The Unconscious and Conscious Self: The Nature of Psychical Unity in Freud and Lonergan

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Abstract. This article compares the accounts of psychical unity in Freud and Lonergan. Following a detailed account of Freud's understanding of psychical structure and his deterministic psycho-biological presuppositions, Lonergan's understanding of psychical structure in relation to patterns of experience is discussed. As opposed to Freud's theory, which is based on an imaginative synthesis of the classical laws of natural science, Lonergan considers psychical and organic function as concretely integrated in human functionality according to probabilistic schemes of recurrence. Consequently, Lonergan offers a theory of the psychological problems of repression and inhibition not primarily as functions of subverted organic desires, but more properly according to the functioning of intellectual bias. Lonergan thereby provides a more comprehensive understanding of the unity of the human self at the psychical level.

In *Insight*, Bernard Lonergan absorbed and synthesized key elements of Sigmund Freud's analysis of psychical structure in the sixth chapter entitled "Common Sense and Its Subject." Showing intellectual sympathy with Freud's psychological findings, concepts such as repression, inhibition in relation to the censor function, and psycho-sexual development are key elements in Lonergan's presentation. Yet, when it comes to Lonergan's and Freud's fundamental psychical conceptions of human selfhood, there is much difference, especially relating to the problem of psychical unity. In order to clarify differences and similarities between these two thinkers regarding psychical unity specifically, it is important to begin by examining in detail the psychical structure of the self as understood by Freud. Therefore, I first provide a detailed account of Freud's understanding of psychical structure (I), followed by an explication of his philosophical assumptions of psycho-biological determinism and how he came to such a philosophical position (II).[1] Next, I

[1]In order to clarify terminological discrepancies between Freud and Lonergan, I distinguish biological or organic functioning from psychic functioning. For Lonergan, psychic functioning

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treat Lonergan's account of human selfhood. In so doing, I present Lonergan's critique of the problem of psycho-biological determinism as an imaginative synthesis of the classical laws of natural science in light of Darwin's evolutionary theory. I examine Lonergan's approach to psychical unity in relation to his conception of thinghood and emergent probability. Also, I discuss Lonergan's account of psychical structure in relation to patterns of experience (III). Finally, I discuss the principal motivation and character of human consciousness insofar as it is a unified entity (IV). This serves to address the psychological problems of repression and inhibition not primarily as functions of subverted organic desires, but rather as functions of intellectual bias. The advantage of Lonergan's account of the unity of human selfhood is that it respects the organic basis of consciousness without requiring a full reduction of consciousness to an organic epiphenomenon.

I.

Freud on the Psychical Self. In order to present Freud's notion of the psychical self, I shall first examine his understanding of the structure of the human psyche. A definitive and mature statement of this structure is found in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), which will serve us as a primary text in presenting the structure. In addition, I shall use Freud's earlier lectures (1915–17) collected under the title, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933) because they link his notion of psychical structure with the practice of psychoanalysis and his overall perspective. Next, I shall discuss a major philosophical assumption that played a prominent role in his particular conception of psychical structure: reductive biological determinism. In so doing, I shall specifically look at the influence that Darwin had on his thought in conjunction with the history of natural science that ultimately informed his specific determinism.

Early in his career as a psychiatrist, Freud discovered the intense impact that psychical effects had on the human body. Freud began his career working with patients suffering from bouts of hysteria and mania. In collaboration with his colleague Josef Breuer, he developed techniques to relieve the psychical energy that contributed to physical problems in his patients. Specifically, he developed a technique of questioning his patients about certain prominent memories that they experienced at the time when their somatic symptoms started. He found that there were certain times during questioning sessions when his patients would become angry, annoyed, and resistant. He would

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can represent biological or organic function as a conscious desire. Unlike Lonergan, Freud reduces all psychic functioning to a recondite interplay of expressions and repressions of biological organic desires.

attempt to understand his patients' reaction but they could not give reasons for their behavior. This led Freud to the idea that there was an unconscious extension of consciousness that represses certain thoughts or images from entering into consciousness. Freud thus came to realize that there was more to human motivation, action, and thought than what is evident at the level of the consciousness. It is with this discovery that Freud developed his unique conceptual structure of the psyche.

