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Abstract

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This dissertation, which is an exercise in psychoanalysis and social theory, investigates the relationship between utopianism and the sexual perversions. It maintains that there is a basic affinity between the utopian and the sexual pervert in so far as both attempt to elude the reality principle. The study attempts to locate these larger theoretical reflections in the context of the current cultural scene, and raises questions concerning the sociology of knowledge and psychoanalysis and the normative presuppositions of psychoanalysis.

The author draws on the recent work of Joyce McDougall and Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel to demonstrate the origins of the perversions in the attempt to disavow the primal scene and the Oedipus complex and to show that this disavowal, in turn, has deleterious consequences for the individual's relationship to reality. This would mean that the perversions, rather than representing a more or less neurotic phenomenon as the early Freudians believed, or an emancipated form of expressing socially uncontaminated sexual wishes as the defenders of the perversions would maintain, represent a form of pathology which compromises the integrity of the ego.

Against the backdrop of these recent psychoanalytic theories, the author investigates Marcuse's utopian defense of the perversions. Marcuse agrees that the perversions do indeed represent an attempt to evade the

reality principle. However, as he views it as a historically contingent, "repressive" reality principle which can and ought to be transcended, he views this as a positive feature. The author criticizes Marcuse's account of the perversions and thereby his utopianism on two counts. It is argued that Marcuse's theory of perversions is inadequate because, resting on early psychoanalytic drive psychology, it does not take ego psychology with its principle of multiple function and the late theory of aggression adequately into account.

The author concludes by raising the question that, even if it were possible for humanity to free itself from the renunciations imposed by civilization, would be desirable? He argues that the realization of Marcuse's "integral gratification" would represent the negation of everything that makes us human rather than our emancipation.

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I. Chapter One: Preliminary Considerations

A. Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Knowledge

The exact relationship between social developments and developments within the theory and practice of psychoanalysis is difficult to determine and has been the object of considerable controversy over the years. And while it is also difficult to sketch the more differentiated positions that lie in the middle of the spectrum, the two extreme poles of the controversy can be described with relative ease. On the one hand, one finds what is often called biologism, i.e. the position that maintains that psychoanalysis deals with relatively invariant conflicts and universal fantasies which are somehow rooted in the biological endowment of the species; according to this view, psychoanalysis would be (and should be) relatively insulated from the more ephemeral developments in society. And, on the other hand, one finds what is sometimes called environmentalism, namely the position that holds that man is the species that is defined precisely by the lack of an invariably given biological essence, and that he is the product of the socio-cultural environment in which he is socialized. It follows that environmental factors play the major role in the etiology of psychopathology and that the nature of psychopathology is itself historically variable. According to this view, then, developments in the larger society inevitably have ramifications

for psychoanalytic theory and practice, and, moreover, it should be recognized that this is a fact not to be bemoaned.

Whatever position one adopts with respect to this theoretical controversy in general, it seems that two recent developments are incontrovertable as facts. More individuals are opting for the "perverse solution," in explicit contradiction to more traditional sexual and familial roles, and there has simultaneously been a renewed interest in the perversions in psychoanalysis; the increased exploration of the preoedipal phases of development in recent years has led to a new understanding of the perversions, i.e., it has uncovered the affinity between the "perverse core" and the "psychotic core" of the personality. What are we to make of this conjunction of an increase in perverse practices and lifestyles with the renewed psychoanalytic interest in the perversions? Is it merely that, a conjunction, or is there a deeper, inner relationship between the two phenomena? Let me state that prima facie it strikes me that the conjunction is too obvious to have been the mere product of accident, and this conclusion is reinforced by certain convictions I have about the sociology of knowledge. Nevertheless, I do not believe I can substantiate this claim, within the confines of the current study. Instead, I would simply like to indicate the central arguments one would have to consider in attempting to answer such a question.

The argument on the one side--the environmentalist side as it were--is that the transition from a more authoritarian patriarchal family to a more permissive one has produced a new personality type as well as a concomitant increase in pregenital pathology. With the passing of the

patriarchal family, so it is argued, importance of the struggle with the strong father diminishes as the central developmental crucible in which the previous phases are absorbed and rearranged. This means the preoedipal period assumes a new importance. "Classical analysis" was born in a milieu in which traditional family structures remained strong, and as a result oedipal disorders became the center of focus. Contrawise, contemporary psychoanalysis is being practiced in a society where the traditional family is undergoing a certain dissolution and pregenital disorders are becoming more prominent. It should be mentioned that the transformation of the patriarchal family, like the transformation of all traditional social institutions, constitutes an ambiguous phenomenon: at the same time as it presents new opportunities for "post-conventional" development of the personality it also presents new threats of anomie, alienation and psychopathology.

It is argued, on the other side, that the actual number of individuals suffering from pregenital disturbances has not increased. Instead, analysts are simply diagnosing more cases of pregenital pathology because of their increased knowledge of the area and their refined diagnostic skills. Two explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, are possible here. It could be the case that much pathology which was formerly diagnosed on the oedipal level and treated accordingly was in fact preoedipal; or, to put it somewhat more accurately, the preoedipal diemension of certain pathologies --which, it goes without saying, are always overdetermined--remained insufficiently diagnosed and treated in the past. And, it is also possible that, as the average length of an analysis has increased dramatically, the

likelihood of entering deeply into the preoedipal period and approaching the perverse core of the personality, which is present in everyone, has increased as well. It is also often pointed out that, in retrospect, the so-called classical neurotics, about whom Freud formulated classical theory and devised standard technique, were in fact much more disturbed than has generally been recognized. Indeed, if many of them were seen in the consulting room today, they would most likely be diagnosed in the "borderline" range of the spectrum.

I would like to indicate the direction in which I would attempt a reconciliation of these two positions. I believe it is possible to admit the truth of the "biologistic position" without having to deny the reality of recent socio-familial developments. That is to say, the second position is correct in maintaining that the perverse core constitutes a relatively invariant feature of the personality, rooted in our bodily endowment, and that much has been uncovered about it through increased research and the lengthening of the average analysis. To admit that the perverse core and the more or less universal fantasies associated with it constitute relatively invariant features of the personality, however, does not explain why this perverse dimension is allowed such direct expression today. Why, in other words, has it become permissible for certain parts of the personality, which hitherto had to remain deeply repressed, to become so freely expressable? It seems to me that only an account of the changes in family structure and all that is entailed by it, could explain this development. Finally, although I have no statistical evidence to support this claim, it is my impression that it is not simply that more analyses are reaching the perverse core after many years of

therapeutic regression, but that more patients are presenting with preoedipal disturbances--i.e., they are closer to the surface.

B. The Normative Question

The questions we are going to be considering in this study are not only a topic of investigation for psychoanalysis, but for ethics and politics as well. Indeed, the extent to which sexual and familial issues have become politicized in the past two decades is truly remarkable. An observation Saul Bellow once made concerning Israeli politics might also be made about "sexual politics," namely one does not make many friends discussing the subject. This is an area where feelings run high --individuals feel their way of life and very identity are at stake-- and it is exceedingly difficult to have a rational discussion. The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that many homosexual and feminist groups perceive the analysts as the ideologues of the inquisition. A few remarks on the normative aspect of the question would therefore be order.

Before turning to more theoretical considerations, however, I would like to state that I am a complete libertarian in these matters, which is to say, I believe consenting adults should be free to enter into any sexual relations they wish. I also believe it is entirely unconstitutional to limit anyone's civil liberties on the basis of their sexual practices. Finally, while I believe that perversions are pathological, in a sense I shall attempt to specify, the fight to have them so classified in official diagnostic manuals strikes me as thoroughly misguided. It not only perpetuates

the misconception that diagnostic labeling is crucial, but also incorrectly assumes real insight into the subject can be promulgated through political struggles over diagnostic categories.

At any rate, let us turn our attention to the more substantial theoretical issues raised by this discussion. As I see it, the question of the normative status of the perversions resolves itself into the question of the theoretical status of the development schemes which are employed evaluatively by psychoanalysis. For those schemes are somehow empirical and normative at the same time. On the one hand, they purport to be grounded in empirical reconstruction and direct observation and to describe the status of at least ideal-typical development. On the other hand, it can be shown that the notion of maturity, which can be traced back through Freud to Kant and the German Enlightenment, is the undeniably normative notion that informs psychoanalytic theory and practice (Kaufmann, 1980). And it is held that the achievement of maturity requires the mastery of the sequential developmental tasks described in psychoanalysis' developmental schemes. The fact that these schemes are both normative and empirical should only bother those who continue to maintain there can be a strict separation of facts and values in the social sciences, that is, those who still adhere to the old positivism. It has convincingly been shown, I believe, in recent developments in the post-empiricist philosophy of science, that the object of the social sciences, society, is normatively constituted from the outset, so we should expect to find an intermingling of normative and empirical elements among its basic concepts.

Having said this, however, we immediately encounter a difficulty. The normative position of genitality or genital supremacy, which constitutes the culminating phase of sexual development, has been challenged, and this challenge has serious consequences for the classical theory of the perversions (Balint, 1948; Lichtenstein, 1970; Ross,1970; Sarlin, 1970). The theory of genitality received perhaps its most extreme formulation--or reductio ad absurdum--in the writing of Wilhelm Reich where psychological health was equated with "orgasmic potency" which was defined in purely mechanistic terms: "a functional relation to mechanical tension...electric charge...electric discharge and mechanical relaxation. The completion of this series and its undisturbed function is the surest sign of a healthy psychic apparatus" (Jacoby, 1975, p. 94) But one does not have to go as far as Reich's hydraulic formulations to see that there are difficulties with the theory. It has been recognized for some time now that orgasmic potency does not necessarily correlate with the capacity for mature object love as the classical theory presumed. Indeed, it is often pointed out that many borderline patients are capable of intense orgiastic experience without at the same time being capable of mature object relations.

Nevertheless, I believe it is both possible and necessary to defend a more sophisticated theory of genitality. Such a theory would fulfill the intentions of the old theory--i.e., it would correlate genitality with maturity--while avoiding the simplistic formulations that dwell almost exclusively on the capacity for orgasm. The argument for the necessity of such a theory within the larger edifice of psychoanalytic thought would run as follows: if maturity is the fundamental value

informing Freudian thought; if it consists in the relinquishment of grandiose, narcissistic, omnipotent, which is to say, infantile attempts to circumvent reality and in the acceptance of the reality principle; and if perversion does in fact represent such an attempt to elude the reality principle which compromises the individual's relation to reality; then, the mastery of pregenital, perverse impulses and their integration into a "genital" personality structure would indeed remain a precondition for psychic health thus conceived. The capacity for orgasm would undoubtedly remain an essential feature of that structure.

While it is necessary to maintain that perversions are in some sense pathological and that genitality retains its normative position, psychoanalysis must avoid two, interrelated dangers with respect to its stance toward perversions: namely, moralism or conformism. The problem is to deny the ideological mystification of the perversions which one often hears, for example, with homosexual groups--e.g., that they are a normal, emancipated or even superior form of sexuality--while, at the same time, not falling into a moralistic condemnation of them. They must be approached with the same naturalistic or scientific attitude with which psychoanalysis approaches all expressions of instinctual life. A similar word of caution must be voiced with respect to the question of marriage. Again, the problem is to maintain the desirability of mature heterosexual object relations, while at the same time, avoiding the use of the concept of genitality to justify moralistically conventional marital relations. True object love --which is an achievement--is to be esteemed. However, conventional couples are often held together through reaction formations against pregenitality, as a defense against the temptation of perversion and because of pathological

dependency needs. The existence of a seemingly stable couple cannot be taken as a presumptive evidence for the achievement of genitality (or of object constancy for that matter).

The point might become clearer if it is realized that the normative position of genitality does not derive from the intrinsic desirability of heterosexual relations as such--it is not the sexual act which is at stake. Rather, genitality assumes this position because of the developmental accomplishments it indicates. It is similar to an "organizer" in Spitz's sense in that it indicates the achievement of certain developmental tasks which are themselves desirable and essential components of psychic health, e.g., the relative mastery of ambivalence through the neutralization of aggression by libido, object constancy, gender identity, the acceptance of the double difference between the sexes and the generations, the radical dimunition of castration anxiety and penis envy, etc.

