Opposite Ends of a Spectrum: Emerson and Freud's Conception of the Romantic Self

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From the systolic beat of the left ventricle to iambic pentameter, what connects poetry to physiology is the mind of man that defines it; and as one is a crucial, involuntary function of life, so then must be the other, for the larger systems to which these components belong are and have been the essential components of our education: the Arts and the Sciences.

In exploring conceptions of the romantic self, one recognizes a uniformity of moderation, an intrinsic philosophy of the need to regulate intrinsically adverse experiences, seeking confluence of thought and action. Every thinking being meditates on this process, or mediates themselves from it, separating universal victimhood into those bound by observation of objectiveless confinement, and those who exert their energy wringing the cage's bars, unaware of, influenced by, the lackluster lifespan of our reconciliations. It is the former forced not simply to survive his discontents but to get to know them, dissect them, learn their mechanics, and inevitably strive and fail to overcome them. It is *for* the former the artist or the intellectual makes the struggle against his discontents a public spectacle, to outline the process by which they are identified, and to point the viewer in the direction of their own. This is neither primary, nor secondary, but simultaneous to the other objective which is the awe and entertainment of the art-consumer. Most who have been moved by art—felt the equally brief satisfaction of the artist's fruition—return from that momentary ascent and reenter lives refreshed; but for some, the ascent is but a symptom of its momentariness, and they return to their lives dissatisfied, agonizingly aware of their mediations, seeking the mechanics of creation, not to be limited as spectator of second-hand sensations. Thus do we see in the burgeoning artist a trajectory of inquiry and experimentation antagonized by the knowledge that he will not—because he cannot—lead a life wringing the cage, temporarily tranquilized by the *evocation* of transcendence. And this

trajectory ends either with the last word written or the last word thought, and completes a conception of the romantic self we can only know in its entirety if it is our own.

What, then, *is* the romantic self? I have come to define it as the embodiment of a subjectively idealized self, the result of study and experience, illustrating one of infinite paths to reconciling copacetic terms of existence. But for this, we must reconsider the terms of idealization. The romantic self has not *mastered* its discontents, it cannot identify what forces it struggles against, what their sources are, how these forces overwhelm, or how they are overcome; instead, the romantic self illustrates these aspects in its constitution, for our observation and study. Its idealization lay in how it is put up as an *explanation*, an autobiographic residual of the intellectual's traversal of a life, what he fought and obsessed over, what he struggled against. The romantic self is an incomplete portrait if not painted by its creator at the cumulative peek of experience: it is our life as it flashes before our eyes; think then, of how incomplete my sketch of Emerson and Freud's will be, when drawn from a meagre selection of essays. But this is OK, and part of the point, because I'm not here to talk about how I'm touched by their work, or how they've contributed to art and academia—I'm here to explore the conflicts and consensuses of (primarily) two vastly different and original thinkers through a limited third-party conception of their respective inquiries. In exploring Emerson and Freud's general theories of mind, man, and society, we create the basic outline of two conflictual romantic selves the product of significantly overlapping investigations. Observing how these conceptions commingle in development of my own intellectual process (the *true* subject of the paper), we can see or semblance the experience of the redundancies of life made original by the power of the investigative mind.

We take the basic philosophies of our subjects (in our case, significantly broad and general encapsulations), and apply them to a form that shares the intrinsic regulatory behavior patterned in every man and his intention. This differentiates the romantic self from a *Romanticized* self, in which the idealization taking place is performative: the hero's journey, the dialectic with and desire to dominate nature, the lonely and victorious finale; the former is a template, a diagram, it does not *perform*, but offers itself as a place of performance, in which thoughts, inferences, and experiments can be simulated. It is a model of the thinker's circumstantial and constitutional awareness, and is necessitated by an inability to content oneself with that which they fight against and see no end to the fight against. It is either that one does not recognize or feel the need to recognize an authority limiting our willful impulses, or they do, and can never *not* address it. When we consider Emerson and Freud in this context, we see that the two belong to this latter category: they are among the disconsolate, and this is the shared basis from which they create forms of reconciliation foils to each other. I draw from but a handful of their essential writings, and so my role is not to judge the applicability of either conception, or how "realistic" they are, but to seek intuition into the mechanics by which they are conceived.

It is interesting for this reason to begin our discussion of two great polarities on the spectrum of the romantic self with *the* great polarities of the intellect. That one *does not* exist without the other means that it *can not*, for the Arts and the Sciences are but one illustration, one phrasing of the dichotomy templating our pursuit of homeostatic purpose and content. Our subjects have long investigated this balancing act, phrasing it in many ways, many times over; they've spent entire lives-worth exploring a disconsolate self the result of subjectively-defined agents of irreconciliation. In this paper, you will not see the results of this investigation, but a version of it, as an inexperienced college student has come to see it. It would be a folly, then, to

treat this paper as advancing a discussion or contributing to a field: I acknowledge how narrow my frame of knowledge takes me, and so my purpose turns towards *where I have been taken*, and what there is evidence in and of itself. In this way, one can see a parallel between the codependent polarities of the intellect, and the Emerson and Freud my study conceives of. This paper exists as evidence of their codependence, if only in the mind of its author. And to what end? What I aim to investigate is not the knowledge provided by my limited reading of the two, but the process of thought for which their originality is either reason or result. A paper is the product of other papers read and dialectics digested in the stomach of subjective reality; this essay demonstrates how the papers of Emerson and Freud inspire a parallel process in myself, and ultimately seeks to engage the reader in the same process, semblancing the revolution of thought solely unique to its medium.

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This concept of moderation will always be incomplete, and I express it without any notion of correctness or attachment, but as a tool to describe how my research has encouraged me to think. There is to be explored (though it has been forever) an intersection of the value of the material world and our fortunate position of determining its value. That there is a discrepancy between the two is evidenced (at least in the mind of man) by the different ways we deal with the question: some say there is no value but what we give the world, others say that there is value *aside* from what we give it; some say our conception is at odds with its true value, others say it's in harmony with, or progressing towards it. Whether this discrepancy is a comfort or a curse, whether it permits or restricts one's welfare, whether it deprives one's life of meaning or enriches it, we all share this: it confronts us all, unsettles us all, and its potentiality, based on

what we're capable of[1], becomes either one's subject of pursuit or object of avoidance.[2] Studying Emerson and Freud's reconceptualizations of man and his relationship to the world, my own

[1] By this I mean whether we are capable of living satisfactorily within the social and spiritual demands of the mind. The perfectly content carry out daily life and may have uneasy sleep and short tempers but they *maintain* and maintain unto death when they reflect and say "I lived a pretty good life, overall" and "If I could do it all again I wouldn't change a thing." There are those, however, that are unable to unsee frivolity in redundant pleasures and repeating pains; for these people does the artist or the intellectual serve for more than mental stimulation, but as *guide to the processes of imaginative and intellectual expansion*. It is also in these disconsolate that the extreme pursuits of the arts and sciences are either drawn or born: one can *immerse* oneself in the idealism that derives meaning from man's mediation, or discredit it as meaningless in exchange for the inevitability of material discoveries. The question of every man's pursuit is whether or not he comfortably inhabits his own mind: whether finding the infinite within, or cabin fever; whether empowered by nature or discouraged; we are all objects of conflict seeking resolution in whatever way we allow ourselves.

[2] By this reasoning did I begin the introduction by defining the dichotomy of the intellect in the very general components of the Arts and Sciences: to suggest that, in the same way the Human race's (pre-)occupations define the educative pursuits of art and science, all reasoning an essay attempts is product *and process* of the individual's subjective engagement with the world. The elements of this engagement can be short- or long-term meditations, obsessive or accidental, prioritized, inescapable, or misremembered. An essay can be written in one sitting, or in part, said portion consisting of a complete skeleton of a work, or the first steps of its argument. It can be written over the course of years, doubtingly revised or cumulated word-for-word with the precision of refined thought. The essay, when carelessly weighed against (and used to signify) an immobile conception of an author's thoughts and beliefs, misrepresents them as two-dimensional, as stagnant. I know Emerson and Freud only insofar as these very specific words of theirs pass through me—I know this *version* of Emerson and Freud. I write this not from a tower of expertise; I am an initial explorer, seeking direction in dialectic with the thoughts of more experienced thinkers. The essay should not be read to locate the author or oneself within a frame, context, or tradition, but for its resonance: how, after one finishes reading it, and after one finishing thinking about it, it reemerges in eternally subsequent thought and perception. Instead we celebrate or disclaim a work and spit with or against the wind trying to inch away from the author or in his direction. Our sum knowledge of an artist is his work (disregarding public appearances and interviews and biographies and such), but, in truth, our sum *sense* of knowledge of an artist is a far greater expanse because of our inability *not* to narrativize his intention as we would his characters'. Considering this volatility of what we call human 'character' or 'personality,' the work should say nothing of the artist and vice versa: the product of time spent on a work from beginning to end, and the artist's physical, mental, and emotional state as he typed each letter or applied each stroke at each particular moment of conception—this knowledge, unknowable, is the closest we get to an image of the artist devoid of human invention: what he was thinking *as* he created, his state of mind upon every word or brushstroke—influenced immeasurably by the preceding word or brushstroke—opposed to what thoughts his creation gives expression to. We could feel the closest to the artist when we are actually the farthest, when a character makes us cry but the scene was written dispassionately; the absurdity the disconsolate perceive is the same as when someone says (without saying) "I like the opinions of people who once had an opinion I liked." I am far different a version of myself than when you read this, and from sentence to sentence my mind minutely changes, and though you cannot track the discrepancy, you are as certain of it as you are of time itself: that I am new, if only in the millions of old sensations I newly feel, or thoughts which now occupy my mind, or did and no longer do. No act of genius is as complex as the mind's acrobatics on even the least productive days. Therefore the value of summary is severely limited; therefore we fill art with a concept as the artist shapes it around another completely alien concept; therefore this essay says nothing of me but that I read a moderate amount of academic writing and thought about it for a decent amount of time and was thinking about the process of thinking about other thinkers throughout most of this thinking. It is for this reason I begin my essay with the arts and sciences, to qualify my language as not separate from—more importantly—not bound by, previous terminological conceptions of 'arts' and 'sciences'. My hope is that by asserting the value of our discussion *despite* the fact that I don't really know what I'm talking about, the reader can

ideas are reconceptualized as well, and it becomes clear that he who cannot cast aside the question of this discrepancy is obligated to confront his unease: thus conflictual conceptions of the self are born, that all share the single commonality of an intrinsic, irreconcilable agon. What is it that draws me to locate myself at this crossroad? It is not that I expect answers, nor satisfaction; it is simply that I've never stood there before. And as I do, I see the footprints of all who've located themselves there before me. They are the same, who've written children's books and given their names to the periodic table: all with resolve battling similar discontents, growing uniquely through life's soil, influenced in ways and directions and by things they are only attempting to perceive.