He started by positing the most obvious element—the ego—as it is revealed in the psychological phenomenon of consciousness. The ego is the conscious psychical element that is linked directly to the sensory manifold. Freud described the ego in the following terms:

> We have formed the idea that in each individual there is a coherent organization of mental processes; and we call this his *ego*. It is to this ego that consciousness is attached; the ego controls the approaches to motility—that is, to the discharge of excitations into the external world; it is the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes, and which goes to sleep at night.[2]

We see that Freud understood the ego as a mechanism of coherence for various perceptions that flow through consciousness.[3] It brings meaning to them and organizes them. The ego's most basic identity arises from its connection with the sensory manifold, but it is also the source of action and interchange with the exterior world given through the senses. Yet, in order for the ego to act in a coherent fashion regarding the contingencies of the surrounding world, it must learn from experience. Thus, the ego does not only consist of a flow of discontinuous images, but also collects, stores, and references them through memory. The images that are not attended to at any given moment—but are available to be recollected at will—are present in what Freud called the preconscious. The preconscious aids deliberation by acting as a virtual storehouse of perceptions and concepts for the use of the ego. Thus, Freud described the nature of the ego as "what may be called reason and common sense."[4]

However, the psychical state of affairs reveals itself as much more complex and problematic. A human being betrays himself or herself as a motivated creature who oftentimes does not understand (consciously) his or her own motivations. She knows what she ought to do and does the opposite; she does things and has

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[2]Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud 19 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1978), 17.

[3]By consciousness, Freud merely means the flow of perceptions or memories as images.

[4]Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 25.

thoughts that she cannot explain or account for. Such effects signaled for Freud a complex of opposing motivations deeply embedded in the human psyche. He also observed that these acts of resistance to overt conscious motivations shown by his patients had more of a preconscious character than a conscious one. That is, Freud found that his patients generally had a conscious will to resolve personal psychological problems, but were unable to avoid resisting progression toward a resolution. This led Freud to observe that, while according to the traditional interpretation the function of the preconscious was to store images to be recalled later, some images or mental content of his patients resisted being called to mind. In fact, Freud determined further that these repressed ideas or motivations are not repressed from their source, but rather are forcefully kept from entering the conscious by the ego itself! Freud thus discovered an unconscious element of the ego that acts as a censor to exclude unwanted ideas or motivations.

The unconscious element associated with the ego is the ego-ideal or super-ego. Through his psychiatric practice Freud determined that the super-ego censor is psychically embedded and initiated through disciplinary interaction with one's parents. Moreover, "behind [the ego ideal] lies hidden an individual's first and most important identification, his identification with the father in his own personal prehistory."[5] The effects of disciplinary action—elicited as tacit commands and taboos—eventually become ingrained as a psychical structure; the psyche internalizes the discipline and applies it to given thoughts and judgments. The super-ego represses from consciousness those desires coming from the psychical depths that are contrary to accepted social norms bestowed by one's parents. Freud states that "injunctions and prohibitions remain powerful in the ego ideal and continue, in the form of conscience, to exercise the moral censorship. The tension between the demands of conscience and the actual performances of the ego is experienced as a sense of guilt."[6] The super-ego may so much desire to dominate the ego that it inhibits images that conflict with its intention from entering consciousness.

However, there is still another vital element of the psychical structure to be addressed from Freud's perspective. Essentially, the id is the organic drive that is represented as demands in the consciousness of the ego. It does not have sense perceptions at its disposal —it is blind and deaf—for the world is the ego's concern. In order for the id to act, it must submit itself to consciousness. However, certain factors prevent the id's satisfaction. The ego-ideal, as a projection of censoring parental discipline, "represents an energetic reaction-formation against [the desires of the id]."[7] This is because the nature of parental discipline

[5]Ibid., 31.

[6]Ibid., 37.

[7]Ibid., 34.

is originally interpreted as arbitrary castigation for a child's acts of desire, which are often visceral in nature (urinating in bed, stealing cookies, bodily satisfaction, etc.). Also, the id's desires are frustrated by the concerns of the ego itself; the ego often forgets its biological desires in its concernful dealings with the world—or it needs to act according to the limitations and demands of the immediate worldly or social environment—thereby delaying the id's satisfaction. Constant frustration of the id's desires in extreme cases results in adverse physical manifestations, such as hysteria, hypochondria, paralysis, and so forth.

It is evident that the ego is under a lot of pressure from the super-ego, the id, and the world itself. The psychical structure is in a constant state of flux and conflict; while the healthy psychological self transitions from psychical equilibrium to equilibrium, the sick psychological self becomes overwrought and fragmented by a build-up of psychical energy.

II.

Freud and Psychological Determinism. At this point, in order to understand the rest of Freud's conception of psychical structure, a fundamental philosophical tenet presupposed in Freud's thinking requires attention: his determinism. Freud's biological determinism explains his reason for reducing the ego and the super-ego to extensions of the id, the latter being the raw biological drive in the human being.

