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Otto Rank's theory of cultural transition

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OTTO RANK'S THEORY OF CULTURAL TRANSITION

by

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The thesis has two purposes. The first is t provide a biographical and theoretical introduction to Otto Rank. The second is to discuss a specific theme in Rank's writings, namely his understanding of culture and cultural transition, with specific reference to what he deemed the transition from religion to psychology.

The study begins with a short biography. It then proceeds to detail aspects of Rank's theories that are important for an understanding of his theory of cultural transition. A conclusion offers speculations concerning the relevance of Rank's theories for modern scholarship.

The investigation of culture is a particularly complex and difficult task. Cultural manifestations are multifarious and span a time of many millennia. Through his psychological theory of the will, Rank attempted a novel interpretation of cultural phenomena. His emphasis on the psychological function of cultural expression paved the way for an understanding of continuity between even the most disparate culture forms. As a derivative of this understanding, Rank posited that the decline of traditional religion is to be explained as a natural product of increasing consciousness, and that this decline is paralleled by the rise of psychology as a new cultural voice.

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Thanks also go to my children for (the unsolicited) contributions they made to typing the manuscript, erasing essential paragraphs at will, and for the single time one of them turned my computer off at a crucial moment. Special thanks to my wife, Kendi, for her heartfelt encouragement, and for the Otto Rank t-shirt she made for me. I can confidently claim to own the only one in existence in the world. And finally, thanks but no thanks to my printer for all the grief it served me through its many years of malfunctioning.

DEDICATION

If the world is my projection, so is becoming conscious of this projection, my birth. The will expresses itself through the act of becoming born.

Otto Rank,
age 21

To Kendi, for her wonderful presence in my life.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The thesis has two purposes. The first is to provide a biographical and theoretical introduction to Rank. Rank was a major contributor to the early growth and development of psychoanalysis. Despite this, the literature on Rank is sparse, especially as regards his mature, post-Freudian theories.

The second purpose is to dwell on a specific theme in Rank's writings, namely his understanding of cultural transition, with specific reference to what he deemed the transition from religion to psychology. This understanding, representing the culmination of a lifetime's study of culture, was developed in his later works as an extension of his psychological theory.

Chapter one presents a biography of Rank's life. Rank grew up in the Jewish quarter of Vienna, as a junior to the great psychological theorists dominating Vienna's psychological community: Freud, Jung, and Adler. His life and concerns reflected the time and place of his birth.

Chapter two, together with the supplementary appendix, introduces Rank's writings, highlighting important theoretical and structural components. The chapter surveys important themes and patterns in Rank's writings; the appendix provides a more detailed overview of Rank's important works.

The third chapter discusses significant theoretical influences in Rank's life, these being Freud, Nietzsche, and Kant. Rank's attempt to contemporize a theory of human nature utilized the insights from especially these authors and melded them into his mature psychological and cultural theories.

Chapter four is devoted to the specific ideas of Rank's mature psychological theory. Rank called his psychology a "will psychology." An examination of its basis looks at three foundational terms used in this psychology: will, interpretation, and difference.

Chapter five concentrates upon his cultural theory as a derivative of his psychological theory of the will. The chapter will emphasize both Rank's understanding of the function of cultural expression in human living and his idea of the nature of cultural development and change.

Chapter six discusses the central topic of the study, Rank's understanding of the cultural transition from religion to psychology. A discussion of religion will be followed by a detailed examination of Rank's understanding of the "cultural" nature of the psychological world view.

Finally, a conclusion will indicate Rank's relevance to one aspect of modern scholarship, specifically how a Rankian critique of culture might open the door to a bridging of the chasm between biological and social science.

Rank often uses language in an intuitive way, and gives established terms a particular nuance. It may be useful to clarify the meaning of three terms that Rank frequently uses.

The term "religion", for Rank, refers primarily to belief in God, belief in a "transcendent reality", or belief in some extra-earthly spirituality. Where one finds such belief one finds religion. "Religion" refers, therefore, to a mindset, its correlating expressions, and the social structure deriving from it. For Rank, belief systems represent metaphysically-based interpretations of human existence.

The term "psychology" also refers to a mindset. A psychological point of view, for Rank, no longer takes as its primary referent something

metaphysical in its interpretation of human existence, but something much more imminent, the human self. "Psychology", therefore, also refers to those specific manifestations of a psychological point of view, especially the psychotherapeutic theories of Rank's day (e.g., Freudian psychoanalysis).

Rank's use of the term "culture" is slightly more difficult to enunciate. Primarily, the term refers to human artistic or creative expression. The activity of interpretation is a key component of what Rank designates as "cultural". Cultural expressions, therefore, represent interpretations of human existence. For Rank, cultural expression includes religion, philosophy, the fine arts, drama, architectural design, and mythology, to name a few.

CHAPTER ONE

Biography

Otto Rank (1884-1939) was born Otto Rosenfeld on 22 April 1884, in the city of Leopoldstadt. Rank was the third child of Simon, an artisan jeweller, and Karoline, his wife. Paul, Rank's older brother and the first of the Rosenfeld children, was born three years earlier in 1881. A second child, Elisabet, was born in 1882, but died only some months after.

Little is documented of Rank's early years. What evidence can be gathered derives mostly from four journals Rank started when he was 18. Named *Daybooks*, they record the philosophical wanderings of the young Rank, while at times providing intimate glimpses into Rank's personal life. A section in the first of these *Daybooks*, entitled "Autobiography", comprises Rank's recollections of his childhood years. In this bitter testament Rank evidences a lonely childhood with little parental investment, encouragement or direction. "My father," he says, "bothered himself little about me and my brother.... I grew up, left to myself, without education, without friends, without books" (in Taft 1958:10).

Overall, the journals picture a youth tormented by a seemingly constant and intense self-awareness. Many entries betray a high level of self-indulgence, combining a typical adolescent awkwardness with an overevaluation of his own thinking. Other entries allow a glimpse into the mature philosophical mind of the later Rank wherein one can detect the subjects which would occupy Rank to his death.

The financial straits of his parents seems to have been the primary determinant of Rank's teenage life. Evidently there was only enough money in the family to provide for one education. Rank's brother, Paul, received the bulk of this and was sent off to law school. Otto, as a result, was denied secondary school, "and so there offered itself the technical school as the only possibility of getting a higher education" (in Taft 1958:12). Upon graduation Rank worked as a machinist in his uncle's shop. The work caused him a great deal of both physical and psychological stress, for he states, "I had for a long time the most earnest desire for suicide" (in Taft 1958:13).

It was at this time in his life that Rank awoke to the arts. Upon being introduced to the theater by his brother, Rank says, "I became a steady patron for four years (1899-1902).... I was hardly ever at home in the evening...[and] the evening illusion of the theater cast a veil over the raw reality of the day" (in Taft 1958:12). Rank also began to read voraciously: Darwin, Dostoyevski, Stendahl, Schopenhauer, and popular writers of the day. Among these he found mentors in the nineteenth-century pioneers of a new self and social consciousness (Liebermann 1985:4), predominantly Ibsen and Nietzsche.

At the age of nineteen Rank eschewed the name Rosenfeld and informally adopted his non-Jewish name, apparently taken from Ibsen's play, *The Doll House*. He also changed his official religious registration (Jewish) to *konfessionslos*, unaffiliated. Rank continued to absorb himself in philosophy, especially that of Nietzsche. During moments of ecstacy he expressed a basic confidence in his abilities. In the private world of his *Daybooks* this confessed confidence took on an immodest tone: "I am of the opinion that in the last five years I have experienced and learned more than formerly the whole race during its existence" (in Taft 1958:27). Again:

> Now I see everything clearly: the world process is no longer a riddle; I can explain the whole culture, yes, I can explain everything. What shall I be able to do with the remainder of my life (in Taft 1958:52)?

Moments of exaltation were complemented by times of deep emotional agony. This affective lability resulted in a deep personal crisis. On 14 May 1904, Rank records, "Today I bought a weapon to kill myself" (in Taft 1958:29). Rank, a self-conscious youth immersed in the culture of his day, led a life constrained by the necessities of material poverty and by the isolation wrought by the unbridled expansion of his thought world. According to Jessi Taft, Rank deeply suffered from "the lack of a superior individual in the environment with whom to measure himself" (Taft 1958:30). It was within this social vacuum that Rank, at the age of twenty, came upon Sigmund Freud.

Rank first makes mention of Freud in a *Daybooks* entry dated 17 October 1904, where he lists Freud's then recently published *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Taft 1958:33). Upon reading this work, Rank wrote his first psychoanalytic essay, *The Artist*. Some time after the essay's completion in the spring of 1905 Rank met Freud personally, probably through his family doctor Alfred Adler. At this meeting Rank gave a copy of *The Artist* to Freud and what followed is summed up in Freud's words:

> One day a young man who had passed through the technical training school introduced himself with a manuscript which showed unusual comprehension. We induced him to go through the *Gymnasium* and the university, and to devote himself to the non-medical side of psychoanalysis. The little society acquired in him a zealous and dependable secretary, and I gained in Otto Rank a faithful and helpful co-worker (Freud 1914:25).

It is difficult to imagine what this event must have meant to the solitary Rank:

> who had seen no way out of his enslavement to mechanical work, who had found no friend or equal in his intellectual pursuits, and who alternated between despair of his fate and ecstatic realization of his gifts (Taft 1958:54).

The indomitable constraints of financial and personal circumstance were broken by Freud's choice to nurture the young Otto. Rank was given a new beginning.

Rank's life followed the course described above by Freud. He became a devoted pupil of Freud and quickly won a place in Freud's heart. Rank accepted surrogate fatherhood from Freud, including the encouragement and financial support for further education. In the words of Hanns Sachs, Rank and Freud were "nearly always together" (Sachs 1944:66) whether at meetings of the psychoanalytic society, or walking to and from Freud's home discussing ideas.

In the course of the first ten years of his involvement with the psychoanalytic movement, Rank completed the Gymnasium, earned a Ph.D from the University of Vienna, and published five books. Within this time he also published a score of articles on topics ranging from Schopenhauer to dreams to various mythological and legendary motifs. Thirty-five works were published between 1910-1914, including one essay of over 65 pages, and two each of over 90 pages. Besides this, Rank wrote a number of notes, reviews, book reviews, congress reports, and translations. By age 30 (1914) he had amassed over one thousand published pages. He had also become editor of the two founding psychoanalytic journals, *Imago* and *Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag*, and as secretary to the International Psychoanalytic Society was responsible for the transcription and publication of the weekly minutes. Amidst all this activity Rank continued to read at what was perceived to be an astonishing rate. Says Ernest Jones, "It was quite

mysterious how he found time to read all that he did" (Jones 1957:160, volume II).

Rank continued to write during his army service, 1916-1918, though his pace slowed. He published twelve articles during these years, including two 50-page papers. Rank returned to Vienna in 1918. He had lost his deferential manner, according to Ernest Jones, and became "tough...with a masterful air" (Jones 1957:12, volume III). Vienna had suffered from the war, and the difficulties of this suffering extended to the operations of the Psychoanalytic Society. Rank sunk laborious hours into the continued functioning of the Society. Jones describes the context for Rank's duties:

> The general machinery of life had so run down in Austria after the war that there were indescribable difficulties in getting anything done. Papers and type had to be scrounged from odd corners, labor disputes were frequent, and communications exasperatingly slow. Rank struggled heroically with the endless problems and accomplished superhuman feats in coping with them almost single-handed (Jones 1957:46, volume III).

The psychoanalytic movement, meanwhile, found itself coalescing and forming well-defined institutional boundaries. This was pleasing to Freud, who long anticipated the institutionalization of his ideas. Yet with this formalization came the first so-called defections. After Jung's departure in 1911, Freud created an "inner circle", a secret committee given the public function of running the International Psychoanalytic Association and the private function of reporting any hint of further defection. The Committee was a tightly-knit group of seven including Freud, Rank, Jones, Abraham, Ferenczi, Eitington, and Sachs. The members were sworn to publish nothing without the consent of all. The Committee was often rife with jealousy, with

members rivaling to gain the unofficial leadership position. Disagreements amidst members, says Taft

> could always be traced to the natural unity and geographical closeness of the two nearest to Freud, Ferenczi and Rank, however valiantly Freud struggled to maintain a just and consistent neutrality as well as an equal friendly concern for every member of the Committee (Taft 1958:82).

The greatest crisis faced by the group dawned on 20 April 1923, when Freud underwent surgery for cancer of the upper right jaw and palate. With his health and longevity in question, Freud became obsessed with thoughts of intellectual posterity (Roazen 1974:135). The same year saw two important and controversial publications from the pen of Rank. The first, *The Development of Psychoanalysis*, written jointly with Sandor Ferenczi, foresaw new directions for what they called "active therapy". Though publication came without Committee consent, Freud approved of the book and gave critical support to Ferenczi and Rank.

The second book, again published without Committee approval, was Rank's controversial *The Trauma of Birth.*

> The book was dictated without notes, "off the top of his head," as his typist, Editha Sterba recalled. She sat at a desk outside his office in the hallway, where he paced up and down, speaking rapidly but allowing her time to catch up when she needed to. In training to become a lay analyst, Sterba registered surprise at some of Rank's material. In good humor, Rank said, "They will all be surprised" (Liebermann 1985:201).

Saturated with Freudian methodology, *The Trauma of Birth* questioned orthodox psychoanalytic assumptions concerning the basis of psychic trauma and pointed to physical partruition as the primary bio-psychological determinant. The mother, in this conception, replaced the father as the primary source for a child's psychological development. This book signalled a

return to the creativity of Rank's earliest writings, the *Daybocks* and *The Artist*. Progoff states:

> As the doctrines of psychoanalysis developed...and as they began to harden into a fixed system, less of the creativity of the early days was required. Psychoanalysis was settling down to the professional repetition of prescribed analytical techniques. Increasingly Rank found that it was his intellectual rather than his artistic energies that were being called into play, and a major part of his personality was thus left unfulfilled (Progoff 1956:192).

Rank presented the book to Freud on May 6, Freud's birthday. It was received with ambivalence, and ultimately led to the deterioration of Rank's relationship with Freud. Freud, who had in many ways functioned as Rank's protector, advocate, and surrogate father, now quickly became his adversary. The Committee was devastated by the event. Rivalries surged and relationships between the members began to unravel (Liebermann 1985:250). Freud was profoundly grieved. Rank was now on his own.

The history of the events surrounding Rank's break with Freud can be read in many histories of psychoanalysis. Suffice it to say that from 1926 onward Rank was the subject of what Thomas Szasz has called a "psychoanalytic character assassination" (Szasz 1970:64). Rank was many times defamed publicly by high-ranking proponents of the psychoanalytic movement. His psychoanalytic membership was revoked worldwide, and all analysts trained by Rank were required to submit themselves to a subsequent retraining. Freud, it seems, could neither fathom nor tolerate Rank's independence, and his judgment upon Rank sparked a wave of anti-Rankian sentiment within psychological societies worldwide. On 12 April 1926, Rank said goodbye to Freud for the last time; the two were never again to meet. As a parting gift Rank gave Freud, somewhat ironically, the recently published complete works of

Nietzsche, twenty-three volumes bound in white leather (Liebermann 1985:259). Freud, who remained untouched, wrote the following concerning this visit:

> He was unwilling to renounce any part of the theory in which he had deposited his neurosis.... On his final visit I saw no occasion for expressing my special tenderness; I was honest and hard. But he is gone now and we have to bury him (in Jones 1957:76, volume III).

Rank moved with his family to Paris. He started to write again, this time penning his own version of psychological therapy (*Will Therapy*) and a more philosophical look at the basis of psychological theory (*Truth and Reality*). Rank attempted in these writings "to free himself from the shreds of his psychoanalytic past" (Taft 1958:123), and began to form his life as an independent psychotherapist.

Rank now divided his time between France and the United States. In America Rank met with stern resistance from members of the American Psychoanalytic Society, but found a favorable acceptance at the Philadelphia School of Social Work. Rank lectured mostly to audiences of social workers and eschewed any official following, consistent with his strong anti-doctrinaire tendencies.

The years 1929-32 were perhaps the most creative of Rank's writing career. During this time, he refined his theories and offered a reinterpretation of the meaning of modern psychology within a broader understanding of culture. In 1929, Rank published the second part of his *Will Therapy*, the third part of his *Truth and Reality*, and a book titled *Psychology and the Soul*. 1931 saw the publication of the third volume of *Will Therapy*. In 1932 Rank published two books: *Modern Education*, and his *magnum opus, Art and Artist*.