The problem is further complicated by the following consideration. In addition to the acceptance of the reality principle, the ability to sublimate one's private conflicts into cultural products with objective significance was a cherished sign of maturity for Freud. Yet, it almost goes without saying, that throughout history many of the individuals who have made the most outstanding contributions to the collective culture have been practicing perverts or individuals with strong perverse tendencies. The Greeks present a particularly difficult case for Freud, as they had for Marx in a different context. Indeed, both of these quintessentially modernist thinkers--who shared the same basic classical Gymnasium education--continued to view Hellenic Culture as ideal throughout their

lives (Sterba, 1982). And this despite the fact that it posed an anomaly for each of their theories respectively. For Marx, the Greek achievement posed a threat to the theory of historical materialism. He had a difficulty explaining how such an advanced cultural achievement could occur on the basis of such an immature economy. For Freud, the Greeks posed a challenge to his theory concerning the relation between perversions and reality. The Greeks were the people who were perhaps the most passionately committed to facing Ananke without illusions; after all, they gave us physical science, Western philosophy and tragedy. Yet, homosexuality was a central institution of classical Greek life.

The foregoing considerations should indicate that a distinction must be drawn between adaption (to reality) and conformity. To adapt to reality does not necessarily mean to conform to the status quo. Following Hegel, we might say the real is the rational, not the existent. In certain instances the most adaptive solution might be to alloplastically transform the status quo--in the name of reality-- rather than to conform to it. Likewise, the reality principle is not equivalent to the particular instantiation of it in which an individual contingently finds himself. Indeed, as we shall see, the relationship between the reality principle and its various historical instantiations is a point of controversy between psychoanalytically oriented social theorists of the right and of the left. The point of contention is, in a nutshell, how mutable is the reality principle?

II. Chapter Two: Perversion and Reality: Some Recent Theoretical Revisions

A. General Comments on Theoretical Innovation in Psychoanalysis

Because of the nature of the subject matter, the question of tradition and innovation, which is problematic for all intellectual traditions, arises in a particularly acute form with psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is, to the best of my knowledge, the only discipline that posits a resistance to its own fundamental propositions; and this resistance, as we know, does not merely result from the complexity of the material, but is the product of some sort of dynamism that repels insight. Owing to this situation, any attempt to revise the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis can always be interpreted as an attempt to flee the truths contained in them. Indeed, while there may be no consensus concerning which propositions ought to be counted among those fundamental tenets, general agreement could probably be achieved for the claim that, whatever those fundamental propositions are, they must be accompanied by resistance. This line of thinking has been caricatured, of course, when the resistance to a particular idea has been adduced as evidence of its truth. Although all fundamental psychoanalytic insights must be accompanied by resistance, not all resisted ideas are true.

The last observation raises the Popperian criticism of psychoanalysis, namely, that it systematically insulates itself from falsification and is therefore not a valid science. And, to be sure, historically there existed a tendency--the price of which became apparent at the 1958 Symposium in Psychoanalysis and the Philosophy of Science (Hook, 1959)--for psychoanalysis to insulate itself from outside disciplines and to treat external criticism rather cavalierly. Ironically, had the analysts not clung to their "splendid isolation" so defensively and been more receptive to outside criticism, they might have been prompted to clarify precisely the sui generis nature of psychoanalytic discourse and practice and could have shed the scientistic self-misunderstanding with which they are still struggling. However, the fact that the unique character of the analytic enterprise has been used at times to avoid legitimate criticism in no way validates the Popperian case against psychoanalysis. Against Popper, it must be maintained that in an a priori fashion he imports standards of scientificality from physics into a domain where they in principle could not apply. Psychoanalysts must become sophisticated enough about the sui generis nature of their discipline so that they do not have to ward off criticism defensively, on the one hand, or try to legitimate themselves in terms of the essentially external standards of positivism on the other.

Part of the uniqueness of psychoanalytic discourse is that it, like Marxist discourse, lies somewhere between science and philosophy. It has often been pointed out that a defining feature of science is progress: the cumulative growth of knowledge. Even where historical discountinuity seems to take place, it can be maintained that progress has occurred

insofar as the predictions of the old theory are special cases of the new "revolutionary" theory, e.g., the relation of Newtonian to Einsteinian physics. It is often said of philosophy, however, that it is characterized precisely by its failure to progress in this manner. Hegel's claim to the contrary notwithstanding, who can seriously maintain that Kant's philosophy, for example, marks an unequivocal advance over Plato's? Indeed is not the sign of a great philosopical system that it is perennial and not subject to temporal superseding in the same way as is science? And how often does advancement in philosophy result from a return to the beginning rather than from an expansion into new territory--a deepening rather than a progressing as it were? Correlated with these distinctions is the fact that whereas sciences proceed through the continual confrontation with facts, philosophy is relatively impervious to factual material. It develops, rather, by working out the implications of its own inner content.

Laplanche (1970/1976) has observed that one of the unique features of Freud's thought is that it developed both as a science and philosophy. The only other thinker whose work developed in a comparable manner is Marx. On the one hand, we are familiar with the empirical developments that occasioned the famous turning points in Freud's theorizing, e.g., the discovery of narcissism and of the negative therapeutic reaction, etc. However, at the same time as his thinking interacted with empirical practice in the fashion of a science, it also possessed the quality of autochthonically unfolding according to its own inner dynamic. How many of the ideas that first appeared <u>in nuce</u> in the <u>Project</u> of 1895 found their mature elaboration in Freud's late writings? Furthermore, we know

there was no simple linear progress in Freud's thinking, and that, like the interlocutors in a Platonic dialogue, he was constantly attempting a new beginning. No better example of this exists than his last major work, Inhibitions, Symptons, and Anxiety, where he radically re-examined some of the most fundamental postulates of his thinking with results that were anything but conclusive.

To return to our question, the relationship of innovation versus tradition within psychoanalysis, the foregoing considerations should begin to indicate a number of pitfalls to be avoided. One, which is a danger in all cultural fields, is a superficial progressivism that views tradition as nothing but a constraint and therefore equates progress with the escape from tradition. This attitude has failed to learn the central lesson of the hermeneutical philosophers--who, to be sure, are always in danger of slipping into conservatism in the bad sense-- namely, that tradition not only acts as a limit on our possibilities, but also provides the material through which we form ourselves; innovation which avoids the discipline of "working through" tradition is doomed to be shallow and abstract. The problem is compounded in psychoanalysis because of the inherent resistance to the basic concepts on which it is constructed. Freud, as we know, was continually forewarning his followers of the attempts that would be made to abandon the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis. And his concerns cannot simply be dismissed as resulting from Freud's perhaps neurotic sense of proprietorship vis-à-vis the discipline he had founded, although there was undoubtedly an element of that involved. He was also pointing to a very real dynamic.

The danger in the opposite direction is perhaps more obvious, has received wider attention and therefore requires less commentary. I am referring here, of course, to the danger of complacent orthodoxy. Tendencies in this direction among the earlier generations of analysts derived, in part, from the desire to consolidate and defend Freud's hard won discoveries. However, this legitimate desire often slipped into the epigonal attitude which assumed a priori that the work of the master could not be qualitatively improved upon. Today the variation on that theme can find its justification in Thomas Kuhn's philosophy of science. Several years ago Arlow argued that we ought to accept the fact that psychoanalysis has ceased to occupy the cutting edge of cultural and intellectual discovery, as it had in the twenties and thirties, and has become a normal science in Kuhn's sense. I only want to mention that the deadening of curiosity can be as much a sign of resistance as the outright rejection of basic psychoanalytic insights.

What is so remarkable, then, about Joyce McDougall and Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, the two authors we are about to consider, is what I shall call their "classicism"--as opposed to "orthodoxy." They transform the tradition by deepening it rather than abandoning it. While they do not express the same overt hostility to ego-psychology as do some Parisian analysts, they nevertheless maintain a certain distance from it. The fundamental concepts of classical drive theory--the Oedipus complex, the primal scene, the phallic woman-- constitute the basic terms of their theoretical vocabulary. This is not to imply, however, that they simply use that vocabulary to reiterate the findings of earlier stages of analytic

theorizing. On the contrary, they have been able to use the language of clasical theory to illuminate areas which have increasingly become of interest in recent years; areas, we might add, for which it is often maintained an entirely different theoretical vocabulary is required. Thus, while the discussions in psychoanalysis seems to be forever dichotomizing--e.g., ego-psychology versus object relations theory, conflict versus Anlage, metapsychology versus hermeneutics, etc.--McDougall and Chasseguet-Smirgel have been able to discover deeper unities in key areas (especially between preoedipal and oedipal development) than had hitherto been appreciated. Freud taught us that whereas the work of Thanatos consists in the dissolution of things into simpler states, the work of Eros consists in the creation of ever greater unities.

B. McDougall and Chasseguet-Smirgel's Elaboration of the Late Freud's Theory of Perversion

Thus, with respect to the theory of perversions it is not so much that McDougall and Chasseguet-Smirgel reject Freud's theory outright and propose an altogether different alternative. Rather, they elaborate his account into a more comprehensive theory of which it becomes a moment, and, in the process they are able to provide a further account of preoedipal origins of the perversions. For Freud, it will be recalled, the mechanism of disavowal--a concept whose precise meaning we shall have to specify below--lay at the center of the formation of the perversions. Taking fetishism as the prototype, as do McDougall and Chasseguet-Smirgel as well, Freud argued that the primary motive for the formation of the

perversion is to disavow the penisless state of the woman, or more precisely, of the mother. And as her penisless state is taken to signify castration, by the child and later by the fetishist, the deeper intention is to disavow both the "fact" and the possibility of castration. While the little boy wants to deny it as a possibility that might befall him, the little girl wants to deny it as a state she has already suffered. The child's strategy for disavowal is to formulate the theories of sexual monism and of the phallic woman. These theories maintain that both sexes have a penis and that the woman's apparent state of penislessness is simply that, apparent--either she has had one in the past which will return, she has one now, which she is hiding inside of her, or she will gain one in the future. Fetishism, then, represents a continuation of these more or less normal stages of child development into adult life. Only whereas the child maintains these ideas or theories of sorts, the fetishist acts them out in his perverted practices; the corporeal fetish supersedes the fantasied penis of the phallic woman. Without it to assuage his castration anxiety--"see, the woman has a penis"--the fetishist cannot achieve orgasm.

The mechanism of disavowal continues to occupy a central role in McDougall's and Chasseguet-Smirgel's theory of perverions. However, what must be disavowed on their account extends beyond the "fact" of castration --although it too must be denied--to encompass the entire constellation that constitutes the primal scene. Their thesis is that the depression, narcissistic injury and rage that result from his or her exclusion from the primal scene--the intensity of which can hardly be underestimated--leads the child to disavow its existence. Thus, whereas with Freud the

difference between the sexes had to be denied to deny the existence of castration, here the deeper intention of that denial is to eliminate the very condition of the possibility of the primal scene. Likewise, the mother's "open sex" presents a problem for the child not only because it signifies castration, but because it is the complementary organ to the father's phallus. To admit its existence and proper function would be to admit that the "genital organs of the parents are meant to complete one another" (McDougall, 1980, p. 71) and that they employ them for mutual pleasure from which the child is excluded.

A correlate of the thesis that the disavowal of the primal scene provides the primary motive for the formation of perversion is the thesis that, in addition to denying the difference between the sexes, the child must deny the difference between the generations: "I believe, in effect that the firm basis in reality is not only the difference between the sexes, but also its absolute correlate, like two sides of the same coin, the difference between the generations" (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1974, p. 350). The fact that the child is excluded from the primal scene in virtue of his not belonging to the parental generation, and the fact that other members of the parental generation fall under the incest taboo to varying degrees depending on their proximity to the actual parents, prompts the child to disavow the difference between the generations; the acceptance of the difference between the generations would entail the acceptance of the primal scene and one's exclusion from it. Chasseguet-Smirgel thus maintains that the denial of this "double difference" between the sexes and between the generations--which comprises the essential structure of the Oedipus complex--in order to thereby deny the primal

scene, constitutes the main motive for the formation of perversion. And she argues, conversely, that the acceptance of the double difference, the primal scene and the Oedipus complex is an essential condition for the establishment of an adequate (in a sense to be specified) relationship to reality.

