Judaism will not be absent from our home.'"[9]

In contrast to Borowitz, Wolf finds the essence to Freudian thought, and its greatest accomplishment to be in the "recovery of paradox. (Freud's) antiquarian interest in Moses, the Bible, and classical Hellenism served the purpose of creating new super-historical persons. His own blend of the ascetic (he ceased having sexual relations with his be-

loved wife when he was about forty-one)[10] with the permissive, the suspicious with the wholly accepting, his hatred of idols combined with a love of truth--all reveal the paradoxical man whose life work was the rebuilding of questions for a world where everything seemed about to be answered. Freud managed to make everything suspect by insisting that in the great human antinomies both sides were right. As Kant had shattered philosophical dogmatism in principle, Freud now made paradox the measurable essence of concrete human existence."[11]

Pursuing this train of thought farther, Wolf becomes quite specific, and in terms of his own frame of reference, explains Freud's position quite satisfactorily.

> We are the victims of an endless chain of circumstance which determines our most intimate choices, but therapy itself implies the power to break free. On each small issue Freud is pessimistic, realistic, bound. But with an optimism so long-range and touching that we must call it messianic, Freud breaks free of ultimate constraint. Today it is always difficult, but 'optimism was Freud's faith in the day after tomorrow.'[12] The power of Death (Thanatos, personified and capitalized) is everywhere, but love (Eros, a God as well) will not be forever denied. The needs of man are set permanently against the awful power of civilization, but it is out of such conflict that humanity is achieved. If Galileo showed the world we are not masters of the universe and Darwin that we are not masters of the world, Freud proved that we are not masters even of ourselves. We are, rather, the uneasy mediators of everlasting struggle, the victims and inheritors of a liberating and stultifying paradox.[13]

Wolf finds the clearest expression of this paradoxical situation in psychoanalytical anthropology. He says that Freud gives no simple answer to the question, "Is man good or evil?" He gives Freud credit for opening to us the greatest paradox of all--ourselves. In 1932 Freud wrote, "I have told you that psychoanalysis began as a therapeutic procedure, but it is not in that light that I wanted to recommend it to your interest, but because of the information it gives us about that which is

of the greatest importance to mankind, namely, his own nature, and because of the connections it has shown to exist between the most various of his activities."[14] "The proper study of analysis is man."[15]

Wolf agrees with Philip Rieff in reminding us that "although he (Freud) was not a believing Jew, he remained a psychological one," for "grey, grim despair" was only half his knowing. Freud was his own ideal Jew."[16] He foundered on the paradoxical God of Judaism, but he had rediscovered the Jewish doctrine of man.[17]

It would seem that Rabbi Wolf has taken a slightly unorthodox approach to Freudian thought in emphasizing the idea of paradox to such an extent. Yet it is not unreasonable to take his ideas as an attempt to synthesize his existentialist approach to things with what I would heretofore have called a strict deterministic approach. The potential in this seeming paradox is worth exploring further. Wolf certainly does not deny the basic tenets of analytic theory. He seems to be extending them in unexpected but not impossible directions.

"Freud," he says, "writing at the turn of the twentieth century, was shocked at the evil he found in man. Rabbinic Judaism, after a millenium of going to school with biblical anthropology, is beyond being shocked. And modern Judaism, disciple of both Akiba and Dr. Freud, may succeed to a new understanding of man."[18]

Wolf's exploration of the relationship between Freudian thought and Rabbinic thought is not new, but is is lucid and worth reproducing here:

> In an important paper, 'Eighteen Hundred Years Before Freud: A Re-evaluation of the term Yetzer Ha-ra,' Harris H. Hirschberg attempts to correlate the rabbinic idiom with the Freudian.[19] The Freudian Id, like the yetzer ha-ra, the Evil Inclination, of rabbinic literature, is

> part of man's biologically inherited psychic apparatus. It is tied to the body, driven to seek infinite gratification for its instinctual needs. The Ego, on the other hand, is as Freud himself said, 'anthropos himself,' corresponding to the Good Inclination, yetzer tov, which represents the human self struggling for mastery over unconscious libidinal power. Using fear (anxiety) as its method, says Hirschberg, the Good Inclination, like the Ego, checks instinctual wishes which seek to prevent its fulfillment. The yetzer tov displaces the yetzer ha-ra ('where Id was, shall Ego be!') and turns it, at a price, into selfhood and social usefulness. Man is told, in the rabbinic literature, not to repress his yetzer ha-ra, but to woo it, to sublimate it, to master it. And so Freud sometimes demurely suggests that in manipulating the Id, man becomes more (and more unhappy) than his libido. For both Freud and the rabbis, says Hirschberg, the Id is more than sexuality narrowly conceived, but is explicitly sexual anyway and only thus ultimately creative. The constant chastening of man's animality, he finds, is the work of Torah.[20]

