

Rethinking Mind in the Age of the Brain

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This book is a treatise on the unconscious mind. It attempts to reclaim and clarify many key elements from classical psychoanalytic doctrine through a Hegelian revisionist perspective I have called *dialectical psychoanalysis* or *process psychology*. Although process psychology has potential applications for theoretical, clinical, and applied psychoanalysis, here I will be mainly concerned with explicating its conceptual explanatory power. It is my hope that this work will be received as a fresh paragon for the advancement of psychoanalytic inquiry grounded in a solid philosophical foundation. If it finds verification among the social and behavioral sciences it stands a chance of enjoying greater receptivity across disciplines; but this work ultimately rests on philosophical justification alone. In this way, my approach is founded in a theory-based practice that further informs methodological considerations. Here I am concerned with first principles, namely, the ontological configurations of mind and the logical precepts that lend cohesion and intelligibility to human experience.

Because I will be preoccupied with articulating the basic constituents of psychic reality derived from process thought, some readers may find this work to be tedious and/or irrelevant to therapeutic practice. It is my intention, however, to stimulate a conceptual shift in addressing the axiomatic principles that inform our presuppositions of mental functioning on the most fundamental

level, a subject matter that has been uniformly neglected within the psychoanalytic literature since Freud and Lacan. It is largely for this reason that I attempt to show how psychoanalysis is ultimately a metaphysical enterprise.

Since Freud's (1933) denunciation of psychoanalysis as a *Weltanschauung*, psychoanalysis has largely remained skeptical toward philosophic speculation while favoring a scientific attitude. But with increasing attention paid to philosophical paradigms within contemporary psychoanalysis, new vistas emerge for mutual dialogue and theoretical advance. Throughout this project, I attempt to offer the first systematic account of a psychoanalytic metaphysics grounded in process philosophy largely derived from Hegel's dialectical logic. After rectifying many misconceptions of Hegel's dialectic, I endeavor to provide a process account of the coming into being of unconscious agency that conditions the subsequent emergence and organization of all other forms of psychic reality. This naturally includes the nature and structure of the ego, consciousness, object relations and intrapsychic defense, semiotics, intersubjective dynamics, and the higher tiers of psychical life that belong to the cultivated mind. Of course mind cannot exist independent of social life, which informs and to some degree defines our cultural ontology, so the reader should not be misled into thinking that the intrapsychic and the intersubjective are mutually exclusive categories. Rather, they are dialectically hence ontologically wed, yet they are capable, in theory, of being phenomenologically analyzed as distinct objects of study from various contingent, intervening perspectives. The main point is that whether we speak of subject or object, inner or outer—perspective, phenomenon, and reality are ontologically conjoined within a complex process holism that permeates all forms of mentation, both individually and collectively realized. Here it is my hope that process psychology will stimulate new directions in psychoanalytic inquiry.

In *The Unconscious Abyss: Hegel's Anticipation of Psychoanalysis* (2002), I provide the first systematic application of Hegel's philosophy of mind to psychoanalytic thought.¹ It is here where I comprehensively point toward a process account of psychoanalysis grounded in dialectical logic and show how it has the potential to advance the discipline itself. While many psychoanalysts, psychologists, behavioral scientists, and clinicians of all kinds may find this approach to be highly abstruse and esoteric, I nevertheless believe that psychoanalysis stands everything to gain from philosophical fortification.

It should be noted that this project is principally directed toward the psychoanalytic community, but I hope academic philosophers will find it of interest. Hegel scholars in particular may find it appealing for its applied value. I realize that a book of this kind is bound to be very

¹ Jessica Benjamin (1988, 1992) is the only other applied Hegelian within psychoanalytic theory that I am aware of; however, her work has exclusively focused on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), and especially Hegel's treatment of intersubjectivity within the master-slave dialectic. My work centers on Hegel's mature system as outlined in his *Science of Logic* (1812) and the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Division Three, *Philosophy of Spirit* (1817c). It should be noted that Benjamin's academic training was in sociology and not philosophy. Her account of Hegel's work is in fact very skewed and narrow in her application. She has been criticized, albeit respectfully, by Elliot Juris, who, as a philosopher and psychologist, has pointed out that she misinterprets and misrepresents Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology*. In particular, she overemphasizes Hegel's notion of being-for-self as a desire for omnipotence at the expense of undermining the importance of being-for-another, when both are of reciprocal importance in Hegel's notion of the coming into being of self-consciousness (see Juris, 2000, pp. 204-206).

