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HERAUSGEBER

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**AUSTRIA:**

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**HOME OF THE WORLD'S  
PSYCHOTHERAPY**

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ALFRED ADLER

MICHAEL BALINT

VIKTOR FRANKL

SIEGMUND FREUD

FREDERICK KANFER

MELANIE KLEIN

HEINZ KOHUT

WILHELM REICH

PAUL WATZLAWICK



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## **Austria: Home of the World's Psychotherapy**

Psychotherapy in Europe: In view of history Vienna is the top address. Vienna is not only the capital of Austria. Vienna is not only the Austrians. Culture and science aggrandise her to an international level. But it would be unfair if Vienna did not give some of her brilliancy to her homeland. Therefore we name this special issue: Austria - Home of the World's Psychotherapy - even if most of the great psychotherapists lived in Vienna or their career began there. This special issue reaches far, not only geographically but concerning personalities, their biographies und also the dynamics which originate therefrom. Different also are the author's approaches and procedures in this issue. Sometimes the person and their origin, with others the personality and their relationships and sometimes the scientist and their work occupy centre stage. Just to name some at this point:

Axel Holitzki wrote about the first great psychotherapist SIGMUND FREUD. The subtitle names his date of birth and his date of death and reminds us that Freud was born in the middle of the 19th century and that he died even before most of us were born. Some critics talk about him as if he was still living today and they condemn him for not having properly taken into consideration our current scientific knowledge. This might be due to the fact that he did not consider his work to be science and a psychotherapeutic

approach only, but instead he saw it as a movement. And these create emotions, in favour or disapproving.

Irma Schwartz wrote the article about MELANIE KLEIN and allows us to participate in her inner and outer struggles - a private and professional exceptionally eventful life, and work that engaged opponents and supporters in equal measure.

That MICHAEL BALINT, originally from Budapest, is admitted into this special issue Austria may be justified in retrospect because of the times when Hungary was part of the imperial monarchy. Balint stayed in Hungary intermittently until just before World War II. Few know that his beneficial Balint-group work with physicians is based on the intention he adopted from Ferenczi, to look more at love than at self-love.

WILHELM REICH became a renegade and himself father of the Humanistic Body-Therapies, especially Bioenergetic Analysis. His career also began in Vienna. He, too, started with Freudian Psychoanalysis and his views and language are very much analytically shaped. He was not the only one whose personality and work presented something unique, so much so, that he did not fit into the analytic community anymore, but created his own and then gained his own followers.

KOHUT was born when Freud was aged 57. He saw this old man leaving Vienna in 1938. For a long time he did not publish his Self Psychology, because he knew that many could not take it without contradiction.

Bernd Rieken described ALFRED ADLER as consistently going his own way with his Individual Psychology, from 1911 onwards, from social to socialist and how he found many

supporters. Rapprochement only took place in the sixties of the past century, thirty years after his death.

Some articles in this special issue originate from the book "Wien, wo sonst! Die Entstehung der Psychoanalyse und ihrer Schulen" (Vienna, Böhlau 1994) published by Oskar Frischenschlager and reprinted here with his kind permission. In his book numerous other Vienna psychotherapists and psychoanalysts are described such as Paul Federn, Otto Rank, Helene Deutsch, Paul Ferdinand Schilder, Theodor Reik, Jacob Moreno, Heinz Hartmann, Anna Freud, Margert Mahler, Max Schur, Otto Fenichel, Bruno Bettelheim, Eugen Gendlin and Otto Kernberg. And there are also two other personalities from Budapest to be described: Sandor Ferenczi und Imre Hermann.

Even if VICTOR FRANKL enjoyed a psychoanalytical education, he went his own way and he did not mean much to the psychoanalysts. Alfried Längle allows us to understand his very special path.

PAUL WATZLAWICK also had a psychoanalytic education which took him to a totally different place in science and psychotherapy. Special here is that his niece, who is no psychotherapist, wrote the article about him, which promises the opening of a different and important perspective.