Wolf says that the idea is good, but that the parallelisms might have to be modified slightly after inspecting the appropriate rabbinic sources. He does not expect, like Hirschberg, to equate what is disparate, but to certify that the Jewish doctrine of man is both instructive and important to post-Freudian thought. With some scrutiny Wolf finds that "the nature of the good yetzer is thus very like the ego of Freud. It is the middleman between the primeval libidinal urge and the commandments given from the superego. It is linked as subject to the id throughout childhood and throughout that lifelong childishness which is the human condition. It seeks to internalize and thus transcend the dictates of conscience and subvert the paralyzing anxieties of chaotic lust. It seeks to harness the sexual life in the service of the self. It starts poor and yet may become a king."[21]

Wolf also recognizes, however, the pessimistic aspects of what he is saying, and apparently is not afraid to face them. Citing Norman O. Brown and the rabbis, which is, in itself, a rather odd combination,

Wolf explains the centrality and irrevocability of the conflict between Love and Death.

> As Brown has proved, Freud's theory of instincts is irredeemably death-oriented. What makes man more than his id is simply his ability to get sick.22 Another word for the unconscious power is Thanatos, Death. This 'Mythical being' (Freud) is at the root of man's biophysical nature. The instinctual dualism which underlies that conflict which is life is the war between Love and Death, or as the rabbis put it, between Torah and Yetzer. It cannot be resolved this side of Heaven. 'The Torah is a stone, and the Yetzer hara is a stone. The stone shall watch the stone.' 23 And the rabbis know, too, the Freudian name of the Evil Power: 'Resh Lakish said: Satan, the evil impulse and the Angel of death are all one.'24 Man's evil temperament is greater than he; it is one of the metaphysical surds. It is, in the end, his ultimate destruction. Thus one thinks about the Yetzer with terror and despair. Sublimation is finally insufficient; repression is evasive but not ultimately effective; death alone atones for all man's sin. . . . Only God can make life out of libido.25

With this pessimistic attitude darkly hanging over mankind, Wolf makes a turn toward the mystical. Here, too, he draws the parallel between the elements of Freudian thought which are appropriate to mystical understanding, the most important of which is the idea of a unity with nature or deity. Here, too, Wolf draws from Buber, another existentialist, and still does not find the teachings of Freud incompatible with his thinking.

> The dualism which infects and constitutes human biology is transcended only by God's unification of the world. Freud's pessimism is Jewishly penultimate; the final truth is the dialectical unity of opposites in God.
>
> Thus, healing is strictly and precisely, 'meeting,' in Martin Buber's phrase. As dialogue with the therapist and with the world is the essence of psychoanalytic therapy, so is dialogue with God the final act of self-understanding and self-transformation. The divorce of spirit and instinct is a picture of the separation of man and man, of man and God. Psychoanalysis foreshadows redemption.26

Continuing in the mystical vein, Wolf elaborates his comparison of the ineffability of the Buberian confrontation with that of the analytic

experience. Unity is the goal, and Unity is God. In modern parlance, it might be called "getting your thing together."

> The analytic experience is ineffable; so is the confrontation of God and man. To an apikoros, an outsider, religious phenomena are nonsense. So too, the therapeutic moment is objectively incredible. Freud insisted, at the end of his life, that only by analysis and reanalysis could the therapist discover that what he was doing was not useless or worse. Only by the alchemy of transference could a patient find healing. If there is no transference, the analytic procedure is ungainly and impotent. A dialogic act in which man seeks to transcend himself is at once incongruous and indispensable.[27]

Wolf's summary statement on the subject sounds almost trite. But reflecting on what he has said which leads directly up to it, it is based on solid reasoning and on a cogent understanding of the material he brings to bear on it. While one might find room to question some of the inflexible-sounding pronouncements, the gist of the following thought is very much in line with that toward which Wolf has been building: a unity principle which integrates the diverse elements of the world in which we live, and that unity, again, is God.

> The temperaments of man are sublunar. Only God is the arbiter of eternity. Man is torn, aspiring, passionately in need. But God is One, however passionately concerned. Therapy is a metaphor for faith which, itself, is a metaphor for messianic wholeness. Psychoanalysis looks cooly and pessimistically at every past and present. But it truly foreshadows an incredible healing at last to come. 'On that day the Lord shall be One, and His Name shall be One.'[28]

Wolf wrote a short book in 1968 entitled, What Is Man? In it he summarizes the points which I have set forth earlier. Taking into consideration the pessimism of Freud, the existentialism of Buber, the dichotomies of Jewish theology and Christian thought, he synthesizes the entire mass into a good-tasting soup, which is not only potable, but is nourishing at the same time.