After this Rank's writing stopped and would not again commence until near the end of his life. Rank continued lecturing and practicing psychotherapy, and in 1934 took up residence in New York City. Some time late in 1937 Rank began writing his final work, *Beyond Psychology*. Conflicts with his wife eventuated in a divorce in 1939 whereupon Rank immediately married Estelle Buel, his American secretary. While completing his book and hoping to start a new life in California, Rank succumbed to an infection and was hospitalized. He died on 31 October 1939 of a reaction to the drug administered to treat his illness. He was fifty-six years old. Thus ended the career of one of the fascinating characters in the the emergence of psychoanalysis.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction to Rank's Writings

The introduction to Rank's works is presented in two parts. The first part, the present chapter, takes up recurrent themes and major developments in Rank's writings, providing a basis for a subsequent evaluation of particular Rankian ideas. The second part, contained in the appendix, provides a detailed overview of Rank's major works and is useful to those who desire a more comprehensive understanding of Rank's literary career.

Rank's writings may be divided historically into two halves, with Rank's separation from Freud as the dividing line. The separation was a complex affair spread over the course of several years. The theoretical ramifications of the split were realized only some years after Rank's physical departure from Freud. Rank's writings of this period record the theoretical developments that were to mark Rank off as a unique psychological theorist. This period includes those works written between and including *The Trauma of Birth* (1923) and *Will Therapy* (1926, 1927, 1929).

Away from Vienna and Freud, Rank set out to create his own system of psychology culminating in the English translation of *Will Therapy*. Under Rank's direction, only the latter two parts of the original three-part German work were included in the translation, omitting the first because of its overtly "Freudian viewpoint" (Jessie Taft in Rank 1926:vii). "The first volume," says his translator, "despite its startling technical discoveries, was written from

the Freudian viewpoint, as was *The Trauma of Birth,* its theoretical parallel" (Jessie Taft in Rank 1926: vii). Rank says that his ideas were at first

> completely under the influence of Freudian realism..., (and cast) in the biological-mechanistic terms of Freud's natural science ideology.... *The Trauma of Birth,* a book written in 1923, marks the decisive turning point in this development (1927:2-3).

This "decisive turning point" was Rank's break with "Freudian realism" (theoretical determinism), a break that was only fully realized in the second volume of his *Will Therapy* (1926:197). The untranslated first volume of *Will Therapy* became the closest thing to a crossover point between Freudian and post-Freudian in Rank's writing career. Rank's translator agrees, stating that volumes II and III of *Will Therapy* combine as a "presentation of Rank's unique contribution to modern psychology" (Taft in Rank 1926:viii). The later chapters of the present study deal with the thought that emerged from the works following *Will Therapy.*

Rank's writings may also be divided according to their content. Each composition may be seen as falling into one of the two categories "Culture Study" or "Psychological Theory". The division forms a useful way of categorizing his works. Those works of equal psychological and cultural content form a third column between the others.

Fig. 2.1; Categorization of Rank's Writings By Content

STUDIES OF CULTURE	PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY
The Artist 1907	
The Myth of the Birth of the Hero 1909	
The Lohengrin Legend 1911	
The Incest Motif 1912	
	The Significance of Psychoanalysis for the Mental Sciences 1913
The Double 1914	
The Don Juan Legend 1922	
	The Development of Psychoanalysis 1923
	The Trauma of Birth 1924
	Will Therapy 1926, 1929, 1931
Truth and Reality 1927,1928, 1929	
Psychology and the Soul 1930	
Modern Education 1932	
Art and Artist 1932	
Beyond Psychology 1939	

ANALYSIS

What can be learned from the combination of these two divisions? To begin, it might be noted that Rank's writings betray an enduring concern for culture. Of the fifteen books listed above, nine fall under the heading "Culture Study" and only four under the heading "Psychological Theory". This reflects the primacy of cultural theory in Rank's thinking.

Yet while Rank wrote primarily about culture, he emphasizes that developments in his cultural theory derived foremost from his experiences as a therapist, "on the basis of practical analytical experiences" (Rank 1927:1). This

is an important distinction to be kept in mind when reading Rank. Rank was a practicing psychological therapist. His thoughts on culture are consistently referred back to a practical and tangible basis.

For example, in the years following the emergence of his *Will Therapy* Rank wrote intensively about culture. In a two-year period he compiled four works including his *magnum opus, Art and Artist.* This prolific period followed upon a complete reformulation of Rank's psychological theory, specifically with *Will Therapy* but including developments contained in *The Trauma of Birth* and even *The Development of Psychoanalysis.* Rank clearly states that the cultural theory contained in the works following *Will Therapy* developed from his psychological idea of the will (Rank 1927:13) which, in turn, is claimed as a product of his analytical experience.

As both a psychological and cultural theorist Rank was the first, in an extensive manner, to relate modern psychological processes to cultural modes such as religion and mythology (Liebermann 1985:142). Rank's broad understanding of culture developed from years of both scholarly research and analytic experience. "Rank's uniqueness," says Esther Menaker quite rightly, "lies in his erudition of culture" (1982:ix).

Freud actively encouraged Rank's forays into culture, and seemed to welcome the products of these journeys. Rank's ability in this realm was undeniably one of the important bases for Freud's acceptance and enjoyment of Rank. Rank, it seems, was Freud's complement: he was lay, he was interested in philosophy and the arts, and he broadened psychoanalytic investigation to include the realm of culture. But Rank never aligned himself too closely with orthodox psychoanalytic theory. When his theoretical differences finally manifested themselves in print, Freud evidenced an attitude of unwavering intolerance.

A glance back to Fig. 2.1, aptly illustrates these aspects of Rank's relation to Freud. The works leading up to Rank's split with Freud comprise his first essay, five significant works on culture, and two works on psychological theory. The works on culture were all positively received by Freud who, by the time of the publishing of the second work, was rather concerned with theoretical uniformity. One might speculate that the basis for Freud's acceptance of the two somewhat controversial works on psychological theory was that they were both products of co-authorship. When Rank finally wrote independently in the realm of psychological theory with *The Trauma of Birth*, his difference in training and interest came to the fore and his relationship with Freud dissolved.

As a final observation Rank's first work, *The Artist*, his last work, *Beyond Psychology*, and his *magnum opus*, *Art and Artist* alike present a merger of psychological and cultural theory through a focus on the *person* of the artist. This is important for understanding Rank's view of culture. Although cultural artifacts might be seen to have a static quality about them, culture, for Rank, was a living reality. Moreover, Rank never lost sight of the dialectical fact that cultural forms were created by individual artists, and that such artists were invariably in service of the needs of society. Rank had a keen eye for the intimate relationship between human living and culture.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, Rank's writings display two major interests: that of culture and that of psychological theory. Both interests were affected by his break with Freud. With this split came a complete reformulation of Rank's psychological theory with a subsequent reappraisal of his theory of culture. Although Rank's interest in cultural theory as opposed to psychological

theory was the stronger of the two, the crystallization of his mature theory of culture derived from an extensive and prior reformulation of his psychological understanding.

CHAPTER THREE

Intellectual Influences on Rank: The Contribution of Freud, Nietzsche, and Kant.

Three seminal thinkers are the focus for a discussion of intellectual influences on Rank: Sigmund Freud, Friederich Nietzsche, and Immanuel Kant. Rank's thought can be seen as a blending of psychological theory, represented by Freud, and philosophical epistemology, represented by Kant. This combination was presaged in some respects in the works of Nietzsche, which Rank read for many years.

The question of influences in Rank's life is made difficult by the fact that Rank rarely quotes secondary sources. Rather, Rank almost exclusively presents only his opinion of a given writer to whom he is referring. But Rank cannot be understood without questioning the philosophical underpinnings of his formation. He spoke within the language of his age. It seems useful, therefore, to piece what is known ut those authors whom Rank read, together with the evidence of those whom he quotes in order to gain an understanding of the probable influences in his life. The discussion will begin with Sigmund Freud.

SIGMUND FREUD

The greatest influence in Rank's thought and life was Sigmund Freud. Although rarely quoted *verbatim*, Freud is mentioned extensively in most of Rank's writings. Rank began reading Freud in his early twenties and there-

after quickly adopted Freud's theories. The second of Rank's *Daybooks* evidences an immediate shift of focus, following mention of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams.* Psychological concepts such as "the unconscious" afterward became common expressions, and Rank's philosophical tone took on an overall psychological character. From this beginning, Rank's writing remained submerged in a Freudian idiom until the late 1920's. Rank's authorship by this time was substantial.

The bulk of Rank's writing was therefore cast in a Freudian terminology. After 1928, however, Rank disavowed any relationship to psychoanalysis. His writings became decidedly anti-Freudian, and central aspects of his terminology were recast; seemingly little of his twenty-year theoretical association with Freud was retained.

In light of this, what can be said of Rank's long-time and intimate association with Freud? It was mentioned in the previous chapter that Rank was always to some degree theoretically distant from Freud. Comparison to the works of Ernest Jones or Theodore Reik indicates that from the outset Rank stood at the edge of orthodox psychoanalytic theory. Rank's psychotherapeutic method, on the other hand, remained consistently orthodox, at least until his break with Freud. Rank consistently worked with the assumption that the basis of human behavior was to be found in the historical past of any given person: present-day psychological conflicts were to be understood in the light of a perceived historical origin.

Until his split with Freud, Rank's psychology was, therefore, a peculiar combination of orthodox method and creative theory. This combination is seen clearly in *The Trauma of Birth.* While remaining true to a psychobiological causality, this book replaces the father—the psychoanalytic cornerstone—with the mother as the primary figure in the life of the child. This

book, the beginning of the end of Rank's association with psychoanalysis, brought about an essential shift in Rank's method.

This shift was a rejection of psychological causality, a shift completed in Rank's *Will Therapy*, as indicated in chapter two. Writings published after this work show an explicit and sharp divergence from key Freudian ideas. Words such as "unconscious" and "origin" are replaced by "will" and "present experience". Moreover, the concept of psychological causation came under strict criticism. Rank became an outspoken opponent of psychoanalytic theory.

This analysis allows the following statements concerning Freud's influence on Rank. First, Freud's influence was time-specific and did not endure. Early on, Rank utilized a characteristically Freudian methodology, only to discard it after the publication of *The Trauma of Birth.* Freud, furthermore, seemed to have very little specific theoretical influence on Rank.

Second, Rank was psychologically oriented. He was a psychologist, and so was Freud. Although this orientation is in evidence at a time before Rank read Freud (Taft 1958:4ff), one can speculate that Rank's close association with Freud could only have embedded him more deeply in a psychological point of view. This is evidenced by the hardening of a psychological attitude in his *Daybooks* after reading Freud. From this point onward, Rank remained committed to a changing but consistently and thoroughly psychological viewpoint to the end of his life.

Third, one may speculate that Freud actually fostered Rank's development as a free-thinking individual. Rank's use of Freudian principles became an efficient catalyst for theoretical developments within him. This is illustrated by the fact that in Rank's later writings Freud became something of a backdrop against which Rank created his unique theories. Rank arrived at

his own position somewhat in reaction to Freudianism, "but also by the positive utilization of its material for a new development" (Taft in Rank 1926:viii). As a catalyst for this development Freud was seemingly essential.

FRIEDERICH NIETZSCHE

Rank refers to Nietzsche frequently in his writings. He seems to have had a long-standing affinity with Nietzsche which began when Rank started reading him at age thirteen. In a *Daybooks* entry Rank states that, "I virtually bathed in Nietzsche's genius" (in Taft 1958:44). Another entry extols Nietzsche as a "model, leader, and guide," (in Taft 1958:42)

This immersion in Nietzsche's writings seems to have cooled somewhat when Rank discovered Freud in 1904. Freud rather disliked Nietzsche, as he did philosophy in general, which may account for this cooling. In the minutes recorded by Rank for the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society meeting of 1 April 1908 Freud remarked that philosophy's

> abstract nature is so unpleasant to me that I will not study it. I do not know Nietzsche's work; occasional attempts at reading it were smothered by an excess of interest. Despite the similarities that many people have pointed out, I can assure you that Nietzsche's ideas have had no influence whatsoever on my own work (in Rank 1962:359-60).

Significant mention of Nietzsche after this is picked up only years later. In the second preface (1917) to *The Artist*, Rank calls Nietzsche a "direct philosophical forerunner" of psychoanalysis. Other references at this time show an equal enthusiasm for Nietzsche.

Later, Rank was again to remove himself from Nietzsche's abiding influence. In a letter to George Wilbur, dated 21 January 1931, Rank says:

> Your discovery of Nietzsche's influence is quite correct, particularly in earlier days, because lately I have emancipated

> myself from him too. But in stressing his influence on my development don't overlook the tremendous influence he had on Freud inasmuch as he has influenced all European thinking (in Taft 1958:143).

References to Nietzsche in Rank's works of this time are still evident although the overall tone of such references has a less urgent, more by-the-way character. Rank, at this time, also wrote some criticisms of Nietzsche.

All in all, Rank attributes one important aspect of his thought directly to Nietzsche. In *Truth and Reality* he says:

> Nietzsche's contribution...based on Schopenhauer's important discovery of the will, is the separation of the will from the guilt problem (the moral) (1927:18).

Rank repeats this reference in *Beyond Psychology*:

> Nietzsche, by approaching human problems culturally, saw more clearly for he recognized the moral conflict, both in the individual and in groups and nations, as the problem of problems. In this sense, Nietzsche appears as the first and only thinker who realized this problem and tried to liberate human psychology from its involvement with moral issues, which are foreign to it and only cloud the issue (1941:273).

Nietzsche's separation of moral issues from philosophical thinking became one of the cornerstones on which Rank built his mature psychological theory. Rank took Nietzsche's non-moral emphasis and expanded it into the realm of formal psychological thinking, culminating in what Rank has called his "ethical" or "epistemological psychology", that is, his psychology of the will. This psychology was characterized by an emphasis on human-relational dynamics, detailing the functional, almost mechanical role of such emotions as guilt and fear, with no recourse whatsoever to an evaluative, moral schema.

IMMANUEL KANT

In *Truth and Reality* Rank states:

> An epistemological psychology without flaw, that is neither moral nor religious as the Freudian system still is, must start at the point where Kant placed the problem. How can the individual determine himself from himself, or better, why does he do this with such difficulty (1927:61)?

In the last chapter of *Psychology and the Soul* Rank describes his will theory as an epistemological psychology strongly reminiscent of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. In this chapter Rank gives a full exposition of the philosophical underpinnings of his will theory, describing what he perceives to be the larger intellectual context for the development of that theory. Rank points to developments within scientific thought in general that he saw as paralleling the emergence of his idea of the individual will as an indeterminate entity, where individual elements are placed beyond any strict causality. Specifically, with Heisenberg's development of the quantum indeterminacy principle, Rank sees the failure of the causal notion as a real-world category (1930a:173). The precedent for this kind of non-causal thinking Rank sees in the philosophy of Kant. He says:

> Prior to precritical philosophy, science had been the image and photograph of reality. According to Kant it was rather an interpretation of reality which is governed by certain categorical premises. In Kant's sense the law of causality is a hypothesis which underlies experience ..., a postulate imposed by man on nature, and not...a law extracted from his knowledge of nature (1930a:169-70).

What defined Rank's will psychology as a radical departure from Freudian psychoanalysis was his distinctly non-causal viewpoint, a "relativity" psychology, having

> no fixed standpoint for the experimenter, but only a momentarily given relationship between the experimenter and the person studied, whose closeness varies dynamically at all times" (Rank 1930a:172).

This Kantian derivative is contrasted with popular psychological theorizing which,

> in the terminology of our natural science era, combines the causal way of thinking which seeks to explain facts by reducing them to relationships expressed as natural laws, with the cultural way of thinking which tries to comprehend the meaning and structure of mental phenomena (Rank 1930a:8-9).

Although Freud's theories may have changed rapidly and even extensively over the course of time, his "causal way of thinking", according to Rank, did not. "Strangely enough," muses Rank,

> Freud's theory has consistently become more causal during its development. In my opinion, this happened because the theory led into a blind alley. For in the "pleasure principle" which Freud established in 1911, there still lay a certain individual "freedom," despite the apparent biological influence of the sexual characteristic of pleasure on the principle. But the experience that man did not behave according to the pleasure principle drove Freud to considerations which entangled him still more deeply in the causal principle instead of leading him out of it. His "Beyond the pleasure principle" could have become a "Beyond the causal principle," had he not sought shelter in a more comprehensive causality (1930a:187).

Rank's theory of the will, with its stated importance as *the* fundamental element of human psychology, comprised Rank's leap "beyond the causal principle". Again, Rank finds a precursor to this theoretical leap in Kant.