Just a single behaviour therapist must be mentioned here, FREDERIK KANFER, who in particular coined the German Behaviour Therapy during three decades, and thus had a similar influence on psychotherapy in Europe to other personalities introduced in this special issue. The interview, taken shortly before his death, shows how still full of scientific curiosity he tried to explore the future of psychotherapy.

This special issue as a whole leads us not only to Austria and Vienna, but also into the biographies of outstanding personalities and let us be a witness of the heyday of psychotherapy. It allows us to have a look at an approach to psychotherapy as it began initially from a biological-psychophysiological oriented direction, and ended with a hermeneutic method that used spirit and language in a dialogical relationship towards the goal of deeper understanding. Today the neurobiological knowledge-base is much broader but maybe the same step would be taken if we were now in the position of beginning this process anew - to the place where natural science is not sufficient.

Serge Sulz in December 2014

Axel Holicki

## **Sigmund Freud and the importance of the unconscious**

Comments on the life and work of an ingenious thinker (06.05.1856 - 23.09.1939)

### **ABSTRACT**

The author dispenses both with the repetition of familiar biographical details as well as with any comprehensive description of the theoretical structure of psychoanalysis. On the basis of biographical facts, the author discusses hypotheses on the personality development of Sigmund Freud which allowed him to create the extraordinary cultural edifice that is "psychoanalysis". The author equates acknowledgment of his own limitations and finiteness, a precondition for the capacity for psychoanalytic thinking, with the acceptance of the "unconscious", and describes the "unconscious" as the central pillar on which Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis is built. Proceeding from Freud's work "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900a), from the theory of transformations, the author discusses examples of more recent developments which he attributes to the further development of the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud.

*All things the gods bestow, the infinite ones,  
On their darlings completely;*



*All the joys, the infinite ones,  
All the pains, the infinite ones, completely.*  
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1777)

According to Wikipedia, the free internet encyclopaedia, Sigmund Freud "became known as the founding father of psychoanalysis. " Much has been written about Sigmund Freud, and a lot more about his life's work, psychoanalysis. A journal article about Sigmund Freud must necessarily remain incomplete. "What is required is no longer the broad sweep and the conclusive overall view which an individual could provide, but, rather, patient work on a mosaic made up of the diverse studies of researchers and researcher groups from various disciplines." (Kimmerle & Nitzschke, 1988, p. 6) The following comments are a selection from the very extensive scientific research on Freud's biography and on psychoanalysis. The selection focuses on the significance and the effect of the "unconscious". For anyone who is encouraged by this short journal contribution to read more, I recommend "Sigmund Freud. Living and Dying" by Max Schur (1972) .

"The question as to what psychoanalysis is cannot be answered unequivocally. For Freud it was three things: a science, a method of psychotherapy and a movement." (Federn, 1988, p. 9) "In accordance with the physiochemical and evolutionary-biological world view of the 19th century, in which he came to intellectual maturity, for Freud psychoanalysis had an undisputed value as a biological science which was ultimately rooted in the growing understanding of the brain function." (Wallerstein, 2006, p. 801)

With his life's work and with psychoanalysis , Sigmund Freud brought about an "extended understanding of the concept of humanity and the culture of the 20th century". The

ethical requirement of looking more honestly at the motives for our own actions, of taking responsibility for them towards ourselves and towards others, are just as inseparably linked with the name Sigmund Freud as psychoanalysis. "There was physics before Galileo and philosophy before Descartes, but the origin of psychoanalysis is definitely Freud." (Federn, 1988, p. 9)