Three major factors contribute to Freud's psychological determinism. First, Freud interpreted the classical natural sciences originating with Galileo and Newton as committed to a radical physical determinism. Secondly, Freud interpreted the advent of Darwinism from the perspective of these determinate classical laws. The third factor in Freud's determinism is his enchantment with neural-psychology and its pioneers, who maintained that the psychological phenomenon is fully determined by neurological patterning.

First, Freud maintained that the most acceptable *Weltanschauung* is not religious or philosophical but one based either on the natural or the psychological sciences. This is because it is only the scientific worldview that is capable of "undreamt-of improvements."[8] Despite its imperfections, the scientific worldview, epitomized by the great contributions of Newton, was for him a solid knowledge-base for the orientation of human life.

Secondly, Freud was heavily influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution. The evolutionary theory was originally interpreted as a way of turning the scientific eye to biological organisms (namely, human beings) in an utterly scientific mode.

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[8]Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1965), 174.

Darwinism essentially explains the diversity of organisms as a process in which those that are more complex are derived from simpler ones. The complexification of biological organisms comes about through interplay of biological and environmental variations resulting in new and varied species. Freud desired to explain the specific difference of human psychology as a further biological change in the bio-environment. According to Darwin's biographer Geoffrey West, "In the very deepest sense, Darwin was Newton's successor, as Freud his."[9] Freud transferred certain principles taken from physics and biology to explain the nature of human psychology. He used such scientific terms as "energy," "excitation," "tension," and so forth to explain the dynamics of human consciousness and psychical structure based on material principles.

Thirdly, Freud was originally interested in working in theoretical physiology. The scientist Ernst Brücke served as his model; as a young man Freud worked with Brücke in his physiology laboratory. Brücke himself, a noted neuro-scientist, held a strong deterministic philosophical position. He asserted that "no other forces than the common physical chemical ones are active within the organism."[10] All effects in a biological organism, either human or non-human, can be reduced to physical and unalterable principles. Freud himself subscribed to these principles, believing that "no psychic process could appear separate and distinct from physiological ones . . . [and] that physical processes invariably precede psychic processes."[11] When Freud states that physical processes invariably precede psychic process, he means also that physical processes invariably determine psychic processes.

In light of Freud's psychological determinism, the rest of Freud's ideas on the psychical structure makes sense. For Freud, the whole process is fully characterized as flowing biological principles. Since the id is the instrument for gaining biological satisfaction, it ultimately is the unifying principle of the human psyche. In fact, the ego is an extension of the id. The ego derives all of its energy from the id. So radical is the ego's dependence on the id that Freud says: "We shall now look upon an individual as a psychical id, unknown and unconscious, upon whose surface rests the ego, developed from its nucleus the . . . [perceptual system]."[12] Likewise, the ego-ideal is fully determined through the impulses of the id itself. The ego-ideal is determined not only through external disciplinary intervention, but it is also internally determined through the sexual comportment of a child toward his or her parents. A healthy or unhealthy super-ego is

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[9]Morton Levitt, *Freud and Dewey on the Nature of Man* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 80.

[10]Ibid., 84.

[11]Ibid., 86.

[12]Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, 24.

the result of a complete or incomplete unfolding of the Oedipus complex. A successful Oedipus process steers an individual beyond his or her parents toward fulfilling sexual and psychical companionship, whereas an unsuccessful Oedipus process leaves a permeating psychical residue of one's parents as sexual objects. All in all, biological motivations and principles such as these determine both the ego and super-ego.

This biological drive has its origins in infants and begins to develop through the dialectic of satisfaction of biological needs and conscious ways of gaining satisfaction. A baby feels the sensation of hunger, cries, and then is satisfied by his or her parents' nurturing response. However, as a child matures and grows, it becomes apparent that the id's impulses cannot be immediately satisfied or that, in order to be satisfied, the individual must be able to manipulate its environment. This delay of gratification diversifies the ego and causes it to establish its own proper functioning, complexity, and concern. However, the delay of gratification of the id's desires sometimes results in psychological and physiological problems. The complex interplay of the id, the ego, and the super-ego results in the primary psychological phenomena of wish-fulfillment. However, the most important realization at this point is that in the Freudian system, all of the various psychical functions and operations fall under the sole principle of neurological patterning in the brain.

III.