strange to psychoanalytic audiences, especially psychoanalytic practitioners who pride themselves on clinical work rather than theory. I must apologize for not satisfying their expectations. Psychoanalysts whom merely critique ideas based on clinical applications will be sorely disappointed—if not lost—in wading through such complex theory. But appealing to the practitioner is not the intention of this book. Rather, I follow a structural format that is attentive to the philosophical parameters of clinical theory rather than centering on clinical material. Here I am concerned with speculative metaphysics, a subject matter that cannot elude the behavioral sciences, humanities, or even the natural sciences such as quantum physics. What I may optimistically hope for is that the clinician will learn to see and appreciate value in theoretical sophistication and accept it for its own intrinsic benefit, if for nothing more than for the sake of advancing our critical science. If practitioners can apply philopsychanalytic theory to the consulting room, then all the better.

Because psychoanalysis conceptually addresses all aspects of the human condition including the nature and structure of mind, society, and culture, psychoanalysis is by definition a philosophical enterprise. Although perhaps unintended by Freud and his followers, or seen as a corollary to the psychological observations advanced by psychoanalysis as a behavioral science, psychoanalysis as a discipline is a mode of philosophical inquiry by virtue of the fact that it critically examines and speculates on the ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological aspects of human existence through the puissance of reason,² or what Freud (1927, 1930, 1933) refers to as *Logos*—the scientific

² For those unfamiliar with the taxonomy of philosophy, it becomes important at this point to define what we mean by ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology in order to bring psychoanalytic thought into context with philosophical discourse. Because these terms are tailored to signify particular meanings ascribed by a number of different philosophical traditions, systems,

and individual philosophers, only a general understanding is needed to serve our purposes here.

‘Ontology’ is traditionally a branch of metaphysics dealing with ‘first principles’ or the ground, scope, breadth, and limits to claims about absolute or ultimate propositions concerning the nature and structure of reality. ‘Metaphysics’ was the name given to Aristotle’s works that proceeded his book on physics, but has generally taken on an encompassing definition with a large margin of specificity. Ontology is more specifically concerned with the question, meaning, and essence of Being. While metaphysics is broadly concerned with the nature of the real, God, the universe and cosmology, causality, freedom and determinism, and the self—just to name a few, metaphysical claims are ultimately ontological statements about how things are, hence being qua being. In many ways, ontological arguments purport to explain the underlying conditions and fundamental assumptions of being and reality, and more specifically human existence. Because psychoanalysis is arguably a general psychological theory of human motivation, cognition, and behavior, it takes the human mind and all its manifestations as its general object of study, which by definition is an ontological endeavor.

‘Epistemology’ is concerned with the nature of knowledge and justification, which intimately engages the questions, criteria, and meaning of belief, truth, skepticism, and certainty. It is specifically concerned with the defining features, kinds, sources, conditions, and limits to knowledge and justification. Epistemological justification remains deeply entrenched in analysis and controversy over how we come to form judgments and defend them, our rationale, the probability and credibility of our conclusions, and the substantive validity about what we know and what eludes us. All disciplines including psychoanalysis must defend their fundamental epistemological

intellect. The criterion of reason, however, does not preclude the study, role, or value of the emotions, the passions, moral sentiment, and irrationality, only that we must respect the need for intelligibility governing our conception and comprehension of these polarities and divergent processes that animate human existence.

These three aspects of philosophical inquiry, namely, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology, cannot be divorced from the broader rubric of metaphysics, for all propositions are ultimately claims about what is real: it is for descriptive purposes that I briefly highlight their distinctions here. Psychoanalysis makes fundamental assumptions concerning each of these philosophical domains including (a) the ontological—the nature of psychic reality, (b) the epistemological—how we justify our knowledge claims and clinical practices, and (c) the phenomenological—the disclosure, appearance, and quality of lived experience. While

assumptions about knowledge and reality, for we can never escape the vexing question: How do you know?

Unlike the ancient's focus on being, 'phenomenology' is a relatively modern philosophical concept now identified as a systematically developed movement within 20th century continental philosophy, yet with no clear body of consensus among its diverse proponents. Generally we may view phenomenology as the realm of appearance, disclosure, or that which shines forth or comes to presence. As such, it typically consists of a description and analysis of consciousness, but it may also be described as a methodological conception attributed to the study of essences, transcendental subjectivity, concrete existence, and/or a style of thinking and engaging the world. In this way, phenomenology deals with the realm of lived experience and our modes of awareness. As such, phenomenology privileges conscious subjectivity and experiential immediacy.

psychoanalytic process psychology has implications for all of these philosophical traditions, I will be mainly focused on its conceptual application for understanding the ontology of the unconscious. Like Plato, Freud saw psychoanalysis as the science of the life of the soul (*Seelenleben*). Through philosophical inquiry into the nature and operations of the psyche, psychoanalysis is first and foremost an inquest into the quandaries of the unconscious mind. Dialectical psychoanalysis is therefore concerned with expatiating the ontological conditions that make knowledge and experience possible, and this has its root and etiology in the dialectic of process.