In my investigation, the arts and the sciences begin to define themselves by two functions: 1. To provide an expanding constant of unknowledge to which we can always aspire (purpose), and 2. To be that which we are wholly in possession of, which is always ours, with which we (must) content ourselves. It seems to me that the Sciences either instigate or invite the restlessness of man by the universal law that every discovery is exponentially fertile with new routes of inquiry; and by this essentially tragic notion of achievement, there is for the man of science no end to his ambition, no falter of purpose, always a *next step*. If this then encourages the pursuit of that which is not, or is yet to be, then the Arts serve to keep us from forgetting

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tune in to the most minute inquiries qualified by their own curiosity, without the anxiety that accompanies the prospect of pursuing a foundationless path of thought. You will say "can you not get a point across without referencing 'dichotomies and 'concepts' that have the human race's existence's-worth of varying definitions contained within them?" And I will say that I use what terms signify my thoughts and illustrate my reason without hesitation, and ask you not to weigh my premature definitions against those of the rest of humanity. I forgive you, then, (if you did so) for narrativizing my intention in dealing with only adequately understood ideas that lead to grandiose reductions of human thought and behavior, and I hope you can now go on to internalize my internalization of Emerson and Freud disburdened of the suspicion of my self-presentation. Or think "this idiot went so far as to write a page-long footnote to illustrate how hard he's *not* trying" and make this whole essay only slightly less false a fact of human character than the disgruntled diatribe of a sleepless employee upon a slightly lazy but always well-mannered temp, or my role as amanuensis.

what already is, that which we must cherish: the aspects of our constitution we precisely deem tragic. In the cage of mortal and mortally-defined existence, one continues to craft images in sleep and waking life, where bars bend and time eternal replaces time lost; and where in life what we lose frees or cuffs us, from the cage's aspects over-observed the Arts exist like bored doodles, impressions of beauty from unknown origins.

In the cage are properties to be ascertained, documented, defined and categorized; our perspective sharpens as we dig deeper into its variating properties, but our behavior is product of the same imagination that creates, unites, bridges the gaps, *narrativizes*: for both the arts and the sciences, it is the same imagination simulating confluence between internal and external experience. This is what I mean: their lay eternity both infinitely inward and outward, whether one ascends to the heavens, or finds it in the fabric of reality. When I read Emerson and Freud, I feel both these paths converge at a single point. It cannot be summarized, but I see it subtly, solely clearing before my step. In this essay is the foundation of a greater essay, but you are witness here to the mechanics of the mind in the act of surrounding itself with patterns.

As I've suggested, my attempt to describe these patterns is arrived at not from *experience* but from *study*, and this study is a fractional synthesis of two unique and fertile lifetimes of *both*. In this way, I see how the dichotomy of the arts and sciences manifests in the life of the individual, as yet another expression of this central moderation: observation of life passing through me (experience), and observation of life passing through others (study). We must observe the patterns in construction before we can construct our own, as Freud did of Darwin and Emerson of Kant; but in this process, more than building a foundation from which to build off preexisting ideas, I find myself thinking about what it means for preexisting ideas to pass

through productive minds. What I'm interested in exploring is what of these two is not only exceptionally powerful, but powerfully original.

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Mary Shelley illustrates a conception of this dichotomy in *Frankenstein*. In the first part, the scientist's failure to come forward with urgent honesty after the flight of his creation (as well as the failure to do so in the midst of subsequent calamity) is one of the most selfish displays in all of literature. That his fear is of being perceived mad indicates 1. that his priority still lay in qualifying purpose with recognition of his achievement, and 2. that he attempts to live content with the murderer's guilt he's inherited. Should he have rationalized that he could simply *show* how the monster was created, take *initiative* to find him, and teach *others* the dangers of unmediated passion such as his, he'd have saved himself and his loved ones from death's interruption; and though likely still considered mad, he'd inarguably be recognized for his work. Instead, he watches and wallows in a state of ineptitude, certainly without purpose and certainly without content, as events unfold as they would in a world where he had died of his grief. He carries this mentality through to the very end, as when, with the knowledge that the monster shall seek revenge for his refusal to craft him a wife, he says,

> I avoid explanation, and maintain a continual silence concerning the wretch I had created. I had a persuasion that I should be supposed mad; and this in itself would forever have chained my tongue. But, besides, I could not bring myself to disclose a secret which would fill my hearer with consternation, and make fear and unnatural horror the inmates of his breast. (Shelley, 190)

Referring to his loved ones as his "hearer[s]", what we see is a decision made not only in the interest of reputation, but of faulty moral logic. Shouldn't his fiancée and father act upon fear and consternation to survive? No: for Frankenstein, they need not know their survival threatened. Even on his deathbed, the last restoration of his energy is given to the glory of unsuccess unto death, which Walton's crew disposes of with the threat of mutiny.

Aspiration, ambition, must be in conversation with achievement, so as not for the subject to be discontented with what they already have, and see the world in his possession as platitude. This, a truly viable extraction (of infinite to be made) from Shelley's work, requires the medium of the novel, *of the Arts*, to be conveyed. From our objective position we see in the petrified Frankenstein, who compares his superior suffering to the "misery of innocence" (Shelley, 89)—to that of Elizabeth and of Justine—his self-perpetuated discontent. That he considers himself responsible for the murders and fails to act is an example of the moral reasoning that would be more finely developed if he had allowed the influence of his relationships (of the great appreciator of the sublime, Clerval, or the emphatic forgiver, Elizabeth) to influence a portion of his study; and if the scientist were to read his own biography from a place of balanced contemplation, he'd see his guilt not as the result of his creation, but as the result of his *neglect*, which made of it the monster. Indeed, the *Modern Prometheus* should have been avoided by the story of Prometheus. Instead of fire handed to man, it was there to be observed in its earthly mechanics, as it is for the young Frankenstein observing the lightning-struck tree: thus unsymbolized outside of Frankenstein's perspective.

If Shelley and I share this conception, then it is this that *Frankenstein* contributes to her romantic self, one which gives itself generously to our judgement without inculcating us in its fate. We feel the horror she felt upon waking from the dream with the knowledge of her monster,

and leave the book thrilled with the safety of our reality, or bored by it, desiring to reproduce the sensation which moves us. It is inarguable, however, that I arrived at this reading through the influence of the work I've been doing with Emerson and Freud, and Shelley may not have intended my reading in even the slightest way; and it is therefore as likely as not that I share nothing with her but the knowledge that this book exists. Still the connection waits to be made; the idle mind is satisfied to seize upon new sights when handed them, but the aspiring mind will always yield insight unsuggested, unintended, or misunderstood—the very thoughts and ideas of others which he allows to inhabit him create something unique, and potentially intuitive.

In the philosophies of Emerson and Freud, the foundational elements of their romantic selves are those that recur the most throughout the works, building bodies upon the starkest differences in direction, however similar the catalysts dictating said direction. For Freud, the central conflict is expressed between the Reality Principle and Pleasure Principle; for Emerson, between Nature and the Universal Mind. It is here that the furthest ends of our romantic spectrum are established. At one end, pre-Oedipal man; at the other, the pre-individuated universal mind. Both resonate through every thought and action of every member of the history of man, and at the base of both, in Harold Bloom's expression, the agonistic self: man the sum of conflict between internal and external experience. Though a literary critic, Bloom's interests are intensely linked to the psychological, and having thought extensively about precisely who and what we discuss here, the agonistic self is a connecting vessel that drives our pursuits away from mastering an understanding of Emerson and Freud and towards observing the process of a romantic self's conception: the intellectual/artistic transposition of subjective experience at particular moments and over the course of one's thinking life.

Both routes our thinkers suggest embody truths of the individual and society; both elaborations are implicitly instructional, yet the two develop these conceptions from foundations so vastly different they fit exceptionally well into general dichotomies: Eastern versus Western tradition; the Arts and the Sciences; Romanticism versus Realism; Empiricism versus Rationalism; (in Emerson's words) Idealism versus Materialism; (and in Freud's) the biological vital process versus the social/individual one. That these conflicts tend to be expressed in dichotomous relationships emphasizes the strange (and contradicting) universality of variability, as when, in his essay on Plato from *Representative men*, Emerson expounds upon these differentiations as the individual's tendency "by temperament and by habit," to one of two constitutions, to which he gives over a dozen different forms, to semblance a greater conception of this dichotomy:

> Two cardinal facts lie forever at the base [of philosophy…] 1. Unity, or Identity; and 2. Variety…. One is being; the other, intellect: one is necessity; the other, freedom: one, rest; the other pleasure; one consciousness; the other, definition; one, genius; the other, talent: one, earnestness; the other, knowledge: one, possession; the other, trade: one, caste; the other, culture: one, king; the other, democracy: and, if we dare to carry these generalizations a step higher, and name the last tendency of both, we might say, that the end of the one is escape from organization—pure science; and the end of the other is the highest instrumentality, or use of means, or executive deity. (Emerson, 422)

His list is extensive, and yet, it represents but a fraction of the number of possible expressions of the very same idea, of these "[t]wo cardinal facts" which he calls "gods of the mind," and which operate around "the same centripetence" yet in severe departure from one another. For what purpose does the extent of his elaboration serve? To "unite all things by perceiving the law

which pervades them; by perceiving the superficial differences and the profound resemblances." (Emerson, 425) In other words, as humans we are in the business of creating a sense of order from things, yet the coherence we achieve varies subject to subject: "every mental act—this very perception of identity or oneness, recognizes the difference of things. Oneness and otherness. It is impossible to speak or to think without embracing both." (Emerson, 425) Thus do I see in the works of Emerson and Freud, in Psychoanalysis and Transcendentalism, similar questions and answers passing through the minds of complexly different individuals. And thus I hope you find yourself, as I do upon every revision, open to formerly-concealed directions of inquiry inspired by the sentence, regardless of your knowledge of the paper's subject matter, qualified by the thoughts of an unfamiliar observer.

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In order to begin to compare conceptions of the romantic self, we must first establish the most pivotal aspects of each's endeavor. It is here we can identify the "superficial differences" from which will emerge the "profound resemblances" between Emerson and Freud, whose lives overlapped by over twenty-five years, and through which we can begin to see the revolution of ideas Emerson describes as "the very oldest of thoughts cast into the mould of these new times." (Emerson, 81)

There's a way in which the two, separate from the Arts as admirers and analyzers, yet exceptionally close in influence of its creation, are free of the compulsion to justify the sense of originality we commonly see in the artist. As Emerson expresses his role as transpositioner of ancient Greek and Hindu thought, Freud recognizes the cumulation of ideas which through him become the established natural science of psychoanalysis: "I have said nothing which other and better men have not said before me in a much more complete, forcible and expressive manner."

(Freud, 688) That he could reflect upon this, yet still posit his contribution as "the third insult that intrepid investigators had offered mankind's megalomania" (Gay, xvii) suggests, in the same vain as Emerson, that his is a rare example of a mind around which the times conform, in distinction from the generality of minds which embody the ideas of the time.

This insult is psychoanalysis: "a medical procedure which aims at the cure of certain forms of nervous disease (the neuroses) by psychological technique." (Freud, 322) That much of its development is the result of the dialectic Freud opens with literature, art, history, biography, anthropology, and much more, and that these fields reciprocate the call (whether intentionally or unintentionally) is testament to its reach of influence. What exciting things to explore in the contradiction of recirculated thought disrupting thoughts in circulation! leaving the disrupter the only place to credit the spread of influence. As Copernicus had proven that the earth, and therefore man, wasn't the center of the universe, and as Darwin had placed the human species within the animal kingdom, Freud ushered in the next deconstruction of our reason's foundation. (Gay, xvii)

How was this accomplished? How did his scientific pursuit to describing the mind inspire and expand into world thought? And how did he, from these early diversions from traditional study, arrive at the visionary theories of the human condition which cumulate over his career into a greater conception of the self? I turn first to the case study of "Anna O.," who, despite being a patient of Joseph Breuer, a friend of Freud's who relayed to him the case, was a major influence on his approach to psychology, and is widely considered—including by Freud, himself—"the founding patient of psychoanalysis." (Gay, 61)

Anna O. was born into a relatively privileged Jewish Orthodox family in 1859. She was of exceptional intelligence, and would go on to become a significant figure for Jewish and

feminine activism. After college, however, with little mental stimulation to feed her productive imagination, she began spending large amounts of time in "systematic daydreaming," which occupied much of the mundane household duties she was responsible for. In 1880, her father fell ill of tuberculosis, and the then twenty-one-year-old took over the care of him. But as a result, her own mental and physical health began to deteriorate, and she was soon forced to give up the duty of caring for her father. In the following December, "the patient took to her bed and remained there until April 1." (Breuer, 81-83)

This period is referred to as the incubation phase of her neuroses, in which Breuer observed two separate states of the patient's consciousness, as if she had two separate personalities: "[i]n one of these states she recognized her surroundings; she was melancholy and anxious, but relatively normal. In the other state she hallucinated and was 'naughty'—that is to say, she was abusive" (Breuer, 63). These states were succeeded by amnesia which would cause fits of confusion and intermittent emotional outbursts.