Reflecting Beyond Determinism: Lonergan on the Human Self. In *Insight*, Bernard Lonergan acknowledges Freud's description of the tension among various aspects of the psychical structure. Along with Freud and the discipline of depth psychology, Lonergan acknowledges the powerful stubbornness of the repressive forces of consciousness, the complexity of inhibition, the aberration of the psychical censor, and so on. Lonergan accepts these aspects as documented scientific facts. Moreover, regarding the general psychical structure presented by Freud, there are no major conflicts between Lonergan's and Freud's viewpoints. However, Lonergan's thought makes a radical departure from Freud's reductive determinism. In order to explain Lonergan's departure I proceed from his notion of a human thing as understood through a complementary synthesis of classical and statistical laws: namely, a human thing as a scheme of recurrence and emergent probability.[13] This new understanding of selfhood brings to the

[13]Although Bernard Lonergan devotes the whole of chapter eight to the notion of "thing," it can be generally defined (in its technical philosophical sense) as that "grounded in an insight that grasps, not relations between data, but a unity, identity, whole in data; and this unity is grasped, not by considering data from any abstractive viewpoint, but by taking them in their concrete individuality and in the totality of their aspects" (*Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed.

fore the unifying character of the human self, which possesses a unique integrity proper to the level of the human psyche. This leads to an understanding of the essential drive that is proper to the human self, as opposed to the biological drive of the Freudian self. Against this background, I then show how Lonergan understands dramatic bias and its psychical manifestations of repression, inhibition, etc. in ways that are integrated into this higher and unified understanding of the human self.

Freud's determinism arises from what Lonergan calls an imaginative synthesis. Lonergan claims that a powerful imaginative synthesis entered the history of philosophy through Galileo. He states that an imaginative synthesis "is secured when images, informed by insight, are altered in accord with known laws."[14] Galileo contributed the notion of explanatory correlates that bespeak the relationship objects have to one another. This explanatory relationship arises through experimentation on concrete elements. However, along with discovering correlations among objects (for instance, the correlation between time and distance of a falling body), Galileo also privileged what he deemed primary qualities—space and time—over secondary qualities—color, shape, and so forth. He singled out the former along with their correlations as more real than the latter.[15] Essentially, by privileging these primary qualities with their correlations, he constructed an imaginative synthesis in which he concretized abstract principles. That is, he envisioned abstract, intelligible classical correlations as existing concretely in space. By treating these abstract principles as concrete, Galileo bypassed the need for concretizing these principles in things. The world that Galileo passed along was a world of "imaginable parts, each of which stands in determinate systematic relations to all the others."[16] This was also Freud's view of reality: the "movement" of imaginable bio-physical parts wholly explains the movement that produces the psychological phenomenon. The psychological phenomenon is reducible to a mechanistic movement of imaginable arrangements governed by physical laws that determine beforehand the more complex movements at any level. Because of the imaginative understanding of classical correlations as "concrete, determinism follows [;] . . . the possibility of statistical laws, except as a confession of ignorance, rigorously is excluded."[17] Essentially, Freud conceived

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Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 3 [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992], 271). It is also often identified as that which is an intelligible unity-identity-whole.

[14]Lonergan, *Insight*, 116.

[15]Ibid., 107, 108.

[16]Ibid., 154.

[17]Ibid., 228.

of the subconscious drive not just as an explanatory classical correlation, but also as possessing an imaginative embodiment.[18]

Due to his uncritical acceptance of an imaginative synthesis, Freud was blinded to the inherently statistical nature of Darwinian theory: the fact that it revolves around concrete biological organisms. Attention given to concrete biological organisms brings out the probability that is inherent in contingent factors such as competitive survival and natural selection. However, Freud's classical laws offered a concrete reference prior to the statistical nature of Darwinism, which grounds its understanding in the concrete instances (events) of species. A fundamental problem regarding the consistency of Freud's psychological science is that it fails to recognize the proper relationships and divergences between classical physical laws and the notion of probability inherent in Darwin's method. For Lonergan, what Darwin's theory really has brought about is a complementary synthesis of classical and statistical laws known as schemes of recurrence.[19] "Abstractly, the [recurrent] scheme itself is a combination of classical laws. Concretely, schemes begin, continue, and cease to function in accord with statistical probabilities."[20] In order to avoid an imaginative synthesis, Lonergan points out that classical laws are not facts in themselves but are rather abstract ideas through which we can understand and predict concrete schemes of recurrence. However, statistical probability does indeed refer to concrete objects and events directly and is not prone to such an imaginative synthesis.[21]

The complementarity of classical and statistical investigations opens up the understanding that higher schemes of recurrence are conditioned by lower schemes: molecular interactions and schemes allow for the possibility of biological schemes, which allow for the possibility of psychological schemes, which allow for the possibility of rational schemes of recurrence or cycles of cognitive

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[18]By "explanatory classical correlation" Lonergan is referring to abstract scientific "correlatives defined implicitly by empirically established correlations, functions, laws, theories, systems" (ibid., 103).