Does Rank's reference to Kant depict an influence or a parallel development? Rank seems to imply the latter. He says:

> I did not simply hypostasize freedom of will out of subjective experience or deduce it philosophically, but was rather

> driven to it as the physicists had been driven to "chance," by a too strict application of determinism, to mental phenomena in this instance. I have pursued to its ultimate consequences the principle of causality which Freud applied to psychic events in a naive "physical" way, and have been led inexorably to a point where I simply had to derive mental phenomena from a "causality of willing" in order to understand them. My conception was not that the principle of causality was "false," but that it no longer sufficed for our current level of awareness because its psychological meaning had undermined its heuristic value (1930a:171).

It seems that Rank came to a deep appreciation of Kant only after the crystallization of his will psychology. Kant is rarely mentioned before this in Rank's writings, but thereafter he figures prominently in his description of the philosophical basis of his psychology. Kant's philosophy as a historical event represented for Rank the initiation and emergence of a type of thinking whose consequences spread into such differing realms as psychology, philosophy, and physics. In the realm of psychology it was Rank who thoroughly applied the Kantian viewpoint.

CONCLUSION

Two of the three key influences on Rank's thought were philosophers. This is in contrast to other colleagues of Freud whose predominating influence, as was Freud's, was that of medical science and medical psychology. The basis for Rank's psychology, however, lay elsewhere in the realm of art and human creativity. Rank's humanistic emphasis became the basis for such later popular psychologies as Fritz Perls' (1947) *gestalt* psychology and the non-directive therapy of Carl Rogers (1942, 1951). Rank's emphasis on the will combined the influence of Nietzsche and Kant into a philosophical framework wherein the individual was seen as primary, where emotions

were seen to serve specific sociological as opposed to moral functions, and where human art and creativity played a predominant role.

CHAPTER FOUR

Distinctive Features of Rank'sTheory of Psychology

Rank's mature psychological theory was developed in the works following *The Trauma of Birth*, as noted in chapter two. Rank called his theory a will psychology. It is detailed primarily in his book *Will Therapy*, although significant elucidations are contained in the works following this book.

The theory revolves around a few fundamental, overlapping concepts. The presentation of the theory below follows the definition and discussion of these concepts as capsulized in three words found in the theory. These are will, interpretation and difference.

WILL

Rank chose the title *Will Therapy* for the English translation of his *Technik*. The book contains the core of his mature post-Freudian psychology, and the title reflects Rank's discovery of the notion of the will as the broadest ranging idea in his psychological theory. In her introduction to *Will Therapy*, the translator writes that following this formative discovery,

> all the material which he has been collecting in twenty years of analytic practice, all the new discoveries he has tried to see in Freudian terms are thrown into sudden illumination and take their places with startling consistency in an orientation that is basic not only for therapy but for a living psychology of human beings. He has the key now to a final and convincing critique of Freudian doctrine and method, but what is more important, he has the basis for his own philosophic development (in Rank 1926:xx).

The concept of will was always strong in voluntaristic philosophy. From Fichte, to Schopenhauer, to Kierkegaard, to Nietzsche, the concept of will played an important role. Will was likewise respected by early psychological theorists, including William James (Liebermann 1985:355). With the emergence of the scientific psychologies of Freud and the behaviorists—the two great poles of psychology after World War I—the term suddenly disappeared. It came to be considered an anachronism, a metaphysical notion of days gone by (Liebermann 1985:356).

Rank's adoption and extensive use of the term risked obvious misunderstanding. It is perhaps not surprising that his will theory was openly resisted in certain circles simply because of his use of the word "will". In 1932, at the First International Congress on Mental Hygeine, Rank read a paper on emotional development in children in relationship to will. One commentator responded by saying:

> I have read and reread Dr. Rank's paper, and each time I asked myself what it was all about.... I decided that the paper was interesting as a museum specimen.... Dr. Rank's paper...reminds me, in its talk about *the will* and *the intellect*, that here we have some dear old ideas we learned about when we were very young.... I don't think we are so easily taken in (Proceedings 144).

The sentiment expressed in this quote is probably representative of the general attitude in Rank's day toward the term, however it may have been understood.

Rank, however, felt very confident about his use of the term, although his understanding of it bears little resemblance to its use by the philosophers and early psychologists mentioned above. Rank says:

> My re-introduction of the will concept into psychology solves a succession of problems in such a simple and satisfying way that it may seem to some a deus ex machina. But I

> know I have not brought it in as such; on the contrary that I have busied myself long and intensively in the attempt to solve certain problems which psychoanalysis had brought up anew without coming to a satisfactory solution. Only after a struggle against prejudices of every kind did the acceptance of will as a psychological factor of the first rank seem unavoidable but soon also became a matter of course, so much a matter of course that I had to say to myself that only a tremendous resistance could have hindered the complete recognition and evaluation of will as a great psychic power (1927: 13).

What Rank denotes by the term "will" is a complex of ideas that are at best difficult to articulate. Generally speaking, the term refers to human individuality, or perhaps better to the problem of human individuality. As a social psychologist Rank viewed individuality within the larger framework of human sociality, and therefore as an ambivalence-laden fact of human living. Humans are at once social and individual creatures, and the requirements of psychological individuality live in a dynamic tension with the requirements of our social nature. The will, for Rank, stands as the mediator between these opposing poles and is that agent which synthesizes a creative response out of life's competing interests. The will represents at once human individuality and action.

This is reflected in Rank's technical definition of will, given as follows. "I understand by will a positive guiding organization and integration of self which utilizes creatively, as well as inhibits and controls the instinctual drives" (1926: 111-12). In a later, similarly energetic formulation, deriving from his last work, he writes:

> I mean rather an autonomous organizing force in the individual which does not represent any particular biological impulse or social drive but constitutes the creative expression of the total personality and distinguishes one individual from another. This individual will, as the united and balancing force between impulses and inhibition, is the decisive psychological factor in human behavior (1941:50).

The will is here seen as a mediating, consolidating psychological factor. As the ground on which the compromises of human living are struck, the will is therefore something of a locus of conflict within the self.

The will, furthermore, *is* the self, the conscious, feeling ego. Says Rank, "without consciousness there is no will in the psychological sense and without will no consciousness" (1926: 50) Conscious selfhood, for Rank, representing the center of personality and decision-making, lives within the continual conflicts of interest of human life process and is decidedly painful. This painfulness is manifested as a form of primary ambivalence within the self, which, because of the duality of human interests, cannot be removed through educational or therapeutic means:

> Man suffers from a fundamental dualism, however one may formulate it, and not from a conflict created by forces in the environment which might be avoided by a "correct bringing up" or removed by later re-education (psychoanalysis) (1926:122).

This is Rank's primary conception of the human person, and it informs every aspect of his understanding. (So pervasive is the idea of dualism in Rank's writings that 37 of the 51 chapter titles of the five books written at this time reflect a dualistic structure.) Rank's thoughts on neurosis are a mere derivative of this conception as indicated by the following:

The conflict among opposing tendencies in the individual is not, as it first appeared to be, the cause of the neurosis, but the very basis of life, and the neurosis is only the expression of dissatisfaction with this condition of life, in the last analysis, a refusal of life itself (Rank 1926:108).

In Ernest Becker's words, neurosis, for Rank, "sums up all the problems of a human life" (1973:176-7), including, especially, those of a more universal nature. Says Rank, the individual will has not only to settle this or

that particular problem, "but the life problem itself, which must be affirmed by the individual instead of being denied" (1926:108).

A curious, though central, aspect of Rank's understanding of will is that conscious recognition of individual self-autonomy and self-reliance is extremely difficult. Most mental activity, as will be seen below in the section on interpretation, constitutes for Rank attempts on the part of the individual to avoid such recognition, resulting in a fine line between normality and neurosis. Ernest Becker has stated Rank's understanding concisely:

> In order to function normally, man has to achieve from the beginning a serious constriction of the world and of himself. We can say that the essence of normality is the *refusal of reality*. What we call neurosis enters in precisely at this point: Some people have much more trouble with their lies than others. The world is too much with them, and the techniques they have developed for holding it at bay and cutting it down to size finally begin to choke the person himself. This is neurosis in a nut-shell (1973:178).

Because of the nature of the self, the inability to affirm the basic conditions of life leads to a denial of individuality. As the individual shuts down the feeling of life's conflictual nature, including the range of emotions from fear to terror which guide an individual in a particular course of action, conscious responsibility in decision-making is denied. The problem of neurosis, as such, resolves itself as "a problem of individuality" (Rank 1926:49), and revolves around the issue concerning the acceptance or rejection of the self and self-responsibility in relation to life pain. Speaking precisely to this issue, Rank begins the formal presentation of his will psychology with the following statement:

> The psychological problem par excellence makes its appearance with this question, why we must always deny the will, call it now God, now Fate, or attribute to it an "id". In other words, the essential problem of psychology is our abolition

> of the fact of will and its varying interpretation at different times (1926:10).

The psychological problem of consciousness concerns not this or that historical content, idea, or event, according to Rank, but the actual *form* of expression as a means for the displacement of the present emotional matrix. For, as he says:

> All psychic life is anchored in the present; the regressive as well as the progressive tendencies of the individual both respond to the pressure to get loose from the present which with its willing and knowing is so painful. This is the authentic psychological problem of the so-called "reality problem," which is nothing but the problem of the present, in other words, the consciousness of living. The tendency to get free of it is perhaps the strongest psychic force in the individual, as it manifests in striving after happiness and salvation (Rank 1926:41).

Rank's will psychology is therefore a psychology of the present. Rank says in regard to this that "there certainly are no unconscious complexes, nor even an unconscious in the topical sense of the word" (1926:28).

> The undischarged, unreleased, or traumatic experiences are not repressed into the unconscious and there preserved, but rather are continued permanently in actual living, resisted, carried through to an ending or worked over into entirely new experiences. Here in actual experience...is contained not only the whole present but also the whole past (1926:28).

Because of this carrying-forward of life experience and pain in consciousness itself, the tendency to escape such consciousness, as stated above, "is perhaps the strongest psychic force in the individual," which might seem a reasonable strategy for a creature able to feel self-generated pain. In a will psychology, says Rank, "the emphasis on content is transferred to the understanding of the necessity for displacement and denial" (1926:28).

The will, as such, represents a fundamental problem. And as a problem of life and personality, the will finds emotional representation in the feeling of guilt. Says Rank:

> Psychoanalysis itself has finally come up against the clearly insurmountable guilt problem which rules the analytic situation in such a central fashion because it represents not only the nuclear problem of the neurosis, but also of the formation of personality in general (1926:2).

Rank sees guilt as "an ethical problem...found in every human relationship" (1926:2). As a derivative of human sociality, guilt inheres in the fact of individuality and as such presents itself as *the* practical problem of psychology. Guilt is "a universal problem" (Rank 1926:10) and infects all manner of human living.

On a functional level, guilt for Rank represents something of a feeling check within the individual to curb excessive individualization. Says Rank, "guilt arises from the ego development of the individual" (1926:72). Because of its regulatory function within the psyche there can be no will—no individuality—without guilt. With individualization comes the feeling of guilt "as unavoidable as the heat produced by friction in machinery." (Rank, 1926:163) Rank refers to this situation as the will-guilt problem (1926:10) and sees it as the prototype for all human suffering.

Rank criticizes Freud's Oedipus concept in light of both the pervasiveness and inevitability of guilt. He says:

> The patient suffers not from the fact that he wants to destroy his father and marry his mother, but much more because he cannot, that is, because he is not able to will without getting guilt feeling which is the real psychological problem (1926:29).

Guilt, says Rank, is not created by forces external to the individual because it springs from our own willing, "which does not stop at the death blow to the

father and the sexual conquest of the mother" (1926:50). The problem of Oedipus, says Rank, is a problem of knowledge and not of reality. As "an overweening riddle solver", Oedipus represents the "intellectualist who fails to explain the deepest problems of men rationally in not recognizing the primary phenomena underlying them" (1926:51).

> In the Oedipus saga all evil arises not from doing, but knowing or wanting to know, for which one must finally take over responsibility oneself instead of putting it on fate, or the Gods, or the unconscious (Rank 1926:51).

INTERPRETATION

The question of causality was fundamental to Rank's psychological thinking and informed his theory of the psychology of the individual. Rank's understanding of psychological individuality was very similar to the understanding of individual elements contained in the emergent physical theories of his day. In both, the individual is considered something of an unmeasurable entity because of the problems associated with individual freedom. Rank says that

> in psychology as in physics there is greater freedom the more one advances from masses to elements, and the smaller and finer one conceives these elements to be. Psychologically, that means that the more one approaches the individual and the more completely one analyzes his elements, the more difficult it becomes to justify strict determinism and causality (1930a:174-5).

Rank felt that any psychological interpretation of individuality represented a false or improper use of the causal principle. The attempts of causal psychological theorizing to achieve an individual psychology resulted, according to Rank, in a theory of "'the statistical average,' as Freud's normal psychology, Adler's social psychology, and Jung's collective psychology all betray"

(1930a:175). A theory of psychological normalcy "derives laws of 'average events' from observation, but is unable to explain the behavior of an individual in a particular situation" (1930a: 175). The reason for this is that, as a derivative equation, a norm cannot be used to explain that from which it is derived, that is, the common affairs of an individual's life. Any norm, by definition, represents merely the summed average of all deviations, and in a real sense, therefore, does not exist. This is especially true, according to Rank, for psychology. To understand neurosis, say, as Freud does, as a deviance from the normal, simply makes no sense on methodological grounds. For Rank, there is no valid psychological theory of the individual that can be utilized in a therapeutic framework, and scientific psychology, in this strict sense, is an impossibility, a contradiction in terms:

> The theory which had evolved from a therapeutically oriented understanding of man into a scientifically motivated knowledge of self yielded only a psychology of the psychological type of man who still yearned to become unpsychological and more like the "normal man" whose psychology science always wanted to find but could not, because he had none (1930a:10).

The "normal man" simply does not exist. On this account, Rank rejected a statistical, mass causality in favor of what he called an "actual" causality which he says corresponds to the idea of "action at point of contact" expressed in Einsteinian relativity theory (1930a:172-3). "For the individual simply lies beyond lawfulness," says Rank, "and cannot be comprehended or explained by the causality either of natural or social science" (1930a: 175). For Rank, a correct formulation of the problem, in the sense of clarifying the limits of causal psychological research, is deemed more important—especially in the realm of psychology—than any attempts to solve it. "The error of problem formulation," he says, "itself results from confusion of practical and the-

oretical points of view" (1930a:176)—a criticism especially of Freud's psychology that Rank had been developing strongly since his 1924 book with Ferenczi. What popular psychology desires, according to Rank, is the prediction and control of individual behavior, which, on grounds of theory alone, Rank deems impossible.

Rank ultimately sees the source for the desire to control in the attempt of psychology to reduce or mitigate the painful aspects of life: the need to choose between irreconcilables, the caprice of circumstance, the fearful character of individual smallness and vulnerability. Freud's psychic causality is a case in point. Representing a purely historical causality, Freud's psychology "tries to explain the present completely in terms of the past" (Rank 1930a: 176). At the same time, however,

> this causal understanding is obliged to function as the therapeutically effective agent, by effecting a different manner of reacting to the present (1930a:176).

What Freud's system really accomplishes, according to Rank, is a "displacement of certain actual impulses *from* present experience" (1930a:176), and not an actual change in the individual in question. A "therapeutic" effect is nonetheless produced, but finds its significance in the element of displacement:

> The individual does not really want to go back because the past was at that time any better or even less painful, but only because it was "then", because it is already past. The present is always more painful, because it is present; that is, actual willing and feeling for the neurotic type just increases the tormenting self-consciousness (1926:41).

For Rank there exists nothing historical as such,

> but only the present, that is, willing and feeling, thinking and consciousness. From which it follows that psychology

> itself, a pure psychology, cannot be historically oriented, cannot be static but only dynamic (Rank, 1926:42).

Rank's emphasis, again, is on the need for the "emotional denial of the present experience" (1926:42). "This act," he says, "stands at the service of the ego which wants to conserve, preserve, defend, and justify itself" (1930a:178). Rank argues that the tendency toward denial is not to be underestimated, and that popular systems of psychology which actually foster denial are popular for just that reason:

> In its application to the psychic, therefore, the causality principle means a denial of the will principle since it makes the thinking, feeling, and acting of the individual dependent on forces outside of himself and thus frees him from responsibility and guilt (Rank 1926:44).

As will become clear in the final chapter, Rank sees displacement as a fundamentally religious process, which he states as follows:

> Psychic causality differs from the natural science kind in the fact that with the latter we have an endless chain of causes which one must close some time by setting up a primary cause (1926:44).

In the case of psychic causality, this search for the psychic first cause represents a practical impossibility

> and in the last analysis is based on faith whether we have to do with the naive release of religion which places the individual will in Almighty God as primary cause or with any kind of primary force, in which we may still recognize the denied individual will (Rank 1926: 44).