> The dehumanization of man has been a terrible self-fulfilling reality in our years of holocaust and their aftermath. We are thrown back on the realism of the Jewish estimate of man. This estimate is documented in modern times in Sigmund Freud's subtle and decisive doctrine of man, in which Jewish categories are recovered and the Jewish dialectic brought alive. Trained as a physiologist and physician, Freud understands that man is an animal, his body an animal body, and his spirit coordinate with, if not simply another name for, his body. He refutes medieval Christianity's pretensions of man's spirituality and European rationalism's exaltation of human reason. He admits no either/or; man is <u>both</u> body and psyche, <u>both</u> good and evil, <u>both</u> irrational and rational, <u>both</u> sick and curable. Freud teaches us that dangers beset the self on every side; it is hard to be human. Sanity is in permanent crisis. Selfhood is man's rarest achievement. Love and death compete for his loyalty. Man's sexuality, construed by Freud as the instinct for life and pleasure, offers man an Eden of the imagination from which the demands of reality inevitably expel him. Love leaves us conflicted. And death, it turns out, is not only our destiny, it is also our deep human wish.
>
> Every death is a kind of suicide; no man survives his own drive to die. Therapy is, in principle at least, interminable because neurosis is indestructible. The self is a battlefield on which is fought out every primitive skirmish; the war goes on, and if it is never won, neither need it ever be wholly lost. That is what Freud said about man, and, despite his imitators and revisers, no one has known as accurately as he the nature of twentieth-century man.
>
> But there is more to be said--and it is Martin Buber who amplifies Freud. To know oneself is, as Freud had already guessed, to be known by another. Indeed, one only becomes a self in interpersonal encounter. But this means that the id and the ego themselves are not just given; they are somehow made. The unconscious is not, Buber insists in his great book, <u>The Knowledge of Man</u>, simply dredged up; it is created. The inner machine of humanity is not fundamentally inherited. It is produced out of numberless meetings or dialogues with other men, and the one great meeting with God which lies at the center of them all.[29]

Thus Wolf concludes his comments on Freud and psychoanalysis. It is easy to see the degree to which his thinking has been influenced by Freudian thought, for a great part of the material which was presented here is simply an attempt to make Wolf's ideas mesh with Freud's. It is

also worth noting that Wolf finds a much more unconflicted way of mixing Freudian determinism with Buberian existentialism than did Borowitz.

My feeling is that both Borowitz and Wolf will be read extensively over the years, as both are well-respected spokesmen for their forms of Jewish theology. It will also depend to a considerable degree on the charisma of the men as to which one will get the greater following. Both speak frequently away from their respective places of employment, and before varying types of audiences. There is no doubt that the Freudian elements in their own philosophies will come through to a certain extent. It seems likely that the influence of Freud will come through more strongly from Wolf, whose entire orientation is accepting of Freud's approach to things, and that Borowitz will continue to express his feelings about Freud, but without the enthusiasm of a devotee like Rubenstein who is a proselytizer for the Freudian cause.

CHAPTER VI

RABBI LEVI A. OLAN

This, the fourth and last of the contemporary Jewish thinkers whom I will examine, is a departure from the preceding ones. Levi Olan is not a full-time college or university professor. True, he is a scholar, and has taught at various places from time to time, for example, at Rice University. But his efforts have been concentrated in pulpit work, for over forty years, and it was my feeling that this would give the opportunity for a different perspective than that of the ivory tower-nik.

Levi A. Olan was graduated from the University of Cincinnati and ordained at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, where he earned his M.H.L. and D.D.

He occupied the pulpit of Temple Emanuel, Worcester, Mass., from 1929 to 1949, when he was called to Temple Emanu-El in Dallas, serving there until he retired in September 1970 as rabbi emeritus.

A visiting professor since 1952 at Perkins School of Theology (Dallas), he taught in London at the Leo Baeck College in the fall of 1970.

Rabbi Olan was president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1967-1969, and he has been an outstanding leader in his community through the years--as board member of such organizations as the Dallas Jewish Welfare Federation, the Circle Ten Council, the Dallas County Association for the Blind, the Texas Society for Mental Health, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Dallas Council on World Affairs, and on the Advisory Committee of the Dallas Citizen's Interracial Association.

He is the author of several monographs, including On the Nature of Man, Judaism and Modern Theology, and The Philosophy of Liberal Judaism; and he is a lecturer on college campuses under the auspices of the Jewish Chautauqua Society.

When Rabbi Olan began writing in the early 1940's, he was considered one of the great liberals of Reform Judaism in this country. He himself considered his position on the political scale to be to the left of center. But as Roland Gittelsohn once said to me, today's radicals are tomorrow's reactionaries. Gittelsohn was counting himself in that number. But I do not think that he should have counted on Olan.