Besides specific symptoms of visual disruption, diplopia, and headaches, Anna's speech became increasingly inhibited, resulting eventually in complete muteness. Breuer notes that it is here he first discovered "the psychical mechanism of the disorder," when, obliging Anna to talk about something which some time prior she had been offended by and refused to speak of, her inhibition ceased and speech immediately returned. Her condition improved to the point that she finally left her bed on April 1st, 1881. However, Anna regressed completely back into her illness four days later as a result of the death of her father. (Breuer, 63-65)

In seeking to discover the relation between her first state and her *condition secondi*, or, the second state of *absence*, Breuer noticed patterns of behavior, thought, and physical sensation which correlated to the incubation stage of her illness, pointing to an essential idea of

psychoanalysis, that information retained in the mind is permanent, and can resurface as neuroses any amount of time after the psychical event has already passed. This is particularly evident in the daily patterns of Anna's behavior:

> the somnolent state in the afternoon, followed after sunset by the deep hypnosis for which she invented the technical name of 'clouds'….This pattern of waking at night and sleeping in the afternoons seems to have been carried over into her own illness and to have persisted long after the sleep had been replaced by a hypnotic state. (Breuer, 66)

And from where did this pattern originate? "During the nights she had watched by [her father's] bedside or had been awake anxiously listening till the morning; in the afternoons she had lain down for a short rest, as is the usual habit of nurses." (Breuer, 67) In other words, during the incubation stage of her illness.

The neuroses Breuer was treating suggested a function of the mind to preserve characteristics of a specific period and resolicit them, often in a different form, at another time of anxiety. After a year had elapsed since the death of her father, the pattern of her condition "became clearer in a very peculiar manner." Breuer observed that the first state, the 'normal' state of Anna, was present in time and place, but that the second state lived in the exact equivalent of the day a year prior, and knew not of anything that had happened in the time that had elapsed since then, *except* that her father had died[3]. (Breuer, 70)

A notebook kept by her mother confirmed these observations. Even more interesting, in addition to the amnesia that followed her shift between states, these stimuli carried over from the

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[3] Modernist art has long since explored the implications of this discovery; I think of Quentin Compson's narrative in *The Sound And The Fury*, in which, similar to Anna's experience, events of the present trigger the experience of events already passed, more powerful than recollection: memory *relived*.

second state to the first, lucid one: "one morning the patient had said to me laughingly that she had no idea what was the matter but she was angry with me….sure enough, this was gone through again in the evening hypnosis: I had annoyed the patient very much on the same evening 1881." (Breuer, 71) This illustrates my meaning when I suggest that Freud deconstructed our foundation of reason, in that for the first time (and not by religion), there was evidence of something within us that possessed a powerful agency over our actions and behavior and which we can not identify or understand. Not fate, not karma, but biology.

For Breuer, this was more simply the key insight to helping his patient overcome her neuroses. Since the psychical events which recurred originally took place between the period of her father falling ill and his death, it was through the process of vocalization that Anna was disburdened of their symptoms. For instance, there was a period of several weeks where she refused to drink water. Often, she would ask for a glass and immediately upon raising it to her lips would react aggressively as if repulsed.

> One day during hypnosis she grumbled about her English lady-companion whom she did not care for, and went on to describe, with every sign of disgust, how she had once gone into that lady's room and how her little dog—horrid creature!—had drunk out of a glass there. The patient had said nothing, as she had wanted to be polite. (Breuer, 71)

Breuer facilitated Anna in vocalizing this frustration, and immediately afterwards she drank a glass of water without any difficulty and never again faced the inhibition. By this process, Breuer helped Anna to address one-by-one the unconscious anxieties which were responsible for her hysteria. He would encourage the patient to tell a story in her hypnotic state, and by the stories conclusion her agitation would be gone and she'd once again be calm. On days when she refused to, or for whatever reason couldn't, recite a story, she'd have to tell two the following day to

reach the same pacification. She named the procedure a “talking cure,” (Breuer, 68) and by repeating it several times a week and encouraging Anna to tell three to five stories per session, Breuer facilitated her reconciliation with the discontents brought upon by the death of her father.

It is interesting to consider how this case makes its way into a Freud Reader, and sheds insight on that peculiar power that separates Freud from so many. For though Breuer knew the patient to the degree of none other, and is most responsible for her recovery, it was Freud who, from a significantly greater distance, saw it as a clue to a greater discovery. Is there a correlation, I ask myself, between the therapeutic disburdening of Anna’s psychical trauma and the artist’s attraction to creation, or the essayist’s to elaboration? The alienated Freud, inhabiting othered thoughts mocked as pseudoscience, refined this idea through the pure context of his perception, through which bloomed a romantic self in conflict with what can be neither forgotten nor remembered, making of every antagonist an externalization. This fundamental aspect of Freud’s romantic self permeates every inquiry and analysis I’ve encountered of his, and is fittingly expressed in one of his late—and most encapsulating—works, “Civilization and Its Discontents”:

> Let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past — an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus would still be rising to their old height on the Palatine and that the castle of S. Angelo would still be carrying on its battlements the beautiful statues which graced it until the siege by the Goths, and so on….In the place occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli would once more stand — without the Palazzo having to be removed — the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus;

> and this not only in its latest shape, as the Romans of the Empire saw it, but also in its earliest one…Where the Coliseum now stands we could at the same time admire Nero's vanished Golden House. On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of to-day…but the original edifice erected by Agrippa; indeed, the same piece of ground would be supporting the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. And the observer would perhaps only have to change the direction of his glance or his position in order to call up the one view or the other. (Freud, 735)

In this idea of psychical preservation, we see the foundation of Freud's "map of the mind," his early endeavor to describe a new conception of the self with a geographic model of the psychical processes. That we recognize this in the Rome metaphor, written in a late self-review of his work, gives the sense of expansion his thought must have undergone to lead him from founding psychoanalysis on material observation to using psychoanalysis to explain material phenomena. From the pasts of men does he conceive of Man; from men does he conceive of Man's history. That Freud traversed from the perfect retention of the Id to the inflated parallelisms of man bound by the actions of his ancestors, suggests a significant discrimination to be made between him and Emerson: that, while the former looks inward to discover an infinitude of influences upon the self, the latter looks outward, to an infinitude of which his self is but a single influence.

#

Emerson's idealism benefits to be put in conversation with what Freud refers to as the "oceanic feeling." "The source of religious sentiments," he quotes of a contemporary, is a "subjective fact" he is never without. It is "a sensation of 'eternity', a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded—as it were, 'oceanic'." Freud describes it as the feeling of "an indissoluble

bond, of being one with the external world as a whole." But he cannot reconcile this feeling in himself. He says this oceanic feeling seems to him an "intellectual perception" with "an accompanying feeling-tone" (Freud, 723):

> the idea of men's receiving an intimation of their connection with the world around them through an immediate feeling which is from the outset directed to that purpose sounds so strange and fits in so badly with the fabric of our psychology that one is justified in attempting to discover a psycho-analytic—that is, a genetic—explanation of such a feeling. (Freud, 724)

Yet, that he cannot escape his materialism to experience this for himself, he claims "no right to deny that it does in fact occur in other people." Believing this sentiment to be the origin of the religious institution, he suggests that "one may…rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion." The question for Freud becomes "whether it is being correctly interpreted [or] whether it ought to be regarded as the *fons et origo* of the whole need for religion." (Freud, 725) What he seeks in his investigation is not the ultimate source of the sensation, but the material mechanics which produce it, whether they be of external or phylogenetic construction.

Unable to divest his perspective of an inherent naturalism, he seeks arguable, provable evidence for such a sensation, where Emerson's source need not be proven *because modern man is its evidence*. In this way, we see the oceanic feeling as a point of divergence. For Emerson, where it is felt the strongest—that vague relationship of the mind to eternity (never to be any less vague), the body's strange connectedness to nature—we benefit not by defining its mechanics, but by seizing upon the means of reproducing, or of capturing it, though it be felt only in brief, fleeting moments. Emerson isn't driven to know what lay in the ocean, but to feel its waters, and

to lead others by his example. What do I mean by this? For one, that the form of inquiry to which Freud turns for the security of a foundation, is in Emerson's estimation completely foundationless.

> In the order of thought, the materialist takes his departure from the external world, and esteems a man as one product of that. The idealist takes his departure from his consciousness, and reckons the world an appearance. The materialist respects sensible masses, Society, Government, social art and luxury, every establishment, every mass, whether majority of numbers, or extent of space, or amount of objects, every social action. The idealist has another measure, which is metaphysical, namely the *rank* which things themselves take in his consciousness; not at all the size or appearance. Mind is the only reality, of which men and all other natures are better or worse reflectors. (Emerson, 83)

For the Transcendentalist, we see the world by its representation; it is what we perceive it to be, as well as what we consent to it being. Emerson quotes Condillac: "Though we should soar into the heavens, though we should sink into the abyss, we never go out of ourselves, it is always our own thoughts that we perceive." Emerson's suggestion by quoting one of the great proponents of materialism is that every materialist "will be an idealist; but an idealist can never go backward to be a materialist." (Emerson, 81-82) Inescapably does our discussion venture into the metaphysical, and it makes sense that Freud should see in its systems nothing "but dogmatic and ostentatious verbal constructions that in no way advance knowledge" (Freud, xviii); he is a man of science, building off of and contributing to world knowledge as it is found in the study of its other contributors. He writes in the vain of efficiency, systemization, organizing succinct

argument. From a place of preexisting knowledge, he endeavors into the unknown, but Emerson would criticize this with a question: aren't all endeavors metaphysical?

> "Every ship is a romantic object, except that we sail in. Embark, and the romance quits our vessel and hangs on every other sail in the horizon. Our life looks trivial, and we shun to record it. Men seem to have learned of the horizon the art of perpetual retreating and reference." (Emerson, 308)

Emerson's ship sails from the port of the unknown unto the sea of knowledge from which he defines what truth he finds in *himself*. And to what purpose? From a therapeutic perspective, Freud seeks external observation of subjective discontents, while Emerson, by this "transfer of the world into the consciousness, this beholding of all things in the mind," (Emerson, 313) seeks subjective resolution of internal discontents. When Emerson suggests that Nature is "all that philosophy distinguishes as 'not me,'" (Emerson, 18) this appeal to the authority of the subjective is where that oceanic feeling is put to use, for while Freud's psychoanalysis seeks to fix the individual that cannot fulfil society's demands, Emerson's philosophy seeks to improve the individual that is the *product* of society's demands.

These vague and indeterminant comparisons are brought into finer focus by this discrepancy: Emerson's corporeal self is the "I" of Freud's, which for the former is separate from the body, and for the latter, one and the same. Emerson sees society constructed by the mind's failure to create this separation, therefore are the woods and forests medicinal, regenerative, where the immortal mind observes its physical vessel in confluence with the mortal cycles of nature.