Again, the causal theories of Freud, Jung, and Adler, in shifting responsibility from the individual, attempt a "consolation which is in no way inferior to spiritual belief or religious consolation" (Rank 1930a:179). For Rank, the failure of these psychologies as true psychologies of the individual refers back to the issue of interpretation. He says:

> One cannot deny that each of these authors covers all sides of the total problem to a certain extent, but in his ambition to find the psychological explanation of phenomena, each fails to study the varying and peculiar values involved, including that of explanation itself, which is only an interpretation of phenomena (1930a:89).

Rank says that regardless of the packaging, religious or scientific, displacement seems the key to therapy. But displacement as scientific psychological explanation bears the cost of increasing of increasing self-consciousness.

> As long as it is projection it is helpful and therapeutic, because it is illusory. With increasing self-consciousness and growing self-insight, this psychology becomes destructive until, with further awareness of the truth about one's own self, it ends in a feeling of utter powerlessness. The victory of knowledge about nature may not be crowned by one of knowledge of self-knowledge—too dearly. Although man's control of nature by knowledge is his greatest victory, his correspondingly greater self-awareness becomes his greatest defeat. (1930a:185)

Why Rank thought the growth of self-consciousness worked against therapeutic effectiveness is discussed in chapter six.

Scientific psychology, in Rank's view, "gives the individual only a new kind of excuse for his willing and a release from the responsibility of consciousness" (1926:45). The effective agent for this release from conscious responsibility is the psychic scapegoat that Rank names theoretical causality, or, in a word, interpretation, which "only represents a wish to deny the incalculability of one's own fate by the assumption of natural lawfulness" (Rank 1930a:187-8). The mind, therefore, exhibits a deepseated "compulsion to interpretation" (Rank 1927:10), which Rank designates in other references as "human mentality" (1930a:122). This, and not any particular mental content, is, for Rank, the object of psychological research. "The materials of psychology are not facts, but ideologies," he says, "which again are not simply facts re-

lated to a definite reality, but ideologies related to a definite mentality" (1930a:89)—such mentality being the interpretive mindset.

Rank's dynamic therapy grew out of his mature thought on the fundamental role of the interpretive gesture in human mental affairs. Rank's understanding of interpretation filtered into every aspect of his thought, especially his understanding of culture, the subject of chapter five. Rank viewed culture as a mental phenomenon. Cultural forms were "materialized" interpretations, and their sense and meaning were were derived from a psychology of individuality.

DIFFERENCE

Difference and separation are related concepts in Rank's mature thought. The term difference is perhaps more philosophical in character, the term separation more psychological. Beyond this, little can be said to distinguish the two terms in Rank's writings. They will therefore be treated together.

The concept of separation first surfaced in a significant form in Rank's *The Trauma of Birth*. In this work Rank took physical parturition at birth to be the prototype for all later sufferings. The actual birth trauma was described as an unsuccessful physical separation from the mother (Rank 1924a:5). In Rank's will psychology the concept of separation gained a metaphorical flavor and was deemed a psychological factor of primary importance.

Looking back at *The Trauma of Birth* Rank says: "When I wrote it I did not understand it myself. The book is really a great vision of separation governing the universe" (Letter to George Wilbur in Liebermann 1985:317). Recalling the discussion of will, it was noted that Rank took individuality to represent a fundamental human problem: individuality apparently cannot be

admitted without great cost. Neurosis, in turn, was presented as a refusal of life process, or a refusal of the basic conditions and cost of living, a notion that is reiterated in his concept of separation/difference. Rank says:

> Separation...is one of the fundamental life principles. All organic evolution itself rests upon separation, but only the conscious knowledge of this life principle on the part of man who can preserve or call back the past in his memory, or can imagine the future in his memory, gives to the concept and the feeling of separation the fundamental psychic meaning (Rank 1926:72).

Separation is seen as fundamental to life process in general—a principle of evolution—and is given individual import through the human faculty of consciousness and memory. In the section on interpretation, Rank's critique of the popular psychologies of Freud, Jung, and Adler derived in part from the manner in which he saw these psychologies to block natural individuation. The unburdening attempts at denial, for Rank, serve to bind the individual to a regressive or restrictive psychological framework. Rank's message is that the denial of human freedom represents a self-constriction and that such denial admits a certain functional slavery into the daily affairs of those concerned. Vital aspects of the whole self are thus restricted, and with greater restriction, the more the ego becomes an unreal entity. For, as he says, "only with the cutting off of all these [denial] possibilities does the own ego become real, does the individual recognize and accept himself as independent of the other" (1926:81).

The problem of neurosis, from this vantage point, says Rank, "is a separation problem" (1926:73). Neurosis represents a blocking of the human life principle, the conscious ability to endure release and separation, first from the biological power represented by the parents, and finally from the lived

out parts of the self which this power represents, and which obstructs the development of individual personality (Rank 1926:72).

This understanding of the inability of certain individuals to bear the natural life processes of separation and individualization caused Rank to see individual suffering as rooted in a feeling of one's own difference. He says:

> The neurotic frequently introduces his story with the remark that he has felt himself different from others from childhood.... Regardless of how far this feeling is correct historically in terms of actual content, at all events it is psychologically true insofar as the individual traces his difficulties, his sufferings, back to his difference. Whether this difference has belonged to the individual from childhood, whether it first appeared through painful experiences of later life, or whether it does not come to full consciousness at all, it exists, is given in the very fact of his individuality, which apparently he can neither accept nor affirm, but must deny.... Accordingly, the individual suffers from his difference, from his individuality (1926:46-7).

Rank thus named his psychology "a psychology of difference" in his final work (1941:29), expressing his understanding of the individual's root fear of isolation. As a consequence of the realities associated with isolation—the accentuation of personal smallness and the loss of unburdening supports beyond the self—humans, according to Rank, exhibit a strong urge to identification and likeness.

This tendency is borne out in the English word "like". To express acceptance of a given person, place or thing, we use the word "like", as in, "I like this," or "I like that". This manner of articulation, according to Rank, is done from a purely egocentric point of view, and refers back to the most primitive form of classification which

> classifies things of the outer world, psychologically speaking, into those belonging to the ego, and therefore forming a part of it, and those not belonging to the ego, which are therefore foreign or hostile to it (1932b:120).

The English word "difference" is equally interesting. It has the same etymological root as the word "suffer", being the Latin *ferre*, "to bear" (*Oxford English Dictionary*:722; henceforth O.E.D.). The word "bear", in turn, refers to both the act of birth, and the act of carrying, as in to bear a burden. The concepts of suffering and difference are therefore intimately linked in probably what is the most fundamental form of human expression, language, and both are referred to the act of birth as a fundamentally painful process. One can hardly resist mentioning in this context the evolution of Rank's idea of separation from his naive theory in *The Trauma of Birth* to his sophisticated understanding of human suffering in *Will Therapy*.

And so the individual grasps for something of "like" quality external to the ego. Says Rank:

> Such craving for likeness in the face of all the multiform differences—individual, social and racial—originates in man's need to counteract the negative aspect of individualization, in the last analysis, death (Rank 1941:55).

Separation fear for Rank is also a fear of life, which again brings in the elements of ambivalence and dualism. He says that people exhibit a fear of life, "which...seems to me actually the fear of having to live as an isolated individual" (1926:124), and that the fear of death represents the fear of the loss of this dearly bought individuality.

> Between these two fear possibilities, these poles of fear, the individual is thrown back and forth all his life, which accounts for the fact that we have not been able to trace fear back to a single root, or to overcome it therapeutically (Rank 1926:124).

Ernest Becker puts it as follows:

> A person spends years coming into his own, developing his talent, his unique gifts, perfecting his discriminations about the world, broadening and sharpening his appetite, learning

> to bear the disappointments of life, becoming mature, seasoned—finally a unique creature in nature, standing with some dignity and nobility and transcending the animal condition; no longer driven, no longer a complete reflex, not stamped out of any mold. And then the real tragedy...: that it takes sixty years of incredible suffering and effort to make such an individual, and then he is only good for dying (1973:269).

From this angle of the fear of separation and difference, Rank presents another critique of psychological therapy. Rank felt that the success of the popular psychologies of his day was due to the manner in which they gave their adherents an ideal framework wherein individual difference was shrouded and concealed. His comments on the psychologies of Freud, Jung, and Adler were as follows:

> In his remedy, the developing of "social feeling" in the individual, Adler was striving for a kind of equalization from within, whereas Freud's "adjustment" aims at external uniformity. Jung [saw]...the individual's salvation ...[in] sublimation...[whereby] the individual, according to Jung, makes use of the symbolism in his racial unconscious, thus achieving as it were a kind of collectivity within his own self (1941:37).

The conclusion drawn by Rank was that psychological therapy, popularly conceived and practiced, consisted primarily of creating a new unity or collectivity for the individual.

> Freud sees it in sex, Adler in social fellowship and Jung in racial collectivity. In this sense, psychology is searching for a substitute for the cosmic unity (Rank 1941:37).

Again, as Becker puts it:

> It is no wonder that when therapies strip man down to his naked aloneness, to the real nature of experience and the problem of life, they slip into some kind of metaphysic of power and justification from beyond. How can the person be left there trembling and alone (1973:275)?

More on this particular critique of modern psychology will follow in chapter six. Rank's understanding of separation/difference shares many of the important elements contained in his concepts of will and interpretation. All three terms overlap in important ways, yet they all are needed to express something of the breadth of Rank's psychological theory. Rank's conception of will contains within itself the problematic human dynamic of separation, its emotional consequences, and the individual attitude toward these consequences. Interpretations serve only to expiate the will-guilt problem in service of a denial of human isolation and responsibility. The three terms thus combine to form a complex understanding of the interpretive structure that constitutes the core of Rank's psychology. The application of this psychology to a study of culture comprised the bulk of Rank's later writings on culture, to which this study moves in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

Rank's Theory of Culture

The present chapter discusses the cultural theory which grew out of Rank's mature psychology. In this psychology, the suffering of one's own individual difference was seen to be the core human problematic, determining the nature and scope of human mental activity. Thinking, for Rank, is a property of organismic life and is seen to serve specific organismic goals. It thus more closely approximates a type of "strategizing" than it does, say, a dispassionate, deductive reasoning. Rank calls this strategizing a "creative" activity whose goal is the betterment and furtherance of the individual in question. Cultural expression represents for Rank one important manifestation—an externalization of sorts—of such mental activity. As a mental derivative, cultural expression therefore reiterates the fundamental will-problem lying at the core of human living. Rank's cultural theory thus expands his psychological understanding into the material and objectifying processes of creative human expression. This expansion is mirrored in Rank's works in which he comments on the growth of his awareness of the will problem:

> The problem soon presented itself to me as a universal one, going far beyond the critique of psychoanalysis. Why must the will be denied if it plays so great a role in reality...(1927:13)?

Again:

> Why is the will valued as bad, evil, reprehensible, unwelcome, when it is the power which consciously and positively, yes even creatively, forms both self and the environment? If one puts the problem thus, then one sees at the same time that this apparently necessary contradiction is not only the basic problem of all psychology, but lies at the root of all religious dogma as well as of all philosophic speculation.... The problem therefore is not peculiarly psychoanalytic, not even purely psychological, but *cultural* and human (1927:13/14; emphasis mine).

The psychological and the cultural merge with this formulation. The problem of will, as a particularly human problem of life and living, is seen as both a psychological and a general cultural problem.

Rank's thoughts on culture are complex and will be presented in three sections. Under the section entitled "Phenomenology" is presented Rank's view of the fact of culture, of the simple existence of a cultural modality. In the second section, named "Psychology", Rank's understanding of the content of cultural systems is examined. The final section, "Process", is devoted to a discussion of Rank's view of cultural change and the role of consciousness in this change.

PHENOMENOLOGY

A prevailing theme in Rank's work is that culture is a distinct *phenomenon*. Although his general theory of culture saw many changes, it is fair to say that Rank's phenomenological idea of culture remained constant over time. Culture, for Rank, is a distinct phenomenon. It is an entity analogous to a biological species: it had a time when it did not exist, an emergence, a development, and evidences a functioning unique to anything be-

side it. The demonstration of this functioning and of culture's phenomenological nature was the goal of all Rank's writings on culture.

Illustrating his phenomenological idea of culture, Rank says:

> Specialists in the fields of archaeology, anthropology and sociology are re-constructing from relics of bygone civilizations the characteristic patterns of various culture periods. Here we are not interested in any specific civilization nor do we intend to draw conclusions by comparing material pertaining to different civilizations. On the contrary, we have in mind an approach which is "algebraic," because it deals with the general problem of why and how the human being built up civilization at all and with it a civilized self (1941:64).

Again, he writes:

> ...we merely think that the problem as to how the phenomenon in question arose at all—no matter when and where—is entitled to be considered as at least worthy of an attempt at solution (1941:xliii).

And finally:

> My human interpretation conceives of the supernatural as basically identical with what we call "culture," which is after all made up of things non-existent in nature. I mean by that not only all spiritual values of mankind, from the early soul-belief to religion, philosophy, and its latest offspring psychology, but also social institutions (1941:63).

"Culture" is the humanly created. It is made up of things non-existent in "nature". In respect to simple biological functioning culture represents an added factor. The specifically human, in effect, is delimited from the natural. Culture, as therefore "super" natural, is the distinguishing mark of the human. Rank says, "the supernatural [is] the really human element, in contradistinction to the biological life which is *natural* (*homo naturalis*)" (1941:63). Again:

> Man no matter under how primitive conditions, never did live on a purely biological, that is, on a simple natural basis.

> The most primitive people known to us show strange and complicated modes of living which become intelligible only from their supernatural meaning (1941: 62).

What is important about Rank's emphasis on the cultural as the supernatural is, first, that human living is not self-evident. Even in its most primitive or simple form, human living is "complicated" and difficult to understand. It is not just simply "natural" and begs a complex explanation. This, and not a simple nature/culture dualism, is central to Rank's intent.

Secondly, culture is supernatural in the sense that cultural expression represents a denial of the natural (1941:273). If pain is natural, what better way to dispose of it than to live in a self-created supernatural reality? Culture, then, represents the building up of a second reality distinct from biological givenness, a humanly created "reality" in which "all experience is played out more or less potentially without actual happening" (1932b:106). In principle, culture thus provides for "an internal phantom existence without actualized experience, but one in which the individual does not necessarily become conscious of its illusory nature" (1932b:106). The pleasure associated with this mode of living, says Rank, comes through the avoidance of real-life expenditure

> which is, basically, in the escape that it provides from life itself and, behind all, from the fear that is inseparable from real life and experience (1932b:106).

Is it no wonder that the idea of human specialness is central to cultural expression? Humans simply cannot be the same as other animals, for the world of nature is decidedly painful and full of grief. The Christian Church has held tenaciously to the idea that only humans have souls. What is the significance of this curious expression, over which human blood has been spilt? Rank would answer that the complex logic behind such assertions leads back to the question of the nature of cultural expression which, as a re-

pudiation of a necessary element of natural life process, *must* hold to the idea of human difference vis a vis the world of animal biology. The human psychic economy does not lend itself to an easy recognition of this reality, which is why Rank stated that "only a tremendous resistance" (1927:13) could have kept him from the complete recognition of his will psychology.

There are some compelling features to Rank's cultural phenomenology. First, it is open to the emergence of new cultural systems. Rank deciphered ancient and modern lifestyles from the point of view of human creative activity. Culture is therefore not place-specific and dependent upon technological development. Culture is conceived to be an active element in human living in general and is not extinguished by but rather adapts itself to new thought-modes and external environments.

Secondly, Rank's generous perspective allowed him to see cultural activity as an unbroken continuity from ancient to modern time. "Culture develops," says Rank, "neither geographically nor anthropologically, but from [an] inner...need" (1941: 32). This quotation describes culture's genesis as deriving from an internal motivation, an "inner need". The human self, for Rank, is a cultural self, and remains so over time. Rank therefore saw continuity where others thought discontinuity to prevail, such as with the development as psychology as a new cultural reality.

PSYCHOLOGY

As an expression of human mentality, culture, for Rank, operates on the principles of human psychology. The roots for Rank's cultural understanding are thus found in his psychological theory.

For Rank, cultural systems are ideologies. Etymologically, ideology denotes "idea" or "mental". This meaning corresponds very closely to

Rank's intended use of the term. Rank says: "Peoples as well as individuals live by ideologies.... Ideologies are expressions of life power and represent attitudes toward life and its basic facts" (1930a:44). The term "ideology" might be likened to Rank's term "interpretation" as used in his psychological theory. They both indicate the symbolic or ideational framework within which human beings live their complex social lives. Symbolic frameworks are interpretive frameworks.