Again, as in Freud's account, the child formulates theories of sexual monism and the phallic woman, but now to deny the larger constellation we have been discussing. If parents of each sex possess a penis, then a (heterosexual) primal scene is obviously impossible. Furthermore, in addition to disavowal, another defense that the child employs to combat the pain and anger at having been excluded from the primal scene is idealization, or, more specifically, idealization of pregenital sexuality. The masturbating child often formulates fantasies which assert the superiority of pregenital sexuality over the parents' adult, genital sexuality--"Who wants them or needs them anyway?" Indeed, Joyce McDougall points out that there is an intimate connection between masturbation and the hermaphroditic wish, i.e., the wish that the difference between the sexes did not exist. In masturbation one at least begins to approximate the situation where one is both sexes to oneself and thus denies the necessity of the complementary sex to provide pleasure. The objection might be raised that strictly speaking, it is illogical to say that the child simultaneously idealizes pregenital sexuality in contrast to adult sexuality and disavows the primal scene. The very act of idealizing pregenital over genital sexuality tacitly admits the existence of the parents' sexuality. And, as we shall see, this ambiguity

lies at the very heart of the phenomenon of disavowal; indeed, Freud devoted a good deal of effort trying to grapple with it.

C. The Developmental and Diagnostic Location of the Perversions

As perversion represents the continuation of a relatively normal stage of development into adult life, its precise diagnostic status can perhaps best be determined by determining the exact developmental location of that stage. McDougall attempts this through an examination of the stage specificity of the defense of disavowal. And, drawing on Laplanche and Pontalis, I shall attempt to develop her analysis further. It will be recalled that it was through his investigation of the interrelationships between disavowal, fetishism and splitting that Freud arrived at his late theory of perversions, i.e., the theory that located them closer to the psychotic than the neurotic end of the diagnostic spectrum. This is not to say, however, that Freud developed a rigorous theory of disavowal (Verleugnung) or that he systematically distinguished it from other "closely allied processes." Nevertheless, as Laplanche and Pontalis observe, "there is...a definite consistency in the evolution of the concept, in his work" (1967/1973, p. 118). Freud's thinking on the subject evolved from viewing disavowal as a basically psychotic phenomenon to seeing it as a more or less independent structure lying somewhere between the psychosis and the neurosis.

Thus Freud (1924a/1975) first attempted to define the specific difference between the psychosis and the neurosis in terms of their respective strategies toward reality, and suggests that disavowal

constitutes the specifically psychotic approach: "In neurosis a piece of reality is avoided by a sort of flight, whereas in psychosis it is remodelled. Or we might say: in psychosis, the initial flight is succeeded by an active phase of remodelling; in neurosis the initial obedience is succeeded by a deferred attempt at flight. Or again, expressed in yet another way: neurosis does not disavow reality, it only ignores it; psychosis disavows it and tries to replace it." It should be noted, as Laplanche and Pontalis (1967/1973) have pointed out, that Freud had been searching for a defense mechanism that was specific to psychosis throughout his career. And it is significant that he introduces disavowal in a paper dealing with psychosis. I shall return to this point when we arrive at the concept of splitting.

At about the same time Freud (1924b/1975, 1925/1975) began to use the term in his discussion of childhood sexuality and to identify disavowal as the defense the child employs when confronted with the castration complex. Thus, in "The Infantile Genital Organization," Freud (1924b/1975) tells us:

> We know how children react to their first impression of the absence of a penis. They disavow the fact and believe they do see a penis, all the same. They gloss over the contradiction and preconception by telling themselves that the penis is still small and will grow bigger presently; and they then slowly come to the emotionally significant conclusion that after all the penis had at least been there before and had been taken away afterwards. (p. 144)

A certain ambiguity can already be detected in Freud's account at this point, and the tension produced by that ambiguity will become a basis for the further development of the theory. On the one hand, he seems to be saying that the child falsifies the data of his perceptions and

actually hallucinates a penis where there was none; this would be a "psychotic" solution. On the other hand, however, he seems to be maintaining that the child perceptually registers the penisless vagina and then attempts to formulate a theory to explain it away. Furthermore Freud (1925/1975) also asserted that the little girl employs disavowal to cope with her sense of castration and made the observation that the use of that defense is "neither uncommon nor very dangerous" (p. 253) in childhood, but would become psychotic if extended into adult life.

It was finally in 1927 that Freud explicitly connected disavowal with castration anxiety and fetishism, and, inasmuch as fetishism is taken as the prototype of the perversions, with perversion in general. His thesis in "Fetishism" is that just as the little boy had to believe in the existence of his mother's missing penis to combat his castration anxiety, so the pervert must create his fetish for exactly the same reason. Or, to put it more precisely: "The fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis the little boy once believed in and--for reasons familiar to us--does not want to give up" (1927/1975, pp. 152-3). What is important for our purposes in that article is Freud's rejection of the term "scotomization" as a designation of the child's defensive activities vis-à-vis castration and explicitly counterposes "disavowal" to it: "If I am not mistaken, Laforgue would say in this case the boy 'scotomizes' his perception of the woman's lack of penis...'scotomization' seems to me particularly unsuitable, for it suggests the perception is entirely wiped out, so that the result is the same as when a visual impression falls on the blind spot in the retina" (p. 153). Freud is

thus explicitly rejecting the position he had himself ambiguously advanced earlier, namely that the child obliterates the content of his perception and replaces it with an hallucination. He is rejecting, that is, the strictly psychotic interpretation of "disavowal." I would concur with Laplanche's and Pontalis' suggestions that another term--perhaps Freud's own "repudiation" (Verwerfung) or Lacan's "forclosure" (forclusion)-- should be reserved to designate this strictly psychotic outright rejection of reality and that disavowal be reserved for another purpose that will be specified.

If Freud rejects what I am calling the strictly psychotic interpretation, how, then, does he interpret disavowal at this point? Freud's unsuccessful attempt to answer this question will lead him to introduce the notion of splitting in this connection. However, before considering splitting, let us examine the passage in question. Freud writes (1927b/1975):

> In the situation we are considering... we see that the perception [of the vagina] has persisted and that a very energetic action has been undertaken to maintain the disavowal. It is not true that after the child has made his observation of the woman, he has preserved unaltered his belief that women have a phallus. He has retained that belief but also given it up. In the conflict between the weight of the unwelcome perception and the force of counter wish, a compromise has been reached, as is only possible under the dominance of the unconscious law of thought--the primary process. Yes in his mind the woman has got a penis, in spite of everything; but this is no longer the same as before (p. 154, italics added).

The relative obscurity of this passage results from the fact that Freud did not yet possess the conceptual terms to say coherently what he would like to say.

After rejecting the strictly psychotic interpretation of "disavowal," he attempts to construe it on the model of the neurosis, that is, as a

compromise formation. However, a neurotic compromise, because it involves repression cannot ex hypothesi involve the simultaneous presence of two contradictory ideas in consciousness--i.e., the woman does and does not have a penis. The problem for Freud is that, logically, fetishism constitutes a simultaneous admission and denial of the woman's "castrated" state. It is an admission insofar as the perception of the penisless organ must have been at least tacitly registered, or else there would have been no reason to fabricate the fetish. And it is a denial insofar as the fetish is supposed to be the missing penis. It was only after he introduced the distinction between repression (Verdrängung) and splitting of the ego (Ichspaltung)--or between horizontal and vertical splitting as it is sometimes called today--that Freud could adequately articulate the ideas for which he was groping.

It was in large part, then, to account for this fact that in fetishism "two attitudes persist side by side... without influencing each other" (1940/1975, p. 203) that Freud introduced--or since he had already used the notion in the 1890's we should say reintroduced-- the concept of splitting. Indeed, the extent to which Freud hoarded theoretical terms and reemployed early concepts late in his life provides evidence for his own claim that human beings are loath to give anything up. Splitting had been a notion from which Freud had intentionally distanced himself early in his career when he had tried to distinguish his account of hysteria (and psychopathology in general) from Janet's and Breuer's. Freud came to view their account of hysteria in terms of splitting as superficial, which is to say, merely descriptive. He sought, in contrast, to provide a dynamic explanation in terms of intersystemic conflict

between conscious and unconscious demands. The theory of repression could account for, indeed posited, the presence of contradictory ideas in the different systems; but it could not accommodate their simultaneous presence in the same system. With the introduction of the structural theory, however, and the increased investigation of "the ego's pathological states" (Freud 1940/1975, p. 201), it became necesssary to account for the phenomenon of intrasystemic as well as intersystemic conflicts, i.e., conflicts within the ego itself. And the concept of splitting was rehabilitated for this purpose.

While fetishism perhaps provides the prototype and offers a "particularly favorable subject for studying the question" (Freud, 1940/1975, p. 202) of splitting, Freud is quick to point out that to one degree or another, a split of sorts accompanies all psychopathology. Unfortunately, his usage is not as rigorous as one might have hoped, but we can interpret his meaning in the following manner. First, it is necessary to distinguish between splitting in a narrower and in a more general sense. The narrower sense would refer to the splitting of the ego--intrasystemic splitting--which we have just discussed. The more general sense of splitting would refer to the fact that all psychopathology diminishes the unity of the self in one way or another. This general phenomenon can be observed in the way in which Freud distinguishes repression from disavowal, namely in terms of that which they defend against. Whereas repression defends against the drive demands of the id, disavowal defends against the demands of external reality. In each case a split occurs: with repression, between the ego and the id, and, with disawoval, within the ego itself. Or to put it differently: whereas

the price paid with repression is the failure to integrate a portion of instinctual life, with disavowal, it is the failure to integrate a portion of external reality.

With the foregoing discussion in mind, let us turn to McDougall's attempt to locate the perversions on the developmental-diagnostic spectrum. She maintains that the pervert, like the borderline, constitutes a "third structure" (McDougall, 1980, p. 77) which must be distinguished from the psychotic, on the one hand, and the neurotic on the other. The psychotic, like the child that obliterates the content of his perception and seeks to replace it with another--"There was a penis--I saw it."--negates the perceptual datum and substitutes an hallucination for it. Following Laplanche and Pontalis' suggestions, we might say he employs repudiation rather than disavowal. In contrast to the psychotic, the pervert does not obliterate the contents of his perceptions. However, neither does he, like the neurotic, simply rearrange them in fantasy. Rather he employs "disavowal in action" by staging his perverse drama in such a way as to eliminate the unacceptable facts in the external world through the creation of artifice--e.g., the fetish replaces the woman's missing penis. In other words, instead of resorting to subjective delusions, like the psychotic, the pervert seeks to create illusions in the external world.

Freud (1924a/1975) makes the argument that normality borrows, in the correct proportion, from both the neurotic and psychotic stance toward reality:

> We call, behavior "normal" or "healthy" if it combines certain features of both [psychotic and neurotic] reactions -- if it

> disavows the reality as little as does a neurosis, but if it then exerts itself, as does the psychosis, to affect an alteration of that reality. Of course, this expedient, normal behavior, leads to work being carried out in the world, it does not stop, as in psychosis, at effecting internal changes. It is no longer autoplastic but alloplastic (p. 183).

Along these lines we can say that the pervert too attempts to alter external reality, but not in a realistic way as it were. That is to say, rather than trying to transform reality according to its own inner principles--as, for example, as modern science tries to transform external nature--he tries to manipulate external reality to demonstrate precisely that those principles do not obtain.