> In the woods is perpetual youth….The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. (Emerson, 6)

Thus psychotherapy, addressing objects of the mind preserved from the earliest moments of childhood, serves the same purpose as the true appreciation of nature. My ego's "clear and sharp lines of demarcation" (Freud, 724) dissolve, "I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all" (Emerson, 6). At the place from which the mind ascends (that is, the body), demarcation is observed; the mind circulates through "the currents of the Universal Being" and we recognize ourselves as "part or parcel of God" (Emerson, 6); whereas the ego, departing from objective reality, descends "without any sharp delimitation, into an unconscious mental entity[, the Id.]" (Freud, 724) And in this concept of an expanding recess of sensory and psychical information of immeasurable depth, Freud's materialism becomes less distinguished from Emerson's idealism. Though he operated within the realm of the material, defining the vital processes of mind and man, he wasn't bound by materialist thought; from materialist thought he developed a romantic self bound by distinct ideals. And Emerson, beginning with the collective consciousness that makes of every material object a divine fragment, works from the heavens down, to the very same processes of self and society.

2

Emerson's essays are the products of lectures given and revised over his career, many of which were told, retold, and perfected over several years during his travels with the Lyceum. But prior to his intellectual career, Emerson was a Unitarian minister for Boston's Second Church, wherefrom his sermons quickly developed renowned reputation. In 1831, his first wife, Ellen Louisa Tucker, of whom he shared the truest and most passionate love of any companion since,

died of tuberculosis. Unable to find reprieve from grief in religious worship, he left the church less than two years after her death. Imminent of his reasons for leaving was his disenchantment with communion, which, with great controversy and backlash from the community, he refused to administer. Though he never denies the idea of an omnipotent being, he shares with Freud a skepticism of the religious institution that puts him out of favor with common conception. For both it is clear that the institution hinges upon our participation, and participation within the institution hinges upon its appeal to our internality. For both, as well, this aspect is the contenting desire for unity, to escape a loneliness that for Freud is psychologically inhibiting, and for Emerson, corporeally. Emerson's is a form of faith based on subjective virtue, through which all faiths to some degree conform to his, yet must all contradict in their particulars. He toured Europe, honing his skill in the art of the lecture, and creating the foundation of this new individualism. From a journal entry dated June 1832: "I have sometimes thought that, in order to be a good minister, it was necessary to leave the ministry. The profession is antiquated. In an altered age, we worship in the dead forms of our forefathers". (Buell, 71) Religious practice and tradition, broadcasted from its many sources, had become to Emerson evidence of the institution's vie for preservation, thus ceasing to exalt the spirit of modern man to whom its words were never directly addressed.

In 1838, Emerson was asked to deliver a lecture to the graduating class of one particular institution, the Harvard Divinity School. It was the senior students, and not the school officials, who had invited him; but it would be at the hands of the latter that nearly thirty years would elapse before he was asked to return.

The Divinity School address defines Emerson's approach to a new spirituality derived not from an external entity, validated not by an institution, but proven self-evident by active pursuit.

Early in the address, he says "[i]f a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice." (Emerson, 64) By inviting the individual to account for their own definition of what is just, Emerson criticizes the notion of faith inherited by way of custom and culture: "Thus of their own volition, souls proceed into heaven, into hell." (Emerson, 65) From this perspective, society, as the system to which the religious institution belongs, is externalized as the enemy of enlightenment, of originality, autonomy—of lucid self-awareness; there is an ideal to strive towards that overcomes this agon by recognition and renunciation of it, though in totality this is completely unachievable in the same way Freud's primitive self never overcomes the demands of society and the super-ego. The closest either come to reconciliation with the parallel threat of default spirituality is the recognition of something that drives us towards it, the catalyst of moral argumentation regardless of a divine or phylogenetic source.

Literary critic and professor Lawrence Buell, in his biography of Emerson, says that, aligned with liberal Protestant beliefs of faith, Emerson saw "[r]eligous sentiment as panhuman, 'whether the individual honor Jove or Brahma or the Holy Virgin or a Saint,' however 'disordered by the corruptions' of cult and culture (S 2: 138)." (Buell, 170) As touched-upon above, the institutions of faith derive their legitimacy by seizing upon a preexisting moral instinct; it is for this reason that the most universal aspects of morality are shared between differing and contradicting religions, because they are intrinsically shared between differing and contradicting individuals:

> The essence of Religion consists in the 'influx of the Divine Mind into our mind,' the promise of which is 'the Unity of the human soul in all the individuals.' This is the core of all religions, 'the law of laws. Bible, Shaster, Zendavesta, Orphic Verses, Koran,

> Confucius.' No faith tradition is privileged. Indeed, the only way to attain it is 'to quit the whole world and take counsel of the bosom alone' (EL 2: 87, 86, 95)." (Buell, 37)

Nothing to a greater degree are we familiar with the experience of but ourselves, and so this, the bosom, must be held the highest source of authority. What, then, is the source of conflict? By what process is the agonistic self a result? For Emerson, it begins with man's first individuation: birth, where he is first distinguished from all who have died, and are yet to be born.

It is viable to suggest that, whereas Emerson looks out at society, to the elements through which the libido seeks liberation, Freud looks inward, to the obstacles which inhibit the libido's expression. Consciousness for both, the economic regulation of psychical energy, comes with a set of responsibilities that for Freud rewards a higher freedom than the rest of earth's inhabitants are privileged with, but for Emerson merely binds us to *an illusion* of freedom, as when he says

> the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *eclat* he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. (Emerson, 134)

The newborn, yet uninfluenced by the consequences of individuation, has only his subjectivity from which to derive his conception of the world and others. But to arrive into consciousness by that first un-courted act is the first datum by which external interpretation makes of the boy a logistic we call the man. By every subsequent act founded upon the first (and the response it elicits), we further from Emerson's ideal self, and enter into the finely pre-defined conceptions of "the individual."

The wisdom of the child is similar to that of the adult at the end of a long life: proximity to eternity preserves itself as a sensation felt most in the mind of the former; and its pull, its

reemerging presence in the latter, gives once again that imminent sense of impermanence. But while we distance from Emerson's ideal self as we enter and exit the center of a lifespan, we also distance from Freud's defective self: from birth we begin learning the custom around which we shape our happiness, a happiness that, for the former, is but a copy, a substitute, a temporary occupation, in the waiting room of the sublime.

There is a parallel between the objects of our reality as they are seen by the child, who has not yet identified himself with them, and this new perception when, at the end of life, one sees they provide nothing that influences their course or trajectory: we return to the same unknown from which we came. Life for the idealist is wrought with evaluative doubts, while life for the materialist is the sum of our evaluations. In this way do these two conceptions of the romantic self again differ, for Emerson's dichotomy is the source of an unfulfilled self, while Freud's bid for fulfillment results in his dichotomous self. Society is Emerson's Agon while Freud's is pre-social man, for the latter's ideal is man in healthy regulation of, happily contented with, his traversal of the social world; and the former's, repulsed by societal engagement, resists its influence to seek the same satisfaction elsewhere.

> Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better security of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs. (Emerson, 134)

Here is another distinction: Emerson's conformist shares the same definition of reality as Freud. "Names and customs" are the reality of which biological nature (the phylogenetic process, evolutionary development) is directly or indirectly creator. Freud's "bread" is the guarantee of

satisfaction compensated for by the restriction of instinctual freedom, which here closely resembles Emerson's "liberty and culture." The difference again are the variant conceptions of its fundamental foundation. Emerson's self's desire for reunion with the universal One, though completely incompatible with Freud's libidinal externalizations, sketches the very same image of conflict between man and society. Emerson sees society turn man away from, and forget his possession of, a divine imagination, while Freud sees society as the flawed, but enduring, proponent of our fight against an intrinsic animalism. For both, the ideal balances are never completely achieved.

#

No essay of Emerson's more intensely describes the anxiety of man's inescapable mediation from himself than "Experience." It is here he explores the irreconcilable separation of the "me" of the mind, and the "not me" of Nature. Like a poem, man is defined by the spaces between which he exists; parallel pre-individuation, "[n]othing is left to us now but death. We look to that with a grim satisfaction, saying, There at least is reality that will not dodge us." (Emerson, 309) This satisfaction is grim because it is our only reprieve from life as "a series of surprises, [which] would not be worth taking or keeping if it were not." And this grimness is satisfying, because, when we look around us, we see with what "grand politeness" God has made of now: "an impenetrable screen of purest sky, and another behind us of purest sky. 'You will not remember,' he seems to say, 'and you will not expect.'" (Emerson, 318) Where, for Freud, the mind of any present can access all of its past, Emerson's imagination, conforming nature to our perception of it, makes of temporality merely another abstraction of many to be deconstructed. It is for both the same: the mind is a power great beyond what our faculties can capture. For what, then, does the present exist? It would seem that for both, nature manifests and

mediates our relationship with our origins: for Freud, biologically, tethering us to a (uniform) history as the mind does to its past; for Emerson, spiritually, suggesting the common denominator a circle outside of perception. Time as a faculty of nature—for both, the present *presents* the path to resolution. For one, by outlining a naturalistic trajectory; for the other, a Romantic one. Freud objectively departs from the present self, and from the subjective present does Emerson depart from *him*self.

Unlike his first major essay, “Nature,” which illustrates and exalts in this dialectic with the external world, “Experience” emphasizes its necessity, and why it is never resolved:

> We wake and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us, which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight. But the Genius which according to the old belief stands at the door by which we enter, and gives us the lethe to drink, that we may tell no tales, mixed the cup too strongly, and we cannot shake off the lethargy now at noonday. (Emerson, 307)

For a moment we are suspended in the sky’s force of perception, the next we feel the ache of our legs without prospect of alleviation. This lethargy is the reason and result that the devout worshiper need renew his contract with God every week at church, every night before bed; life, “a succession of moods or objects”, repeatedly leaves us unsatisfied with those foreign forces which try to define our permanence through proof of their own.

> We need change of objects…The reason of the pain this discovery causes us (and we make it late in respect to works of art and intellect) is the plaint of tragedy which murmurs from it in regard to a person, to friendship and love. (Emerson, 312)

Here I detect what may have been an inspiration to Nietzsche: the permeation of Emerson's distrust of the material world into an anxiety of his relationship to its objects. Friendship and love are reduced to concepts, *functions* of life whose value is qualified by the value of one's existence. For Emerson, this suggests that if what is in question relies upon the medium of reality (here, love-relationships), then it proves itself representative of that illusion. For Freud, it suggests that if what is in question is *relied* upon to displace libidinal energy, then it proves itself representative of that *function*.

"Experience" also serves to outline the subjective discontents which permeate Emerson's idealism, and to which he knows himself forever bound. The first he discusses is the death of his son, Waldo, in 1842, of Scarlet Fever.