Because cultural systems and expressions exist as incarnations and materializations of psychological attitudes, the meaning of any and all cultural expressions is derived from "the most general principles of the development of personality" (Rank 1932b:369). As presented in the last chapter, these are the life-principles of separation and individuation, to which the individual reacts with pain and guilt. Rank says concerning this reaction:

> The human individual must have at his disposal from the start some sort of ideology, even if of the most primitive kind (such as the notion of good and evil), not only that he may find his place in the society which is built up on these ideas, but also that he may find relief from the inner conflicts.... This ideologization of inner conflicts manifests itself in the individual in a form which psychoanalysis has called that of "identification" with parents, teachers, and other ideal patterns.... The motive of these identifications is the individual's root fear of isolation (1932b:370).

For Rank the desire to identify with something external to the ego is a primary, operant factor in cultural expression. Cultural expression, says Rank, "presents a unity, alike in its effect and in its creation" (1932b:113). The intended effect is "the potential *restoration* of a union with the Cosmos, which once existed and was then lost" (Rank 1932b:113). "The individual urge to restore this lost unity is...an essential factor in the production of cultural values" (Rank 1932b:113). Rank sees that cultural expression serves a collectiviz-

ing or identifying function, "collective" here referring to something generically extra-individual. Cultural expression serves to bind the solitary ego with a larger external entity in an attempt to mitigate basic human sufferings.

The creation of art-forms as a reflex response to separation is the dominant picture Rank paints of cultural expression. Cultural ideologies effect an identification of the individual with the greater "beyond" of society and the universe. This identification may be wrought through social organization (as in church membership) or through symbolic expression (as in union with God, to continue the analogy). Usually, for Rank, both are included in a given cultural framework, although the important point is that the identification factor remains prominent. This identifying has the characteristic of being a denial of will:

> The entire history of human development, and not merely of man's spiritual development, shows how the individual gradually negates and denies his own will in order to justify it, and how he seeks to extirpate it when justification is impossible (Rank 1930a:183).

Individualization separates the person out of comfortable "beyonds", compelling one toward ever more complex forms of ideological self-justification. Because of the denial element, mental expressions veer away from what Rank calls the "real" in service of conceiving of 'what is not yet', of 'what should be', of 'what will be', of 'what used to be', of 'what can be'—all of which, he argues, is in a literal sense unreal. Thought-expressions have an unreal element written into their very operation. Rank says, "In the creation of ideologies we have to deal with [an] unreal factor" (1932b:102). Further:

> not only is the unreal character of...ideologies obvious, but their unreal origin also: that is, their unreal motivation in the individual. Thus at the very commencement of human development...we have the unreal element as the decisive factor which led to [cultural] expression (Rank 1932b:102-3).

Culture, therefore, stands as a mediating phenomenon, bridging the world of human thought with actuality, "realizing the unreal and rendering it concrete" (Rank 1932b:103). Again:

> Human development consists in a continually progressive concretization of phenomena that were originally purely ideal or spiritual. In this sense, the whole of cultural development is an artistic, or at least artificial, attempt to objectify human ideologies (1932b:103).

Because of the prominence of this unreal element, cultural expression, for Rank, is a form of belief. He says, "...ideologies are products of...belief" (1930a:192). Rank's theory contrasts sharply both with Freud's biology principle, where creativity is defined as a sublimation of sexuality; and with Jung's spiritual principle, where creativity is seen to be an expression or manifestation of archetypal components of the collective unconscious. For Rank, the logic of cultural expression is explained in a totally different manner. Cultural expression seeks to objectify an idealism "anchored beyond all reality" (Rank 1932b:103-4).

Cultural expression, for Rank, derives and gains its meaning from an understanding of the motivations lying at the core of human psychology and human mentality. Human mental reality is understood by Rank psychologically as dominated by the concern for the real and fearful aspects of human individuality and isolation. Rank took popular therapeutic psychology to be just another form of human culture, as will be seen in the next chapter.

PROCESS

Rank's theory of culture incorporates an evolutionary perspective. Cultural expression, for Rank, exhibits constant change. An important question concerning this change asks whether it can be viewed as directional. Rank answers in the affirmative. "Human development," as cultural development, "is nothing but a progressive individualization of spiritual belief" (Rank 1930a:11). Cultural change, for Rank, is rooted in a progressive individualization. This notion recalls Rank's understanding of the separation principle as a universal life principle. Rank defined separation as simply a furthered individualization, which he took to be a basic developmental mental principle. Cultural transitions are seen as having their source in changes in consciousness due to its developmental nature.

Mental development, for Rank, is only partially explicable as a broadening of knowledge in a scientific, factual sense. Rank's general conception of the mental includes knowing, but more importantly includes *being*, which is a subjective and indeterminate entity. What interested Rank was therefore not an idea of an accretion of knowledge, but of the individual's experience of knowledge and to the growth of knowledge. Again, this grew out of Rank's experiences as a therapist. Just before his break with Freud, Rank began to speculate that therapeutic processes cannot be explained as a clarification or expansion of the client's knowledge. For Rank found no direct correlation between knowledge and therapeutic success. In fact, Rank states that the reverse was often the case.

Rank therefore moved to an understanding of a subjective experience of knowledge. Any change in consciousness, therefore, even if predicated upon a simple increase in knowledge, always includes a subjective element

to it. Of what this subjective element consisted, Rank was never too clear, except insofar as he argued that it seemed to augment individual difference. Increased knowledge itself is therefore not better, truer, or more advanced, but simply different:

> Here, in my opinion, we hit upon the most paradoxical phenomenon of the human soul, the understanding of which I consider the most important result of my relativity theory of knowledge. It concerns the law of continuous development of our general psychological knowledge. This [development] results not as one might think pedagogically, by the handing over and broadening of the already known, whereby he who follows knows more or sees better. No, it is not only that he knows more, he know differently because he himself is different. And this "being different" is related to the continuous development of self consciousness, which alters the whole individuality because it determines it (Rank 1927:40).

Self-consciousness, and its development, is the "paradoxical" core of psychological theory. Rank sees a complex interplay between the natural development of the individual and the individual's reactions to this developing. Cultural development, as a representative and materialization of mental development, incorporates all of these aspects. Rank's understanding of cultural transition takes the one guiding principle of individualization as primary, but moves away from the problematics of a detailed theoretical description of the causal mechanisms behind this development, preferring a type of description couched in the terms of functional dynamics.

On the whole, culture is for Rank a developing reality. Culture forms are under the constant pressure of change. Cultural transition is thus a dominant theme in Rank's understanding of culture. The next chapter dwells on this theme and attempts to elucidate Rank's understanding of the perceived recent cultural shift from religion to psychology.

CHAPTER SIX

The Cultural Transition From Religion To Psychology

The focus of the present chapter moves from the general theoretical presentations of chapters four and five, to an elucidation of Rank's idea of the decline of religious belief and its appropriation by psychological ideologies and interpretations. As the culmination of his thought, this topic utilizes all of the important ideas contained in both his psychological and cultural theories, and fuses them in an examination of modern-day cultural process.

For Rank, the emergence of psychology represented a fundamental cultural shift, a shift predicated upon the demise of religious belief. Psychology is seen by Rank as a replacement for religion and as the creation of a consciousness whose new breadth could no longer tolerate the older religious symbol systems. More specifically, psychology is seen to represent the application of natural science realism to the interpretation of human living, an application, thus, anathemic to the natural language of the self, which is cultural and *un*real.

In presenting Rank's view of this subject, this chapter begins with a clarification of Rank's concept of the soul. The discussion then moves to an elucidation of his understanding of religion, followed by a detailed look at Rank's view of the emergence of psychology, of its role and function in a so-called secularized society, and of the meaning of modern-day neurosis. Rank's resulting critical view of the psychologies of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler concludes the presentation.

As a caveat to the foregoing discussion, it must be stressed that although Rank spoke of cultural expression as developing through steps and stages, he was never too explicit or rigid in his definition of these stages. Rank did not posit a universal grid through which all cultures would be expected to pass, point for point. That is not the way Rank wrote and, in any reasonable estimate, is not the way he intended his works to be understood. Rank's intentions were spent elsewhere, that is, on the attempt to discern within the various forms of cultural expression a common interpretive thread, and not in producing a developmental schema as such.

SOUL

Rank's cultural developmentalism, therefore, is non-rigid and elastic. It is neither teleological nor predictive, and is informed by the fewest possible variables needed to give a minimal understanding to the fact of cultural change. If there is a concept guiding Rank's understanding here, it is that cultural change seems to accompany the ever-increasing growth of human self-awareness. Counteracting this growth, psychologically speaking, are the renewed attempts of the individual to find solace from this self-awareness in the development of new forms of artistic or cultural expression, giving rise to cultural expression. It seems, furthermore, that Rank understood the growth of self-awareness to track the growth of empirical knowledge in general. In this sense culture is seen as a fight against realism, against the increasing burden of a realistic self-awareness, and therefore more properly defined as a history of belief. Cultural or artistic production, for Rank, is an attempt to "make real" an *idea*, to materialize something fundamentally illusory or spiritual—what, in a sophisticated or formally theological vein, is called the "transcendent" (1932:96). Rank's name for this universal cultural

endeavor is belief in the soul (cf. especially 1930a). For Rank, cultural and artistic expression seeks, therefore

> to prove the existence of the soul by concretizing it.... It achieved this by presenting the abstract in abstract form—that is, by imitating as faithfully as possible, not reality, but unreality (1932:96).

The key word here is "unreality". The "soul", as an idea, represents an unreal conceptual framework which cultural expression attempts to materialize and to thus "prove".

As can be seen, an element of difficulty enters into Rank's understanding at this point. For Rank, the idea of the soul is precisely that, an idea, or, better, an ideal—in fact, the ideal of ideals, an ideal of the first order. Cultural expression, for Rank, embodies the *creative* attempt to make manifest this ideal, to bring it to life, as it were. Of what does this ideal consist? Rank answers that the idea of the soul is an idea of perfect human happiness, the mere conceiving of which is an *impossible* task, at least as far as reality is concerned. Here, again, one meets an emphatic dualism lying at the base of his conception, illustrated concisely by the following statement:

> [W]hat [art] seeks is to prove by objectification the emotional reality of what has never been real and can never be made real. This psychic actuality is not, however (as analysis would have it), a precipitate of the real, but an idealism *a priori* anchored beyond all reality (1932a:104).

Hereafter the term "soul" is used in this Rankian and decidedly complex way.

RELIGION

Rank was never explicit about what he had in mind when he used the term religion. He never formally defines the term in his writings. The rea-

son for this, in part, is that his understanding of religion was very broad. Rank speaks of religion as

> the most powerful instrument for the creation of [the] cultural world...as expressed in cult ('culture'), from which spring the fine arts, as well as architecture, drama and literature (1941:64).

Religion is therefore something of an umbrella term in Rank's vocabulary, and refers to almost everything cultural the world has ever produced.

Yet Rank never wholly equates religion with culture. Religion is seen as one—albeit significant—stage amongst others in a cultural succession spanning prehistoric times to the present. In his *Psychology and the Soul,* for example, the so-called era of religion is seen to be preceded by an older animistic era, and superceded by the current natural science era of today (11ff.). Religion is named as one product within a developmental sequence and is seen to mediate between the most primitive cultural expressions (animism) and those of the modern era.

Other references in *Psychology and the Soul* indicate that Rank understood religion to represent an individualization of an older, more collective cultural mode. For example, he says that

> the concept of God as a higher Being equipped with supernatural power was developed...from...the concept of mana. In other words, God was a personification of the individual will-ego (Rank 1930a:148).

He continues:

> ...the soul was the general mana of all, or the folk-mana which the community acquired by levies upon personalities gifted with mana, and which to some degree religion made available to all (1930a:148-9).

The important point here beyond Rank's designation "mana" is that the God of religion is seen to represent a democratization or individualization of

what was formerly collective. This is consistent with his idea of cultural development as a process of individualization. Older social and cultural forms can exhibit a sense of being less individual and more collective if only because of their order in a temporal sequence.

Religion, as belief in God, is therefore for Rank a time-specific cultural language. What links it to the vastly different cultural modes preceding and following it is the function it is seen to perform in the life of the individual. Religion, like its older animistic cousin, and like its adversarial modern-day counterpart embodied in the scientific mindset, is an offspring of "belief in the Soul" (1941:61), a form of ideal self-deception which serves the psychological function of will justification and denial:

> The entire history of human development, and not merely of man's spiritual development, shows how the individual gradually negates and denies his own will in order to justify it, and how he seeks to extirpate it when justification is impossible. The law of causality...is the characteristic form [of will denial] of our scientific world view, just as God was the characteristic form under the religious world view (Rank 1930a:183).

The concepts of religion carry meaning only for a limited time, both in the life of an individual, but more so, for Rank, in a broad, historical sense, losing their sway when the dominant self-representation ages and dies. The historical succession of ideologies is only *believed* to represent truth at a given time, yet it is precisely the belief component that comforts and consoles and provides the thread of continuity between varying cultural forms. Cultural expression, at whatever stage, is directed by the dynamisms of human psychology, and is put to the attempt to solve the most basic of human problems, to give comfort in the face of suffering and meaning in the face of death. Religion gives the individual a place to be and a reason to act within

this life and through death, lifting the burden of self-responsibility in the midst of life's sheer ambiguity.

THE CULTURAL TRANSITION TO PSYCHOLOGY

Rank's idea of the cultural transition to psychology is given little in the way of formal attention in his writings. This is most likely because he leaned heavily on discussing the psychological significance of a particular cultural frame of reference and did not spend his time trying to account in a strictly causal fashion for the change in question. What was important to Rank were those internal dynamisms of a given cultural reality important for its real-world functioning. This emphasis on the functional element was the basis for Rank's comparing externally different cultural systems.

The end result is that Rank does not discuss the causal mechanism which gave birth to psychology as a modern cultural phenomenon. He merely postulates a change in consciousness with the emergence of a natural-science world-view. He illuminates, rather, in what manner psychology both parallels and seeks to dispose of the cultural function of religion. Rank's strong phenomenological view of culture allowed him to see psychology from a distance, as if he were viewing it from a future vantage point. In this particular capacity Rank felt he was "a few generations" ahead of himself and others (letter to Jessie Taft, 3 Nov. 1931; in Taft 1958:168). In another reference he says, "I always seem to rise one mile or so above the plane on which I am actually operating or creating" (letter to Jessie Taft, 9 Mar. 1939; in Taft 1958:257). Each reader must decide whether or not Rank's viewpoint can be considered valid, that is, to what degree he was able to make claims about a thing in which he was so deeply immersed. Yet the reader should make no mistake about Rank's qualifications as a result of his lengthy immersion in the psychoanalytic

world: probably no other person living or dead, besides Freud, could claim the vantage point Rank had because of his unique, extended involvement with Freud and others in the movement. Rank was well aware of his enviable position (as were a host of others in his day!) and of the ramifications this position had for his ability to esteem the significance of psychology as an emergent phenomenon. In a letter to George Wilbur, dated 5 Jan. 1933, Rank says, "The whole history of psychoanalytic thought has to be written one day and I am afraid that I am the only one who can write it" (in Liebermann 1985:317).

Soon after leaving Freud, Rank consolidated his view of psychology as a cultural manifestation. The concept developed as one product of his newly-found idea of the will. The idea of will, in turn, threw into broad relief all of Rank's previous studies of culture, the insights from which Rank now brought to bear upon a critique of modern psychology. It should be noted that the word "psychology" in Rank's writings sums up a multitude of ideas. As with other significant terms in his vocabulary, terms like religion or neurosis, the meaning of any given reference must be derived primarily from context. Suffice it to say that "psychology" for Rank refers primarily to the use of psychological theorizing to bring therapeutic effect (psychology as a therapeutic discipline), and secondarily to psychology as a general cultural "atmosphere". Freud's psychoanalysis, as a theory of life, is for Rank the primary representative of the former. The latter, he might say, can be seen most clearly against the backdrop of the decline of religious belief, of the falling away of a general disposition. Admittedly, the influence of traditional religion has faded. Psychology, says Rank, has taken its place.

Expressing his "cultural" view of psychology, Rank states that, "Psychology is the last and youngest offspring of religion, more specifically of

the age old belief in the Soul" (Rank 1941:61). Psychology, here, like religion, is seen to represent a product of belief and thus to constitute an ideology. He says:

> [The] psychological ideology rules today. This is meaningful only in relation to our explanations, and particularly to the one depicting contemporary psychology not only as a science for the explanation of mental and other phenomena but as a continuation of, and a substitute for, this spiritual phenomenon which fashions the contemporary ideology that governs our conception and alteration of our world (1930a:192).