In the early forties, the second World War had just broken over this land, and the national patriotic spirit was on the upswing. One thing which was truer then than it is now, however, was that Freudian psychology was undergoing its most severe time of attack. At that time, Olan could have been numbered among the critics of psychoanalysis. What is more important to realize is that he was aware of the likely impact of analytic theory even then. As a liberal thinker, or more accurately, as a proponent of liberal faith, he would have been in a better position to appreciate Freudian theory if he had taken books like Civilization and Its Discontents and Moses and Monotheism more seriously. Both books touched on the relations between Jews and non-Jews, and the events of the war bore these unfortunate predictions out only too well. Since Freud saw the potential disaster which could befall the Jews, for reasons completely hidden from the consciousness of Christians, as well as from many Jews, his stance as a liberal might well have been modified. But, alas, his devotion to liberal faith, and his distrust of psychoanalysis at that time prevented this from happening.

His stand against Freudian thought was taken in defense of what he called liberal faith. At that time, liberal faith was a pie-in-the-sky kind of faith where everything would work out all right in the end, and by which men could sleep at night peacefully, knowing that God was on their side. What Olan called modern psychology would be called psychoanalysis today. His first written thoughts on it (in 1942) were:

> The last and most recent challenge (to liberal religion) has come from the textbooks of modern psychology. While it is true that the battle lines of its conflict with liberal religion are not as sharply defined as in the other two (antagonistic philosophies, evolution and mechanistic materialism), yet a threat has been hurled and the struggle is still on. The most disturbing phase appeared in the form of behaviorism as represented by John Watson. However, it is the psychology of the 'unconscious' as created by Freud and his disciples which arrests the attention of liberal faith today. That there are dangers in the idea of religion as a wish fulfillment, has been pointedly said many times. To explain God by an oedipus complex is a definite challenge to the moral concept of life which is at the base of liberal religion. . . . The disciples of Freud, especially Jung, are coming nearer in attitude, if not in thought, to the essential value of religion. Secondly we must beware lest we accept Freudianism as a science. If we look upon it as a tool for research and take its valid findings we may discover that it will serve our liberal faith devotedly. The finality of Freud is absurd; the possibilities are vast. While we cannot say of psychology, as we did of Darwinism and Mechanism, that liberalism stood stronger at the final mark, we are justified in positing the assertion that the essential tenets of liberal religion (as it is here described) have not been seriously affected.[1]

Within seven years, Olan's tune had changed. Still the fiery liberal, he had come to see psychoanalysis as less of a threat and more of a tool with which to emotionally prepare oneself of the challenges of life. In an article subtitled, Rethinking the Liberal Faith, Olan seems to be taking to task all those who have not progressed in their attitudes toward Freudian theory as much as he had in those few short years. He said,

"When Freudian psychology indicated that religious concepts are not only intellectual, but spring from the unconscious, the instinctive, and the emotional, the claim was dismissed as irrational and futile. By placing narrow limits on the use of reason and experience, by confining themselves to the world of sense and mind in a severely literal manner, the liberals, ironically enough, ceased to accept their own basic faith. In their hands the sympathetic investigation of mystical revelation and intuitive knowledge could have been orderly and controlled. In the hands of its present (1949) advocates, untested and unchecked, these novel manifestations have become the basis of a completely irrational faith."[2]

Olan also finds that Freud has restated in his psychoanalytic terminology things which had been said many times before, but that psychology made man look worse now than he had ever looked in the past.

". . . Freudian psychology has uncovered bottomless pits in the soul, full of primordial matter; man is revealed as much less than an angel. His self-importance and pretensions were dealt far heavier blows by analytical psychology than those administered by the heliocentric astronomy which robbed man of his central position in the universe, or even by Darwin's discovery of his animal ancestry. The children of Freud are supplying the scientific patter for a doctrine of man that is rooted in antiquity. The depravity of man has played a role in many religious formulae. . . ."[3]

All this would not have been so bad, but for Olan it spelled trouble. Not that everything which Freud said was good. Far be it from that! But the problem seemed to be that since Freud's teaching conflicted with the faith of the liberals, the liberals ignored it rather than confronted it. "Instead of welcoming the researches of Freud, and applying the

critique of reason and laboratory experiment to his findings liberals chose to disregard the whole business. Thus it fell into the hands of the supernaturalists, and became the basis for all the dark and frightening theories of life and destiny. The idea of progress has been pushed aside and we witness a revival of New Testament eschatology."[14]

Olan is not saying that psychology <u>in itself</u> is bad. And at least at this point he has moved from a position of seeing "modern psychology" as a real threat to his brand of liberal faith to a position where he can see a place for it to make a real contribution to the welfare of mankind. What he saw as the pessimism of Freudian thought in 1949 has given rise to a feeling that even if we do have an animal nature which is inescapable, we are still able to deal with it and put it to good use. By 1953, Olan's attitude had changed markedly toward a positive feeling for the discoveries of science.