I must inform the reader that dialectical psychoanalysis or process psychology is differentiated from the tradition of process philosophy based upon the influential work of Alfred North Whitehead and the contemporaneous ideas of Charles Hartshorne and Samuel Alexander. It also diverges from Jung's dialectic of opposites, and more contemporarily, Arnold Mindell's process oriented psychology. Despite similarities and shared affinities from these respective philosophies, dialectical psychoanalysis is derived from Hegel's dialectical ontology. For Hegel, mind is an active process of becoming forged through negation and conflict. His metaphysical system is a grand and dauntless attempt to derive unity from disunity, integration within chaos, purpose from pattern by highlighting particularity and contextuality within a dynamic self-articulated complex universality. Process psychology amends certain facets of Hegel's system, as I will articulate in my prolegomena, but without abandoning the primacy and structural organization of the dialectic. Of course any metaphysical system is bound to be inadequate from the standpoint of phenomenology. I hope that phenomenologists will at least appreciate the effort to begin to question—let alone articulate—how experience is even made possible.

Our dialectical system is teleological but it has no proper beginning or end. That is, there

is a purposeful, persistent, and meaningful order that is not predetermined or predesigned, nor is it superimposed; rather it is determinate and procreative as it progressively unfolds through various maturational contingencies that are derived from its own interior constitution. The system is unifying, not unified: it is always maintained in a state of flux and process which can never be complete or static. One can enter the system at any given point and still remain ontologically connected to the whole despite highlighting a particular piece of activity, perspective, or experience of mind, and by extension, collective social life. The structure of the system is non-linear, hence privileging a unifying matrix of intercessions that assume a weblike development and presupposes the whole system at the very start. This may appear rather contradictory given that we will be preoccupied with the origins of psychic life—hence beginnings, and particularly on what I call the “genesis problem”—hence the ground of becoming, namely, the coming into being of psychic existence. But this contradiction soon dissolves when you realize that everything is interconnected. Although the system is holistically encompassing and coherently circular, thus presupposing multiple complexities and processes at once that stand in ontic relation to one another, in order to minimize opacity for the reader, I will attempt to present this book in linear and progressive terms by providing a successive treatment of the subject matter.

Joseph Newirth (2003) recently reminds us that the unconscious is generative, a thesis that was originally promulgated by the German idealist F.W.J. von Schelling (1800), a contemporary of Hegel.³ What I am interested in exploring throughout this project is not only how the unconscious

³ Schelling’s *System* offers an ontological account of mind that places the unconscious squarely within the center of psychic life. Arguably offering the first coherent and systematic theory of the unconscious, he envisions mind as generated from an unconscious will that conceives

is generative, but how it generates being, that is, how psychic reality is constituted. Reality is constituted by mind as agentic process that emerges, grows, and matures from its basal primitive form to more robust configurations of conscious life, self-reflection, and social order. Psychic reality begins as unconscious experience constituted through presubjective events that collectively organize into an unconscious sense of agency. The coming into being of this agentic function signals the coming into being of subjectivity, which becomes the fountainhead for future forms of psychic life to materialize and thrive. What this means is that before we can speak of the infant, before we can speak of the mother or the attachment system, before we can speak of culture or language, we have to account for the internally derived activity that makes consciousness, attachment, and social relations possible.

Process psychology shows how internally mediated relations become the ground and prototype for all external relations, as well as how the structures of unconscious subjectivity allow for intersubjective dynamics to unfold and transpire. Put laconically, what this book endeavors to explicate is the domain, scope, and limits to unconscious mentation prior to the birth of the human subject, culture, and language. Of course this assumes that psychic life is endogenously organized from the start (*endon*, within) and prepares the organism to experience and acquire information from any mode of information-emitting sources, including exogenous channels—but mind is not solipsistic. Even in the womb, the fetus finds itself socially embedded in a matrix of embodied form that receives many forms of communications. These communications are multifaceted and spring

and produces. He tells us that mind “begins as unconscious and ends as conscious” where “unconscious activity operates . . . through the conscious” (*STI*, p. 219). Nowhere do we encounter the ubiquity of the unconscious until von Hartmann and Freud.