Psychology, for Rank, represented an ideology insofar as it took upon itself the function of providing an "explanation" or interpretation of human life. In the context of the decline of secure collective ideologies, the emergent psychological world-view, for Rank, provided a new vocabulary by which to "conceive" of oneself and the world. Ira Progoff, illustrating this position, states that:

> The basis for the existence of psychoanalysis, as well as those sister disciplines that are related to it, is to be found precisely in the fact that they...have been able to provide a believable frame of reference within which the individual could reconstruct his experiences in a way that would make his life seem reasonable and meaningful once again. The main contribution of the psychological ideologies has been to alleviate the chaos of belief—or more accurately, of disbelief—in the modern personality (Progoff 1956:224-5).

Psychology emerged as a fierce critic of religion, and while it perhaps did not initially realize the social crisis resulting from the success of that criticism, it soon took over the interpretive and consoling function of religion. This ideological function, in the strict, Rankian sense of the term ideological, allows the individual once again to "reconstruct his experiences". The psychological ideologies provide "a believable frame of reference", in short, an interpretation.

Consistent with his understanding of the nature of cultural development, Rank explained the emergence of psychology as a manifestation of a growth in consciousness. Psychology, with its primary reference to the individual self, represents an extreme form of cultural individualization, an individualization that can be seen in the historical evolution of compound words using 'self-' as the prefix. The O.E.D. describes this evolution as follows:

> *Self-* first appears as a living formative element about the middle of the 16th cent., probably to a great extent by imitation or reminiscence of Greek compounds in *avro-*. The number of *self*-compounds was greatly augmented towards the middle of the 17th cent., when many new words appeared in theological and philosophical writing, some of which had apparently a restricted currency of about 50 years (e.g. 1645-1690), while a large proportion became established and have a continuous history down to the present time (1971:2715).

The O.E.D. further states that those compounds which became established are for the most part represented as separate words, and that the remainder of compounds are of such an unlimited application that no attempt was made to "represent with fullness the extent to which [*self*-] has been employed either in early or recent times" (1971:2715). Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" seems to symbolize the onset of the development of this literal, psychological self-consciousness.

Psychological and religious perspectives are for Rank both humanitarian/therapeutic disciplines. They are thus intimately linked and, says Rank, grow out of one another historically. Rank notes that other modern sciences evolved from similarly spiritual ancestors. Chemistry, for example, derived from alchemy, and astronomy from astrology (Rank 1930a:72). But the evolution from the spiritual belief embodied in religion to a doctrine of the

mind, says Rank, "was the more radical and fateful development" (1930a:71). He says:

> While the natural sciences continued in one way or another to develop the themes of their spiritual prototypes, psychology acquired an anti-spiritual focus because, unlike the natural sciences, it could neither sustain other forms of belief in the soul nor escape the pressure exerted by its own intellectual analysis to destroy the soul (Rank 1930a:72).

Modern psychology, as a form of scientific empiricism, represents something of an impossible situation, according to Rank. For insofar as psychology's uniqueness lay in its claim to offer a realistic explanation of human self-awareness and living does its very uniqueness work against the solution of the most fundamental of human problems. The eminence of the religious world view is that it allowed the individual to move through life with a minimum of equanimity. It put an order to life's chaotic incommensurateness and made humanity's suffering dualism an external reality (ie: God and the Devil), thereby disposing of it insofar as consciousness was concerned. The price paid for this was the cost of supporting belief in a so-called "reality" that could be perceived by none of the senses. Realistic psychology saw through all of this by showing just how demonstrably false were the contents of religious ideologies—but at its own particular cost. For

> this kind of realistic psychology could only mean the death of the soul, whose origin, being, and worth inhered necessarily in the abstract, the ineffable, and the esoteric (Rank 1930a:32).

Psychology's realism killed the soul, but it soon became apparent that the soul was something people could not live without. In Ernest Becker's words:

> When you narrow down the soul to the self, and the self to the early conditioning of the child, what do you have left? You have the individual man and you are stuck with him (1973:192).

The problem with psychological explanations is that their sole reference is and remains the individual self. Yet individuality, according to Rank, has always represented the fundamental human problem. Whether named as a problem of individual isolation, individual responsibility, guilt, or even death, human emotional suffering for Rank always refers back to the fundamental fact of individual consciousness, of human individuality and difference. In consequence, Rank maintains that:

> Since the psychological ideology according to its nature is individual, the individual differences can never disappear in it and consequently it can also never become a collective ideology (1932a:107).

Psychology, says Rank, "which is gradually trying to supplant religious and moral ideology, is only partially qualified to do this, because it is a preponderantly negative and disintegrating ideology." (1930a:193) People need collective shelter and the cognitive means by which this might be attained. The psychological interpretation of life simply cannot support this collective function because it is an ideology which negates and disintegrates collective beliefs. "It destroys illusions," Rank says, "which can no longer withstand its progressive self-consciousness. It becomes progressively unable to maintain even itself" (1930a:193).

Psychology's attempt to appropriate the consoling function of religious belief, says Rank, must therefore come to grief against the fact that "psychology represents a purely individualistic ideology, indeed the most individualistic possible" (Rank 1926:100). Psychology in its bare form as a causal, scientific explanation of life, simply cannot function as a collective ideology because of its commitment to the individually conceived self as the fundamental theoretical locus. For "every effective therapeutic ideology must be collective," says Rank (1926:100). Rational understanding of the self

through self-scrutiny was and remains the basis for psychology's promise of individual liberation. But what liberation, asks Rank? A liberation to see more clearly life's painful contradictions? Rank's understanding is that self-knowledge brought more problems than it solved, and he regarded its application in a therapeutic situation to be equivocal at best:

> Not only is every kind of healing extra-individual or more correctly, super-individual, but also the purely psychological consideration or description of the individual can produce only a one-sided, distorted, neurotic picture of a human being (1926:100).

Rank appreciated that self-understanding, "is far from being a purely intellectual process" (1926:22), and may cause deep emotional reactions within those in whom it is engendered.

NEUROSIS

A key to Rank's understanding of the historical transition to psychology lies in his mature thoughts on human neurosis. According to Rank, the negative historical offshoot of the development of psychological self-consciousness is represented in the modern-day neurotic. Rank's thoughts on neurosis are profound, and his view of neurosis as a historical phenomenon defines his uniqueness as a truly original psychological thinker. Beyond his finer psychological sketch of the neurotic type, Rank viewed neurosis as a problem of human history. The neurotic type, for Rank, represents the developmental extreme in a historical growth of consciousness, the hyper-conscious individual of modern society who personifies an "extreme manifestation of the process of individualization" (1932a:144).

Rank's conception of neurosis is designated "a philosophy of suffering" (1926:15). Informing this philosophy is a deep understanding of the

paradoxical relationship between human living and consciousness, an understanding already in evidence in his earliest writing. Speaking of the painfulness of lived consciousness, Rank says in a journal entry dated 10 Apr. 1905: "Living and thinking are not to be combined. One must decide for one of the two, together they are impossible" (in Taft 1958:49). A small step leads to a mature casting of this conception in terms of the interpretive key to neurosis:

> [T]here is a class of neurotics, or better said, of people, who essentially suffer from consciousness in that they are too conscious of themselves.... We can hardly consider this an individual illness any longer, but rather a developmental phase of increasing self-consciousness whose broadening and deepening we cannot check but can perhaps guide to recognition of the real problem as it manifests itself in the modern individual (1926:52-3).

From this historical conception, says Rank, there results a "paradoxical but deep insight into the essence of the neurosis" (1927:42). A person, as such, will be the more normal, healthy and happy

> the more successfully he can repress, displace, deny, rationalize, dramatize himself and deceive others.... [It] follows that the suffering of the neurotic comes not from a painful reality but from painful truth which only secondarily makes reality unbearable. He suffers, not from all the pathological mechanisms which are psychically necessary for living...but in the refusal of these mechanisms which is just what robs him of the illusions important for living (1927:42-3).

Ideologies are forms of self-deception, and so are world-views and interpretations. All serve one goal: the alleviation of a reality which cannot be alleviated. They are therefore illusory. The neurotic, says Rank, has lost these illusory mechanisms.

Yet this is not Rank's whole definition of neurosis. Certainly the neurotic suffers from having nothing shared to lean on, but the neurotic also suf-

fers from not being able to accept life under just those circumstances. Rank's view of neurosis therefore looks in two directions: towards that type of individual who is paralyzed by consciousness, who has seen through the illusions necessary for living, yet who cannot live as a solitary self; or towards societal normalcy whose shared collective supports obscure and absorb the same inability to live independently.

According to Rank, the various psychological schools of his day, especially Freudian psychoanalysis, represented and spearheaded the historical growth of consciousness, further embedding the neurotic types in their primary problem.

> The whole of psychoanalysis in its theoretical and practical aspects is actually an unparalleled glorification of consciousness and its power...while Freud himself designates his theory as a psychology of the unconscious and as such wishes it to be understood.... In practice, however, psychoanalysis represents...in its cultural significance a tremendous broadening of consciousness (Rank 1927:6).

As a means of therapy, psychoanalysis failed to appreciate the historical character of neurotic suffering. In Becker's words:

> [P]sychology has limited its understanding of human unhappiness to the person life-history of the individual and has not understood how much individual unhappiness is itself a historical problem in the larger sense, a problem of the eclipse of secure communal ideologies of redemption (Becker 1973:193).

Freud's psychoanalysis comprehended the destructive process in the patient only from the patient's personal history "without considering the cultural development which bred this type" (Rank 1932a:143). For Rank, the neurotic suffers from a historically developed consciousness. Put in different terms, the neurotic type suffers "from a consciousness of sin as did his religious ancestor" (1941:193), but without believing in this concept.

> This is precisely what makes him "neurotic"; he feels a sinner without the religious belief in sin for which he therefore needs a new rational explanation (Rank 1941:193).

For Rank, the use of psychological theories and principles—and especially the use of self-knowledge—to treat such individuals was fraught with difficulty, as mentioned above. Yet Rank also says that the creation of just this type of therapy represented a corollary outgrowth to prior developments. The creation of "psychological treatment" justified the therapist type, while the neurotic, born into an ideological and cultural vacuum,

> had to create the therapeutist of any kind for only by living in close union with a god-ideal that has been erected outside one's own ego is one able to live at all. When I say therapeutists of any kind, I mean at least psychotherapeutists in the proper sense, although these are characteristic of our time and are, so to say, the neurotic's product due to his illness (Rank 1932a:141-2).

The decline of religion left a cultural vacuum out of which arose the "therapeutic hour", in a word: psychology. Therapists and neurotics alike, according to Rank, became the key representatives of a new and painful consciousness, representatives of a "developmental phase" who could no longer look to traditional religious supports. Psychology became, of necessity, the new cultural ideology. The new self-knowledge it paradoxically fostered did not bow to religious conceptions and could not be displaced by religious means. Ironically, self-knowledge was not the original goal of psychological research, according to Rank, but "was only its by-product which it first tolerated and then welcomed" (1930:7). He says:

> It seems to me that this self-knowledge is responsible for the modern type of psychologist who in turn seeks it for himself and others. Expressed somewhat ironically, it is as though man had to find some use for his apparently worthless self-awareness, and so created out of it a science oriented not to the practical understanding of others but to a "scientific" jus-

> tification of his pedagogical and therapeutic techniques.... Unless one can *use* his introspective skill he can only meditate upon his own thoughts and feelings, and can only become what the practical psychologist often calls a "compulsive neurotic" or, at best, a philosophical thinker (1930a:7-8).

Rank mentions that psychology gained its exalted value precisely because of its subjective relation to our personal ego (1930a:8). Psychology, that is, offered a social and theoretical justification for an apparently worthless self-knowledge, a self-knowledge which destroyed religious belief as illusion but left no substitute. This is why Rank said that, "The current interest in psychology is essentially the pursuit of religion and of a belief in the soul" (1930a:11). It was from this vantage point that Rank penned his critique of modern psychology.

CRITIQUE OF SPECIFIC PSYCHOLOGIES

On an elemental level Rank had little regard for the popular psychologies of Freud, Jung, and Adler, the three prominent psychologists of his day. In one reference he says that their psychologies are actually composed of "psycho-biological and social psychological misconceptions" (Rank 1926:101). For Rank, their theories were not pure psychologies, but ideologies with a social function. Rank felt that theoretical psychology needed to be purged of its collective contents and that the line between what is psychologically true and what is therapeutically effective needed stronger demarcation.

> Theoretical psychology...must be treated as purely individualistic and more thoroughly than has yet been done, and must be purified of sociological and biological concepts which it is true play a powerful role in human soul life but only as contentual ideologies of the collective type which provide material for the individual's dynamism and lend it its constructiveness. These collective contents might well be the content of psychology but not its object. Probably, how-

> ever, they constitute the essential therapeutic agent just because they work as collective ideologies, constructively, while the individual psychology has in itself no therapeutic effect (1926:101).

Collective concepts deriving from therapeutic intent have no place in a psychological theory of the individual. Their use in such a theory betrays an attempt to reclaim the vital concept of the soul as predicated on the need for a collectivizing function for which collective concepts are necessary. It is here that Rank begins his critique of the psychologies of Freud, Jung, and Adler. The affective power of their theories, he says, lies precisely in their scientific weakness of "being both psychology and spiritual doctrine, and of failing to differentiate at all between these two aspects" (Rank 1930a:8-9). Rank characterizes their psychologies as attempts to salvage collectivity and belief from the ruins of dying religious ideologies. He writes:

> Adler, who rationalized everything spiritual according to individual psychology, found collectivity in society, just as Jung found it in religion, and Freud, in biology. While Freud treated sexual facts ideologically, Jung made a psychological fact out of collective spiritual ideology, and Adler derived an individualistic ideology from a social fact (1930a:88-9).

With each, some form of collectivity is built into the interpretation of the self. This inclusion of extra-individual categories betrays their character as as ideologies, as psychological saviours of the soul, as world-views (1930a:88). Rank says that for any type of therapy, be it social or individual, "a world view is indispensable and the more one strives against this presupposition the less prospect one has of finding a solid basis for educational reforms or therapeutic results" (Rank 1927:33). The differences in the psychologies of Freud, Jung, and Adler represent, for Rank, primarily differences in the specified means of attaining collectivity:

> In his remedy, the developing of "social feeling" in the individual, Adler was striving for a kind of equalization from within, whereas Freud's "adjustment" aims at external uniformity.... Jung...did not look for the individual's salvation in relation to reality...but in a sublimation of those inner forces which were frustrated.... The individual, according to Jung, makes use of the symbolism in his racial unconscious, thus achieving as it were a kind of collectivity within his own self (Rank 1941:36).

The one factor linking these three vastly different psychological theories is that they have all reached a similar conclusion:

> ...namely, that the evil from which our personality suffers is over-individualization; hence, they agree in the remedy consisting of an emotional unity with something beyond the Self (Rank 1941:36).

Freud sees it in sex, Adler in social feeling, and Jung in racial collectivity.

RANK'S CRITIQUE OF FREUD

A closer look at the collective concepts in Freud's system serves to illustrate Rank's general understanding of their functioning. Rank says that Freud's use of extra-individual categories caused an enormous theoretical confusion. "All mental processes and emotional reactions," he says, "are determined by the Unconscious, that is, by something which in itself is unknown and undeterminable" (1941:13). This, according to Rank, represents a mere makeover of the religious world-view, whose affective draw Rank identifies as follows:

> The religious solution was and is so...gratifying because it admits *the Unknown*, indeed, recognizes it as the chief factor instead of pretending an omniscience we do not possess (1932a:44).

Whereas the religious solution forgoes omniscience in favor of belief, Freud, with his emphasis on the scientific nature of his theories, at once claimed

this omniscience, but threw it away with his attempt to retain therapeutic value through his use of the collective concept of the Unconscious. The term itself has no literal positive definition because it is a negative designation.

> The unconscious, just as the original meaning of the word shows, is a purely negative concept, which designates something momentarily not conscious, while Freud's theory has lifted it to the most powerful factor in psychic life. (Rank 1926:28)

Whatever it can mean and whatever its presumed definition, the unconscious denotes something extra-individual, which is why it plays such an important role in Freud's psychology. Rank says that the basis for this importance

> is not given in any psychological experience but in a moral necessity, that is, to find an acceptable substitute for the concept of God, who frees the individual from responsibility (1926:28).

Again, Freud's natural science psychology

> denies will and consciousness and in their place must introduce the unconscious Id as a causal factor which morally does not differ at all from the idea of God, just as sexuality as a scapegoat is not different from the idea of the devil (1926:45).