> There is sufficient evidence in modern science to warrant not only a continued confidence in the possibilities of human nature, but actually an intensification of our faith in man. Biology in its researches into hormones reveals the possibility of influencing man's behavior patterns. Cultural anthropology is pointing more and more to the opportunities which changing environments present for man's development. Psychology is eloquently demonstrating that man's behavior is not fixed and unchangeable. Indeed, there is overwhelming support for the assertion of our tradition that man has the capacity to grow up, to mature.[5]

The most fundamental test of rational and liberal faith which man has yet known was the holocaust. The basic proposition that man was inherently good, and that all things would ultimately be worked out for the best, was no longer on solid ground. There were reasons to believe that, in fact, the opposite was true. The deaths of six million Jews and countless millions of others at the hands of mechanized murderers did little to answer the nagging questions of those who had previously

joined the ranks of the liberals in believing that liberalism was the be-all and end-all of philosophy and religion. And, much to the dismay of the liberal thinkers, the holocaust was a grotesque realization of the prophecies and predictions of Freud.

It is reasonable to assume that the slight shift of Olan's position on psychology from open hostility to tolerance could be based on the understanding which he reached that Freud had, indeed, virtually predicted something like the holocaust, not necessarily in the form which it took, but at least in the type of atmosphere in which it took place. With incontrovertible evidence like that, it is easy to see why Olan could be expected to make such a shift.

It is to the credit of a man with Olan's liberal stripe that he could be so flexible in his thinking that he could ultimately embrace the possibility that psychology could have important explanations for mankind, even if these explanations left people frightened and uncomfortable.

Olan ultimately arrives at some conclusions which he might have come to earlier, had he not been part of the strongly rationalist group which helped to shape the Reform Judaism of thirty years ago. These men were advocates of almost purely intellectual faith. No emotionalism for them. If something could not be explained rationally, then it had no place in Reform Judaism. But as the times changed, and fallibility of the notion that man was infallible was demonstrated, Olan changed as well. Even his rose-colored-glasses optimism seemed to be dimmed slightly from the days when God was on our side and all was well with the world, even if we were at war.

By 1960, Olan saw psychologists and theologians as having made a

pact against pure rationalism, a vision he did not relish, but one to which he seemed resigned, nevertheless. With undaunted, but realistic faith, he said,

> The image of man's nature has been radically altered from the days when Jefferson relied upon him to use his reason and his freedom to know good and to choose the good and the true. Man is today conceived to be a creature of deep unconscious drives whose mind is adequate to measure time and space, but who is disqualified, however, to seek and find truth and virtue. The attack upon man as a rational creature comes from the disciples of Freud, Marx, Schopenhauer, and Kierkegaard. Psychologists and theologians have joined forces against the important role of reason in human nature so that we find ourselves confronting an unintelligent universe inhabited by a creature with a very fallible mind.[6]

Olan demonstrated great flexibility and insight in the face of some very unpleasant alternatives. Over the years his feelings about "modern psychology" seem to have changed enough so that he is no longer openly hostile to it. He even encourages, as a true liberal, the exposition of different points of view. And to the very core of his liberal being, no matter what misgivings he has come to know at the hands of psychologists and theologians, Olan maintains his view of the immortality of the soul, and the essential goodness of man.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary Jewish theology, like any theology, does not exist in a vacuum. Since the subject of theology takes in both the study of man's conceptions of, and his relation to, God, it is a wide-open field within which almost any other area of concern might equally well be found. Certainly the theologian is not solely concerned with how man relates to God. He might well consider how man relates to man in terms of how men follow what we call God's Law. Or he might ponder the abstract questions of philosophy, psychology, history, anthropology, and the arts. Whatever the focus of the theologian is, he must focus down from a broader perspective, from a larger world from which the subject of his investigation is taken.

And so it is with most other scholarly pursuits, the social sciences being no exception. Taking Sigmund Freud as the exemplar of the biologically-oriented physician who developed the art and practice of psychoanalysis, one can easily see the world from which he came, the macrocosm, and the world on which he eventually focused, the microcosm, the nature of the human psyche.

It is fortunate for mankind that such a man ever lived. A sign of his greatness lies in the fact that controversies still rage today over the work that he did, and even more because of the numberless people who have been helped to gain insight into themselves through the program of psychoanalysis which Freud pioneered.