from diverse sources—biologic, neonatal, environmental, anaclitic, etc.—but they are also prefigured by objective cultural society that predates the birth of the human subject, and hence commands an ontological facticity that cannot be annulled or ignored. We shall forgo the temptation to insist on the ontological primacy of the object over that of the subject, or vice versa, in order to avoid a hopelessly infinite regress. The question of whether a social ontology exists prior to the birth of the human subject is not as important as the question of *how* the unborn and incipient mind, uninitiated in the experiential world of consciousness, becomes internally organized and receptive to events it processes from all modes of information emittance. Therefore, we must center our inquiry from the imaginative standpoint of an unconscious phenomenology, phenomena we cannot directly observe nor measure, despite the fact that what we are positing is based in ontological discourse. This makes our inquiry a metaphysical enterprise and not an empirical one; for how can one measure that which cannot be observed? Instead we are forced to rely on logic and logic alone. Here we must summon the principle of sufficient reason: Is there a ground to every mental event, a ground from which all else emerges, even if that ground is amorphous, unrefined, incomplete, unobservable, ungrounded?

“I,” or more appropriately, the “sense of I,” is not a declarative we make from the start, unlike Fichte’s (1794) notion of the absolute I (*Ich*) that posits itself into existence and declares its being *ex nihilo*.⁴ The I develops naturally and organically precedes as an epigenetic architectonic,

⁴ Fichte declares that the *I* is entirely the result of its own activity—without prior ground. Hence, the activity of its self-positing is “unconditioned,” that which is “*absolutely posited*, and *founded on itself*, [which] is the ground of *one particular* activity . . . of the human mind, and thus of its pure character; the pure character of activity as such” (*W* § 1: I, 96).

self-organizing achievement. It must emerge from the organic contingencies in which it finds itself, and this logically must be prepared from a priori structures the field of psychoanalysis has customarily called the unconscious. What would it be like for mind to know itself upon birth, to know it is an entity that is sentient, that feels, that thinks, and is self-conscious of itself as a knowing self-reflective being? Would this not be fantastic, merely a fantasy, merely a creative stretch of imagination? But what if there were some small modicum of thought, of self-certainty, of self-awareness —abandoned to the naked facticity in which mind originally finds itself?

The unconscious, properly understood, is not an archeological find, rather it is a *series of spacings*. Although the archeology metaphor may have a certain legitimacy when we consider the purpose of psychoanalytic method, there is never truly a pristine uncovering of an artifact as the pure deposit of psychic occurrence or event, as if it were some buried relic of the discovered past. Rather, whatever psychic events that are roused, dislodged, or realized are necessarily subject to translation and transmogrification by virtue of the fact that consciousness mediates, and therefore a fortiori, transforms unconscious process. Because all psychic events are processes, they never remain static or unaltered. Any conscious recollection or awareness of the past will undergo alteration to various degrees by the mere fact that we posit them, hence bringing the past into a new mediated dynamic. When we envision psychoanalysis as an archeological endeavor, our subject matter becomes history—the past—accompanied by an interpretive, often speculative, explanation about what preceded the present and went on originally (hence, in the *arkh'*). What becomes important to reemphasize is our quest for understanding the most rudimentary structures of mind as a return to the most original, or more appropriately, aboriginal (*ab-*, from + *origine*, beginning) motifs that

govern unconscious life. Just as the term $\text{--}\$LFF@H$ refers to the being ($@L$) of the unfathomable, boundless abyss—the infinite void of the underworld, so does $\bullet DP_{\pm}$ (origin) refer to a first principle, element, or source of action. This first element as pure activity is unconscious genesis.

The unconscious is real although it is not an entity. It is more appropriately understood as a spacing or presencing of certain facets of psychic reality having loci, shape, and force in the indefinite ways in which they manifest as both the interiorization and external expression of agentic events. Here we are mainly concerned with the reality of the unseen and the ontological invisibility of the abyss. Process psychology displaces the primacy of language over the primacy and ubiquity of unconscious mentation, instead radicalizing an unconscious agency that modifies and differentiates itself, and disperses its essence throughout its dialectical activities. Here we must begin with prebeginnings, with addressing the philosophical notion of how agency first emerges from the psyche's unconditional embodiment. This requires us to address the mind/body question from the inception of unconscious life before the ego of consciousness is aware that it is embodied. Here the notion of *Trieb* as a pulsional bodily organization is necessary to explore. The specific question of how agency emerges from drive, and even more specifically, how self-directed teleological processes emerge from teleonomic pressures inherent to the bodily pulsions, is closely examined.