As an ironic qualifier to this theoretical conundrum, Rank claims that Freud's therapy, in a final sense, merely added confusion to confusion. People are not passive recipients, and collective ideologies cannot be forced at will, even under the sophisticated guise of "resistance," as the Freudians name it. The neurotic suffers from just the ability to see through such ideologies, from the ability to "see through every kind of therapeutic self-deception and it is just that from which they suffer, just that which forms the very root of the neurosis" (1927:15). The earlier individuals are innoculated against the affective power of collective ideologies, "the earlier they also lose

their value, and the more difficult it will be...to replace these deeply rooted ideas with others" (1932a:56). Freud's psychoanalysis failed to understand this element, resulting in the fact that the psychoanalytic attempt to liberate the suffering patient

> brought the good therapeutic view of psychoanalyis to grief, for it was finally the understanding psychoanalyst who sent the self-conscious neurotic back to the very self-knowledge from which he wanted to escape. On the whole, psychoanalysis failed therapeutically because it aggravated man's psychologizing rather than healed him of his introspection (Rank 1930a:9-10).

CONCLUSION

According to Rank psychology failed before the all-destroying power of self-consciousness,

> which is no longer capable of illusions and unsparingly exposes even the last great attempt of this kind, psychoanalysis, as it has all earlier ones because it seeks to give at one and the same time comforting concepts which no longer delude and psychological truth which no longer comforts (Rank 1927:46).

This situation has resulted in what Rank calls "a kind of psychological 'twilight of the ego'" (1927:79). After the "magnificent unreal solution" of the God concept had been "destroyed by the knowing power of consciousness" (Rank 1927:79), there is left what Rank has called the age of psychology in which the will problem reemerges with a vengeance. The death of religious belief, as the "twilight of the Gods",

> is accompanied by a still more fatal and tragic process, which one might designate as the disenthroning of the individual himself, the result of which we have before us in the neurotic type with its guilt and inferiority feelings (Rank 1927:79).

Says Rank: "The modern neurotic type has completed the human process of internalization which reaches its peak in psychological self-knowledge, but is also reduced to an absurdity" (1926: 94). Again:

> The neurotic is, so to say, the first human type who lacks the support of an ideology of God of whatever kind, and is thrown entirely on his human qualities on which he tries to live and cannnot. He may be designated as the man simply thrown on himself, whereas the men of earlier epochs were the real "supermen"; that is, individuals raised above themselves and their psychical capacity by virtue of their heavenly or earthly ideology of God (1932a:140).

The neurotic represents a throwback of a development of consciousness who, despite all effort, miscarries in the attempt at self-transcendence. Yet neurosis, according to Rank, represents only an extra small push in the direction of stumbling that modern civilization is destined to travel. For the modern personality lives life's contradictions to the worse because of the decline of convincing forms of cultural illusion and social self-transcendence. Rank therefore deemed the neurotic "incurable" (1926:158) and stated that the only therapeutic hope for such a type remains, experientially, "the acceptance of the self, of the individuality as given, yes, as the only reality of which a doubt is not possible" (Rank 1926:94). This seasoned and modest proposal, simple as it sounds, was Rank's final and only therapeutic conclusion.

Rank considered psychology to be the last natural science ideology, "because of all interpretations, it is the one that concerns the interpretive instrument itself" (1930a:194). Rank here was not offering a new apocalypse, but simply underscoring the fact that from a theoretical point of view, psychology as a *scientific* ideology simply could not affirm the various aspects of human spirituality that have been embodied, from time immemorial, in socially accepted cultural forms. Neither did Rank offer any sort of panacea.

We live our tensions within a new and painful realism, but live them we must. Rank echoes this in a statement taken from the preface to his final work:

> I have not set out to convince or to convert, nor to divert anyone from his own pursuit of personal happiness. I have no panacea to offer, nor any solution to our human problems which seem to me to be a part of man's life on this earth. We are born in pain, we die in pain and we should accept life-pain as unavoidable—indeed a necessary part of earthly existence, not merely the price we have to pay for pleasure.

Rank died some four and a half months after penning these words.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important aspects of Rank's thought is his insistence that religion remains a serious problem to the social scientist despite any popular claims to the contrary. For Rank, any interpretation of human living must necessarily confront the phenomenon of religion whether historically as a product of the human past, or presently as a currently operative human dynamic. In either analysis, the scope of religion's sphere of influence is deemed extensive.

Rank's life work might be viewed as a serious attempt to contemporize an understanding of human nature. His examination of human culture was central to this task. Rank emphasized that cultural expression, of which religion was taken to be the most significant representative, was vital to human functioning. So significant was religion as a cultural manifestation for Rank that he very nearly equated the two—with one important difference: whereas culture is seen to be a general human reality, religion, for Rank, is viewed as a cultural reality. Put in different terms, "religion" defines one means to the attainment of a general "cultural" goal. Thus "culture" is deemed to be a broader reality than religion and is not seen to reside only in religious manifestations. This understanding both relativizes religion and, more importantly, allows a vision of cultural continuity across disparate and even adversarial cultural manifestations through a deep awareness of function. What function religion performs may be adequately wrought through non-reli-

gious means. Rank demonstrated this through his critique of modern psychology.

Rank's functional understanding of culture represents a significant theoretical synthesis and opens the door to important advances in the study of human nature. Religious manifestations of culture, for Rank, are not viewed as belonging to a naive stage of history, but as something essentially human. Insofar as we remain cultural beings will we manifest, then, some form of "religiosity" if I may put it that way.

It is my position that Rank's cultural functionalism defines his primary contribution to modern scholarship. In what follows I wish to indicate one way in which Rank's viewpoint might be critically applied to modern thinking. Specifically, I intend to show how a Rankian critique of culture might open up the doorway to linking religious and cultural theory with the biologically based theories of human nature, thereby bridging the chasm which divides the social scientist from the biological or evolutionary theorist. The means to this end will comprise a delineation of the following proposition: the idea of human distinctiveness, a notion which invades even the highest echelons of scientific thought, is a form of what Rank refers to as belief in the soul, and as such it serves the "artistic" function of intentionally precluding the development of a fully realistic view of human nature, thus impeding scientific advance. A critique of a modern biologist will serve to illustrate the greater part of my hypothesis. I will also suggest that the presence of the idea of human distinctiveness in empirically-based studies gives evidence that even in science there exists the strong disposition toward an ideological "interpretation of self in nature" (Rank 1930a:195). My discussion will be limited in scope and will in no manner comprise a detailed demonstration.

Just before he died, Ernest Becker wrote a small essay entitled, "Toward the Merger of Animal and Human Studies" (1974). The essay represents a summation of Becker's life's intent through writing, which was to formulate a scientifically based "theory of human nature" (1974:235). Originally part of his final book, *Escape from Evil*, the essay draws on the scholarship of various authors, mostly anthropologists, and is a direct extension of his previous work, *The Denial of Death*. This work, in turn, is based upon the thought of Otto Rank. Becker's final point of view is therefore something of a development of Rankian theory, especially Rankian theory of culture. Noting the content of *The Denial of Death*, it can be seen that Rank gave Becker the confidence to comprehend the realm of human culture within his characterization of (specifically human) organismic striving. Rank thus allowed Becker a greater theoretical encapsulation of things human in his delineation of fundamental human motivations. This resulted in a recasting of Becker's anthropology, which led to Becker's stated desire in the forementioned essay for the merger of animal and human studies.

This is not to argue for the decisiveness of Becker's theories, or even of his interpretation of Rank. I mention Rank's specific influence on Becker in order to illustrate both what I think is a lingering problem confronting the attempt to create a scientific theory of the human, and what I think it takes to get beyond this problem. This problem is summed up in the first line of Becker's essay:

> One of the great obstacles to the development of a theory of human nature that would command scientific respect has been the bitter dispute between the biological and cultural scientists themselves (1974:235).

I would add that, beyond the normal difficulties inherent to any sort of theory building, be they the problems and constraints of research, finances, or

time, this factor represents the *most* significant obstacle to such a development.

Ironically, the noble scientific quest for a truly empirical understanding of human nature has been repeatedly stopped dead in its tracks by, of all things, a truism. This truism, which has commanded respect for centuries and whose power shows little sign of waning, might be stated as follows: human beings, because of culture, are not to be considered animals. Let us call this the idea of human distinctiveness. As an idea it has had a rather formidable history. The Christian Church, for example, a mainstay of Western cultural expression and a significant authority on human nature until very recent times, has formally worked and reworked the idea for centuries in its doctrine of the human soul. Even amidst representatives of the present-day social sciences and humanities, including the more biologically-based disciplines, the idea of human distinctiveness flourishes. I would emphasize that it does more than flourish. It remains the subtle, core resistance to a scientific study of human culture. Until this resistance can be properly addressed, little progress toward a scientific understanding of human nature will be made because of the significant exclusion of the cultural in its considerations.

Allow me to illustrate this point of view through the critique of a recent work by the biologist, Stephen Jay Gould. By any standard Gould is certainly one of the most respected biologists living, perhaps of our century. Gould is a devout modern Darwinian. He is also a fierce critic of human sociobiology, this discipline representing for him perhaps the closest approximation to a truly biological (realistic) theory of human behavior currently available. My criticism of Gould implies neither my acceptance of nor the

correctness of sociobiological theory. Rather, it centres on his assumption that sociobiology represents a reductive limiting of human possibility.

The essence of Gould's critique of sociobiology is summed up in a short essay bearing the title, "Sociobiology and the Theory of Natural Selection" (1980), and runs as follows. Darwinian theory of natural selection and genetic encoding, he states outright, "does not apply to humans" (1980:263). The reason for this is that, "humans have so far surpassed all other species in developing an alternative, non-genetic system to support and transmit adaptive behavior—cultural evolution." (1980:263)

From the outset, there seems to be nothing terribly peculiar about this statement. Nowhere does it directly intimate the Rankian conceived "soul" as the unique property which allows our surpassing of all other species. An initial reading suggests that it seems even to have been written in the best interests of scientific pursuit. Yet it does posit a dualism (the genetic, as the natural, pitted against the non-genetic cultural, the "super" natural), which gives a Rankian due cause to be wary of a leap, of a crossing of a line of discontinuity from scientific formulation to cultural belief.

That this statement encompasses such a leap is substantiated by comments from Gould himself when he states further on why he is opposed to any strict science of human behavior. To argue and illustrate his point Gould offers an anecdote, as though to show that scientific reasoning cannot touch the affairs of real life. At the end of his essay he recalls a visceral reaction he experienced while singing in a full production of Berlioz' *Requiem.* The culmination of the experience resulted in "spine tingling and...involuntary tears..." which almost prevented him from singing (1980:265). One day later, musing over a statement of a founding sociobiological theorist, it occurred to him that even his emotional reaction to the *Requiem* might be prone to be-

ing analyzed, even on some incomprehensible level, as a Darwinian behavioral response, reducible "to neurobiology on the one hand and sociobiology on the other" (1980:265). His recoil to this thought calmed upon the realization that

> these explanations...could never capture anything of importance about the meaning of that experience. And I say this not to espouse mysticism or incomprehensibility, but merely to assert that the world of human behavior is too complex and multifarious to be unlocked by any simple key. I say this to maintain that this richness—if any-thing—is both our hope and our essence (1980:265).

This is a very revealing statement. Our "essence", he says, embodies a "richness" *beyond knowledge* and, as unknowability, is therefore our hope (of all things!). And all of this because our animality is a cultural as opposed to a natural animality.

But why specifically hope? One can only assume that Gould actually intended the use of just this term in that very place—the reader is availed of no other option. But where comes the leap from the discussion of the scientific feasibility of biologically motivated behavior to the positing of hope? A Rankian analysis provides the key.

A careful look at Gould's statement above reveals the following. For Gould, hope is related to "the meaning of...experience": no meaning, no hope. The sustainment of hope, then, is dependent upon the maintenance of meaning. Meaningfulness, in turn, is predicated upon the failure of attempts to "unlock" ("know", presumably) human behavior. Meaningfulness of experience is therefore a function of the multifariousness and complexity of human *being* within the context of a human desire to know. Gould names this our "richness", stating in the same breath that this idea does not "espouse mysticism or incomprehensibility". Yet the essence of this richness,

regardless of Gould's disclaimers, *is* mysticism, incomprehensibility, Unknowability. For look at the first few words of the above quotation: "these explanations" can "never" capture "anything" about the meaning of experience. This is very unambiguous language. There is no semantic problem here.

Allow me to now recall a previously quoted statement from Rank to illuminate the cultural pattern behind Gould's critique:

> The religious solution [as opposed to any natural scientific solution] was and still is so much more the gratifying because it admits *the Unknown*, indeed, recognizes it as the chief factor.... Besides, religion is also more consoling...because, with the admission of the unknown and unknowable it also leaves room for all kinds of hope that it still may not be so hopeless as it seems (1932a:44-5).

Gould's will to hope resolves itself as a mere derivative of a Rankian belief in the soul. As a fundamentally religious gesture, such belief must posit the supernatural as the "essential" element of being human in order to function properly. This characteristic we find in Gould's concept of "richness". Gould's problem, upon close scrutiny, is a problem of knowledge and consciousness, not of any content of knowledge, but of not wanting to know. The existential problem lurking behind Gould's concern over realistic explanations of (especially human) life is adequately illustrated in a quotation from Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*:

> A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world [i.e. a desirable familiarity]. But, on the other hand, in a universe divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land.

We are back again into the heart of Rank's thoughts on the painful duality of human interests, the relation between consciousness, cultural expres-

sion, and the range of human emotions defined primarily by fear, guilt and denial. We want to know, but we don't. If we really are animals, to parody Gould, we are so only in a limited sense for certain qualities that make us so, and infinitely not so for all the rest. Knowing ruins things, but then so does not-knowing. So we are compelled to know with a knowledge buffered by carefully-placed infinities. For when "push comes to shove", humans are guided by the imperative of what feels good, of what consoles, and not, emphasizes Rank, by the imperative of conscious knowing. But what feels good cannot be attained in any straightforward manner—there is too much ambivalence to everything. As a result, we posit a Not-This and a Not-Here as the goal of our striving and as the essence of our inner sanctum.

To recast the argument, the only defense of culture is culture. To defend the soul one must necessarily posit the soul. The soul is that element of conceptual ideality or unreality which makes the real world bearable, yet which by its very definition cannot be accounted for in any scientific manner. This is the pattern we find in Gould above. A structural critique of his argument bears out the conclusion that he relies on the element of the "extra", the *seelisch* (soulish) as Rank said, to give full weight to his thesis. This manner of displacement, according to Rank, represents *the* defining feature of cultural expression. Put in ironic terms, yes, other-worldliness *is* the definitive human characteristic; the super-natural *is* "the really human element" (Rank 1941:63). Whether it is called our "richness" or our "Id", our "collective unconscious" or our "soul", the one necessary mental component for a daily living free of gross psychic disequilibrium is the belief in some manner of unexplainable, core distinctiveness as the essentially human. The significance of this fundamentally religious attitude for the final rendering of theories of the human cannot be underestimated.

In conclusion, Gould's critique leads straight to the core of Rank's contribution. Rank was perhaps the first cultural theorist to link the significant forms of cultural expression to non-mystical, real-world human motivations, and to see through the persuasion of (metaphysical) human distinctiveness. By real-world I mean that Rank's formulations are easily recast into the terminology of Darwinian evolutionary thinking. That they can be might seem imperative to those who note that the only other theory besides Darwinian evolution at our disposal for the explanation of both the emergence of species and the specific qualities (including behavior and even social behavior) of all life is religious creationism. This fact should probably not be taken lightly, for the ramifications it has for the social sciences are immense.

I might add that the polarization between origin-of-life theories is not as far-reaching as the division which separates those who propagate the idea of human distinctiveness from those who do not. The fundamental problem for the social scientist is not religious creationism, but a deeper, more subtle, and more far-reaching religious attitude: belief in the soul; or in Gould's words, belief in the non-genetically based irreducible "richness". The recognition of this theory-endemic trait as a cultural symptom remains one of Rank's most important contributions.

That Rank's theory of culture might be easily recast into the the terms of biological evolutionary theory should not be surprising. Rank was versed in the works of Darwin and other significant biologists of his day and utilized what manner of biological thinking was appropriate or relevant to his discourse. Many of Rank's conceptions begin from an understanding of human biology: his concept of will (1927:4); his theory of consciousness (1927:6; 1926:46ff); and his profound understanding of guilt (1926:123) and of human sociality, to name only a few. Rank was also one of the first to recognize typi-

cal psychological differences between male and female styles of thinking, creating, and living (cf. especially ch. 7 of 1926 and ch.7 of 1941) and attributed these to biological influences. Finally, and most significantly, Rank's view of cultural expression can be easily transposed into the logic of evolutionary reasoning. Rank's extensive use of the idea of the duality of human interests, a conflict of interest that Rank saw to be especially manifest in cultural expression, simply reiterates the fundamental social-individual ambivalence lying at the core of human action, a product of our being a highly social species.