It should be noted that it was no accident that Freud's interest ex-

tended beyond that which had at first attracted his attention. Even noting that there was much work yet to be done in perfecting the art of psychoanalysis, he plunged ahead to try to find ways of applying his new-found knowledge. Not always successful, he at least arrived at conclusions which have occupied the minds of scholars for years afterward. Let his book, Moses and Monotheism, serve as an example. With little to go on other than what biblical scholars had uncovered up to his lifetime, Freud attempted to explain, using and applying psychoanalytic concepts, the origin and development of his own religion, Judaism. While it is possible that his work was faulty, (and there are undoubtedly many who would claim that it was), it still stands as an unparalleled achievement in the history of this century in the area of psychology, both theoretical and applied.

Knowing the impact which Freud and Freudian thought had had generally on Western civilization, and which I mentioned briefly in the first chapter, I explored the specific impact and influence which it had had on four contemporary Jewish thinkers in particular.

First to be considered was Eugene Borowitz, an existentialist theologian and intellectual disciple of Martin Buber. The man who coined the phrase "Covenant Theology," he remains today one of the most eloquent spokesmen of that group.

In terms of what influence Freudian thought might have had on Borowitz, it became clear that Borowitz had more than a passing acquaintance with the subject. Otherwise it would be doubtful that he could have voiced such cogent and lucid arguments about it. He expresses his mistrust of psychiatry and explains that his mistrust is based on the fact that he believes that psychiatry has overstepped its bounds. At the same

time he complains that it is "having difficulty meeting its therapeutic responsibilities."[1] In a very peculiar sort of way, he attacks those who abuse and misinterpret Freud, while he himself is, at the very best, only lukewarm to Freud.

It is also unusual for a person to still be using the terms psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis interchangeably, as Borowitz does. There are important distinctions to be understood among the terms, and they are not interchangeable.

For the most part, Borowitz covers vast areas and unfathomable depths without any discernible reference to Freudian thought, though it is clear that he is not ignorant or unaware of the work and thought of Freud. So one may assume that his avoidance of it is both conscious and intentional.

The second man to be considered was Richard Rubenstein. The difference between his approach to Freud and Freudian thought and that of Borowitz is a study in contrast. To begin with, Rubenstein had gone through psychoanalysis, and therefore, had a better working knowledge of it than would someone who had not gone through the process. Second, it seemed as though Rubenstein's total mind set was such that Freudian thought fit into it perfectly. His analyses of things, both within and outside of the realm of theology and religion, were sure to reflect his acceptance of the ideas of psychoanalysis. It seemed that no explanation was devoid of some element of analytic interest.

At the same time, he did not hesitate to disagree with Freud in areas where he had a more sound basis in logic or reason. One of the main criticisms aimed at the Freudians is that they are "never wrong." If someone demonstrates a fault in their logic, they simply indicate that

if they had had more information, then they would not have been misled. And it is on grounds such as these that Rubenstein makes some of the extrapolations which he does. And he is most convincing in his work.

In other words, Rubenstein does not feel bound to a strict interpretation of Freud, simply because he feels that Freud would have encouraged attempts to expand the frontiers of psychoanalysis, and, quite simply, that is what he is doing. As a teacher and lecturer, writer and scholar, and very particularly, as a death-of-God theologian, it seems that his work will continue to be read and discussed for some time. Consequently, since it is clear that he approaches Freud and analytic theory warmly, it should also be clear that one may expect the influence of Freud in his work to come through noticeably in the years ahead.

Arnold Jacob Wolf was the third man whose work was examined in this paper. A man with many talents, both on the pulpit and off, he chose to move from a very secure and comfortable position with a midwestern congregation to a large university campus where his ability to relate to the college crowd would be tapped to the fullest extent.

Wolf effected a surprising synthesis of Borowitz's existentialism and Rubenstein's Freudian theory. And what is more surprising, he seems to have made a go of it. One of the understandings which came through more from Wolf than from either Borowitz or Rubenstein was the way in which Wolf evidently sees psychoanalysis as something which can free the individual from determinism, to some extent, and enable him to make more independent, existentialistic choices regarding his life style and social conditions. It is virtually a synthesis of two opposites.

But these are not the only things which Wolf synthesizes. He concentrates his attention on the tension between the evil and the good in-

clinations, and shows how the synthesis of determinism and existentialism helps to resolve the problem of good and evil as well. He is closer to admitting that he is striving for an almost mystical unity with the cosmos.

As is usual for Wolf, he sounds as if he is talking in the language of today, language which is brimming with extra meanings, yet language which he makes it easy to understand. His goal, attained through the system he envisions, is, in modern parlance, "getting your thing together." And on that day, the Lord shall be One and His Name shall be One."

Wolf's approach to things is unorthodox enough that he has attracted as much negative attention as positive. This is quite unfortunate, for the man has a great deal to say, and much to offer to the open mind. He expresses his indebtedness to Freudian theory by using it, and by devoting a chapter of his most famous text, Rediscovering Judaism, to psychoanalysis and Jewish theology. People who know him also know that he is generally oriented toward understanding things in the framework of psychoanalytic theory. I have no doubt that in the years to come Wolf's work will stand out as some of the most important done in the twentieth century toward synthesizing the disparate elements of contemporary Jewish thought, and, all the while consciously calling on Freudian theory as one of the bases of his work.