Following a naturally organic and developmental process of dialectical unfoldings, the unconscious soul erupts from its corporeality to find itself as a sentient affective life that is desirous and driven by lack, a lacking or absence it wishes to satiate. But unlike a wish or a drive, desire cannot be sated. It is an endless striving that seeks fulfillment through many circuitous routes and endless forms of content-specific appetite. In the initiation and wake of desire lies the causal force

behind the dialectic, namely, the engine of appetitive motivational longing which mind finds itself immersed. Here lies the gestation of a certain form of prereflective self-consciousness we may call *unconscious apperception*. Unconscious mind becomes prereflectively aware of its self-certainty as a desirous apperceptive being that wants, that craves, that becomes. This dialectical progression traces the coming into being of the unconscious ego that emerges from its desirous rupture to experience and transcend its confinement to its mere corporeal nature while remaining an embodied experiential subject. This dialectical and architectonic process potentially explains the initial origins of psychic reality.

In this age of the brain, the notion of mind has largely become relegated to a reductive category subsumed under some form of materialism spearheaded by cognitive neuroscience and philosophies of mind. Indeed, some developments in cognitive science and neurobiology are content with displacing a dynamic unconscious altogether, instead substituting the language of dissociation, attachment processes, and the implicit forms of memory that are in turn shaped by corresponding brain asymmetry (Siegel, 1999). With the focus on neuroimaging technologies, as they observe the functions of the brain, many researchers are enticed by the lure of material reduction and commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness or simply location. Here they illegitimately conclude that unconscious processes are *caused* by brain events and are reducible to brain activity rather than concluding that they are merely *correlated*. In other words, scientists often mistake observable, measurable phenomena for their simple location and make inconclusive causal claims. This fallacy is committed when observable physical locality, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), is equated with the mental functions and representational content we ontologically *infer* to be causal, rather than correspondent, and therefore hastily conclude that mind equals brain.

I am sympathetic to advances in the neurosciences and value consilience, complementarity, and symmetry between theoretical and empirical work. In fact, process psychology needs to account for empirical science if it is to have any theoretical currency. On the face of things, this is not hard to support: in the hard and soft sciences, including anthropology, sociology, and the humanities, mind and culture are mainly conceived as a plurality and series of interactive systemic processes, some more cohesive and harmonious than others, while some are chaotic and destructive, hence governed by unpredictable possibilities, each with their own psychophysical correlates and social order. In other words, we can never abolish the fact that we are embodied in space and time within a cultural and linguistic milieu that informs our being in the world. But let us not fool ourselves into thinking that empiricism holds a privileged touchstone to truth or is of superior value when empiricism by its very nature is limited in scope and what it can control and measure. By definition and design, empiricism observes Occam's razor and follows the law of parsimony. As a corollary, it is unable to control for, manipulate, and observe all phenomena it sets out to study. Therefore, it must artificially contrive a "laboratory" or a "controlled" set of experimental "variables" that discards other variables and dislocates its operations from the original phenomena being "observed." Any conclusions and generalizations made cannot ignore the parameters in which empiricism limits its activity, and hence at best can only offer limited inferences based on its circumscribed object of study. In other words, empiricism certainly cannot address questions outside its realm of experimentation and measurement that a metaphysical inquiry affords.

Certain conclusions made by contemporary theoreticians and researchers—such as there is no dynamic unconscious, or that nonconscious encoded events implicit in memory structure displace our previous understanding of unconscious activity (see Iannuzzi, 2006)—do not hold up to logical

scrutiny when they fall under a category mistake or are guilty of the fallacy of simple location. What we can legitimately say is that mental processes correspond to brain events, but we cannot epistemologically ascertain that they are unequivocally causal or that they are identical in composition. Furthermore, there are qualitative variations in what we experience, believe, and feel from what we observe and know. Psychoanalysts who advocate for a sufficient conceptualization of the unconscious from the standpoint of neuroscience displace the allegorical, metaphorical, aesthetic, and spiritual expressions of human subjectivity and the qualia of lived experience that cannot be adequately captured by biologicistic language. Although neurobiology is a necessary condition of our embodiment, it is not a sufficient condition to explain the complexifications of lived experiential reality. For these reasons, the mind/body conundrum needs to be bracketed from the materialist enterprise and engaged from the standpoint of ontology that is compatible with the language of embodiment and the interstices of human experience without evoking a causally reductive argument under the banner of science and at the expense of philosophical sophistication.