Bringing together the two parts of our analysis thus far we may say that perversions represent the continuation into adult life of the relatively normal stage of development at which the difference between the sexes (and the generations) is disavowed, and that the pervert attempts to accomplish this disavowal through the fabrication of illusions. Indeed, McDougall (1980) maintains that a unified "perverse scenario" can be identified which underlies the enormous multiplicity of perverse sexual practices; they constitute so many variations on the theme that there is no significant difference between the sexes:

> Thus the pervert attempts to convince himself and others that he holds the secret to sexual desire. This is then played out in his sexual creation. What in fact is his secret? What is his sexual play trying to prove or achieve over and beyond its value as a path of libidinal discharge? The secret may be reduced to the relatively simple proposition that there is no difference between the sexes. More precisely put, his secret is this: there are perceptual differences between the sexes, but these are without significance; and above all this difference is neither the cause nor the condition of sexual desire. It is a denial of a vast order and includes the denial of the primal scene. Through an infinity of symbolic displacements and the cutting of certain associate links, sexual desire is furnished with new objects, new zones and new aims (p. 69).

The pervert's continuous and compulsive reenactment of his version of the "perverse scenario" can be seen as an attempt to restage the primal scene, but this time as the child would have liked it. This is a classic instance of turning passive into active; what the child had to endure he now restages on his own terms. McDougall even argues that there is always a fantasied "anonymous spectator" present, occupying the child's former position, for whom the scene is staged. The child is thus transformed from a passive onlooker into the master of ceremonies as it were.

Furthermore, like the masturbating child who idealizes his pregenital sexuality over his parents' adult sexuality in order to combat the depression and anger at having been excluded from the primal scene, the perverted individual idealizes his form of sexuality vis-à-vis "straight" sex: "Normality, the pervert declares, is the castration of Eros." (McDougall, 1980, p. 187) While he does not of course formulate it in the vocabulary of psychoanalytic metapsychology, the pervert usually possesses a more or less explicit theory that he is acting on the pure, uncontaminated desires of childhood--a position, as we shall see, Marcuse explicitly defends in Eros and Civilization. Whereas others have had to submit to the repressive focus of socialization, so the pervert maintains, he has somehow been able to retain his natural presocial impulses. If any psychoanalytic pedigree could be claimed for this idea, it would have to date from an early stage of psychoanalytic id psychology--anterior to ego psychology and the principle of multiple function--which itself was surpassed with the growth of psychoanalytic knowledge:

> As Gillespie (1956) pointed out, although perversions are created out of the constituent elements of childhood sexuality, it is both clinically and theoretically untenable to maintain (as Freud's early writing on the subject might have led one to believe) that organized perversion is simply the persistence into adult life of id impulses that have escaped repression. In many ways the perverse play is comparable to a dream [i.e., it is a compromise formation] (McDougall, 1980, p. 67).

The denigration of adult sexuality is captured nicely in an expression used by French youth as a putdown "l'amour à la papa,"which, loosely translated means "the old man's way of doing it." (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1974, p. 352) The expression conveys the two parts of the child/pervert's claim: that straight, adult sexuality is dull, inhibited, uninspired, etc., and, by implication, that he possesses the secrets of an esoteric form of sexuality which is infinitely superior to straight, adult sex. The essential teaching of that esoteric doctrine should, of course, already be obvious to us, namely that the difference between the sexes is not the source of sexual desire and that the pleasures of pregenital sexuality far exceed those of adult sexuality.

Of all the forms of pregenital activity, it is perhaps anality which receives the greater share of idealization in the perverse scheme of things. For example, a theme that runs through Sade and "classical" pornography in general is the extolment of the virtues of the anus ("the other temple") and derogation of the vagina ("this accursed slit") (Chasseguet-Smirgel , 1978, p. 32). And anality does indeed lend itself to the intentions of perversion in a number of ways. In the first place, the anus is an androgynous sexual organ par excellence: both sexes possess it and perform the functions associated with it. If the stool is interpreted as a penis in virtue of its phallic shape--"the anal penis" (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1978,

p. 32; McDougall, 1980, p. 44)-- then the theory of sexual monism is validated, and the mature paternal phallus is replaced with a pregenital, bisexual, fecal substitute. Moreover, as it falls off and returns regularly, this "anal penis" is particularly well suited for combating castration anxiety; no loss is permanent. Finally if the pervert wants to eliminate important distinctions, then anality, in virtue of the homogeneity of feces, provides an appropriate mode. Chasseguet-Smirgel speaks of the fecalized, anal universe of the pervert where things are reduced to a non-differentiated homogeneized condition.

What of the heightened sense of excitation which can admittedly accompany perverse sexual practices? Does it not in fact support the pervert's claim to have access to a superior form of sexuality? On the contrary, this heightened sense of excitation actually attests to the fact that "the dynamic motor of perverse sexuality is more closely linked with anxiety than with desire" (McDougall, 1980, p. 210). That is to say, McDougall and Chasseguet-Smirgel maintain that the intensified excitement derives from a "manic defense," in Klein's sense, against the underlying depression, which, as we have seen, motivates the formation of perversions:

> Sexual perversion admits and exhibits its excited, libidinal aims but draws a veil of silence over its more frightening aspects. "Kinky sex" is widely displayed as a technicolor diversion; this "gay" world of the homosexual is paraded in many a bar; but the colour and the "gaiety" thinly disguises its depressive and often persecutary counterpart (McDougall, 1980, pp. 62-3).

Another defense which works in conjunction with manic flight to produce the heightened excitement is the sexualization of anxiety. The pervert flirts with the very things that terrify him the most, e.g., castration,

in order to convince himself that they are exciting rather than frightening. McDougall notes that it is generally when these defenses fail, and the individual is exposed to the deeper dangers which they hid, that he presents himself for treatment.

D. Consequences for the Relation to Reality

The disavowal of the primal sence and the double difference exacts a high price on the individual's relationship to reality in several crucial ways: (a) it leads to a failure of symbolization and structuralization of the ego, (b) inhibits differentation from the archaic, preoedipal mother, (c) and prevents the establishment of the proper relationship between the reality principle and development.

(a) Freud, as we have already seen, maintained that all psychopathology compromises the unity and coherence of the personality--that, in other words, splitting in the larger sense I tried to specify accompanies all forms of pathology. We also observed that splitting in the narrower, more technical sense of "the splitting of the ego" occurs with the perversions; indeed, it was the investigation of fetishism which, in large part, led Freud to formulate the theory of splitting, McDougall attempts to provide a more concrete and detailed account of the deficits that occur in the unity of the ego with the perversions. Her thesis is that the disavowal of the primal scene results in certain failures of symbolization and structuralization which are essential to the unity of the ego. More specifically, she argues that the inability to symbolize

the meaning of the paternal phallus, of the mother's "castrated" state, and of the reciprocal relation between them, which follows from the disavowal of the primal scene, results in major lacunae in the ego; developmentally, these are necessary steps in the coalescence of the ego's unity. This also attests to the fact that the "capacity to contain and elaborate painful affect and frightening ideas" (McDougall, 1980, p. 198) is absolutely essential for psychological growth, and raises a question which is central to understanding the genesis of the perversion: namely, if the primal scene is a universal trauma, why are some children ultimately able to accept it while others are not? Finally, we should note that McDougall is working with the concept of the ego as a symbolically medicated associative network, the strength and vitality of which is to be measured by the richness and elaborateness of the network.

McDougall (1980) tries to elucidate her point by reflecting on the deeper connotations of the German Verleugnung, which, as has been mentioned, The Standard Edition translated as "disavowal," and argues "it implies the notion of 'avowal' followed by a destruction of meaning, through the cutting of associative links" (pp. 75-76). It is thus not the case that the disavowed object is not represented in the psyche--as with the strictly psychotic solution--but that it is not symbolized. It is, in other words, not that the existence of these objects but their meaning which is denied by severing their representations from the associative web that constitutes the ego. Following Lewin, McDougall states somewhat aphoristically that the "gap" in the ego results from the failure to symbolize the "gap" of the mother's sexuality. Indeed, Lewin (1948) had observed that in many of his patients' associations female

genitalia were equated with reality and had asserted that an acceptance of the vagina is an essential step in the development of the relation to reality. McDougall maintains that the pervert develops pockets of psychosis or "focal psychosis," which is to say that, in contrast to the psychotic who breaks with reality in general, the pervert breaks with a particular portion of reality, i.e., sexual reality. She points out, however, as does Glover (1932), that these "focal psychoses" often prevent a general psychosis from occurring; the pervert sacrifices a certain portion of reality and the richness of his ego to ward off a larger catastrophe.

The child who finds his way to a "neurotic solution" in these matters, that is, a child who, for example, does not have to exclude the representation of the vagina from his associative web, but defensively counterinvests it as filthy, dangerous, uninteresting, disgusting etc., at least possesses the possibility of further elaboratizing it. The child who will become the pervert in adult life will have no such opportunity. This belies the claim often made for the perversions, that they involve a richer, more creative and less inhibited fantasy life than normal sexuality. Just the opposite seems to be the case for the reasons we are considering: the lacunae in the associative network impoverishes and rigidifies that network as a whole. The point is exquisitely illustrated by a clinical vignette that McDougall presents. The example compares the dreams of two patients, one a fetishist who was able to perform sexually, albeit in an anxious and restricted fashion, and a neurotic who was completely impotent. Both men witnessed a plumber working in a portion of McDougall's apartment that was usually closed off to patients and the following dreams were

responses to those incidents. First, the dream of the fetishist:

> "I dreamed I was lying beside a woman and was asked to look at her legs. I stared for quite some time, but couldn't make out what I was supposed to reply. It seemed a problem in logic. Finally, I admitted that I would never find the answer because I had never been good in mathematics." In his associations to this dream the patient mentioned the open door, but added that he was not at all sure what the workmen were doing inside my house. From there he went on to remember his long hours of erotic daydreaming during his lonely childhood.

And the dream of the neurotic:

> "I am trying to penetrate a woman, but something stops me and I become flaccid; suddenly I find myself inside your house. I am told I may not go further along a certain corridor because those are your husband's private quarters. Then I find myself transported into your garden. There are rare animals around, and a man explains to me they are half cat and half seperpent. They rise up from the ground, cross one another, and fly everywhere. The man asks if I am afraid of being touched by them, and I say I'm not, but I'd like to understand how they manage to stay up in the air like that." (McDougall, 1980, pp. 200-201)

The difference between these two dreams in terms of complexity, richness and creativity speaks for itself and requires no commentary.

I would like to call attention to a comment made by the first patient while he was reporting his dream, namely, that he was involved with what "seemed to be a problem in logic." Freud (1913/1975), in Totem and Taboo had already pointed to a certain affinity between paranoia and philosophy --the paranoid's delusional system represents a caricature of the philosopher's both with respect to its formal rigor and impregnability. Now McDougall makes the comment, without elaborating on it in any detail, that a connection exists between perversion and philosophy. Allowing ourselves a moment's liberty, we might speculate about her possible meaning. McDougall (1980) uses the term "lacunary logic" to refer to

the fact that the pervert is constantly reasoning about sexuality and reality with a calculus that lacks fundamental postulates:

> To realize that "one and one makes two" is not in itself a profound intellectual acquisition, but he who, in spite of evidence to the contrary, calculates on some other numerical system, is going to encounter difficulties wherever he goes... The false arithmetic of perverse sexuality is not always entirely limited to the sexual relationship; it may color the understanding of human relations in general with the concomitant risk of precipitating moments of psychotic confusion (p. 195).

Could it possibly be that the universal fantasy of the phallic woman represents an attempt to deny the law of the excluded middle, a fundamental axiom of ordinary lgoic? Whereas the law of the excluded middle states for all X, X is either A or not A, and no third possibility exists, the fantasy of the phallic woman maintains that there are beings who are neither men nor women, but who belong to a third genus. If this speculative hypothesis were correct, then the acceptance of the difference between the sexes would be the psychological precondition for the institution of secondary processes and ordinary logic. We might speculate further that the logical rumination of the philosophers represent in part attempts to master the trauma of the excluded middle, as it were, and that the works of the great dialecticians such as Heraclitus and Hegel, who in some sense maintain that the law of the excluded middle does not hold, represent extremely sublimated attempts to retain the idea of a phallic woman.