> The only thing grief has taught me is to know how shallow it is. That, like all the rest, plays about the surface, and never introduces me into the reality, for contact with which we would even pay the costly price of sons and lovers. (Emerson, 310)

This is interesting to put in conversation with what Freud describes as the linguistic simulation of the ego's desire for unity with the love-object: "a man who is in love declares that 'I' and 'you' are one ["we", "us"], and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact." (Freud, 724) Regarding sexual love, this is manifest as the romantic relationship; regarding aim-inhibited love, the familial relationship. Marriage gives legal and religious (symbolic) ordination to this simulated union, while the idea of blood-relation contributes the sense of identity that desires said union. These are, for both our subjects, ideas which travel no further than the mind of man; both deny to entertain their arrival by way of transposition or divine intervention. For Freud it calls for a mental exercise to fulfill; for Emerson, to overcome. From the latter's tower of idealism, this observation is unavoidable, and results in his *failure* to reconcile such a sensation:

> bodies never come in contact…souls never touch their objects…In the death of my son, now more than two years ago, I seem to have lost a beautiful estate—no more. I cannot get it nearer to me. If tomorrow I should be informed of the bankruptcy of my principal debtors, the loss of my property would be a great inconvenience to me, perhaps, for many years; but it would leave me as it found me—neither better nor worse. So it is with this calamity; it does not touch me; something which I fancied was a part of me, which could not be torn away without tearing me nor enlarging without enriching me, falls off me and leaves no scar…I grieve that grief can teach me nothing, nor carry me one step into real nature. (Emerson, 309)

Emerson criticizes that we feel these things to be real as evidence of their effect on us; Freud reviews their effect and determines them evidence of the real. From the material dirt beneath his feet, our bid for existence is defined by the shackles of love and grief; the libido is refreshed like the body by the nutrient, where for Emerson, like the soul by its source, or the intellect by the word. Thus, clearly can we see the discontents of our subjects which source the direction of their endeavors, for Freud cannot reconcile the oceanic feeling that for Emerson makes reality irreconcilable. Here derives the divisive iciness that compares his son to the possession of property, that for the scientist is the reconciling iciness of love as sustenance. Emerson is more unsettled by his disposition than the reader is, and such illustrates that his philosophy was first and foremost a therapy for himself. While the person who can't grieve is therapized by Freud to regain the ability to grieve, he is not urged by Emerson to find his way back to the normative self, but to address his outsidership as a first step to overcoming it, to separating himself from the illusion of necessity. For the former, love is an essential aspect of the dichotomous balance; for the latter, it is a fantasy contributing to imbalance; for both, it is one of infinite processes at the

disposal of observation, positing itself to be explained in whatever way best befits the individual and his needs.

Other aspects which influenced Emerson's emphasis on distrust of objective reality, and tended him towards the Eastern idea of the mind displaced by the body, were the death of his wife few years into adulthood, and his longstanding health complications from tuberculosis. For a young Emerson, enchanted by the appeal of the Romantics in the delighting eye of youth—to have such a perception confronted by loss of the object which embodies the sentiment, is made a metaphor for Emerson's idealism by the presence of mortality that accompanied his ill health. One must,

> build an ideal image to the unworthy beloved [as to the ailing body unworthy of the mind] that will both serve as an image of human possibility and wean the ennobled lover from disabling passion…actual mortals always disappoint. (Emerson, 70)

As when we look upon Nature the self is reflected, when we love it is of the part of the self the object fulfils: 'When I say, I love you, it is your genius & not you' (Emerson, 72). This is the foundation of Emerson's Self-Reliance, the remedial practice of stripping away the impermanent external influences that are the agents of Nature, creating the infinite from the unattainable by separating the ideal self from its mortal majority.

> The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius, for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living,

> and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. (Emerson, 154)

"Friend," "wife," "brother," "lover," become concepts as much of personal value (evaluation) as "occupation," "household," "style;" they prompt the individual to locate himself at the intersection of an excess of influences (detrimentally for Emerson, necessarily for Freud), where for the former, the true self lay at the interstices.

For the latter, there is no attempt, and no value in attempting, to move beyond the mechanical relationship of the individual and society. The healthy psyche self-harmonizes, micro-corrects, addresses every satisfaction as it is requested, and lives within the concomitance of a temporal and intemporal self. When Buell says, "Emerson prescribes [self-reliance] not for the cocky or the lackadaisical, but for the disconsolate" (Buell, 71), the suggestion is that Emerson's disconsolate seek the same harmony, to authenticate themselves outside of themselves; but that we are always unsuccessful in the long run inspires his search for something more reliable than the libidinal deposits of the material world. For both, this intrinsic strive is for something evidence of itself: Emerson seeks the creative imagination, which purposes with the ability to produce the temporary sensation of the sublime; Freud seeks copacetic terms between principles of our constitution, confluence of two thriving systems which content us—the average individual—with the temporary satisfactions society provides the self. Where Emerson calls for the renunciation of society, Freud seeks the success of its original endeavor.

Infancy for both is a catalyzing period of this bid for reconciliation, as when Freud considers a psychoanalytic explanation for the oceanic feeling: "An infant at the breast does not yet distinguish his ego from the external world as the source of the sensations flowing upon him." (Freud, 724) The feeling is described not as the intimation of a universal entity, but the

memory of the undeveloped ego, which cannot interpret or organize reality upon the senses, and must take in an (oceanic) inflow of information itself not incomprehensible, but not comprehended in the earliest stages of development. Eventually, the ego, once unable to separate the self from the world of the senses, makes its earliest locations, beginning to form the first semblance of the individual. If it is true that the oceanic feeling persists in a portion or majority of humanity, it does so alongside the now sharply demarcated lines of the matured ego, presenting itself as a wish for that once-known unboundedness, limitlessness, what for the idealist is a precious immortal assurance of indistinct existence—for the materialist, an ignorance of social distinction slowly, but immediately resolved. Here is a new way of comparing what this paper has made an old comparison: The latter engages his Agon by demonstrating how he sees the perpetual activity of unfulfilled desires (not the prospect of fulfilment); and the former does so by showing *how he deals* with perpetual unfulfillment of prospective desires. Emerson sets an ideal, acceptedly unachievable, reasoned unreachable, yet pursued to define purpose; and Freud presents observation, enlighteningly discouraging, employing reason, pursued to maintain content. In other words, the man of science, armed with infallible purpose, is not illustrating a lifestyle as the products of civilization (money, status, religion, company) attempt to do, but outlining the conflicts that arise in the pursuit of it; the man of art, infallibly content with nature, seeks a lifestyle which distances him from said conflicts.

#

Now that we've contextualized Freud in terms of Emerson's fragmented self, I turn to the opposite inquiry. What are the beginning threads of individuation that first contribute to the ego's self-awareness? They are the two elements of the Oedipus complex: the child's unlimited passion for pleasure, and his fear of the limiting authority. In the world of man is evidence—in

fact, the world of man *is* evidence—of this primary chemistry of the instincts. The child would break, because he does not know, the societal code of conduct which makes pleasure pursued at the expense of thy neighbor or thy blood a taboo, if not for his physical incapability and the demanding role of the patriarch. For Freud, it is no mere coincidence that the complex fits its Oedipal framework, for there is a parallel between the child's disposition in adulthood, and the primordial father in modern man. Oedipus's strange adventure is not the basis from which Freud theorized the Oedipus complex; from what is residual of the Oedipus complex was Sophocles' epic written. In an early letter from a young burgeoning Freud to his friend and colleague Wilhelm Fleiss, we see the early entertainment of this concept:

> [a] fleeting idea has passed through my head of whether the same thing may not lie at the bottom of *Hamlet* as well. I am not thinking of Shakespeare's conscious intention, but I believe rather that here some real event instigated the poet to his representation, in that the unconscious in him understood the unconscious in his hero. How can Hamlet the hysteric justify his words "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all', how can he explain his hesitation in avenging his father by the murder of his uncle—he, the same man who sends his courtiers to their death without a scruple and who is positively precipitate in killing Laertes? How better could he justify himself than by the torment he suffers from the obscure memory that he himself had meditated the same deed against his father from passion for his mother, and—'use every man after his desert, and who should scape whipping?' His conscience is his unconscious sense of guilt. (Freud, 116)

These early threads of thought are from where he would begin his intense introspection, dissecting memories of his own childhood and analyzing the content of his own dreams through a new lens, in effect, founding psychoanalysis, and expanding into its historical and artistic

representations. Everything from individual thought and behavior, from every insignificant detail of the psychical processes, to every construction, relic, and monument of civilization: all is result of the chemistry between our primitive instincts and their suppression for the sake of society, represented by the authority of the father. Here Emerson's Easternism diverges from Freud's model of Western thought; while that within us which the religious institution seizes upon is for Emerson a spiritual resonance, it is, for Freud, resonance of the ancestral father. It is this Christianity seizes upon by the debt of intention which is the result of Christ's death. Where, on a phylogenetic scale—considering the anthropological implication of the Oedipus complex to be dissected—man is bound by the psychical preservation of a primordial guilt, so is the Christian indebted to God for the sins he commits, that he has committed, and were committed by others. Our discussion is now primed to dissect the origin of the Oedipus complex, through the template of which we can extract Emersonian ideals, homing in on that single point of contact where the romantic self is first conceived from. There, we come closest to closing the distance between ourselves and our subjects.

3

Freud's attention to childhood and its effects on the individual is widely considered in psychoanalytic circles today to be overemphasized, the Oedipus complex its critical paradigm. For it only fits within scientific margins insofar as it demonstrates modern man's thought and behavior. The result of the complex is *us*, while its *cause* is only demonstrable insofar as we unconsciously explain it. Thus, the entangled fates of conscience and civilization, from which it attempts to create coherence,

> makes sense if one abandons his notion that [Freud] has described a single historical event in favor of the more modest proposition that the dramatic murder and incorporation of the father is, if rarely a reality, a recurrent and virtually universal fantasy. (Gay, 482)

How is this conversation begun? One of his most ambitious works, and for the same reason, one of his most captivating to read, "Totem and Taboo" dives into the common theories of prehistoric man and community, in order to derive a psychoanalytic context in which to observe what we know of the customs and culture of totemic communities. He begins this inquiry by "the nominalist,…the sociological and…the psychological" theories of how "primitive men [came to call] themselves (and their clans) after animals, plants, and inanimate objects" (Freud, 486).

In all three theories can we feel the framework of an unintended Emersonian relationship between man and nature, as when Freud describes the first as "the need felt by clans to distinguish themselves from one another by the use of names." (Freud, 486) If we consider this "need" to be the same that drives modern man to individuate himself, then the theory strongly demonstrates the dynamic addressed by self-reliance: though we seek the sensation of oneness (to which the oceanic feeling gives a sense of familiarity), its material pursuit is but a simulation of this achievement quickly dissatisfied. The community's first wish is not to divide itself from other communities, but in the act of uniting individuals under a totem animal, it presents itself as separate from others represented by different totem animals. The unity sought by every man leads to disunity fought by every tribe.

In the sociological theory Freud attributes to Emile Durkheim, the totem "is the visible representation of social religion among the races concerned: it embodies the community, which is the true object of their worship." (Freud, 487) At this vertex is it clear where self-reliance addresses the individual: every form of worship is the unconscious worship of society; though

we strive to simulate union with the universal mind (in the form of worship), we merely perpetuate union within the community. We also observe an intersection of our subjects' conception of nature: Freud's is from which we came and from which we must to a degree pull away; Emerson's, from which we first identify, and with which we must renounce identification.

Unlike the selves of both, the animal is never in the act of defining itself against the rest of its kind; the animal needs no totem of its own. Converse to the fact that the totem represents its species (i.e. the brown eagle is no more a brown eagle than his less-brown brown eagle brother), amongst early man there was no single condition that brought all species together under a single synecdoche; "Earth-dwellers" might have been appropriate had it been an object of interest. Even within the community, the desire to individuate persisted among its members. This is for what Emerson's philosophy creates the ideal, and what Freud addresses when he asks "what psychical needs in men [the totemic institution] has given expression" (Freud, 485) turning lastly to a "historical" theory.

> Darwin deduced from the habits of the higher apes that men, too, originally lived in comparatively small groups or hordes within which the jealousy of the oldest and strongest male prevented sexual promiscuity…'armed, as many of them are, with special weapons for battling with their rivals, that promiscuous intercourse in a state of nature is extremely improbable…Therefore, if we look far enough back in the stream of time,…judging from the social habits of man as he now exists…the most probable view is that primaeval man aboriginally lived in small communities, each with as many wives as he could support and obtain, whom he would have jealously guarded against all other men. Or he may have lived with several wives by himself, like the Gorilla. (Freud, 491)

Is Emerson's sense that even his closest relationships amount to mere possession a phylogenetic residual of the animal self? Or does his investigation of the soul's relation to eternity intuit the *single very oldest* of ideas? And is this jealousy the projection of discontents onto the image of the corporeal effortlessness of the "fittest?" Yes and no: did he mean that? Almost certainly not. Does the shoe fit? Quite well, actually.