We are accustomed to think of mind and self as being largely defined by conscious experience, such as the impact of early childhood attachment and interactional patterns with others, culture, and the linguistic forces operative within our social ontology, as well as a biologic organism that encounters these environmental influences. In psychoanalysis, little attention is paid to the philosophic notion of how embodied organizations derive and modify from their material nature as desirous-ideational units of agentic order within social and linguistic parameters without devolving into biological and linguistic determinism. Mind remains embodied but it supercedes material reduction by virtue of the fact that it becomes uniquely ideational, emotive, and valuational. It is

from its embodied thrownness and sentient impingements that it emerges as a self-articulated, self-defining developmental agency. Modified from its original pulsional constellations, mind is oriented toward instituting action, processing events, and experiencing itself as being-in-becoming. When I speak of mind, I do not mean some panpsychism or invisible spiritual-immaterial force that inhabits and animates the universe, rather I am speaking of the universal aspects of mental functioning that all people to some degree possess regardless of gender, race, or historicity. Contra postmodern psychoanalytic theories that displace metaphysics, process psychology attempts to situate phenomena, contingency, and contextual complexity within a subjective universality that accounts for individual variance and plurality within an encompassing holistic governing totality, despite the concession that this totality is never complete, united, nor unified. Conflict, negation, and strife is its very essence, the engine propelling development, the positive significance of the negative.

Just as our recognition of the unconscious as an entity is an antiquated notion, the postmodern collapse of the subject and subjectivity for the reification of language is also a misguided project. Because psychic reality is process oriented, and initially derived from its own internal constitution, the linguistic turn only partially accounts for unconscious dynamics. That is, before the breach into consciousness, the dialectical unfolding of the psyche originally constitutes itself as the coming into being of the unconscious ego, which acquires agency as a teleologic determinate being-for-self. In its generative activity of self-enactment, unconscious agency institutes its own network of semiotics as the original mode of signification and meaning relation. Desire as being-in-relation-to-lack interjects its own semiotic markers within its unconscious interior that structurally prepares a priori the capacity for linguistic receptivity and production encountered

in consciousness. Rather than adopt the postmodern turn, process psychology attempts to articulate the functional structures of semiotic meaning relations that unfold prior to the conscious birth of the ego. What this means is that unconscious signification precedes linguistic signification. In other words, language is conditioned on unconscious precipitants.

Unconscious semiotics initially materialize and unfold as agentically assigned and often segregated units of embodied affective sentience that disperse yet simultaneously coalesce as a plurality of unconscious schemata under the rubric of the unconscious ego. Unconscious schemata take their incipient forms as somatic and emotional organizations that may be partially autonomous from one another and comprise nonconceptual prereflective representations of internal experience that further execute and convey their own meaning relations through a combinatory of signifiers within its embodied affective resonance states. Schemas start off as primitive process systems derived from immediate bodily impulses and sensations, such as those belonging to the psychophysicality of teleonomic somatic and affective reverberations, and later become more organized through perception and the higher-order conceptual capacities afforded through linguistic cognition, which lend cohesion, clarity, and vitality to inarticulate unconscious experience.

Schemata comprise the building blocks of psychic reality. They may be viewed as microcosmic units or entities that have various characteristics or properties peculiar to their own internally derived constitutions, such as specific contours, impressions, affect, or desirous-riddled content that compose the microdynamic processes relative to a particular schema. These microcosmic units can communicate with other individual schemas that exist within the plurality of unconscious process and may form interrelationships between other schematic entities. Schemas may take on more zest in organization and structure and can form elaborate phantasy systems fueled

by unconscious restraints and pressures. These process systems infiltrate unconscious life and can hold a certain dominion over the underworld. Furthermore, groups that are aligned in terms of their internal structures may form communities of schemata that can further colonize other schemata that are more susceptible to being annexed or overthrown. In other words, lesser organized or weaker schemata can be incorporated within more dominate and vibrant communal structures. Despite the capacity for the subexistence of competing mental units within the abyss, the plurality of schemata that populate mental life fall within the overarching supraordinate, governing totality of the dialectic. Therefore the dialectic is the macrocosmic unifying activity that provides organization, order, and direction to the infinite flux of events that comprise psychic reality.

Schemata are information emitting and information processing microagents or self-states that form communication channels and linkages through their semiotic relations. They may facilitate or oppose linkages by ingressing into, hence incorporating, one another, or by negating one another through defensive fortifications, depending upon which movement of the dialectic is operative at any given moment within each schema's internal structure. Fantasy systems are forged or aborted through the way in which semiotic relata are formed and reinforced. This insures that there will always potentially be quasi-autonomous activity performed by each schema that conform to or resist the greater pressures of the dialectic. Not only does this independent functionality of schematic action account for variation in different and distinct modes of expression, it also accounts for agentic choice and the bid for freedom each schema intrinsically possesses. In more common language, drives, affect, and phantasies may take on their own unique autonomous existence within the abyss despite the fact that other phantasy systems negate or subsume them within their internal constitutions.