Be that as it may, the issues we have been considering raise the question of the relationship between perversion and sublimation. It has been a tenet of psychoanalysis, almost since its inception, that pregenital impulses provide the material for sublimation, and, as they also provide the material for the perversions, perversions and sublimation are

constructed from the same source. The interesting question becomes, then, what constitutes the specific difference? Why are we entitled to call some transformations of pregenital material sublimations and others perversions? As the comparison of the two dreams suggests, McDougall maintains the concreteness, constrictedness and inflexibility of perverse thought and action. She (1980) contrasts pornography and erotica, in terms of the "extent of imaginative space" (p. 170) they allow the audience, to make her point. Thus, in addition to the fact that it is always subordinated to the goal of "orgastic denouement," pornography differs from erotica in its explicitness; it spells everything out and leaves nothing to the imagination. And, rather than representing a freedom of expressiveness, this explicitness is designed to serve a defensive function, i.e., to prevent the emergence of authentic fantasy: "There is a conspicuous lack of fantasy and imaginative freedom in most perverse inventions; once created they tend to be stereotyped and to maintain their central theme and detail for decades as though the person were not permitted to imagine anything else" (McDougall, 1980, p. 178). Erotica, on the other hand, precisely in its inexplicitness and suggestiveness, is meant to stimulate the associative network of the onlooker so that what he sees "is immediately linked with an infinity of other representations, impressions, perceptions, and reflections in a to-and-fro movement between primary and secondary processes. This is in marked contrast to the immutable quality of perverse inventions." (McDougall, 1980, p. 207)

A balanced position has to be struck with respect to the relationship of perversions and creativity. We noted above that, in contradistinction

from the psychotic's delusions, the pervert's sexual activity can be interpreted as an attempt to create illusions in the world--"motor hallucinations" to borrow a term Freud uses in another context. This penchant for illusion serves to explain in part the often observed affinity between perverted individuals and the decorative arts, e.g., the popular stereotype of the homosexual as an interior decorator. Glover and Chasseguet-Smirgel have commented at length on this affinity in terms of the pervert's need to idealize anality. (Glover, 1931; Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1974). It cannot be denied, however, that an appreciable number of authentically creative, as opposed to merely decorative, individuals in our cultural tradition have been active perverts or possessed strong perverted tendencies. This fact is often adduced to show that there is an inherent link between perversion and creativity, and that the fact of being a pervert by itself bestows a special cultural status on the individual. McDougall (1980) argues, however, that in the case of these truly creative individuals, their creativity generally results in spite of rather than in virtue of their perversions:

> And indeed our cultural history contains many famous examples of this dual coexistence (i.e., of perversion and creativity). But the reverse proposition is not true, that is, the fact of being a homosexual, fetishist, sadomasochist or voyeur in his erotic life confers no particular creative gifts on the individual. On the contrary, it would be more exact to say that certain gifted persons are capable of authentic work in spite of their disturbed sexual organizations, for it is frequently the case that the specific problems which have facilitated perverse solutions to mental conflict, thus blocking any access to sexual fulfillment, exerts the same restrictive and inhibitory influence on the rest of the subject's life--his everyday social relations or his sublimatory capacities in general (p. 177).

To reiterate, because of its effect on the structuralization of the ego

and its inhibition of the full associative capacities of the individual, perversions as a rule act as an impediment to authentic creativity.

While we can appreciate the pervert's need to mystify his often painful life situation by attempting to endow it with a special cultural significance, we need not accept those mystifications. At the same time, however, there is an element of truth in what he is saying that should be recognized. For there is something which the "neo-sexual creator" and the authentic creator in fact have in common which distinguishes both from the so-called normal, namely, access to the world of pregenital polymorphous sexuality which the man-on-the-street must keep under lock and key. All creativity--neosexual and authentic--exposes the individual to enormous dangers and anxieties which the man-on-the-street seeks strenuously to avoid: "If the large majority of human beings are neither artistic nor neosexual creators, this is partly because such impulses are so strongly countercathected most people are not prepared to assume the transgressions inherent in any production of an innovative kind, nor the anxiety which accompanies such production" (McDougall, 1980, p. 209). Thus, although it might be a mystification to assume there is an intrinsic affinity between sexual perversion and authentic creativity, there is truth to the claim that the pervert like the authentic creator does not accept the conventional order with the complacency of the man-on-the street.

These reflections should serve to warn us, once again, against adopting a moralistic attitude toward the perversions. The possibility of perversion is inherent in the very possibility of being a human, which is to say, a cultural being. The fact that we are endowed with mutable Triebe, whose

aims and objects are variable, instead of species-specific Instinkte, whose sources of satisfaction are fixed within narrow limits, makes both perversions and culture possible. Furthermore, the fact that the drives are not immediately subordinated to reproduction and require a long period of development before they are integrated into genitality --a process that can be derailed at numerous points along the way-- also contribute to this dual possibility. The man-in-the-street's contempt for the perversions is thus wrong in two respects. First, he is mistaken in his failure to realize that a polymorphous core is a universal feature of the human condition and that his is simply sealed off by countercathexis, reaction formations, etc. Secondly, and perhaps more sadly, his need to deny this part of his personality, deprives him access to one of the major sources of creativity in human life:

> ...the-man-in-the-street usually gives the term "perverse" a perjorative connotation. Let us trust such is not the case with those who consider themselves to be analysts, for the analyst has ample opportunity to observe, in himself as well as in his analysands, that all men hide within themselves a polymorphous perverse child. Let us add that they also contain a polymorphous nexus of creative resources. But most people are as unaware of their potentially perverse core as they are of their creative potential (McDougall, 1980, pp. 171-172).

(b) This point and the next rests on a conception of the phallus, as apposed to the penis, which has been current in recent French psychoanalytic theory. (Lacan, 1966; Grunberger, 1971). In that theory the symbolic phallus is distinguished from the anatomical penis: Whereas the term "penis" is reserved to refer to the actual physiological organ, the term "phallus" is used to refer to all that the penis might stand for symbolically--e.g., power, plentitude, fertility, narcissistic

integrity, the fundamental signifier of desire for both sexes, etc. (McDougall, 1980, p. 118). In this point and the next, then, we shall see how the failure to symbolize the phallus leaves the individual vulnerable to psychotic-like dangers.

As we have now seen in detail, McDougall's and Chasseguet-Smirgel's central thesis is that the child who is destined to become a pervert, because he cannot bear the painful realities of the primal scene, disavows the meaning of the parents' sexual organs. However, in addition to the function it fulfills in the establishment of gender identity, the symbolization of the meaning of the parental genitalia also serves a crucial function in the separation-individuation process. More specifically, the acceptance of the reality of the paternal phallus and its meaning--i.e., that it, and not the child, is the primary object of the mother's desire--is a crucial step in the differentiation from the preoedipal mother. Or, to put it somewhat differently, the intrusion of the reality of the paternal phallus as a third term, as it were, into the closed world of the mother-infant dyad is an essential step in the differentiation of the child into the larger, extra-dyadic world. It would follow that a child who, for whatever reason, could not accept and symbolize the meaning of the paternal phallus would suffer from the ego deficits of inadequate individuation and from the terrors of the archaic, preoedipal mother. This also provides us with some indication of familial constellations that would predispose the child to perverse outcomes, namely, those when the father was not present as a phallic force to be reckoned with. As it is absent in the inner world of the pervert, he must constantly look for the paternal phallus in the external

world as a shield against psychosis:

> This eternal quest for the father, for something which stands between the child and the omnipotent mother, contributes to the compulsive character of perverse sexuality. It also gives the psychic structure a bulwark against psychosis and at the same time marks the possible fragility to the perverse structure. That which is missing in the internal world is sought in an external object or situation, for there is a vital lack or a blank in the ego structure of the subject, and this in turn is due to a failure in symbolization. The failure concerns the meaning of the primal scene, and the role of the father's penis. The effacement of certain associative links tends to weaken the individual's relation to reality, at least in this circumscribed area, and thus leads to a "psychotic solution"... (McDougall, 1980, pp. 60-61).

(c) If, retrospectively, the inability to symbolize the meaning of the paternal phallus and the primal scene has deleterious effects on the separation-individuation process, then prospectively, it prevents the establishment of the proper relationship between reality and temporality and the cathecting of development itself as a goal. Chasseguet-Smirgel (1974) argues, once again, that it is not simply the fact that the mother is "castrated" that presents a problem for the little boy. Rather, the problem consists in the fact that he cannot satisfy her with his immature penis: "The reality is not that the mother is castrated, but that the mother has a vagina that the little boy cannot fill" (p. 350). The little boy has two options open to him: Either he can deny the fact his small penis is inadequate and that the mother desires the father's mature phallus; in this case he will most likely continue to defensively idealize pregenital sexuality, maintaining he is the object of his mother's desire in virtue of his pregenitality, and develop along perverse lines. Or, he can tolerate the considerable narcissistic mortification involved with accepting his inadequacy and his mother's desire for the father. This

option undoubtedly involves the most psychic pain in the short run. Indeed, the ability to tolerate this pain is an important prognostic indicator of the child's developmental potential. In the long run, however, this option opens the path for the boy to identify with the paternal phallus and strive to become a mature adult; development itself becomes cathected as a goal. Gratification will be sought progressively through initiative and reality and not regressively through defensive illusions and perversion. But this leads us to the subject matter of the next chapter.

III. Chapter Three: The Utopian Defense of Perversion

A. The Critique of Civilization

While Freud is generally depicted as the stern, unwavering defender of civilization, it is interesting to note how ambivalent, even reluctant, his advocacy of it actually was. Thus, in one of his most famous pronouncements on the subject, Freud actually refuses to commit himself and displays considerable neutrality toward the critic of civilization:

> For a wide variety of reasons, it is very far from my intention to express an opinion upon the value of human civilization. I have endeavored to guard myself against the enthusiastic prejudice which holds that our civilization is the most precious thing that we possess or could acquire and that its path will necessarily lead to heights of unimagined perfection. I can at least listen without indignation to the critic who is of the opinion that when one surveys the aims of cultural endeavor and the means it employs, one is bound to come to the conclusion that the whole effort is not worth the trouble, and that the outcome of it can only be a state of affairs which the individual will be unable to tolerate. My impartiality is made all the easier to me by my knowing very little about all these things... Thus, I have not the courage to rise up before my fellow-men as a prophet, and I bow to their reproach that I can offer them no consolation. (Freud, 1930/1975, pp. 144-145)

Freud's agnosticism with respect to the question of the ultimate value of civilization was such that he never systematically explored the question of an alternative to it. In the first place, as of 1930, one could perhaps not maintain that an unequivocally negative verdict was

in on the question. And, secondly, no matter how destructive the cost of civilization admittedly was, Freud was unable to envision a progressive alternative to it, in much the same way that Max Weber could not conceive a progressive alternative to the "iron-cage"--i.e., an alternative that did not entail massive historical regression.

Some fifteen years after the publication of Civilization and its Discontents, however, the situation had changed, and it became at least plausible to argue that civilization was indeed not worth the price. It became at least plausible,that is,to argue that fascism, Stalinism and the bomb, far from being accidental aberrations, grew out of the innermost tendencies of civilization. It was concluded in certain theoretical circles, on the political right as well as the political left, that nothing short of a radical reexamination of the premises of civilization itself would be adequate for comprehending the crisis that had befallen the West. And indeed, one wonders what Freud's attitude would have been toward these questions had he lived to witness the events of the Second World War.

One place where this radical stock-taking occurred after the war was among the social philosophers of the Frankfurt School. Whereas prior to the war they had been relatively conventional Marxists, despite their enormous erudition, by the end of the war, they felt they had to radicalize their analysis to comprehend all that had happened; this radicalization occurred in part through a systematic integration of Weberian and Freudian categories into their thinking.