Freud wrote in 1917 that the "universal narcissism of men, their self love, has up to the present suffered three severe blows from the researches of science." (Freud, 1917a, p. 7) He put himself in a row with Copernicus and Darwin, and concluded, "The third blow, which is psychological in nature, is probably the most wounding." (ibid.) Freud had demonstrated in his research that we, because we are human beings, do not have such free will as we would like to believe, and he informed his readers: "What is in your mind does not coincide with what you are conscious of." (Freud, 1917a, p. 10 et seqq.) This means that Freud was an Enlightener and at the same time an objector regarding the ideals of selfdetermination and feasibility of his time. "Freud and Galileo stirred up and changed the world, they reaped approval and contradiction, they experienced their own theories due to persecution . Their writings were censored and burnt ; they were personally vilified and threatened. But it was not possible to deny or to silence the truth that they sought and represented. Even if we debate the reach and the tenability of some of their theories - what could one expect? - Freud's and Galileo's world views have become part and parcel of our times." (Hirschmüller, 2006, p. 17)

What distinguishes Sigmund Freud from other extraordinary thinkers of his time? According to Federn, "The essence of genius consists in creating a completely new world." (Federn, 1974, p. 18) "In this universe [referring to Freud's psychoanalytical theories] we find almost the entire human

cosmos, [...] the loving, suffering and hating child, the parents in tragic conflicts, the sleeping, dreaming, awake individual, the sick and the healthy, the hero, the sinner, the ascetic, the poet and the painter (only the musician is missing); all affects and drives are presented to us - fear, love, anxiety, hate, the mysterious, the gladdening laugh and the grinding grief - and escalated to melancholy; we observe the liberating daydreams of the artist and the bizarre imagination of the insane [...] the constructs of culture: language, religion, war [...] at the end [an attempt at] psychological analysis of a whole people; his own people." (Eissler, 1974, p. 26) The "universe created by Freud will retain its permanent value because it is more than just science, because scientific insights are not permanent." (ibid., p. →)

"Going beyond the purely scientific insights, psychoanalysis also has a social and moral message: without striving for honesty with oneself and tolerance for one's fellow human beings, psychoanalysis is not possible." (Federn, 1974, p. 21) This tolerance can only be achieved, however, through a deeper understanding and, ultimately, acceptance of oneself and one's own limits. "An intimate friend and a hated enemy have always been indispensable to my emotional life." (Freud, 1900a, p. 487) When Marie Bonaparte described him as a genius, Freud is reputed to have responded: "Geniuses are unbearable people. You have only to ask my family to know how easy a person I am to live with. So I cannot be a genius." (Freud quoted in Eissler, 1974, p. 56) And "while we are accustomed to hearing about great scientists who may have unpleasant personality traits or suffer from severe mental disorders, Freud, as his letters and the testimony of those who knew him show, was an extremely likeable person, a loving father and husband. [...] There are not many great discoverers who showed so little vanity and so little interest in fame as

Freud. There was hardly another great scientist who was capable not only of bringing to life an international movement but also of leading it over decades; that means binding important people to himself the way Freud was able to do this." (ibid., p. →) Jones sees the "courage of truth" as the decisive mark of genius in Freud.

As to how Sigmund Freud became such an ingenious and independent thinker we can only speculate. Sigismund Schlomo Freud was born on 6 May 1856 in the Moravian town of Příbor in the Austrian Empire, now part of the Czech Republic. His father Kallamon Jakob Freud was married for the third time to Amalia Freud née Nathansohn. As a result of the then economic crisis, the father lost his financial security in the wool trade and was faced with social decline. After several moves, the family finally ended up in Vienna. There, young Sigmund proved to be a good learner who strived to understand the world at an early stage. There are two profound influences that could be cited as fundamental to his personality. On the one hand he was influenced throughout his life and protected in his identity by the experience of unshakeable love and unconditional acknowledgement by his mother. She allowed him the experience of belonging without being possessed by her. "The mother may have passed on her temperament and her emotional strength to her son." (Jones, 1960, p. 20) The eldest son Sigmund owes his self-confidence, his feeling of safety that was rarely shaken, to the love of his mother." (ibid., p. →)