The recent appropriation of biological evolutionary thought for the explanation of human behavior goes by the name of human sociobiology. This theory has been quite successful in explaining the major components of social behavior in animals, and its application to humans represents a stimulating though very recent development—perhaps something which Becker desired to attain. Yet sociobiological theory struggles in its attempt to explain the functional basis of human culture and religion. Even the reputed founder of sociobiology, Edward O. Wilson, maintains that, "Religion constitutes the greatest challenge to human sociobiology" (1978:175). The predisposition to religious belief, he says, "is the most powerful force in the human mind and in all probability an ineradicable part of human nature" (1978:169). It would seem a fruitful enterprise to combine Rank's mature thoughts on belief, culture and religion, with an updated version of Darwinian evolution, as specifically embodied by sociobiology, to give unique insight into the peculiarities which define us as one animal amidst many on a "planet shining in the sun" (Becker 1975:1).

APPENDIX

Literary Overview of Rank's Major Writings

Although he died at the relatively young age of fifty-five, Rank left behind a small legacy of writings. The following overview presents a historical summary of Rank's major published works. The summaries indicate both the key ideas contained in each of the works and the significance the work might have within the context of his writings as a whole.

The continuity between Rank's works, from his first to his last, is somewhat striking. The issues of dualism, of the relationship between consciousness and life, of culture as artistic creativity, and seemingly every other major facet of Rank's mature thought is in evidence at each stage of writing. Rank was a highly intuitive writer—the strength of which might account for his failings elsewhere, especially in regards to the lack of formal structure evident in some of his works. Yet this same intuition allowed Rank to grasp significant connections between elusive phenomena, and gives the whole of his work a sense of containment within the bounds of a corpus of highly charged ideas.

THE DAYBOOKS

Rank's literary career began with his *Daybooks*. They comprise four volumes written from 1903-1905. They were journals kept by the young Rank, written secretly, and given over to an introspective study of self. The introduction to the first of these begins as follows:

> I begin this book for my own enlightenment. Before everything, I want to make progress in psychology. By that I understand not the professional definition and explanation of certain technical terms established by a few professors, but the comprehensive knowledge of mankind that explains the riddles of our thinking, acting, and speaking (in Taft 1958:4).

Rank had read Nietzsche extensively by the time he began these journals. Consistent with the Nietzschean world-view, on the one hand, Rank's psychological orientation moved scornfully against religion and toward the body-emotional-self as the prime locus of thinking. This hatred of religion expressed itself in various ways in Rank's life. In 1903, Rank adopted a non-Jewish name, changed his official religious status (Jewish) to *unaffiliated*, and penned his version of the Ten Commandments beginning with, "Thou shalt have no God." He states:

> The external God with his praise of the Creation—and behold it was good—was a grave mistake, an expression of that "monstrous displacement of affects" with which all human knowledge begins.... Roughly, the human will is the long-sought God who directs and guides everything (in Taft 1958:53).

On the other hand, Rank praised philosophy. This is echoed in a passage where he outlines a ladder of human development. At the lowest rung is found religious practitioners. At the second to highest rung are "skeptics and psychologists". Finally, at the pinnacle of human development is found the philosopher. "Seldom," he says, "does one climb so high" (in Liebermann 1985:12-13).

Rank similarly extolled the artist. He proclaimed artists to be those whom, "even if they are not immortal, still live on for several centuries in their works" (in Taft 1958:8). Rank wanted to become an artist, but realized early on that his relationship to art was to be lived vicariously through the academic interpretation of the artist-type.

The *Daybooks* differ drastically from Freud's self-analytical *The Interpretation of Dreams.* In this book Freud presents his scientific expedition into his own so-called unconscious. Rank sought a more philosophic understanding of life and the mind, an artist's attempt to discern the design of human development in a godless world (Liebermann 1985:7). Early in his adult life Rank confronted the paradox and painfulness of human self-consciousness. Echoing his later disregard of the effectiveness of popular psychology, Rank many times mused over the paradox of self-consciousness: "Often I grasp a whole man at one glance.... I kill him because I think him through to an end" (in Taft 1958:43-4). Again: "What then has he to expect, who has understood himself wholly? Of what then should his life consist?" (in Taft 1958:49) Finally: "Living and thinking are not to be combined. One must decide for one of the two, together they are impossible" (in Taft 1958:49).

THE ARTIST (Der Künstler; 1907, 1918, 1925)

The Artist, Rank's first published book, was the manuscript which led Freud to induce Rank to enter his movement. On Rank's acceptance of Freud's offer, *The Artist* was printed, in 1907, and was the first psychoanalytic book to be published by a member of the group other than Freud (Liebermann 1985:70). The manuscript had been thoroughly discussed with Freud and rewritten on the basis of his criticism (Taft 1958:55). The book went to four editions. In the introduction to the second edition, Rank declares Freud's psychology, and the philosophy of Shopenhauer and Nietzsche, to be the theoretical foundation for the book (in Taft 1958:57). Whether Rank was aware of it or not, Freud rather disliked philosophy in general and Nietzsche in particular. That Rank aligns Freud with Nietzsche

in the book certainly could not have been eagerly accepted by Freud and perhaps foreshadows Rank's eventual split with Freud.

The work is a study of the phenomenon of the artist, and of the cultural processes which facilitate the artist's emergence. Rank took the artist to be a product of human cultural development, a development "which progresses from the outward, inwardly" (Taft 1958:57). The artist, whose expression Rank took to be the pinnacle of a development towards individualism, is taken to be, paradoxically, a fundamentally social phenomenon.

Rank chose as the epigram for the work a quotation from Shakespeare, telling of what he saw to be the most basic human struggle: "Is it possible, he should know what he is, and be that he is?" This struggle is clarified in the artist. The artist is compared on the basis of creative productivity to the neurotic, who represents the failure to resolve the basic problems of existence. "The neurotic wants, if one may say, to digest the painful, the artist spits it out" (in Liebermann 1985:81).

THE MYTH OF THE BIRTH OF THE HERO (Der Mythus der Geburt des Helden 1909 tr., 1922 revised version untr.)

This was Rank's second published work and was written in 1907. In this work Rank displays his encyclopedic grasp of mythology. After an analysis of hero myths, Rank declares that the basis of the hero myth is a complex of human struggles, primarily those revolving around birth and the fact of human parentage. Rank's conception of these struggles includes a tragic element, whereby the heroic will meets its biological foundation, mortality.

The work is significant for it tells of an extensive knowledge of mythology, and of a desire to relate ancient fragments of mythological expression to modern psychological processes. Rank's cultural knowledge and gen-

eralizing tendencies were valued highly by Freud. The work is the first to use psychoanalytic theory "on a large scale for the first time" (p.2) for the interpretation of myths.

THE LOHENGRIN LEGEND (Die Lohengrin Sage; 1911 untr.)

Rank's third published work, his doctoral thesis, concerns the medieval German myth of Lohengrin, who arrives by a swan-boat to rescue a fair maiden from her adversaries. Lohengrin had been the subject of a popular Wagnerian opera, first introduced in 1850. With this book—for the first time in psychoanalytic literature—death symbolism was dealt with on par with and related to birth symbolism (Liebermann 1985:136).

THE INCEST MOTIF IN POETRY AND LEGEND (Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage; untr.; 1912, 1926, 3rd ed. in Rank ms. collection)

Published for the first time in 1912, Rank's fourth work ran to 685 pages. The work is a study of the universality of the incest theme and its relation to cultural development, which Rank typifies as an ever-increasing repression of erotic impulses. Such repression is resisted by the artist-type, who subsequently gives voice to overt fantasies denied by the bulk of the human population.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS FOR THE MENTAL SCIENCES (Die Bedeutung der Psychoanalyse für die Geisteswissenschafen; 1913)

The fifth of Rank's works, a short treatise of 127 pages, was coauthored with Hanns Sachs. This monograph insists on the significance of psychoanalysis for the scientific study of mythology and religion. Although the

book remains within a Freudian framework, it adumbrates later Rankian formulations of the nature of religion, the psychology of the artist type, and the mechanisms of cultural development.

The key concept in the book is the Freudian notion of the unconscious. Freud was of the conviction that therapy revolved around the attempt to make the unconscious conscious, and his primary thrust was an effort to make intelligible the unconscious and its many mechanisms of operation. Rank assimilated this. He states that "the foundation on which the whole of psychoanalysis rests is the theory of the unconscious" (p.1). The meaning of "civilized life, myth and religion, art and philosophy, ethics and law...[can] never be elucidated with entire satisfaction if the psychology of the unconscious is not included" (p.26).

THE DOUBLE (Der Doppelgänger; 1914, 1925, 1932)

Rank's sixth published book reflects a fascination with the themes of twin, shadow, and ghost as they relate to the human drive for immortality. Rank saw the double theme manifest in mythologies and works of individual authors, and interpreted the theme as a symbolic representation of the nature of self-consciousness: we are present to ourselves, and this self-presence mirrors the fundamental reality of our mortality. Rank was later to understand the primary sufferings in life in terms of life's dualistic nature, a concept reminiscent of the double theme. Rank's interest in the theme of the double was carried into his final work in a chapter named "The Double as Immortal Self".

THE DON JUAN LEGEND (Die Don Juan Gestalt; 1922)

The Don Juan legend had been a long-standing interest to Rank before he gave it formal attention. This work may be seen as the culmination of his earliest point of view and reflects his untiring interest in culture and in the expressive role of the artist. The book concerns an interpretation of the legendary Spanish love-hero, Don Juan. For Rank, "the essence of the Don Juan material is more profound than the frivolous breaking of hearts" (p.39). It reveals, rather, a psychic constitution oriented around the Oedipal complex. The "conquering nature of the hero is really a poetic fantasy production" (p.40). Rank's analytical interpretation of Don Juan is consistent with his Freudian orientation. Rank argues that the affective life of Don Juan in relation to women can be explained as a primal struggle to subdue the mother. In the final chapter Rank considers the psychology of the artist, the relationship of artistic production to guilt, and the social function of the artist-type.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOANALYSIS (Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse; 1924)

Another product of coauthorship, this time with Sandor Ferenczi, this book was presented orally two years before it saw publication. The theme—the relation of theory to therapy—demonstrates Rank's developing awareness of both the role of psychological therapy and of the nature of psychology theory. This awareness foreshadowed Rank's later functional understanding of popular psychology as a cultural phenomenon akin to, say, religion.

The first paragraph of the book describes the extent of the growth of psychoanalysis in its first thirty years "from a simple medical method of

treatment...to an extensive scientific theoretic system which...seems to lead to a new interpretation of life" (p.1). Psychoanalysis is characterized in an incipient way as a world-view.

The text argues for new directions. Both authors propose an "active therapy", a constructive and dynamic utilization of the therapeutic situation. Finally, psychology as a science is seen to represent a development in human consciousness and self-awareness. The physician, specifically the psychotherapist, is seen as the successor to the medicine man, sorcerer, charlatan and magic healer.

THE TRAUMA OF BIRTH (Das Trauma der Geburt; 1924)

This is Rank's best known work, and the one that precipitated his separation from Freud. The book has been published in four languages. Ironically, it was the only book which Rank wished he had not written. Rank many times later disowned its theoretical and methodological bases. Jack Jones states:

The transitional theory of the "birth trauma," with which for decades Rank's name has been misidentified by most of the histories, encyclopedias, and commentaries, should be immediately dropped into the garbage pail. It has at best only a metaphorical relationship to Rank's later and actually characteristic ideas, of whose existence few are aware even now (1975:62).

The book begins innocently with the statement that the "final origin of the psychical" has been discovered in the psycho-physical: "We are led to recognize in the birth trauma the ultimate biological basis of the psychical" (preface). In the eleven chapters that follow, Rank argues that cultural expressions are human attempts to overcome the birth trauma. Rank utilizes a strict Freudian methodology, but has cast Freudian theory into a new light.

Trauma is no longer related to the figure of the father, but to the mother. Rank, in this reinterpretation, effectively rejected the basic Freudian premise of the Oedipus complex. The theory established the viewpoint that the first separation was the prototype for all anxiety. This book was the last that Rank wrote within a strictly Freudian framework.

WILL THERAPY (Technik der Psychoanalyse; vol.1,1926; vol.2,1929; vol.3,1931; vol.'s 2 & 3 in Eng. tr. as above)

After leaving Freud, Rank struggled to create his own identity as a psychological thinker. This was a complex and gradual process, and the writing of his three-volume *Technik* reflects this. The first volume was started in 1926 and the final volume was completed in 1931. A translation of the final two volumes into English emerged much later in 1936. In the translator's preface Taft explains that the first volume, "despite its startling technical discoveries, was written from the Freudian viewpoint" (vii). Thus, the translated form of the book is intended "primarily as a presentation of Rank's unique contribution to modern psychology" (Taft 1958:viii).

Twelve of the fifteen chapter titles are dialectical in form, and follow the structure "x and y" (for example, "Separation and Guilt"). This structure reflects the theoretical basis of the book:

> Man suffers from a fundamental dualism, however one may formulate it, and not from a conflict created from forces in the environment which might be avoided by a "correct bringing up" or removed by later re-education (psychoanalysis) (p.122).

The book is an extension of what Rank feels he only intuited in the birth trauma theory. What Rank names "dualism", he also names "separation" and "difference": "The problem of likeness and difference...contains the whole problem of individuality" (p.46). Again, "The prob-

lem of separation shows itself as related to the problem of difference" (p.74). These three key words, dualism, separation, and difference, form the theoretical matrix that constitute Rank's distinctive contribution to psychological theory.

TRUTH AND REALITY (Grundzüge einer genetischen Psychologie; vol.1,1927; vol.2,1928; vol.3,1929; third vol. tr. as above)

The English translation *Truth and Reality* is limited to volume three of the original German. Taft explains, "Before the third volume was written, Rank found the key to his own theoretical organization in a sudden realization of the role of the will" (viii). Under this illumination Rank wrote the second volume of his *Technique* and the third volume of his *Genetic Psychology*.

The book presents what Rank calls the philosophy of the psychic (p.1). The work is not fundamentally different from what he wrote in *Will Therapy*. The difference lays primarily in the exclusion of therapeutic considerations and in a broadening of the ideas in *Will Therapy* through a more speculative inquiry into the nature of the will, its denial and justification in cultural expression. The book sketches the historical evolution of the cultural representations of the will, and finds in such representations the operation of a fundamental dualism.

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SOUL (Seelenglaube und Psychologie; 1930)

Rank wrote only a single work in 1930. As an expansion of his mature thinking, this book attempts to show "how our scientific psychology grew out of the belief in the Soul (Immortality)" (Rank in Liebermann 1985:286). Rank once again delves into a study of culture and cultural processes, and at-

tempts to show in what manner psychology is the creation of a cultural transition. Rank critiques psychology as the final manifestation of an interpretive, causal world-view in which the interpreter is now interpreted.

MODERN EDUCATION (Erziehung und Weltanschauung; 1932)

The translated volume of this book was published one year before its original German counterpart. Its appearance extends Rank's psychological point of view to an understanding of the inherent dynamics and problems of education, institutional and psychoanalytic. The term "ideology" comes to the fore in this work. Rank examines the social function of an ideology, the functionaries who propagate the prevailing ideology of a given place and time, and the psychology of the leader type.

ART AND ARTIST (Ger. orig. unpub.; 1932)

This is considered by many to be Rank's *magnum opus.* In it Rank returns to his earlier concern for art and the artist-type. Rank produced this work with amazing speed, completing the 431-page text in a few short months. It contains a reinterpretation of the history of the arts according to the principle of immortality, and highlights the psychology of the artist typical of each major period in human development. Rank argues that art, or cultural creation in general, is not produced under the compulsion of any biological mechanism, contrary to Freud. Rather the expression of the artist type is regarded as containing in concentrated form all the reactions to common human experiences, and a funnelling of these reactions into an expressed desire for immortality.

BEYOND PSYCHOLOGY (pub. posthumously, 1941)

Rank's final work constitutes a coda of his lifelong preoccupations: the neurotic, the artist, the hero. It is a study of human culture. Rank attempts a further refinement of his point of view, and renames his psychology "a psychology of difference" (p.29). In his earlier works Rank studied the phenomenon of interpretation, and viewed psychology as the latest manifestation of the human need for a causal, interpretive world-view. *Beyond Psychology* offers for consideration the concept of the irrational as a growth of Rank's phenomenological awareness of the human faculty for interpretation.

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