The main work of that period, which became the magnum opus of the

Frankfurt School, was the Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944/1972) by Horkheimer and Adorno. It was one of a group of books published in the immediate postwar years that represented an attempt on the part of emigré intellectuals living in the States to comprehend the catastrophe that had befallen European Civilization; others included Hannah Arendt's The Origins of Totalitarianism and Karl Polanyi's The Great Transformation. The question that Horkheimer and Adorno posed to themselves was the following: How was it that the process of enlightenment and the conquest of nature, which according to both the liberal and the Marxian traditions was supposed to emancipate humanity from centuries-old bondage, resulted in a new, historically unprecedented form of barbarism? They answered this question by linking the domination of external nature to the domination of internal nature, thus appropriating Freud at a metahistorical level. The entire modern tradition, from Bacon to Marx, was in agreement on the point that the mastery of the external environment was at least a necessary precondition for the betterment of man's estate. What that tradition had failed to realize--and this was the key insight of the Frankfurt School--was that in order to undertake the domination of external nature, humanity had to dominate its own inner nature. This meant, to put it in Marxian terms, that to the very extent that the material preconditions for a free society had been created, the subjective conditions for appropriating those material accomplishments would be lacking. The entire process was self-vitiating. Thus, it could be argued that, by the twentieth century the material preconditions for a qualitatively better form of life had been created in Europe and America but, because of this self-vitiating process, the masses turned to totalitarianism

rather than freedom.

Horkheimer and Adorno thus attempted to elucidate the fateful logic of civilization at the level of metahistory. And, like Freud and Weber, they saw no way out; it was impossible to conceptualize an alternative to civilization whose regressive traits were not more objectionable than the destructive features itself. Approximately ten years after the publication of The Dialectic of Enlightenment, however, Herbert Marcuse (1955), another member of the Frankfurt School, attempted to question "Sigmund Freud's proposition that civilization is based on the permanent subjugation of the human instincts" (p. 2) and to conceptualize on a philosophical basis a non-regressive alternative to civilization. And for reasons with which we are familiar:

> However, intensified progress seems to be bound up with intensified unfreedom. Throughout the world of industrial civilization, the domination of man by man is growing in scope and efficiency. Nor does this trend appear as an incidental, transitory regression on the road to progress. Concentration Camps, mass extermination, World Wars, and atom bombs are no "relapse into barbarism" but the unrepressed implementation of the achievements of modern science, technology and domination. And the most effective subjugation and destruction of man by man takes place at the height of civilization, when the material and intellectual attainments of mankind seem to allow the creation of a truly free world. (Marcuse, 1955, p. 4)

Given this state of affairs, Marcuse believed it was absolutely essential to attempt to conceputalize a non-regressive alternative to civilization. And he attempted it through an immanent critique of Freud: "But Freud's own theory provides reasons for rejecting his identification of civilization with repression. On the ground of his own theoretical achievements, the discussion of the problem must be reopened (Marcuse, 1955, p. 4). Thus, whereas Horkheimer and Adorno employ Freud on a

metahistorical level and use the concept of the domination of inner nature as almost a heuristic metaphor for deciphering history, Marcuse enters into a detailed confrontation with the Freudian theories themselves.

It is perfectly fitting that the question of the perversions should assume a central significance in this attempt to think an alternative to civilization as they do in Eros and Civilization. For if the Oedipus complex provides the deep structure of civilization, as it were, and if the perversions constitute and attempt to circumvent the Oedepus complex and oedipal reality, then the perversions may indeed provide certain indications for extra-civilizational modalities of existence. And this is in fact the line of investigation Marcuse follows. In this chapter, then, I shall reexamine Marcuse's analysis of the perversions and their implications for social theory in the light of McDougall's and Chasseguet-Smirgel's theories which we investigated in the previous chapter.

B. The Reform versus the Transfiguration of Civilization

In Civilization and its Discontents Freud draws a distinction between two types of rebels: one who rebels against particular injustices within the basic structure of civilization, and one who rebels against civilization as such. This distinction corresponds roughly to the distinction between the social revolutionary or the radical reformer, on the one hand, and the Utopian, on the other. To quote Freud (1930/1975):

> The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization. It was greatest before there was any civilization,though then, it is true, it had for the most part no value, since the individual was scarcely in a position to defend it. The development of civilizations imposes restrictions on it

> and justice demands that no one shall escape those restrictions. What makes itself felt in a human community as a desire for freedom may be their revolt against some existing injustice, and so may prove favorable to a further development of civilization; it may remain compatible with civilization. But it may also spring from the remains of the original personality, which is still untamed by civilization and may thus become the basis in them of hostility to civilization. The urge for freedom, therefore, is directed against particular forms and demands of civilization or against civilization as such (pp. 95-96).

The freedom to which Freud is referring in this passage is the freedom of sexual expression. He had argued in Totem and Taboo (1913/1975), as we know, that the primal murder and its sequelae--which constitute the founding acts of civilization--result in a structure of renunciation which provides civilization with its basic structure. First, the primal murder puts an end to the father's unrestricted sexual privilege. And, secondly, with their social contract, the brothers enter into an arrangement of mutual renunciation through which none of them can ever again claim absolute sexual privilege. The central renunciations of the social contract are the two taboos of totemism which are, at the same time, the two prohibitions of the Oedipus complex--i.e., the prohibition against incest and the prohibition against patricide. The establishment of these prohibitions is the constitutive act through which a world--a social ontology--is created, namely the oedipally structured ontology of civilization.

The precise nature of the distinction Freud made between the two types of rebels can be specified with more detail. The first type of rebel, who revolts "against some existing injustice," basically accepts the oedipally structured world of mutual renuncations and only objects to the fact that the burden of these renunciations is not equitably

distributed. He, in other words, seeks to reform civilization, in the name of justice, from within its basic structure. The second type of rebel, on the other hand, rejects the entire, oedipally-structured framework as such. He does not seek a more equitable distribution of renunciations, but, in the name of gratification, seeks an end to the system of renunciations altogether.

Employing the discoveries concerning the preoedipal phase and the relationship between the proedipal and the oedipal phases that have been made since Freud's death, Chasseguet-Smirgel (1976) has been able to elaborate on Freud's insights into the basic attitudes towards civilization. However, rather than beginning with the Oedipus complex per se, Chasseguet-Smirgel takes the concept of primary narcissism, as the point of departure for her investigations. Quoting Freud to the effect that the human mind can never give up any pleasure it has experienced, she argues that the bliss of narcissistic perfection which we experienced in infancy constitutes a primary example of this phenomenon. Which is to say, she argues that the pleasure of primary narcissistic perfection is something which we seek to recapture, in one form or another, throughout our lives. She argues further that primary narcissism is a source of the ego ideal insofar as the experience of perfection known during that phase gets transposed into the ego ideal as something to be sought after and reexperienced in life. The sense of perfection is a major component of one's idea of the good which, as Aristotle observed, is the source of all action. The crucial question concerns how one seeks to recapture this experience of perfection in life--progressively or regressively, as it were.

The progressive route lies through the acceptance of reality and development via a satisfactory transversal of the Oedipus complex. Chasseguet-Smirgel's argument is based on a particular interpretation of the Oedipus complex which has a certain currency in contemporary French psychoanalysis. She maintains that the incestuous wish represents not only a desire to possess the mother on a genital level, but a wish to merge with her on a pregenital level as well; incestuous intercourse would be a way of reentering and thereby reachieving fusion with the primary object. Following Grunberger, she argues further--and this is the novel twist--that it is not the father's prohibition per se, but the little boy's sense of inadequacy projected onto the father as a prohibition that provides the barrier against incest. Which is to say, the little boy denies the narcissistic injury resulting from his own physical immaturity and inability to satisfy his mother by projecting the prohibition onto his father: "It is not I who cannot, but he who prevents me." (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1976, p. 34)

A consequence of the acceptance of the oedipal prohibition is that it blocks the attempt to achieve fusion with the primary object through incestuous intercourse with the actual object. To whatever extent one may be able to reapproximate the perfection of primary narcissism in life, one cannot, after the acceptance of the Oedipus complex, attempt to recapture it through direction refusion with the object. And this fact, Chasseguet-Smirgel argues, is essential for establishing a proper relation to reality. The entire constellation, if accepted, causes the child to project his desire for narcissistic perfection ahead in time as an ego ideal, as something to be striven after in reality. At the

same time it causes him to acknowledge the father's role vis-à-vis the mother which has the same result with respect to reality and development. The little boy can console himself for his narcissistic injuries by identifying with his father as an ideal and telling himself that someday he too shall be big and have the gratifications in reality that his father now has. This would mean a renunciation of the closed world of the dyad, and a turning to a triadic reality as a source of gratification and an investment in "development as such."

The nature of the regressive solution to the gap between the ego and the ego ideal should be apparent from the foregoing analysis. Instead of the Oedipus complex, identifying with the father, and seeking the approximation of one's ego ideal through mature sexual relations and future accomplishments in reality, the child continues to seek refusion with the primary object. This need not, of course, assume the form of actual incest, but may be attempted in fantasy, in various forms of psychopathology, and most notably in the perversions. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, the perversions, according to both McDougall and Chasseguet-Smirgel, essentially represent an attempt to deny the double difference (between the sexes and between the generations) of the Oedipus complex and to claim that the child's pregenital sexuality is superior to genital sexuality--i.e., that the mother prefers it. And, as the sense of reality and cathexis of development emerge in the gap between the ego and the ego ideal, the regressive attempt to close that gap by fiat, by a direct refusion, precludes the turn to reality:

> ...to ignore the difference between the sexes is to ignore the difference between the generations. This is consistent with the goal the sexual pervert sets himself with his mother's

> help: to guarantee that, with his pregenital sexuality, he is an adequate sex object. This upsets the very foundation of reality which rests on the difference between the sexes and the generations. The sexual pervert therefore attempts to re-establish the fusion between the ego and its ideal by evading reality. (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1976, p. 352)

I would like to stress the essential role of temporality in Chasseguet-Smirgel's analysis, for, as we shall see, Marcuse takes the supersession or at least transfiguration of temporality--transcience--as a major requirement of the utopian project. For Chasseguet-Smirgel, however, temporality, far from being something to be surpassed, is the necessary condition for everything we cherish in human life and civilization. The tension created by the "gap" between our ego ideal, projected forward as something to be attained in time, and our ego is the source of cultural creation. To collapse it by direct refusion with the primary object would be to put an end to all development.

> The oedipal phase, with its incest taboo, solidifies awareness of the "third dimension." Immediate satisfaction keeps us very close to the object, in fact immerses us in it. Progressive frustrations--which later acquire an oedipal meaning--and the triangular situation enable us to keep the object at a distance, creating perspective... In other words, access to reality, distance of the ego and secondary process are possible only in the absence of such wish fulfillment as union with the mother affords. All these acquisitions which have made us human beings would collapse like a house of cards if that which gave rise to them were abolished; that is to say, if instead of "projecting itself forward," the ego ideal sought only to be united with the ego in a regressive style... (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1976, p. 350)

Finally, it should be mentioned that, for Chasseguet-Smirgel, science and politics represent the most effective way of pursuing the progressive path; which is to say, they provide the most effective means of pursuing and approximating the ego ideal in reality, to the extent it can be approximated in reality.

In an article entitled "Perversion and the Universal Law," Chasseguet-Smirgel (1983) draws a conclusion that had already been implicit in her earlier investigations of the perversions: namely, an intrinsic affinity exists between the perverse urge, on the one hand, and the messianic or utopian urge, on the other, insofar as both seek to escape the human condition as it is constituted by the reality principle. After commenting on the prevalence of perverse sexual activity during periods of profound social upheaval, e.g., the Roman Empire, the French Revolution and Weimar Germany--and perhaps suggesting by implication that ours is such a period--Chasseguet-Smirgel (1981) states her thesis as follows: "A first hypothesis then comes to mind: shouldn't we associate historical ruptures which give an inkling of the advent of a new world, with the confusion between the sexes and generations, peculiar to perversions, as if the hope for a social and political reality went hand in hand with an attempt at destroying sexual reality and truth?" (p. 293) By this point in our analysis, the affinity between the perverted individual and the Utopian should not require detailed analysis. Each of them are trying to actualize the universal human wish of avoiding the oedipally structured world of social reality, the one through sexual, the other through political practice.