[19]Lonergan's notion of "schemes of recurrence" can be intuitively indicated as follows: "it is noted that the diverging series of positive conditions for an event might coil around in a circle. In that case, a series of events A, B, C, . . . would be so related that the fulfillment of the conditions for each would be the occurrence of the others. Schematically, then, the scheme might be represented by the series of conditionals: If A occurs, B will occur; if B occurs, C will occur; if C occurs, . . . A will recur. Such a circular arrangement may involve any number of terms, the possibility of alternative routes, and in general any degree of complexity" (ibid., 141).

[20]Ibid., 141.

[21]For example, Lonergan states in his chapter on the canons of empirical method that "statistical theories deal with events. For it is the event, the occurrence, the actual happening that cannot be settled by classical laws without the introduction of a concrete, nonsystematic manifold of further determinations" (ibid., 121).

insights. At each level in which a recurrent scheme of events is actual, there occurs an ideal probability as to the emergence of a further conditioned scheme of recurrence. Lonergan's idea of "emergent probability" explains the process of schemes of recurrence as becoming more and more complex from the actual to the probable to the possible; from the ground up as it were.[22]

In Lonergan's notion of emergent probability, the viability of higher schemes of recurrence cannot be accounted for as mere further complexification of principles at the lowest actual scheme of recurrence. Rather, each higher scheme of recurrence has its own distinct principles proper to its own level, principles that are understood as constitutive for the possibility and actuality of the higher scheme of recurrence.

Different levels cannot be understood fully through knowledge of lower principles. Rather, each higher level requires a certain amount of knowledge of lower principles, but also an understanding of the higher level of principles specific to that level as a further determination of lower principles. This forms the core of Lonergan's classes of explanatory insights, that is to say, explanatory genera. Lonergan explains:

> As one moves from one genus to the next, there is added a new set of laws which defines its own basic terms by its own empirically established correlations. When one turns from physics and chemistry to astronomy, one employs the same basic terms and correlations; but when one turns from physics and chemistry to biology, one is confronted with an entirely new set of basic concepts and laws.[23]

The ramifications of this notion are radical. If one finds things in nature that are fundamentally different from others according to heightened levels of functioning, it is because there are autonomous principles (classical correlations) to account for and sustain such functioning at that level. Human beings as intelligent are not to be fully explained by a heightened complexity of psychobiological functioning. Rather, they are intelligent because they are intelligible unity-identity-wholes exercising schemes of recurrence with the highest principle of functioning. This sets them apart from other biological organisms (or

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[22]Lonergan discusses "emergent probability" in the context of conditioned series of schemes of recurrence: "From these considerations there now comes to light the notion of an emergent probability. For the actual functioning of earlier schemes in the series fulfills the conditions for the possibility of the functioning of later schemes. As such conditions are fulfilled, the probability of the combination of the component events in a scheme jumps from a product of a set of proper fractions to the sum of those proper fractions. But what is probable, sooner or later occurs" (ibid., 145).

[23]Ibid., 281.

mammals) through principles that allow an animal to be human.[24] Lonergan further clarifies this idea schematically:

> Consider, then, a genus of things, Ti, with explanatory conjugates, Ci, and a consequent list of possible schemes of recurrence, Si. Suppose there occurs an aggregate of events, Eij, that is merely coincidental when considered in the light of the laws of the things, Ti, and of all their possible schemes of recurrence, Si. Then, if the aggregate of events, Eij, occurs regularly, it is necessary to advance to the higher viewpoint of some genus of things, Tj, with conjugates, Ci and Cj, and with schemes of recurrence, Sj. The lower viewpoint is insufficient for it has to regard as merely coincidental what in fact is regular. The higher viewpoint is justified, for the conjugates, Cj, and the schemes, Sj, constitute a higher system that makes regular what otherwise would be merely coincidental.[25]

Thus, upon such an understanding, although there are principled conditions responsible for higher functioning, lower functioning still occurs. The higher functioning requires a higher complexity at the lower levels and more conditions in order to operate, but this complexity does not fully explain the higher functioning itself. Lonergan states the importance of the conservative nature of higher schemes of recurrence: "the introduction of the higher autonomous science [does not] interfere with the autonomy of the lower; for the higher enters into the field of the lower only in so far as it makes systematic on the lower level what otherwise would be merely coincidental."[26]

More specifically, Lonergan argues that human consciousness is an autonomous function that organizes and directs human activity. This is seen in human activity itself: A person's

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[24]A simple illustration of the difference between psycho-biological and intelligent functioning is the difference between a level of organic consciousness in which images produced by the sensory manifold are used only as stimulus for instinctive responses—as with highly functioning animals—and psychic awareness or consciousness that possesses insight into images produced through or accompanying the sensory manifold. The difference is described by Lonergan in the first paragraph of the Preface in *Insight* in the context of the difference between solving a mystery—gaining insight or knowledge into the correct suspect—as opposed to merely having a memory of distinct clues (or images). Lonergan says that it is "a quite distinct activity of organizing intelligence that places the full set of clues in a unique explanatory perspective" (ibid., 3). The specific difference between these two levels of psychic function consists in the fact that intelligent functioning in human thought supervenes on psychological images and does not consist wholly of them.