Unconscious schemata are infinite by virtue of the fact that psychic reality multiplies and produces an innumerable deferral of signifiers within its interiority. All schemas are subject to the overarching governance and sublimating movements of the dialectic, but they are also capable of resisting sublimation, and may even regress or stay ossified in unconscious points of fixation or stagnation. This is why at times somatic and affective schemata express themselves as bodily symptoms and emotional dysregulation (e.g., as compromise formations) that are recalcitrant to conceptual mediation or understanding. In effect, conflicted affects, traumas, and phantasies are confined to earlier forms of embodiment that characterize unconscious schematic structure and resist articulation through linguistic mediums. Instead they remain embedded within their original modes of signification and appear as symptoms with overdetermined attributes, properties, and expressive value. The autonomous nature of schematic structure and designation point toward how symptom formation is under the influence of earlier forms of unconscious representation. The fate of each schema is contingent upon the dominant processes at work in the mind and the supraordinate directionality and mediatory operations of the dialectic. Some schemata will flourish while others will perish; however, all schematic activity is subject to the synthetic functions of the dialectic.

The underworld of unconscious semiotics ontologically prepares the mind for the acquisition and production of language, which is filtered through, mediated, assimilated, and amalgamated within the psychic register. This of course is initiated at birth when the infantile ego encounters the external world. The unconscious emergence and breach of the ego into consciousness signals a second awakening of the ego, which now has as its task the role of mediating objects of conscious cognition and all its newfound experiences. Ego development now becomes a flourishing and robust process in the ontogenesis of the self because it is no longer constricted to unconscious embodiment

and non-linguistic schematic representation. Here the nature of maternal attachment, nurturance, affective attunement, and empathic responsiveness from the relational milieu within the broader parameters of the subject's social ontology provide the contents, patterns, and forms of experience that condition the contours of the ego's burgeoning personality and characterological habits of defense. As conscious cognition expands ego boundaries and functional operations inherent to perceptual consciousness and self-experience, schematic representation and signification naturally progress to acquire higher-order organizations as perception, imagination, and conceptual thought.

Reality is constituted by mind by virtue of the fact that we can only have commerce with reality as we conceive it to be. This insures that ego and reality will always be informed by the abyss. The ego of consciousness now must encounter the manifold of sense experience and form meaning relations that help define its adaptation, functionality, and self-identity within the plurality of competing objects it encounters. The dialectic of internal modification that characterizes the developmental epigenesis of the unconscious ego is now extended to the mediatory modifications it must perform in its external relations to objects. Here the ego must set itself over against its objects of experience in its quest for achieving being-for-self as a fully self-articulated individuated agent within the intersubjective contexts that define its being in the world. This is facilitated through the mediation of the m/other, as both the original attachment figure and as the symbolic cultural signifier.

In its labor for self-definition, the ego must execute another series of dialectical movements in which it distinguishes and separates off various portions of the external world from its own immediate unity in which it finds itself. That is, the ego is originally not aware of itself as a subject,

which it has the developmental task of becoming. Because it takes its immediate sense experience to be all encompassing and totalizing, this basic simple unity with reality must undergo inner division, separation, differentiation, and restructuring. Here the infantile ego must differentiate out the various elements of its experience that it takes for its totality as an immediate universality, and through dialectical operations peculiar to its contingent thought processes, it interjects difference, categorization, and discreteness into concrete elements of particularity that comprise the plurality and flux of competing phenomena it encounters. One task the emergent conscious ego must execute is differentiating out self from others, and this specifically includes familial attachment figures. This includes differentiating out language as a distinct medium of communicative relations from the maternal environment, which the ego takes at first to be merged in its symbiotic union with the mother. This is where a sense of I or personal identity is rudimentarily formed in relation to difference. More precisely, the ego differentiates out a sense of self from the mother through her affective attunement and responsiveness that facilitates the emergence of an autonomous sense of self while remaining in relation to the reciprocal dyadic system.