C. Marcuse's Argument

Marcuse also recognizes the affinity between the perversions and utopianism. But whereas Chasseguet-Smirgel seeks to understand them "scientifically"--albeit with a bit of apprehension vis-à-vis the current

cultural scene--Marcuse attempts to make this connection a centerpiece of his utopian construction. That is, he is willing to consider the possibility, even the necessity of transcending the social reality constituted by the Oedipus complex, and to view the perversions as providing a clue as to what a nonoedipal reality might be like. Before turning to his analysis of the perversions, however, it is necessary to locate them in the larger context of his utopian-philosophical program.

As I have already mentioned, Marcuse's research into psychoanalysis took place against the backdrop of the larger project of the Frankfurt School, namely to comprehend why the Western project of enlightenment had resulted in a new, qualitatively more efficient form of barbarism rather than in emancipation. But whereas Horkheimer and Adorno had arrived at conclusions that were perhaps even more pessimistic than either Freud's or Weber's--because of their quasi-ontological as opposed to psychological or sociological status--Marcuse still wants to establish at least the theoretical possibility of transcending the self-vitiating mechanisms; he wants to establish the theoretical possibility, as he puts it, of a "non-repressive society." More specifically, Marcuse addresses the question of why, historically, various emancipatory movements have tended to destroy themselves from within as much as they have been destroyed from without. The example he most likely had in mind was the then recent degeneration into Stalinism and fascism.

Marcuse employs the myth of the primal horde to elucidate the problematic with which he is concerned. Put in these mythical terms, the questions concerning the self-defeat of revolutionary movements becomes: why is it that, after the overthrow of the father and a brief period of

freedom, do the sons reestablish a new form of domination of their own? And is this "dialectic of civilization" inevitable (which would doom all revolutionary movements to failure in advance) or is it historically contingent and therefore surpassable? We know Freud's answer to the first of these questions, i.e., that the remorse over the primal murder led the sons to institute the father as an internalized authority within them. And indeed this internalization of authority--as opposed to external coercion--was viewed by Freud as an enormous step in the development of civilization. Marcuse, in contrast, does not view this internalization of authority as progress in its own right. On the contrary, he sees it only as an extension in the scope and efficiency of domination: "But the domination is not simply a repetition of the first one; the cyclical movement is progress in domination. From the primal father via the brother clan to the system of institutional authority of mature civilization, domination becomes increasingly impersonal, objective, universal, and also increasingly rational, effective productive." (Marcuse, 1966, p. 89) Marcuse can object to impersonal, and objective rational authority and almost seems to prefer the direct, personal charismatic domination of the father, because he believes the elimination of domination as such is desirable and necessary. To use our earlier distinction, he is not a reformist who advocates the equitable distribution of renunciation within civilization, but a Utopian who advocates the elimination of domination which for him means an elimination of the renunciations required by civilization. Only an end to domination conceived in this manner would end the dialectic of civilization as he understands it.

How, then, does Marcuse attempt to show that an elimination of the

renunciations required by civilization is possible? Through an historicization of the concept of the reality principle. In general, the reality principle denotes the demands that external reality places on our inner, instinctual nature, which, in turn, is governed by the pleasure principle. Marcuse claims that, rather than constituting an immutable transhistorical fact, as Freud had maintained, the reality principle is historically contingent. He attempts to establish his claim by linking the reality principle to economic scarcity, and indeed there is some textual basis in Freud for doing this. Marcuse argues that the instinctual renunciation required by civilization were the result of economic scarcity (Lebensnot); as long as human beings have to spend the vast majority of their time toiling to obtain the economic goods of life, they had to repress the large part of their instinctual endowment. He argues, however, that this situation has become anachronistic. Because of the development of science and technology, which had been achieved precisely through centuries of toil and renunciation the domination of external nature is in principle complete and the elimination of scarcity theoretically possible. Civilizational renunciation could thus be deprived of its historical rationale.

Marcuse introduces several sets of inter-related distinctions to try to elaborate his point. The first distinction is between repression and surplus-repression, and, while he never mentions Marx by name, this is the point where Marcuse attempts to introduce the Marxian critique of political economy by analogy into Freudian social theory. Surplus-repression is a quasi-quantitative term that Marcuse introduces to "measure" the repression that has become superfluous given the society's

capacity for automation and which continues to be extracted only for purposes of political control. It is Marcuse's opinion, of course, that surplus repression constitutes practically all of the repression in advanced societies. Similarly, Marcuse introduces a distinction between the reality principle and the performance principle, which is the historical form the reality principle assumes in our society. The performance principle corresponds to surplus-repression, then, in that it governs the continued renunciation and toil which have become potentially eliminable in our society. Marcuse confronts Freud's ahistorical reality principle with the historicized performance principle to show that the dialectic of civilization is not inevitable.

Marcuse's thesis is that Freud, because he never questioned the assumption of scarcity, hypostatized the reality principle into a transhistorical fact, and was therefore forced to assume the inevitability of the repression of the instincts and everything that followed from it. Marcuse (1966), in contrast, sees the "gradual decontrolling of the instincts" as the only way out of the fateful dialectic of civilization:

> Freud's consistent denial of the possibility of an essential liberation of the former [the phylogenetic-biological factor] implies the assumption that scarcity is as permanent as domination--an assumption that seems to beg the question. By virtue of this assumption, an extraneous fact obtains the theoretical dignity of an inherent element of mental life, inherent even in the primary instincts. In light of the long-range trend of civilization, and in light of Freud's own interpretation of instinctual development, the assumption must be questioned. The historical possibility of a gradual decontrolling of the instinctual development must be taken seriously, perhaps even the historical necessity--if civilization is to progress to a higher stage of freedom. (p. 134)

While he tried to accommodate elements of the later Freud into his argument, Marcuse basically works with the assumptions of early Freudian

drive psychology. Which is to say, he assumes that sexual renunciation is the basic source of human unhappiness and tries to devise a scheme to minimize renunciation. As we know, however, Freud developed an object relations theory, in his middle period, and a theory of the aggressive drive in the late period. And, with these theoretical developments, he developed a deeper appreciation of loss and transience and aggression --as well as sexual renunciation--in human discontent. To be sure, Marcuse attempts to deal with the problems of transience and aggression, but always from within his sexual liberationist perspective.

D. Some Criticisms of Marcuse

Marcuse's adherence to early Freudian drive psychology--and the explicit theoretical and "political" hostility to ego psychology-- is apparent in his analysis of the perversions. It was observed in the last chapter that Freud's understanding of the perversions underwent a major modification in the course of his career. Whereas in 1905 Freud conceptualized the perversions on the model of the neurosis, by the end of his career he had come to appreciate their closer proximity to the psychosis. Thus, in the Three Essays on Sexuality, he could refer to perversion as the reverse of the neurosis. This means that both phenomena deal with the problem of socially unacceptable pregenital component drives. Only where the neurotic symptom expresses the drive in a highly compromised, disguised form, the perversion allows it relatively direct expression. The point is that on this model both phenomena--the formation of neurotic symptoms and the formation of

perversions--are the result of intrasystemic conflict; they result from the conflict between the expression of a drive and the internalized social restraints on that expression. At that point in the development of psychoanalysis the fact that the perversions might have serious ramifications for the integrity of the ego and thereby for psychopathology had not been adequately recognized.

Two important doctrines that resulted from Freud's theoretical innovations of the twenties--which had enormous consequences for psychoanalysis as a philosophy of man and a clinical practice--were what Waelder called "the principle of multiple function" (Waelder, 1936/1976) and the final instinct theory. Marcuse's analysis of the perversions is distorted because he does not sufficiently appreciate the meaning of these innovations. Or rather perhaps he cannot appreciate their meanings because of his pretheoretical commitments which they would threaten.

Prior to the advent of ego psychology and the enunciation of the principle of multiple function it was possible to construe psychoanalysis as a form of instinctual essentialism. It was possible to maintain, that is, that the drives constituted the human essence and that all other psychic institutions and productions represented mere appearances of that essence which had been distorted because of the pressure of external reality. The task for psychoanalytic psychotherapy and psychoanalytically-oriented culture critique, given this interpretation, was to unmask the distorted appearances and to gain access to the essence--i.e., to make the unconscious conscious. This approach was perhaps particularly compelling in the early days of psychoanalysis when it was involved in

the critique of Victorian puritanism and viewed sexual repression as the primary source of psychopathology. And it should also be pointed out that this conception is parallel to a Rousseauean romanticism that holds there exists a presocial natural human essence which is basically good and which only becomes distorted by pressures of sociation.

Against this sort of conception Waelder introduced the principle of multiple function, which actually made explicit something that was already implicit in Freud's structural theory of the twenties. Whatever its precise origin, the principle of multiple function marked a major philosophical revision in the theory of psychoanalysis, for it moved from the essentialism of drive theory, to a highly differentiated conception containing three (or four) coequal determinants. Drawing on Freud's tripartite division of the psyche, Waelder argued that every psychic act served a four-fold function: id, ego, super-ego, and he added repetition compulsion. The important point is that none of these functions can be granted primacy. In clinical practice as well as in applied psychoanalysis all psychic productions have to be understood in terms of their multiple function.

Another innovation of the twenties, which was a theoretical concomitant of the structural hypothesis, was Freud's final instinct theory. We know that throughout his career Freud always adhered to a dualistic conception of the instincts, the only question being at any given point what the two members of the scheme ought to be. And we know that throughout his career Freud also had difficulty locating aggression in his theoretical scheme: at times he saw it as a component of the ego instincts and at others as a derivative from the sexual instincts, i.e., from the anal-

sadistic phase. Finally, with his last instinct theory, Freud posited sex and aggression--or, more precisely, Eros and Thanatos--as the two constituents of his theory. The factors that led him to this formulation and the relationship between the death instinct and aggression are too complex to examine here. It is sufficient to point out that, with his final formulation, Freud ascribed an independent non-derivative position to aggression in mental life, with the result that psychoanalysts become more sensitive to the ubiquitousness of aggression. All psychic phenomena had to be analyzed not only in terms of their ego and super-ego functions, but the role of the sexual and aggressive drives had to be analyzed as well.

Drawing on prestructural drive theory Marcuse tries to construe the perversions in a utopian fashion. He argues that polymorphous perversity is subordinated to genital supremacy in the course of development not because of a developmental Anlage in that direction, nor because of the desirability of maturity as a development norm, but only because polymorphous perversity had to be suppressed phylogenetically and ontogenetically in order to turn humans into purposive beings capable of toil. Or to put it differently, the historical fact of scarcity, which necessitates toil, requires in turn that the pleasure principle--to which Marcuse claims the perversions remain loyal--be subordinated to the reality principle. The perversions are a piece of infantile sexuality that has somehow escaped repression, according to him. As we have seen, he argues moreover that, as scarcity has become potentially eliminable, toil has become anachronistic. Indeed, he goes even further and asserts that the elimination of scarcity and toil are not desirable, but necessary to unlock the riddle of history as it is posed in the modern world. And as the perversions remain loyal to the pleasure principle "[t]hey aim

not only against the reality principle, at non-being, but also beyond the reality principle--at another mode of being. They betoken the historical character of the reality principle,the limits of its validity and necessity." (Marcuse, 1966, p. 109)

The claim is, then, that the perversions constitute a relatively uncontaminated phenomenon that has somehow eluded the corruptions of socialization and remained loyal to the presocial pleasure principle. Likewise, Marcuse (1966) argues that, as fantasy is a form of mental activity which is split off at the point at which the reality principle is instituted, it too is a relatively uncorrrupted activity also pointing to "another mode of being":

> By virtue of their revolt against the performance principle in the name of the pleasure principle the perversions show a deep affinity to phantasy as that mental activity which "was kept free from reality-testing and remained subordinated to the pleasure principle alone." Phantasy not only plays a constitutive role in the perverse manifestations of sexuality; as artistic imagination, it also links the perversions with the images of integral freedom and gratification (p. 50).

