If psychoanalysis is to survive in the coming century, how must it change? More often than not, the proposed solution these days sees psychoanalysis building ties with neurology, cognitive science and evolutionary psychology in an attempt to shore up its ‘scientific street cred’. We must persevere, it seems, in Freud’s life-long mission and prove that psychoanalysis is science.

Alfred Tauber’s *Freud, the Reluctant Philosopher* presents the other side of the coin. Psychoanalysis must survive in the humanities as a system of interpretation, a hermeneutical system. Not only that, but the argument that psychoanalysis can only survive as a science is based on a persistent misinterpretation, one that depicts Freud’s work as inherently anti-philosophical. While this trend is present in Freud’s own presentation of psychoanalysis, Tauber argues that Freud misrepresented his own achievement, ignoring the philosophical influences in his own work in the name of positivism. Picking up on the ambivalence between psychoanalysis as science and psychoanalysis as hermeneutical system upon which Ricoeur built his *Freud and Philosophy* forty years ago, Tauber’s work presents Freud as an inspired humanist by reconceiving psychoanalysis as a project of moral inquiry.

Tauber, a hematologist by training turned historian and philosopher of science, draws attention to some interesting ambiguities in Freud’s work. Why, for example, if he was so intent of presenting his work as science, did Freud also take great pains to situate his theories in relation to Kant and other philosophers (xii)? In the same vein, why was Freud so critical of philosophy as a form of knowledge all the while his own theory of the unconscious was being denounced as metaphysics (xiii)? The need to distance himself from philosophy, a camp in which many of his contemporaries already located him, arose from Freud’s desire to be seen as a scientist. Even the therapeutic takes a hit here, as Tauber argues that Freud saw patients not as an end in itself, but for the gathering of data.
with an eye toward his scientific theories. But this trend, this desire to present his work as science, masks the true philosophical influences in Freud’s work, and Tauber points to many of these throughout the book.

Tauber’s book explores four closely related themes which he identifies from the outset (xiii). First of all, Tauber argues that Freud applied philosophical categories to his theories and that his metapsychology and his myth of the drives are closer to philosophy than to science. Second, he argues that Freud’s work can be seen as a philosophy of human nature founded on “both an empirically based psychology and a humanistic philosophy of human freedom coupled to a vision of moral self-responsibility” (xiii). In short, the ‘ideal self’ that emerges as the end-result of the psychoanalytic process is a humanistic construction, grounded in Kantian philosophy. Third, the scientific validity of psychoanalysis must be questioned because the second argument reveals it to be a moral endeavour. Finally, Freud’s turn to the study of religion and culture demonstrates his interest in making psychoanalysis a social philosophy. Ultimately, these themes paint a portrait not of a Freud who is opposed to philosophy, but of a ‘repressed philosopher’ distorting his own work in an attempt to win the favour of the scientists of his day.

The question of intent in Tauber’s argument remains unclear; was Freud trying to be philosophical, or was it simply that he could not help but be a product of the ideas of his day? Consider Tauber’s second theme, concerning the moral nature of the self constructed through psychoanalysis. The same could be said about the view of the subject in any modern therapy, or of any medical construction of health in general. Isn’t every medical practice, perhaps psychology most especially, a moral endeavour? Therapies and treatments always have some kind of philosophical underpinnings, yet few, especially within those fields, investigate them. Would Freud have been any different? Does the fact that he was interested in culture and religion necessarily make him a philosopher any more than Harvey Whitehouse would be, or any of the other modern-day ‘scientists of religion’?
The most valuable element in Tauber’s work is his exhaustive and erudite study into the way Freud’s work reflects his philosophical influences. The first chapter, for example, establishes Freud’s early interest in studying philosophy and demonstrates that some philosophers, including one of Freud’s preferred professors, ‘proto-phenomenologist’ Franz Brentano, did not see much difference between what they did and what positivists did, especially since the philosophy of the day was often understood to be German (Hegelian) idealism, which everyone could agree ought to be opposed. Inheriting from Brentano the ideal of a scientific philosophy, Freud crafted his notion of the unconscious in a way that, he thought, would satisfy Brentano’s criteria.

Tauber’s second chapter goes on to show how Freud failed in this endeavour, reviewing modern scientific critiques of psychoanalysis before arguing that psychoanalysis should not be seen as ‘scientific.’ Instead, it is most valuable as a system of interpretation. The remaining chapters take different approaches to demonstrating the ambivalence between science and philosophy present in Freud’s work. So while chapter 3 locates Freud in relation to the philosophers of his day, especially the neo-Kantians, later chapters rigorously argue for similarities between Freud and Kant on several points, including the autonomous nature of reason (chapter 4), the moral nature of the ‘ideal individual’ (in relation to both Kant and Nietzsche; chapter 5) and the uses of reflexive thought (chapter 6). While other philosophers enter and leave Tauber’s discussion, references to Kant are constant. The final chapter explores the Freudian paradox between the biological determinism of the drives and the free-willed reason necessary to explore and integrate unconscious elements as a moral problem.

For those of us in the humanities who apply Freudian psychoanalysis to interpret and understand religion, the ambivalence between science and philosophy in Freud’s work is nothing new. Without it, we likely would not be able to work the way that we do. And despite the reservations voiced earlier concerning Tauber’s four themes, these seem much less central to the book than Tauber suggests. Rather, his text seems to me most valuable to scholars in the humanities for its glimpse into the ways in which Freud appropriated German philosophy, and the thought of Immanuel Kant in particular.
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