[25]Ibid., 281.

[26]Ibid.

> bodily movements are, as it were, initially detached from the conative, sensitive, and emotive elements that direct and release them; and the initial plasticity and indeterminacy ground the later variety. Were the pianist's arms, hands, and fingers locked from birth in natural routines of biological stimulus and response, they never could learn to respond quickly and accurately to the sight of a musical score.[27]

When human action is unified under the conscious, intelligent, higher control of conscious desires (as opposed to organic functioning alone), biological activities follow almost effortlessly behind the flow and operation of active consciousness. Freud stated that biological drive precedes human action, such that the latter gains an initial organization from conative and emotional sources. However, Lonergan goes beyond Freud by stating that it is intelligence which effects a more comprehensive unity, and that conscious desires gain unity in action and execution through intelligence. This leads Lonergan to state rather poignantly:

> though man's central form were a spiritual intelligibility, it could be the ground and center of his physical, chemical, organic, and sensitive conjugates; for the spiritual is comprehensive; what can embrace the whole universe through knowledge can provide the center and ground of unity in the material conjugates of a single man.[28]

We discovered a deficiency in Freud's account of psychical unity in his own practical psychology. On one hand, Freud was convinced that one could achieve medical progress by approaching the psychical self at the level of conscious activity, instead of merely attacking psychical problems through biomedical means of medication, surgery, and so forth. On the other hand, he was a staunch psychological determinist, as he insisted that psychological conditions are direct manifestations of, and reducible to, biological conditions. Lonergan's approach in fact offers a more coherent account of Freud's practical psychology than Freud's own theory.[29]

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[27]Ibid., 212–3.

[28]Ibid., 543.

[29]I wish to thank an anonymous referee for aptly pointing out what can be called a cascading irony between Freud and Lonergan's views: "Freud foregrounds unconscious drives and assumes cognitive activity to negotiate functional living. Lonergan foregrounds conscious cognitive activity but in his turn not only assumes but also acknowledges the importance of constructive and repressive psychic censoring for the presentation of neural-biological activity in consciousness." As will be indicated below, Lonergan's account of psychical unity better explains Freud's own therapeutic successes than does Freud's own theory.

IV.

The Unity and Character of the Human Self and the Nature of Dramatic Bias. Lonergan's account of psychical selfhood involves explanatory principles or properties of the human thing as a human being. Yet, the nature of the unity at the level of the human self requires clarification.

In order to know what characterizes a human being, one need only observe and reflect on the activities of a human being. A human being is a conscious entity that is affected by, and in turn manipulates, its environment to achieve ends important to it. Human beings are further distinguished as feeling and imagining. A human self has a range of memories at his or her disposal and has emotional responses to stimuli. In addition, a human being understands, knows, inquires, and makes judgments about things in various ways.

In fact, these characteristic activities distinguish human beings from other biological organisms. Freud would agree that a human self carries out all of these functions, including rational activity. At the same time, however, the cognitive and intellectual functions of the self in Freud's theory are subordinated to biological functionality; the ego is merely an organ for obtaining organic satiation. Hence, when Freud conceives of a human being as knowing, he really is affirming nothing but a bodily knowledge—the "already out there now real"[30]—not an intelligible knowledge of things requiring understanding and insight. Freud envisages the ego or consciousness as a juggler of images or thoughts that relate to images; the ego merely arranges sensory perceptions that flow past it or are recalled from the preconscious in juxtaposition to the demands of the ego-ideal or id. Freud emphasizes the instinctual stimulus-response nature of consciousness—even if a very complicated stimulus-response system—to the neglect of the intellectual function of human beings. Freud thus misses the fact that consciousness is characterized by a distinct and irreducible "awareness immanent in cognitional acts."[31] He restricts knowing in its fullness to the first level of knowing only: empirical consciousness. Lonergan, by contrast, identifies higher

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[30]Lonergan, *Insight*, 276.