The fallacies involved in this attempt to decipher the principles of a free society from perverse sexuality and fantasies ought to be apparent from our earlier considerations: it presupposes a form of instinctual essentialism and does not appreciate sufficiently the role of aggression in the perversions.

After the introduction of the structural hypothesis and the formulation of the principle of multiple function it is difficult to maintain that the perversions represent some natural, i.e., presocial, expression of uncontaminated sexual desire--whatever that might mean. We know since Waelder at least that all psychic productions, and mutatis mutandies the

perversions, are overdetermined and serve multiple functions; neither the drives nor the unconscious represent a natural essence, as it were, for which all other psychic phenomena are appearances as Marcuse must assume. The Rousseauean idea which must be presupposed in all romantic politics of a presocial natural essence that only becomes corrupted in society cannot be rehabilitated in psychoanalytic terms. To make matters even worse the general problems of overdetermination and multiple function are particularly pertinent in the case of the perversions. Indeed, once the early Freudian idea that the perversions are simply the "negative" of neurosis had been given up, perversions could be understood in their multi-faceted functions. We examined a number of those functions in the preceding chapter and saw, contrary to Marcuse's idealizations, many of them were anything but benign: e.g., shoring up a disintegrating sense of self, the manic flight from depression, the disavowal of the difference between the sexes, the maintenance of infantile omnipotence and the discharge of anger against the primal scene. Interestingly enough, Marcuse himself evinced some awareness of the problem nine years after the publication of Eros and Civilization when he introduced the notion of repressive desublimation. In One Dimensional Man (1964) he argued that it was possible for a society to tolerate a much larger degree of direct sexual expression and that, far from being liberating, that expression could actually reinforce the existing system. This means that it is not the expression or repression of the sexual drive per se which is at stake. Indeed, it could be argued that what we are witnessing today is repressive desublimation on a relatively large scale; the new prevalence and tolerance of perverse sexual activity in the society at large does not institute

liberation, but points to a deep sense of psycho-social desperation. This does not mean we should reinstate the old repressions, but only that we ought to understand things for what they are.

Finally, a word about aggression. As I have mentioned, a result of Freud's last instinct theory was an increased awareness of the role of aggression in psychic life. And, once again, what was true of psychic life in general was especially true for the perversions. As we saw in the last chapter, the primal scene plays a central role in the genesis of perversions. And one of the central functions of the perversions is to cope with the anger at having been excluded from the primal scene --both through denial and through the more direct discharge of the anger, i.e., in sadism. Rather than being accidental, anger and aggression are essential to the perversions because among other things, of their origins in the primal scene. Ironically, Marcuse provides a strange twist to the entire analysis of aggression. Whereas he remains an early Freudian for most of his conceptual stance, he takes the theory of the death instinct seriously. Indeed, he thinks that the problem of neutralizing Thanatos represents the *major problem of our time*. And he even advocates the neutralization of aggression by sexuality as the solution to the problem, which is more or less the traditional psychoanalytic position. However, he maintains that this neutralization should take place through the liberation of the perversions from genital supremacy, which is exactly the opposite of the traditional position. The concept of genitality --if it means anything--means that stage in development where the pregenital phases with their intrinsic aggression have been integrated so that the quantum of libido in the personality is greater than the quantum of aggression.

This integration, in turn, allows the person to maintain and love another person as a whole object. Marcuse, because he denies the role of aggression in the perversions, gets the position exactly backwards.

E. On Utopianism in General

The point of contention between a Marcuse, on the one hand, and a Chasseguet-Smirgel, on the other, thus concerns the mutability of the reality principle. As we have seen, Marcuse's strategy for "refuting" Freud's conservatism is to de-ontologize him, i.e. to demonstrate that Freud's purportedly immutable principles are in fact historical. He thus tries to demonstrate that the seemingly transhistorical reality principle is historically variable and has in our day assumed the form of the performance principle. Chasseguet-Smirgel maintains a more traditional Freudian position and holds that, insofar as civilization represents something like a social ontology, the Oedipus complex represents its fundamental constitutive principle. Any regression behind it, on this view, results in psychopathology in the case of the individual and socio-political pathology in the case of the collective. This is not to say that the Oedipus complex cannot assume a variety of historical forms. Wallace (1983) has recently shown in a review of the anthropological evidence since Freud's day that, while that taboo may assume a variety of instantiations in various cultures, all cultures are ordered by an incest taboo that delineates the difference between the sexes and the generations. Mutability here concerns the instantiations of the Oedipus complex, not the Oedipus complex itself; Marcuse in contrast, wants to

contest the immutability of the Oedipus complex itself.

Marcuse, however, has at least one polemical point that is well taken. We must remember that he was theorizing in the fifties, which is to say, during the heyday of American cultural conservatism and conformism and of the so-called Hartmann era in psychoanalysis. And while he did not guard sufficiently against this interpretation, I do not believe it was Hartmann's intention to have his theory of adaptation--which was necessary on strictly theoretical grounds--turned into a rationale for conforming. However, this is often what happened in the hands of his less theoretically sophisticated followers, and "adjustment" became the hallmark of American psychoanalysis at its worst. It was against this backdrop then that Marcuse, for understandable reasons, introduced the old Hegelian distinction, which I mentioned in the introduction, between the real, which is judged in terms of its rationality, and the merely empirically existent. He wanted to counter the uncritical acceptance of American Society by many analysts and the implicit conformist values that informed much of their practice. And indeed there is much in Freud himself to justify this more historical approach to psychoanalysis; the opening pages of The Future of an Illusion. (Freud, 1927a/1975) where Freud discusses the relationship of instinctual renunciation and the level of the productive forces in a given society--and which the Frankfurt School mined extensively, and certain sections of Civilization and its Discontents (1930/1975) read like passages from Marx.

However, in addition to historicizing psychoanalysis in this more limited sense, Marcuse had a more radical sense of historicization in mind as well. That is to say, he not only wanted to point out the

historical variability of sexual and moral arrangements and their relationship to economic factors, but he also wanted to historicize the very principles Freud held to be transhistorical, i.e., the Oedipus complex. Actually, while it is the transfiguration of the triadic oedipal reality which is constitutive of civilization that Marcuse (1966) is speaking about throughout, when it comes to confronting the crucial question of the historical contingency of the Oedipus complex, his arguments become vague indeed:

> But if human happiness depends on the fulfillment of childhood wishes, civilization according to Freud, depends on the suppression of the strongest of all childhood wishes: the Oedipal wish. Does the realization of happiness in a free civilization still necessitate this suppression? Or would the transformation of libido also engulf the Oedipus situation? In the context of our hypothesis, such speculations are insignificant; the Oedipus complex, although the primary source and model of neurotic conflicts, is certainly not the central cause of the discontents in civilization, and not the central obstacle for their removal. The Oedipus complex "passes" even under the rule of a repressive reality principle. Freud advances two general interpretations of the passing of the Oedipus complex: "it becomes extinguished by lack of succes" or it "must come to an end because the time has come for its dissolution just as the milk-teeth face when the permanent ones begin to press forward." The passing of the complex appears natural as a "natural" event in both cases. (p. 143).

Such an essential question cannot be dismissed so lightly, and certainly requires more substantive, less rhapsodic argumentation. Chasseguet-Smirgel, on the other hand, is thoroughly unequivocal on the question: any solution, personal or social, which seeks to recapture the perfection of primary narcissism through an evasion of the Oedipus complex and triadic reality is most likely doomed to failure. The triadic structure determines the scope of the reality principle. In other words, the mutability of the reality principle extends to all the possible

instantiations of the triadic structure not to the principle itself.

Several interesting questions arise for social theory in this context. First, what I have formulated in the rather abstract terms of the possible instantiations of the triadic structure can become a topic for "empirical" speculation. Which is to say, what are the conceivable concrete social alternatives that are compatible with the structures of triadic reality? This raises the related question of what one does with preoedipal dyadic or "utopian" impulses once triadic reality has been accepted. In the case of individual psychoanalysis we know the answer, namely, sublimation. But what is the analogue of sublimation at the collective level. To put the problem in the language of Greek tragedy, how are the Furies to be integrated into a rational polis? A current example might help to illustrate the point. The recent proliferation of neo-fundamentalist religious movements attests to the prevalence of the wish for merger which is going unfulfilled in our post-religious society. But how can these dyadic utopian wishes--which can actually serve to vitalize a culture--be somehow accommodated in a secular society in a way that does not result in regressive phenomena like Jerry Falwell and the Ayatollah?

Finally, I would like to raise one last point before concluding. There are basically two ways one can argue against utopianism: either one can accept utopian ideals as desirable and argue that lamentably they are unobtainable or one can question the very desirability of the ideals. With the first position, one is left with what Roy Schafer (1975) has called a depressive, as opposed to a tragic vision of life. One is left, that is, with a constant sense of disappointment that those intrinsically desirable goals will never be realized; humans are finite but should not

be. This position can have the positive consequence of fostering a critical attitude toward social reality; in so far as those ideals are not taken as absolute but as asymptotic goals--i.e., goals against which empirical reality can be measured, but which cannot be realized--they can motivate social criticism. The danger is, however, that even if these ideals are posited asymptotically, their utopian presupposition can distort non-utopian political judgment. The second position is tragic, in Schafer's sense, in that it too recognizes the finite nature of human existence, but, rather than constantly lamenting the fact, it attempts to work it through as it were, and conceptualize its solutions to the human conditions from within the finite horizon of that condition.

The second critique of utopianism itself consists in two parts which correspond to the two parts of the utopian position itself. The first part pertains to the Utopian's more or less implicit judgment on all previous history. And the second concerns the actual content of the utopian vision.

Let us begin with the first part. The Utopian, assuming that humans will only be fully human when the finite constraints are removed from their potentiality, must also tacitly assume, as Jonas (1981) has put it that "past history has not yet let man appear in his truth" (p. 445). This means the Utopian must tacitly assume that all previous human achievements--including the Greeks, the Renaissance Italians, Shakespeare and Beethoven--were somehow subhuman. As Jonas (1981) observes:

> The basic error of the ontology of not yet and its eschatological hope is refuted by the plain truth--ground for neither jubilation nor dejection--that genuine man is always already there throughout known history: in his heights and his depths, his greatness and wretchedness,

> his bliss and torment, his justice and guilt: in short, in all the ambiguity that is inseparable from his humanity. Wishing to abolish this constitutive ambiguity is wishing to abolish man in his unfathomable freedom (p. 453).

The criticism applies with particular force to the Marxian and "Marxified" Freudian versions of the utopian position. For, as we have seen, both make a distinction between human prehistory which is correlated with the realm of necessity, on the one hand, and human history which is correlated with the realm of freedom on the other. With the straightforward Marxian version the position is: human history proper will only begin when the realm of necessity is conquered and supplanted by the realm of freedom. With the "Marxified" Freudian version the position is: human history proper will only begin when the realm of necessity is conquered and the reality principle is supplanted by the pleasure principle. In the second version, it is often argued that, just as the institution of the Oedipus complex marked the transition from the realm of natural history to the realm of human prehistory, now the overcoming of the Oedipus complex --which has presumably become historically anachronistic--would mark the transition from the realm of human prehistory to human history proper.

With respect to the second part of the critique of utopianism, Jonas maintains that the desire to escape from necessity is itself misguided, for it is only in the confrontation with necessity that we create truly human accomplishments. To put it in more psychoanalytic terms, Marcuse's advocacy of what he calls "integral gratification" amounts to an advocacy of infantile omnipotence, i.e., the situation where the breast appears simultaneous with the infant's wish for it. But, as we have seen Chasseguet-Smirgel argue, it is precisely in the gap between the wish and its fulfillment, between the ego and the ego-ideal, that everything

human is created. Thus, far from constituting the realization of humanity, the removal of Ananke would remove the conditions for truly human achievements. It has ofen been observed that the Greek gods, who do not have to struggle with necessity, appear shallow and unsympathetic in contrast to the Homeric heroes who are constantly struggling with it. For our particularly human situation does indeed consist in the fact that we are neither beasts nor gods, but somewhere in between, and all genuine human creation is generated from the tension of that situation.

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