Finally, the work of Levi A. Olan was the fourth and last to be considered. One of the early, outspoken pulpit liberals, he went through a transition from his early period of public distrust of what he called "modern psychology" of the unconscious, by which I infer that he means psychoanalysis. Over the years, however, his position softens, and ultimately he arrives at the conclusion that the liberal position may not be

as strong as it once was, due to the influence of the mental health sciences, but that since they are here to stay, perhaps we had better find ways to live with them and try to benefit from them as best we can.

This is a rather brave approach from a man whose first instinct was to condemn out of hand. But that is perhaps the sign of a true liberal --the ability to constantly re-evaluate one's position in the hopes of arriving at a better and stronger one. Certainly Olan is not one of the more widely read men in the field. The bulk of his work appears in the form of sermons or lectures, used very often for local public broadcasts, and therefore, one might assume, for mass consumption. This does not necessarily detract from the value of the material, but it does limit the numbers of people who are exposed to his work and thought, and thus the influence which it could have. It is also safe to say that, his earlier stand against the secular threat of social science notwithstanding, there is little if any, influence to be sensed from Freud or the Freudians in his work. Olan is still a liberal. But he will be a liberal on his terms and on no one else's. His message is for a liberal audience, is one of undaunted optimism, and is consistent to the extent that he can make everything else fit comfortably into it. That was what he did with "modern psychology." For those who have had the pleasure of meeting Rabbi Olan, the experience is generally most satisfying. He is a deep and understanding man who will, as long as he lives, march with his liberal banner held high. This he will do with or without any influence from Freud. If he had his choice, Olan would prefer to do it without.

I have tried to present the views of four men, four Jews who are influential, each in his own way, who are spokesmen for varying points along the Jewish theological spectrum. No two agree completely, and,

fortunately, no two totally disagree. That is one of the beauties of liberal Judaism. There is room for a difference of and exchange of opinions.

When the writings of these men are analyzed with regard to their use of Freudian thought, they show the varying degrees to which they have been influenced by what Freud discovered and what his successors have continued to teach. Taking this one step farther, it is possible to hazard a guess as to how, or even whether, Jewish thought in the years ahead will continue to feel the influence of Freud. Certainly his contributions to the understanding of man and man's condition have had their listening ears in those men about whom this paper was written. And it is safe to assume that this influence will not wane soon. There will be those who will dismiss Freud, as there have always been, just as there will be those who will espouse him as the Messiah. Regardless, his influence will continue to be felt, not only in the realm of theology, but in every area of concern for the welfare of man, as long as western civilization will exist.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1]*Totem and Taboo*, *The Future of An Illusion*, *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

[2]*The Future of an Illusion*, pp. 25-26.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1]*On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*, p. vii.

[2]*Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 42.

[3]*Ibid*., p. 43

[4]*Ibid*., p. 80.

[5]*Ibid*., p. 81.

[6]*Ibid*., p. 83.

[7]*Ibid*., p. 87-88.

[8]*Ibid*., p. 19.

[9]*Totem and Taboo*, p. 143.

[10]*Ibid*., p. 145.

[11]*Ibid*., p. 2.

[12]*Ibid*., p. 145.

[13]*Ibid*., p. 146.

[14]*Ibid*., p. 147.

[15]*The Future of an Illusion*, p. 69.

[16]*Ibid*., p. 48.

[17]*Ibid*., p. 49.

[18]*Ibid*., p. 71.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1]"Covenant Theology-Another Look," p. 21.

[2]"Crisis Theology and the Jewish Community," p. 38.

[3]Ibid., p. 38.

[4]Ibid., p. 39.

[5]Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[6]Ibid., p. 40.

[7]"Theology and Jewish Education," p. 420.

[8]Judaic Roots of Modern Education, in Heritage of American Education, by Richard E. Gross, pp. 75-76.

[9]"Current Theological Literature," article "Subjectivity and the Halachic Process" in Judaism, Vol. 13, No. 2, Spring, 1964.

[10]Ibid. Article "On the Commentary Symposium: Alternatives in Creating a Jewish Apologetic."

[11]"On Celebrating Sinai", pp. 20-21.

[12]The book is Choosing a Sex Ethic; see the bibliography.

[13]How Can A Jew Speak of Faith Today?, p. 183.

[14]Choosing a Sex Ethic, p. 7.

[15]Ibid., pp. 127-28.

[16]Ibid., p. 9.

[17]Ibid., p. 13.

[18]Ibid., p. 29.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 56.