[31]Ibid., 346. That Freud neglected the intellectual functionality of human beings is negatively evidenced in his silence regarding the nature of intellectual activity itself while he maintains at the same time that there is something called intellectual activity. For instance, in his later work *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays*, Freud asserts the advancement of intellectuality by the Jewish people in virtue of their conception of an elevated monotheistic God. However, Freud never seems to define the nature of intellectuality itself. For instance, in the index of Freud's works entitled *ABSTRACTS of the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. Carrie Rothgeb (Rockville: National Institute of Mental Health, 1972), there is only one reference listed for the term "intellectual," referring to Freud's early work *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The nature of intellectual processes is not defined in the referenced passage.

levels of consciousness (most comprehensively that of intelligence) that organize activities of the lower.

However, it is evident even in Freud's own psychoanalytical method that there is more to consciousness than the awareness of bodies. Freud need only appropriate the insights that he constantly achieved in the breakthroughs that he had with his patients. He considered the psychoanalytic method as a way for a fellow ego to help another ego gain insights into the nature of his or her repression in order to achieve a new equilibrium of the self. We may legitimately ask of Freud, What bodily satisfaction does the psychoanalysist obtain through such an offering of help? Is there not a higher drive and function behind the method? Although his patients often resisted insights into the nature or motivation of their repression, psychical release frequently announced itself as a Eureka moment of insight in which various individual problems and behavior came under a single intelligible unity. The fact of Freud's own psychoanalytic practice thus yields a double conclusion. The first is that Freud's own action shows that there is a higher level of knowing which involves cycles of insights and understanding (and an answer to the question, Is it so?). This shows us that human consciousness cannot be fully accounted for by biological principles. The other conclusion is that this level of understanding or knowing affects the lower order of operations in the human person. Knowledge affects the body—the patient has an insight such that his or her physical symptoms disappear.

A further characteristic of the human person is revealed when one examines the nature of the human self not only as an epiphenomenon of biological principles, but as constituted by its own principles that allow for higher intellectual activity: understanding and insight. In fact, the unifying principle that characterizes the human self is its mode of inquiry. A human self can bring his or her experience under a unity; this capacity to do so is known as intelligence. Thus, the unifying character of a human self is the fact that he or she is intelligent. This is seen, again, in contrast with Freud's notion that the univocal drive of a human self is biological. When one considers the principled nature of the self as intelligent, the self is more accurately depicted as having a drive for inquiry or knowing.[32] Knowing, whether practically or theoretically, in all its various forms, is the supervening purpose of human beings. As Lonergan puts it, the fundamental drive of a human being is the ongoing quest to know being; and, being "is the objective of the pure desire to know."[33]

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[32]However, for Lonergan the only drive of human beings is not only for knowledge but also importantly the drive for "the good." Lonergan sees the two as thoroughly integrated.

[33]Lonergan, *Insight*, 372.

Having contrasted some of Freud's philosophical presuppositions with Lonergan's, I shall now give an account of Lonergan's understanding of deviant psychological phenomena such as repression, inhibition, and psychical disturbance in the conflict between the conscious and unconscious self. The final question to be answered is therefore this: Given the unified intellectual drive of a human being, how does the psychical conflict between the conscious and unconscious arise, a conflict that results in deeply repressed elements? That is, given the fundamental desire to know, why does the unconscious actively repress insights? In order to understand Lonergan's answer, it is important first to examine his notion of human psychical structure.

Lonergan argues that human beings impose structures on various and perpetual experiences of data which he calls "patterns of experience."[34] These patterns of experience are functions of personal desires or concerns. A diversity of concerns causes a diversity of patterns of experience in various classifications. For instance, there is the intellectual and practical pattern of experience as well as dramatic, biological, and aesthetic ones. This patterning isolates and attunes its awareness of the flow of sense data (and the memory of past data) in a gathering and unifying fashion so as to accomplish certain goals or to attain certain qualities of awareness. In fact, what Lonergan denotes with the phrase "intellectual patterns of experience" is not just the intellectual dimension present in every other pattern of experience (practical, artistic, dramatic, etc.) but the patterning of experience that is in pursuit of understanding and truth without any restriction imposed by practical common sense, artistic goals, and so forth. Since a human being is fundamentally a knower and a doer, insights permeate the patternings of experience as a whole. Each concern is an intelligent and resourceful concern which operates intelligently, even if sometimes in a perfunctory manner. Nevertheless, the concern of the self is often intensely conscious and brings its awareness to the world. Meanwhile, the consciousness shuts out irrelevant sensations or memories that are not directly (or derivatively) pertinent to accomplishing conscious aims.

Yet, Lonergan does not merely present the psychical structure of the human self as a despot (to use Aristotle's phrase)[35] over the biological-neural function. In fact, a person naturally responds to the demands of his or her biological needs. For instance, when one is hungry, one finds something to eat. These "demand functions" are "are subject to control and selection"[36] insofar as

[34]See ibid., 204ff.