When Freud says that, "the young male grows up, a contest takes place for mastery, and the strongest, by killing and driving out the others, establishes himself as the head of the community" he defines exogamy as a "practical consequence" (Freud, 493) for those driven out; upon finding a new partner, incest is avoided in the name of the new leader's jealous hold of his position within the new community. Is the excommunicated a primordial version of Emerson's disconsolate? And if so, does it deem him the nonconformist to establish a new tribe? Or is the new tribe just another simulated fantasy of reconciliation? Here I believe we approach the blind spot of our endeavor into the past, for I'd tend towards the latter if I knew that today, as in 1842, the primordial individual separate from his society could still survive, self-sufficient, let alone self-reliant. There is a conviction of correctness not related to the *explanations* Emerson and Freud give, but to how modern man is evidence of *both*, in other words, how well we illustrate their points. From observation of the same behavior, these wildly different conceptions become compatible; vast and hostile originalities, cause of distinct discontents, semblance each other by this act of inquiry, from which the constitution of a romantic self develops its first aspects.

#

How does Freud contextualize this line of inquiry in psychoanalysis? Clinically: in the same way the case of Anna O. led to the discovery "that psychical acts and structures are invariably overdetermined" (Freud, 482), through the analysis of animal phobias in childhood,

we arrive at the "resemblance between the relations of children and of primitive men towards animals." (Freud, 491) It should be said, however, that the side of these resemblances belonging to youth come mostly from observation, largely because of the child's undeveloped abilities of discourse. Regardless, there is no hesitation to declare our subject starting point "a very common, and perhaps the earliest, form of psychoneurotic illness occurring in childhood." (Freud, 492)

The child, yet unaccustomed to the aspects of the adult (human) world, has no conception of romanticized man: the child does not recognize our position in the food chain, nor the elements that promote our agency over the natural world; he does not conceive the question of purpose, only the answer of immediate instinct; he does not weigh his content against external influences; he has no periphery; he is the center of his senses and nothing else. The child is born into a world whose customs he must learn; society is as foreign to him as it is to the pre-domesticated animal, and this therefore validates that "they no doubt feel themselves more akin to animals than to their elders, who may well be a puzzle to them." Emerson and the Eastern pedagogy practice renunciation in pursuit of this ambivalence; an ambivalence that for Freud is what connects us at once to our biographical *and* historical pasts. He asserts that the origins of animal phobias are likely not uniform, but in certain cases, specifically where the subject is male and the phobic object is a larger animal, "[the child's] fear relate[s] at bottom to their father and ha[s] merely been displaced on to the animal. (Freud, 492)

The first example he explores is, as with Anna O., not a case of his own, but a study by a "Dr. M. Wulff, of Odessa," detailing a young boy's terrified response to barking dogs with repeated promises that he will "be good," which the doctor analyzes as the manifestation of the boy's disposition towards his father, who had recently forbid him from and reprimanded him for

masturbation. The doctor, in a footnote, makes a concurrent remark to the ark of Freud's essay, that these phobias are "at least as common in childhood as *pavor nocturnus*; and in analysis they almost invariably turn out to be a displacement on to the animals of the child's fear of one of his parents." (Wulff, 492)

Freud then turns to his own research presented in "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy," in which he describes a child, Hans's, fear of horses:

> he expressed a fear that the horse would come into the room and bite him; and it turned out that this must be the punishment for a wish that the horse might fall down (that is, die)….it became evident that he was struggling against wishes which had as their subject the idea of his father being absent (going away on a journey, dying). He regarded his father (as he made all too clear) as a competitor for the favour of his mother, toward whom the obscure foreshadowings of his budding sexual wishes were aimed. Thus he was situated in the typical attitude…we have given the name of the 'Oedipus complex' and which we regard in general as the nuclear complex of the neuroses. (Freud, 493)

What is interesting is that, prior to developing the phobia, Hans had a natural affection for horses. When the son's hatred for his Oedipal rival is displaced onto the animal, in the same way that said hatred contended with the "old-established affection and admiration for the very same person", so is it in contention with the original affection Hans had for the animal.

> The child finds relief from the conflict arising out of this double-sided, this ambivalent emotional attitude towards his father by displacing his hostile and fearful feelings on to a *substitute* for his father….There can be no doubt that little Hans was not only *frightened* of horses; he also approached them with admiration and interest. As soon as his anxiety

> began to diminish, he identified himself with the dreaded creature: he began to jump about like a horse and in his turn bit his father. (Freud, 493)

Here we begin to see the identification with the animal that parallels certain features of totemism. Bringing into focus the psychoanalytic direction of inquiry into the origins of early social organization, he cites one final case, that of “little Arpad,” the subject of a study by Sandor Ferenczi. He summarizes: Arpad

> tried to micturate into the fowl-house and a fowl had pecked, or pecked *at* his penis. A year later, when he was back in the same place, he himself turned into a fowl…he abandoned human speech in favour of cackling and crowing…At the time at which the observation was made [few years later,] he had recovered his speech, but his interests and his talk were entirely concerned with chickens and other kinds of poultry…His attitude towards his totem animal was superlatively ambivalent: he showed both hatred and love to an extravagant degree…’The slaughtering of poultry was a regular festival for him. He would dance round the animals’ bodies for hours at a time in a state of intense excitement.’ But afterwards he would kiss and stroke the slaughtered animal or would clean and caress the toy fowls that he had himself ill-treated. (Freud, 494)

Freud emphasizes two features of Arpad’s condition which mirror our knowledge of the totemic practices, namely the complete identification with the animal and the ambivalence of his emotional disposition towards it. In this way does Freud justify “substituting the father for the totem animal in the formula for totemism (in the case of males).”

As where Arpad’s extreme violence unto the totem was succeeded by an equal affection, the communal sacrifice of the totemic tribes represented the same displacement. The sacred

animal—whose life and preservation are of the same value as that of the tribesmen—represents the early manifestation of the reality principle that made every member responsible for its death. "In other words, the sacrificial animal was treated as a member of the tribe; *the sacrificing community, the god and the sacrificial animal were of the same blood and members of one clan.*" (Freud, 496) Its sacrifice could only be carried out as a communal agreement to share in the transgression: the sacrifice becomes a sacrament, through which the clansmen "renewed and assured their likeness to god." (Freud, 498)

The festival which ensues is thereby not the result of a literal enjoyment of the sacrifice; the fulfilled desire to overcome the authority of the totem results in the reinforced communal bond between its members, the ambivalence of whom is displayed in "the fact that it is killed and yet mourned." A shared sense of responsibility for the death of the sanctified object of worship results in a strengthened community. That this ambivalence runs parallel the disposition observed in the child against the father, is grounds for the claim of psychoanalysis, and from where Freud arrives at his conception of the ultimate source of the agonistic self.

Emerson's theory sees this ambivalence in the child as disillusionment doomed to evisceration; in society, as the enemy of redundancy (conformity). In Freud's theory, it is seen as the significantly overdetermined will of the libido; and by the discovery of its origin and mechanics, we will strengthen our understanding—and therefore our mastery—of the human condition. His is a practice of comprehension that builds the potential of a parallel end farther along in time than his life, or legacy, will witness. The more of the past we can reconstruct, the more tools we have to shape the future; the better we cultivate self-reliance, the more godlike our abilities. His materialist pursuit is contribution to the promise of science: an expanding constant

of unknowledge to which we can always aspire. Ideal purpose. So fine does he magnify the material world that what he sees can be shaped within the limits of language.

Emerson reduces all, of which language is but a fragment, *to* a fragment, and finds not an egotistical sublime, but a spiritual one, which gives him the same elation, the same sense of himself. But where the former conforms the source of his power to the media of Man's understanding, the latter exalts in its mosaic failures. Freud is forever walking backwards, distancing his view from the horizon, contributing what little the best of us can to its expansion, further mediating a self from a not-self, becoming smaller and smaller: first a counterpoint, then a viewpoint—a checkpoint, a waypoint, and finally a pinpoint. Emerson stands in place, contemplating what the sun would say is at his periphery. He takes a step forward, he knows he is closer to the horizon, he knows his body—though he doesn't feel it—is warmer now as he is closer to the sun, but he feels no different and his view hasn't changed. Then he takes another, and he contently never stops, wholly in possession of that which is always ours, with which we (must) cherish. The horizon contracts, the action of the legs narrows the point of pursuit, intensifies it; the view is more cluttered with less objects, and Emerson expands. Each step is a thought, clauses cumulating around the inevitable failure of language, beautiful—like the sunset—for its consistency.

> Our life is an apprenticeship to the truth that around every circle another can be drawn; that there is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon, and under every deep a lower deep opens. (Emerson, 265)

Both, as you can see, arrive at practices which prove infinite unto Man's omnipotence. Our idealist, by the untamed reductions of the imagination, and our materialist, by the delicate and mathematical expansions of observation. For this reason does the sensation of an Emersonian

thought lead to understandings dependent upon the individual, where the Freudian one intends a uniform understanding, where every individual depends on his thought process. Parallel the position on the illustrative spectrum of Emerson's circles, this description therefore presents both Freud's epistemological endeavor and the form it will take in its expression:

> One day the brothers who had been driven out came together, killed and devoured their father and so made an end of the patriarchal horde. United, they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually…The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers: and in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength. The totem meal, which is perhaps mankind's earliest festival, would thus be a repetition and a commemoration of this memorable and criminal deed, which was the beginning of so many things—of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion. (Freud, 500)

With the removal of the father, all has left but the side of ambivalence left unsatiated, and so persists the sense of remorse.

> They revoked their deed by forbidding the killing of the totem, the substitute for their father; and they renounced its fruits by resigning their claim to the women who had now been set free. They thus created out of their filial sense of guilt the two fundamental taboos of totemism, which for that very reason inevitably corresponded to the two repressed wishes of the Oedipus complex. (Freud, 501)

Thus are we the sum of a repressed femininity and a patricidal inclination. Interestingly, in terms of the metaphor of this expression in Western religion, Emerson's rejection of the eucharist

demonstrates the fundamental renouncement of that which Freud deems the foundation of conscience and civilization:

> a covenant with the father, in which he promised them everything that a childish imagination may expect from a father—protection, care, and indulgence—while on their side they undertook to respect his life, that is to say, not to repeat the deed which had brought destruction of their real father. (Freud, 501)

This guilt is a figment of our constitution, an intrinsic illusion, for both Emerson and Freud the oldest tradition of the modern mind: self-deception. For the disconsolate former, this knowledge is a discontent from which he seeks liberation. For the disconsolate latter, liberation lay in its discontented knowledge.

> For the future no one could or might ever again attain the father's supreme power, even though that was what all of them had striven for. Thus after a long lapse of time their bitterness against their father, which had driven them to their deed, grew less, and their longing for him increased; and it became possible for an ideal to emerge which embodied the unlimited power of the primal father against whom they had once fought as well as their readiness to submit to him. (Freud, 505)

This ideal: the superego, the conscience; conformity, custom; that with which the animal self *and* the divine self are in contention. "[T]he filial sense of guilt" which "all late religions are…attempts at solving": "worship in the dead forms of our forefathers": an "antiquated profession" which varies

> according to the stage of civilization at which they arise and according to the methods they adopt; but all have the same end in view and are reactions to the same great event

> with which civilization began and which, since it occurred, has not allowed mankind a moment's rest. (Freud, 502)

This is the tragic condition from which man defines personal tragedy. It is the pursuit of "knowledge not purchased by the loss of power,"—a power for both (and for all) reconciling the human predisposition to fight against the confines of one's own mind.