[21]"Memorandum from Rabbi Eugene B. Borowitz" Feb., 1969.

[22]The Mask Jews Wear, p. 19.

[23]Ibid., p. 21.

[24]Ibid., p. 82.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1]Borowitz, "Facing Up to It," pp. 14-16.

[2]Rubenstein, After Auschwitz, p. 6.

[3]Ibid., p. 11.

[4]Ibid., p. 12.

[5]Ibid., p. 17.

[6]Freud, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, London: Hogarth Press, 1921.

[7]Rubenstein, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

[8]Ibid., p. 92.

[9]Theodore Reik, Ritual (London: Hogarth Press, 1931), p. 71. Cf., Erich Wellisch, Isaac and Oedipus (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954).

[10]Rubenstein, op. cit., p. 127.

[11]Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams.

[12]Rubenstein, op. cit., pp. 230-31.

[13]Ibid., pp. 232-33.

[14]Ibid., pp. 231-32.

[15]Ibid., pp. 255-56.

[16]I earnestly recommend this invaluable text, in its entirety, to those wishing to pursue this topic at length. Not one word is wasted; the insights are brilliant; and the subject is covered thoroughly and interestingly.

[17]See the section of the bibliography which lists the works of Freud.

[18]Rubenstein, Morality and Eros, pp. 3-4.

[19]Ibid., pp. 32-34.

[20]Ibid., p. 65.

[21]Ibid., p. 85.

[22]Ibid., p. 86.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., pp. 86-87.

[25]Ibid., pp. 92-93.

[26]Ibid., p. 193.

[27]Within this quotation is a quotation from Moses and Monotheism, (see bibliography), p. 110.

[28]Rubenstein, My Brother Paul, p. 18.

[29]Ibid., p. 22.

[30]Sigmund Freud, op. cit., p. 46.

[31]Ibid., p. 47.

[32]Rubenstein, op. cit., p. 27.

[33]Ibid., p. 65.

[34]Ibid., p. 79.

[35]Ibid., p. 82.

[36]Ibid., p. 83.

[37]Ibid., p. 86.

[38]Ibid., p. 87.

[39]Ibid., p. 111.

[40]Ibid., p. 161-62.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1]Wolf, What is Man?, p. 24.

[2]Ibid., p. 27.

[3]Ibid., p. 29.

[4]"The State of Jewish Belief: A Symposium" Commentary, Vol. 42, No. 2. Aug., 1966, p. 158. For a valid explanation of why this is true, see Erich Fromm's Beyond the Chains of Illusion.

[5]See Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud (New York, 1953) for the complex and self-sacrificing attitude of Freud toward Jung.

[6]Ibid., II, 22.

[7]Wolf, Rediscovering Judaism, p. 133.

[8]Ibid., p. 134.

[9]Hans Meyerhoff, "Nothing New about Freud," Partisan Review XXVIII, (1961), 5-6; p. 696.

[10]Ernst Simon, "Sigmund Freud, the Jew," in Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute (London, 1957), p. 298.

[11]Wolf, op. cit., p. 134.

[12]Simon, op. cit., p. 293.

[13]Wolf, op. cit., p. 135.

[14]Abse and Jessner, "Psychodynamic Aspects of Leadership," Daedalus (Fall, 1961), 90:4, p. 693, quotes from Sigmund Freud, "Explanations, Applications, and Orientations" in Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (London, 1933), lecture 34.

[15]Wolf, op. cit., p. 135.

[16]Philip Pieff, "The Analytic Attitude," Encounter (July, 1962), p. 24. Cf., Rieff's introduction to his edition of Freud's Therapy and Technique (New York, 1963).

[17]Wolf, op. cit., p. 136.

[18]Ibid., p. 140.

[19]Harris H. Hirschberg, "Eighteen Hundred Years Before Freud: A Re-evaluation of the Term Yetzer Ha-Ra," Judaism, X, Spring, 1961, pp. 129-141.

[20]Wolf, op. cit., p. 140.

[21]Ibid., p. 155.

[22]Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death, Middletown, Conn., 1959, pp. 78ff.

[23]Vayikra Rabbah, 35.5

[24]Baba Batra 16a.

[25]Wolf, op. cit., p. 159

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., p. 160.

[28]Ibid., p. 162.

[29]Wolf, What is Man?, pp. xii-xiii.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

[1]"Liberal Judaism in a Reactionary World" CCAR Yearbook, 1942, p. 7.

[2]Reform Judaism: Essays by Hebrew Union College Alumni. Article subtitled: "Rethinking the Liberal Faith," p. 43.

[3]Ibid., p. 47.

[4]Ibid., p. 48.

[5]"Judaism: A Religion of Hope for Man," p. 12.

[6]"The Stone which the Modern Builders Rejected," p. 21.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

[1]Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology in the Making, p. 183.

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