[35]Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254b4–6.

[36]Lonergan, *Insight*, 214.

hunger is not hunger for food, but the demand of hunger to become conscious. Furthermore, the needs of the body arise into consciousness quite forcefully, although they can be ignored in favor of turning to other concerns. In fact, in order for the conscious self to get any of its various aims accomplished in light of the many and varied patterns of experience, the self needs to be able to prevent certain thoughts or desires from distracting the consciousness from its task. However, constant ignoring of demand functions can result in psychic and physical problems. For, as Lonergan states, "[t]he demand functions of neural patterns and processes constitute the exigence of the organism for its conscious complement; and to violate that exigence is to invite the anguish of abnormality."[37] The ultimate abnormality at the level of the psychical self is dramatic bias.

We have stated above that the intellectual pattern of experience is a supervening pattern. There is an element in all conscious activity that is inherently intelligent; it is how we operate. Biases, on the other hand, are often emotional responses to ideas or understanding. A bias involves a "knee-jerk" rejection of an image or idea that touches on an entrenched emotional or personal aversion. It is an anemic understanding of a situation; it does not let other images or insights fill out a proper understanding of a thing or state of affairs. The visceral reaction to an image or idea that contradicts or enlightens a bias can become very much ingrained in the psyche. The bias becomes so entrenched (either through a conscious decision in the past, or as inherited from one's culture) in the psychical process that it works at an unconscious level to undermine insights that may soften or remove it. One way the unconscious accomplishes this is by censoring or inhibiting certain perceptual images in favor of others that will yield an insight for a particular concern of consciousness. In fact, for Lonergan, the primary mechanism of dramatic bias is to block an image that might give rise to some feared insight. Consequently, a deeply embedded bias will so affect the censor function that it will allow only schemes of data that will not contribute to the removal of the bias. Thus, an image or idea is repressed or censored from the consciousness. This will inevitably lead to social abnormalities and conflict, and sometimes even to adverse physical symptoms.

A clearer link between bias and insight now comes to the fore. Lonergan states:

> we cannot but claim that there is some connection between it [the flight from insight] and, on the other hand, repression and inhibition, the slips

[37]Ibid.

> of waking consciousness and the function of dreams, the aberrations of religion and morality and, as a limit, the psychoneuroses.[38]

A solution for many psychological problems, Lonergan asserts, can be found in aiding the sufferer in removing the blind spot in the psyche that prevents it from coming to a better understanding of the cause of the ailment. However, as Freud found out, the removal of bias is not easy. Rather, the bias protects itself. It masks itself as something other than what it is (transference), shielding itself from detection in ingenious ways (resistance).

The following example demonstrates the nature of bias. A person is terrified of worms to the point of radical hysteria whenever the person either thinks of a worm or sees one (or thinks that she sees one). On the surface, one might think that according to Lonergan, the only thing to do is to try to convince the person rationally that worms are nice harmless creatures that are good for the soil. However, because of transference, this will not yield any results. For, in this instance, the person has transferred a traumatic childhood memory in which a close male relative lewdly exposed himself to the patient when the latter was a child. The aberrant behavior regarding worms is merely a way of preventing the insight that such a close relative (who should act nobly and lovingly) would act in such a demoralizing fashion. Perhaps the source and function of the bias resides in an attempt to avoid the shame and humiliation (in connection with the intersubjective realm of common sense or the super-ego) that would accompany such knowledge. Thus, bias is not merely a negative phenomenon, but an actively resourceful one. It is with this in mind that Lonergan characterizes bias as follows: it "is resourceful and inventive. . . . It admits a vast variety of forms and, when it finds some untenable, it can resort to others."[39] The key, from Lonergan's perspective, is to expose the real bias that lies deep within the unconscious by means of the light of insight. It is by embracing understanding that biases are addressed, treated and removed.

Biological problems need to be treated at the biological level; psychological problems need to be addressed at their own level. Likewise, since human beings are characterized by a desire to know, the ways in which human beings block insights result in adverse effects. Many problems that one experiences personally or socially are effects of bias, a flight from understanding. Oftentimes, as social and fallible beings, we suffer from intellectual sickness so that the proper treatment consists in an unabashed pursuit of further insights no matter what our initial emotional response to them may be. This is a point that Freud missed

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[38]Ibid., 223.

[39]Ibid., 6.

due to his own bias in favor of a reductive determinism. He was blind to the rich power of knowing that he himself possessed in the very development of his psychoanalytic method. [40]

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