#

Freud seeks the image of man from his furthest horizon. From the Oedipal mind is all of human culture derived; from *his* Oedipal mind are the connections drawn. It is for this reason that art which succeeds *and* precedes his influence align with his theory. It is by the same parallelism between the past and present of men and Man that Freud's originality permeates Faulkner and at the same time Shakespeare. As "[a]ll late religions are seen to be attempts at solving the same problem" (Freud, 502), all art is seen as the attempt to reconcile that which the artist struggles against. Hence Freud's attention to the art and biographical lives of such historic characters as Da Vinci and Michelangelo, which he explores in order to derive an estimation of their psychical composition. Also see here how literary analysis and psychoanalysis share many codependences, for the mechanics are parallel between the reader cohering his experience to an intended order of words and the mind shaping perception to events already recorded. Freud's "Screen Memories" illustrates this, that a vision of childhood, say of taking flowers from a girl, can point to a desire or guilt rooted in a sexual anxiety of deflowering or having deflowered a girl. In the world under the rules of psychoanalysis, the smell of bread can be the result of the universal symbol of sustenance it represents, cast onto the senses of memory or dream to create from a subjective professional anxiety its physical manifestation. How then might Freud's conception of the arts compare to Emerson's? Where for the former, it is the expression of

universally conflicting instincts passing through an individual, for the latter it is the universal expression of a subjectivity breaching through the conflict of individuation; it seeks to bring closer the hands of The Creation of Adam, seizes upon the sense of proximity we feel to our completion when we encounter the sublime.

This dynamic can be described as Freud's thematic emphasis versus Emerson's aesthetic. Where the systematic writing, the cumulation of an argument from one thought to the next, resembles the movement of the scientist's thought, Emerson's aesthetic, the unconditioned jumps, the ambiguous association of thoughts in a single sentence: this is the Transcendental invitation. It seeks to evoke sensation, and from it, relation to experience. It asks you what my words make you think; its words do not tell you what I am thinking. It begs definition and denies to define: as the son dies when we sin; as the father rises when we overstep; as the divine hides from society. For Emerson, there is no meaning but what you give it; for Freud, you have no meaning but what it gives you. For both, "it" is existence, and qualifies the creation of a romantic self: a body in visible conflict with its discontents, which for one constitution are addressed by one, and for the other constitution addressed by the other. It is here we return finally to whom I credit at the center of this dichotomy, the late Harold Bloom.

#

Bloom is regarded today as having reestablished the significance of the Romantic movement with his theory of the anxiety of influence. His is the idea that all artistic movements are actively engaged (consciously or unconsciously) in the act of misinterpreting the school which they succeed. This "complex act of misreading," is a "creative interpretation" he calls misprision, and it stems from the desire for originality that the artist's influences deny upon any close inspection. (Bloom, xxiii) For the Modernists, this points to the idea that they

misinterpreted the goal of the Romantic poets, and defined them by a tradition from which they allowed themselves to break, thereby denying the recirculation of ideas damaging to any sense of originality. The newest, most original things that can be said—at least, my study has suggested—must be accompanied by recognition of their recirculation, tantamount to the original thinker regardless of material or idealistic origins. One must recognize his influences anxiously, if not recognize his anxiety of said influences[4].

Bloom outlines the mechanics of poetic misprision in his essay, "The Internalization of the Quest-Romance," in which he gives two Modernist conceptions of the Romantics which he uses as subsequent evidence of the former's anxiety:

> [1. The Romantics] do not surrender the wish to discover in the universe a network of spiritual meaning which, however precariously, can enclose their selves. [2. Their central desire is] to merge oneself with what is greater than oneself. (Bloom, 4)

He suggests that, though these interpretations are inaccurate, they serve as "excellent guides to what the major Romantics regarded as human defeat or a living death, as the despairing surrender of the imagination's autonomy." In other words, the great philosophical questions we exhaust over time, which we come into inconclusive contact with in this paper—it was not the goal of the Romantics to discover the answers to. The desperation with which the Romantic pursuit is defined is in fact the very desperation of both Emerson and Freud's disconsolate: it

[4] Before considering how the monumentally influential Shakespeare illustrates this point by illustrating this paper's central dichotomy, it is important to establish the interesting ways Bloom's conception of the Romantics incorporates both Freudian and Emersonian thought, allowing us, in these final pages, if not to utilize Shakespeare as a model of the spectrum we have spent this time developing, to at least recognize parallel inquisition in all of their work, evidence of which arises from the potentialities of interpretation as they present themselves to me in his plays.

afflicts those who cannot recognize themselves as elements (fragments for Emerson, gears for Freud) of the greater processes of Man and Nature. The Modernists in this estimation become conduits of influence made uniform by their sense of originality; the Romantics, engaged in self-prescribed talking cures that make of the poem a place of self-observation. As Emerson says,

> [t]here is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title. (Emerson, 8)

What is true of the farmer is for Freud the reflection of himself in his labor and for Emerson the wish to discover himself in nature. These are the residuals of our discontents, that which the Romantic poet is in search of discovery, not reconciliation. Where these discoveries lead to, the mind overcomes, if but temporarily, its servitude, its resentment, its indebtedness, to its disposition.

In a world of his own creation, Nature acts upon the quest-poet according to his subjective discontents, and it is in the imagination only that these discontents are overcome. Only by the mind's agency over it does Nature fail to define Freud's drives of Love and Death, or to discourage or distract Emerson from his metacognition. What remedy the poet provides is first and foremost a subjective one: as an actor in his own play, he finds himself renovated insofar as the hero overcomes the central struggle of his journey, and only insofar a duration as the act of the journey's creation. Socially-permissible satisfaction for the Freudian, meditative nature for the Emersonian, the poem for the poet: these are not ends, but the simulation of ends, *means* by which one must regulate their experience of the mind captive of an outer world. Freud sought to discover the egotistical sublime—Emerson the cosmic one—with no intent to once-and-for-all balance the scales of the dichotomous self; as with the Romantic poets, they simply wished to

contribute to said balance whatever within them they could extract. The poet creates to simulate Godhood, to simulate control over reality; his Godliness is his originality, even if he doesn't expect it to be treated as such, and as a sensation knows it won't last. Precisely within this contradiction lay the artist's Agon: the artist seeks a romantic self in its entirety which the poem is but a fragment.

And where do they depart? Emerson's genius, Freud's neurotic, and Bloom's artist, all primarily share an imbalance threatening isolation and misunderstanding (from society and from one's self), but where for Emerson this is the result of an "extravagant demand they make on human nature," a dissatisfaction owing to societal inadequacy, and for Freud, it is derived from inadequacy within society, for Bloom it is the fact of irreconciliation: the poet creates, knowing how his desires must be met and unmet, knowing how his ideas must be understood and misunderstood. The act of continuous thought is manifest in every body of artistic or intellectual work, evidence of one derivable connection, that when the words were typed, one felt the same tension in the brain like a flexed muscle, felt the same atomic sigh of release, and temporarily left the confines of his own mind. We sense in all of these expressions sets of instructions, but what is truly before us on the written page or painted canvas is a formula: think, and put what you think where you can see it, and if it is medicinal to you, to whatever degree, show it to others.

Emerson, Freud, and the poets, are bound to be attacked, contradicted, and discredited in their own time and in that to follow, but it is precisely the attention that qualifies their success. The poem or essay touches us only after it has served its purpose to the creator. The path to reconciliation must again be addressed, then opened to the public for a new set of effects; Freud's patients return to happy homes, and he to his study; Emerson's flame brings the simmer

of Whitman to a boil, and warms himself in the cloud of steam which travels a wider range than man could wish to cover. Process versus Inhibition: the mind creates insofar as we nourish it; Nature teaches insofar as we question it; and peace—inside and out—comes insofar as we search for it.

#

For Bloom, the advancement of art is dependent upon the anxiety of influence. And for whom is the greatest anxiety harbored but Shakespeare? Bloom, unafraid to make bold claims of his thoughts and ideas, suggests that, so wide does Shakespeare's influence reach, that it inflates out of literature and theatre, and is responsible for the modern human-being as we know it. Thus our subjects are also objects of his influence, which, again, they demonstrate for themselves. Bloom actually does this work for us. Contextualizing Freud under Shakespeare's influence, he says,

> [a] Shakespearean reading of Freud, which I favor over a Freudian reading of Shakespeare or anyone else, reveals that Freud suffered from a Hamlet complex (the true name of the Oedipus Complex) or an anxiety of influence in regard to Shakespeare…influence-anxiety does not so much concern the forerunner but rather is an anxiety achieved in and by the story, novel, play, poem, or essay. (Bloom, xxiii)

Where Freud would suggest that modern man and his activities (including art) are the manifestation of the Oedipus complex, Bloom is saying that modern man is a concept created by Shakespeare. What this suggests is that Freud's paramount theory, around which developed the foundation of a whole natural science, is the result of his conscious or unconscious internalization of *Hamlet*, of his experience at a particular time of reading it and its subsequent

resurfacings in later thoughts and expressions. Thus, in a strange and convoluted way, Freud's conception of our impressionable, enigmatically suggestive consciousness becomes as viably explained through evolution as through the work of an Elizabethan playwright. That within the mind all is permanently recorded and capable of being recalled, is both implied and denied by the idea that Shakespeare came up with the domains of Love and Death before Freud, for in the scientist commingle unconscious elements of the psychical processes that led to his theory.

Shakespeare's universality haunts Emerson's pursuits as well, and emerges in his aesthetic:

> Through such dexterously sententious, invigorating, slightly enigmatic compression, Emerson came remarkably close to achieving what he and his contemporaries never tired of praising Shakespeare for: the power to reach both connoisseurs and groundlings. (Buell, 27)

It is also Shakespeare's solitude—his alienization, not of himself, but of us *from* himself—that shows Emerson the dispersive power of subjectivity dispossessed of a social being. "We know nothing authentic about Shakespeare's politics, or his religion, or his social outlook" (Bloom, xxv) and this contributes significantly to how his art holds itself up to new interpretation as long as there are new times: you cannot do a Shakespearean analysis of art; his is a lens which integrates the most parts. No dichotomy can encapsulate Shakespeare's intent, but from the fertility of his intent are the most dichotomies expressible. Thus, we see the Romantic vision of Emerson's imagination when Bloom posits Shakespeare as the artist's Agon:

> we are so influenced by him that we cannot get outside of him. Criticism necessarily fails when it deludes itself into the smugness of not seeing that we remain enclosed by

> Shakespeare. The only instruments by which we can examine him were either invented or perfected by Shakespeare himself. Wittgenstein, who disliked Shakespeare, tried to defend philosophy from the best mind we can know by insisting that Shakespeare was less a writer than he was 'a creator of language.' It would be nearer the truth to say that Falstaff, Hamlet, and Iago are creators of language, while Shakespeare, by their means, created *us*. (Bloom, xxvii)

And thus do we see an observation made unoriginal by its inheritance, which leaves for originality only what is to be done with information that, like mass, is neither created nor destroyed:

> [m]ost of our understandings of the will are Will's, as it were, because Shakespeare invented the domain of those metaphors of willing that Freud named the drives of Love and Death. Our true relation to Shakespeare is that it is vain to historicize or politicize him, because we are monumentally over-influenced by him. (Bloom, xviii)

But this is not to suggest the great playwright escapes his own anxiety of influence. It is by the same process his art endures that it was created, and it was created by the anxiety of his greatest contemporary influence, Christopher Marlowe.