The institution of prereflective judgments such as division, negation, universalizing, determining similarity and difference, and so forth, allow for the ego's experience of reality to proliferate in magnitude and qualitative depth. Over its developmental maturation mediated by its intersubjective relations with psychosocial life, the ego forges various fluid boundaries between inner and outer, particularity and universality, self and other, being and the world. This dialectical process unfolds within the larger movements of progression from unconscious apperception to consciousness, then to self-consciousness as capacities in self-reflectivity allow for cultivation of the ego. The generic movement of the self that splits and divides itself, projects or externalizes parts

of its interior onto the external world, which it then gathers and reincorporates back into its interiority constitutes the antediluvian cycle we have come to call projective identification. Here mind is conceived as a trajectory of dynamic pattern that unfolds as projective identification, which is none other than the sublating animating force of the dialectic that vanquishes new shapes in its quest for self-consciousness and wholeness. The multiple, overdetermined dialectical processes that are operative in generating higher forms and shapes of mind and social structures through this generic sublating dynamic points toward the logical universal laws of generative process that govern the evolution of mind and society. In its pilgrimage for self-actualization, fulfillment, and betterment, the general thrust of the human intellect instantiated in subjective personality and cultural conscience seeks to fulfill and become its possibilities.

Mind, or more generally the human spirit (*anima*), can never fully complete itself, whether this be reflective of the individual or collective society as a whole. To imagine such a state would necessarily entail the death of the dialectic: mind would no longer strive to surpass itself, to better itself, to create and achieve higher tiers of unification, satisfaction, and experiential complexity. It simply would no longer desire. The human psyche is inherently restless and seeks to cultivate and advance itself in novel ways governed by the idiosyncratic aims of freedom and choice each individual or collective group executes for itself. This is an orienting principle to the dialectic that naturally strives toward ascendance within the face of decent, fruition among decay, and harmony within chaos that saturates our concrete lives and communal world. This orienting principle to mind exemplifies the self-articulated complex holism that we may more properly observe in civilization as the concrete universals that define a collectively shared, social value system based upon the identification with and fulfillment of objective human ideals.

The crusade for holism is a struggle through metaphysical labor and existential suffering that is both individually and collectively borne. Although individual people and societies will only partially attain such exalted ideals, it is the striving that signifies the value of human desire. This quest belongs to the higher faculties of self-consciousness embedded in our social valuation practices that govern our educational systems, economic, social, and political structures, policing and law, religious institutions, cultural centers, and works of artistic expression. The pursuit of an intellectual contemplative life will naturally lead one to engage the question and meaning of the ethical, religion, as well as aesthetic taste and judgment. These human ideals and values are connected to the greater whole, where reason, emotion, aesthetics, and justice participate in spiritual communion with nature and the universe as being in the world with self and others. While the masses are mainly preoccupied with the pragmatics of daily life, self-preservation and survival, and the pursuit of desire and pleasure, the higher shapes of self-consciousness are only attained by few. However, they are nonetheless embodied in our communal cultural practices that define modern society, and hence speak to the upward acclivity of the dialectic. Of course any progressive achievement of civilization occurs within the context of death, trauma, and despair that fall short of attaining such ideals. Here the dialectic stagnates, regresses, or resists sublimating itself. Multiple complexities and pluralities of experience and social array exist within a systemic unifying network that governs process dialectics. Of course negativity and chaos saturate progression, even when a discernable pattern or purpose emerges as we look back at the process of its own becoming. Amongst so much death and decay that saturates our daily world preoccupations, here we may enjoy some optimism that all this suffering is a necessary and meaningful dimension to the dialectic that is part and parcel of the positive significance to the negative that brings about a better world. Without conflict there can be no growth nor betterment. To re-appropriate Leibniz, this is the best of all reasonable worlds.

But what do we make of this striving of the ego to sublimate itself? What is its motivation? What is its object? There is a deep structural impetus that is ontologically constituted within the rotary motion of the dialectic to satisfy its longings, its *telos*. Is there an overarching teleology the ego strives toward? Perhaps this question is only legitimate within the nature of contingent choice each subject encounters. But contingency is never devoid of universality that structures the dialectic.

What I fundamentally believe the human psyche strives for in all its unadulterated instantiations is the wish for unity and peace, free of trauma and violence—whether externally imposed or self-impulsive. What resonates within us all is a wish to be free of negativity, of our suffering or *pathos* (BV2@H), which is none other than a dialectical renunciation yet paradoxical call for death—for termination, the desire to end the lack. This fundamental desire to expurgate the lack, this gap in being, the lacunae that informs the abyss, is simultaneously the wish to recapture the symbiotic reunion with our original natural, sentient slumber that unconscious subjectivity first awakens from. Here lies the conundrum of how the desire for holism is simultaneously a desire to recapitulate its original totality, to repossess its original undifferentiated unity through reintegrated unification, at once a return and a sublation where being and nothing are the same.

And so begins our sojourn into the abyss.