> Shakespeare's freedom manifested itself multivalently, producing the profoundly complex triumphs of Falstaff, Hamlet, and Iago, each a cosmos exposing Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas as caricatures. But what larger provocation did Shakespeare have for his invention of the human than Marlowe's emotional power as a mere cartoonist? (Bloom, xxxv)

I next, in these final pages, want to turn to *The Merchant of Venice*, the historical context of which allows us to explore the potentialities of Shakespeare's process and intent, not to evaluate what is most likely, but to show how said potentialities can illustrate our Emerson-Freud dichotomy.

If the poet's break from convention is rooted in the complexity that makes of Marlowe's characters caricatures, then it similarly discredits the universal tendency of definition we find as far back (and farther) as Theophrastus's *Characters*. What of Shakespeare makes his not-unusual anxiety the source of such monumental resonance with the past, and influence of the future, of the human condition?

> Shakespeare most certainly has written an anti-Semitic masterpiece, one in which the forced conversion of Shylock, at Antonio's insistence, is entirely Shakespeare's own invention, his own shocking addition to the pound-of-flesh story. Indeed, I fear that Shakespeare's revisionary triumph over Marlowe is to give us a psychologically persuasive Jewish devil… (Bloom, xliv)

Consider this in the context of Elizabethan England. It is 1594, Roderigo Lopes, a Portuguese Jew and forced convert, prominent doctor to the Queen, is to be hanged for conspiracy to murder her. His final words: "I love the Queen as much as I love Jesus Christ himself," are met with derisive laughter from the crowd. It is the last thing he hears. Lopes either means these words facetiously or persuasively, yet we see that for the crowd it is assumed the former, amplifying the impact of *both* perspectives, of the tragedy or comedy of the outcome.

The renewed interest in the Jew as an artistic representation of evil leads to the popular resurgence of Marlowes's *The Jew of Malta* and it is brought back into production over a year

after his death. Shakespeare, the burgeoning artist, suddenly finds himself sharing the same stage as his contemporary, who need not even live to challenge him once more. Shakespeare goes on to write *The Merchant of Venice*.

What is the source of his revisionary triumph? If our Jewish devil is psychologically persuasive, and if predominating Christian society was pretty well persuaded of most Jewish devils (including Marlowe's Barabas, who openly admits to poisoning Christian wells and killing the homeless) what is differentiated by Shylock's conversion? Lopes's last words are laughed at because a Queen is saved and a Jew put to death, but what does it mean when Antonio is saved, and the Evil Jew exchanges his gaberdine for vestments? What has changed? It would seem as if Shakespeare had either propelled or predicted the internalization of anti-Semitism in art and society, either representing the comedy that repulses the modern viewer, or creates the laughing audience the modern viewer reviles. Is it because of Shakespeare we see the inhumanity of the times, or do we disdain that such a genius is a product of it? Do we appreciate him for tracking the trend of developing humanity, regardless?

None can be proven, yet to certain people all are true; it is from an expansive view at a deep point of removal that he wrote, and in the context of Antonio and Bassanio's friendship, we can illustrate how this position creates certain points of contact with all other positions, particularly the intense subjective and objective positions of Emerson and Freud. I think first of Bassanio's monologue describing the fair Portia to Antonio.

> In Belmont is a lady richly left;
>
> And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
>
> Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
>
> I did receive fair speechless messages:

> Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
>
> To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
>
> Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
>
> For the four winds blow in from every coast
>
> Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
>
> Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
>
> Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
>
> And many Jasons come in quest of her.
>
> O my Antonio, had I but the means
>
> To hold a rival place with one of them,
>
> I have a mind presages me such thrift,
>
> That I should questionless be fortunate!

I am first struck by the idea of Portia's beauty. Not only is it compared to other great beauties of history, but to nature, and is even raised above, or to its level, when language fails to imagine her, "fairer than that word". I am drawn to Emerson's pursuit of the sublime, that it evades all forms of human communication which attempt to capture it, including language, of which Shakespeare is its greatest wielder, and still he is incapable of finding the right words to capture it. There is, as in Emerson's philosophy, a great inequality being suggested between the beauty of the material world and our ability to both express and conceive of this beauty. But to read on, one recognizes that there is another comparison being made, to commodity.

It is known that Shakespeare used to act in his own plays. Among the characters he's known to have played, the ghost of Hamlet's father, King Duncan, and Henry IV. Let us consider, for the sake of discussion, if he should have played the role of Bassanio among these.

Who is Portia, then, to the playwright incisively pushing against his artistic Agon, striving for a beauty he knows to be out of reach? It is as if he were commenting upon the idea that we can never break away from the success of our predecessors, except by how well our plays do, and how much money they make. The success of the work is wholly dependent upon who constitutes the audience, which is why the creator of such works believed to have been written by then as "Titus Andronicus", "Richard III", and "Henry IV" would have had to contend with the artistic inferiority of a dead man. If commodity be the highest (and most lasting) achievement of his art, aside from prestige, celebrity, and high company (all of which he seemed to care little for), I see another dichotomy which, if this has been an accurate guess of Shakespeare's experience, suggests he found himself at the crossroads of an unattainable sublime and the temporariness of monetary satisfaction.

And what to make, then, of the homoerotic subtext between Antonio and Bassanio, specifically the latter's cure to the former's melancholy, and his commitment unto death to avoid Bassanio's debt? To illustrate the implication of Shakespeare's role as actor, consider his sonnets. Antonio's parallel here would be Shakespeare's patron, the Fair Youth. Are the sonnets and Bassanio's flirtations artificial? meant simply to spread the other's influence and keep the money coming in? This would imply that Shakespeare's universality is either the reason for or result of what is, in the end, a profession meant to keep the lights on. I quote professor Paul Megna:

> Shakespeare doesn't give a shit about anything but making money, so he writes a play in which anti-Semites and philo-Semites alike can find what they're looking for. The sonnets, too, may just be about satisfying patrons and a wider readership to maximize profits, but, here's the thing, nobody's above the vicissitudes of desire, so Shakespeare

might well have loved the Fair Youth, and the Dark Lady, and his wife and also commodified that love in order to fit into a class system and an economic system that rejected him early on. We can't know how genuine Shakespeare was or what his goals were, but I do think he was self-aware enough to make parody of himself in Bassanio, Antonio, or both.

For the genius, less influenced than the average person by Freud's principles and Emerson's society, can see both his subjective position within the world and its objective implications. In the context of the burgeoning capitalist economy of Elizabethan England, the exploitation of relationships, however implicit of romance, and the monetary conceptions of affection, point to Shakespeare's commentary on the commodification of courtly love. Either he recognized this in man, or made it so that the rarity, or temporariness, of things is precisely what attracts us to them. Thus in the great interpretive works of Shakespeare is the imagination engaged in ways it never is with such concentration in the real world, which makes Shakespeare's lyrics at the same time medicinal and addictive, awakening what within daily monotony is dormant and therefore valuable to the point of deserving both one's time and money.

Courtly love is a medieval concept considered by many psychoanalysts to exist today nourished by capitalism. (Megna) Jacques Lacan has discussed its modern implications extensively, and describes the endless process as the pursuit of the *objet petit a*, the "filler of the void." This is the love object, which he addresses when he says "I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you…I mutilate you." (Lacan, 268) We see a resonance with Emerson's idealization of the love-relationship, in that they both posit unattainable goals of fulfillment, but where Emerson uses the ideal to displace the libido, the courtly lover pursues material relationships that temporarily occupy it, and in their succession

continuously simulate its satisfaction. The consumer caught in patterns of consumption. The courtly lover's true desire, according to Lacan, is to *become* the filler of the void for the "big Other," "which is rarely a person, but more often a concept like revolutionary politics, God, or the American dream." (Megna) One can include Emerson's universal mind in this collection as well, but his leads to renouncement of its frivolous material pursuit, and Lacan's, overwhelming absorption of it. Bassanio's sublimation of Portia, in this way, can be seen as evidence of this courtly dynamic in all three relationships that end our comedy: Bassanio's, Lorenzo's, and Graziano's.

With the death of the morality play in Shakespeare's time, art relinquishes the responsibility to preach Christian ideals, and in this new capitalist economy, courtly love does not need to be demonized to attract an audience. However, what permeates "The Merchant of Venice" is the question of how the law will react to Shylock and Antonio's situation. Christian supersessionism made of Shylock's law of letter's an immorality, to be replaced by the mercy law, and thus making of Shylock the object of Christian justice. It is clear from this perspective that Shakespeare makes of the Christian presence in the play the willy-nilly wielders of subordinate fates, including those of the audience, fated to miss this critique of their culture, or, if we decide to think this way, seduced by a disguised critique of their culture.

> It makes sense, then, that Bassanio's desire for Portia mixes sexual desire, desire for virtue, and desire for money: Shakespeare's showing us how courtly love can be subsumed into a capitalist economy. From a Lacanian perspective, Antonio is probably the best off, because his queer desire for Bassanio can never be satiated, so he can remain the courtly lover forever. (Megna)

Whether Shakespeare understood the burgeoning capitalism of England and took advantage of the changing thoughts of the time, or if he embodied the changing thoughts of the time and it unconsciously found its way into the work, the question remains of what his intent must have been when he made the first stroke of his pen: whether *The Merchant of Venice* came from subjective recognition of that inescapable courtly dynamic he exploits (rooted in his instinctual competitiveness with Marlowe), or from its objective recognition in the re-staging of *The Jew of Malta*. Finally, thinking skeptically of Slavoj Zizek, Megna suggests,

> the evil genius of late capitalism is that it knows that we are always looking for something to fill the void, but don't really want to fill it, and it offers us an endless stream of products and experiences that promise (but always fail) to make us whole. The capitalist superego, as Zizek memorably puts it, constantly commands you to enjoy, and capitalism commodifies enjoyment.

In this psychoanalytic interpretation, Shakespeare is the capitalist puppeteer. If art holds only the value of its admirers, then he simultaneously loathes and exploits his role as commodifier of the audience's interests. Despite that in reality there may be a stronger intention, or a different one, or a perfectly dispersed consideration of them all, the question our essay has built the framework to leave unanswered is whether Shakespeare is addressing the commodification of courtly love *as* he commodifies courtly love, or if, in addressing his discontents, relying purely upon his internalization of experience, the power of his expression comes closer to representing pure subjectivity than any man has come before or since.

Regardless of which is true, or which is truer, the question has shaped Shakespeare to the content of the paper, risen more questions than the essay can address, and brought into conversation great polarities of the romantic self. That we end with him, that you don't read on

this last page a synopsis of what you just read, is invitation for a dialectic. Shakespeare is our synopsis, through which I leave you to draw the connections, for they are there to be made from anything before or after him, from anything of your past, present, or future, from any conception of the Arts and Sciences, any interpretation of Emerson and Freud, any datum of your inner or outer self; the connections are always there. There is no contradiction between nature's creation and God's, only multiple answers to the same lack of explanation. Man's final form will be the answer that perfectly satisfies every inquiry: scientific evidence of divinity. We can look in any direction we please, but we always move forward, either

> into the thin and cold realm of pure geometry and lifeless science, or [into] that of sensation. Between these two extremes is the equator of life, of thought, of spirit, of poetry—a narrow belt (Emerson, 135)

that though we walk separate, lead to the same location. We perceive the immediate future on the back of he who precedes us, before whom lay eternity and those walking towards it; at our heels we sense someone else, behind whom extends another trailing eternity. What connects us is the implication of the infinite in either direction, our conscious or unconscious awareness that it is merely *implied*, and the comforts and consolations of the familiar (such as language, with which, under suspicion of the infinite, we locate ourselves within a paradox sandwich; in doing so, suggesting that we love our limitations, or we perceive them.)

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