On the other hand, as a Jew, he permanently found himself in the position of the outsider. Freud lived in a time when "a liberal Jew was a second-class citizen both [due to] his free thought and due to his religion." (Marcuse, 1956, p. 24) As a doctor he was socially acknowledged, but due to the anti-Semitism he experienced, he did not always feel at home

there either, perhaps even within the Jewish community. I regard this simultaneous sense of belonging and not belonging, of being securely embedded and at the same time rejected, as a formative biographical experience which explains not only his early scientific curiosity, his unquenchable thirst for knowledge and his capacity for free thought. Freud's later ability to give the people who sought his advice space with him and in him, his sincere attempts to understand while maintaining a scientific distance, that very attitude that allows mental healing and development of maturity in psychoanalysis, has its roots in these specific biographical experiences. Add to this his special skills in dealing with languages and his early urge to do great things. Eissler tells us that, at an early age, Freud "was fascinated by the phenomenon of language and must have granted it a special place in his personal and cultural world", and Eissler concludes that the "centre of the creative force in Freud was language." (Eissler, 1974, p. 28) With reference to his scientific curiosity, Freud wrote: "... during my life I wanted to make a contribution to the sum of our human knowledge." (Freud, 1914f, p. 205) "Men are strong only so long as they represent a strong idea. They become powerless when they oppose it." (Freud, 1914d, p. 113) It seems that Freud is also writing here about his own experience with rejection and exclusion. "Freud drew the logical conclusion from his perceived isolation in the scientific world and set about building his own discussion platform." (Hirschmüller, 2006, p. 12) The capacity for precise observation and for such independence of thought is only possible if one can repeatedly withdraw internally and separate oneself to a minimum extent from the significant others without entirely dissolving the bond and the relationship. Freud appears to have found this inner balance for himself at a very early age.

"As a young man my only longing was for philosophical knowledge, and now that I am changing over from medicine to psychology I am in the process of fulfilling this wish. I became a therapist against my will" (Masson, 1986, p. 190) This last sentence, that Freud became a therapist against his will, could be a possible clue in helping us to understand what made it possible for him to develop his abilities to such an extraordinary intellectual standard. In this context there are two particularly interesting developmental steps. In line with his abilities, Freud initially devoted himself entirely to medical research and had already attracted attention with his own publications, when something significant happened: "At the age of 26 Freud [...] was hit by the coup de foudre of a passionate love. The object of his affections was Martha Bernays, who later became his wife." (Eissler, 1974, p. 35) From then on, he devoted to her a love that was just as unquestioning as the unconditional maternal love he had grown up with. His love for Martha Bernays became the centring point for the rest of his life. In line with the social requirements, he now had to earn money to an extent that allowed him to marry and feed a family. At the time this also included provision for the unmarried relations. He could only earn enough money as a practising doctor. Freud made a decision. He placed his love of Martha above his desire for fame and recognition as a scientist. He made a sacrifice and accepted restriction. After an engagement period of four years he was able to marry, and worked in his own practice until the end of his life. A decisive factor in his further development was therefore "the inner willingness to accept a life without achieving greatness as worth living. The great achievement was no longer the *conditio sine qua non* of life fulfilment, but the willingness to achieve greatness was retained. It was only this step that made it possible for him to realize the full potential of his intellect." (ibid., p. →) The ability he developed to reject narcissism, to recognize individual limits, was the decisive development

achievement. It was only by fulfilling this condition that he was able to make the next important development step towards applying his abilities to the full extent. We can imagine that this decision in favour of his love of Martha and of a life as a father was not easy and, in particular, was not achieved by simply making a life decision. From today's point of view, the developmental step that now followed, Sigmund Freud's self-analysis as of 1897, appears to be just the logical conclusion. In what was a crisis period for Freud - he was 40 years old when his father died - he begins, with great courage of truth, to explore his own identity and the motives for his thoughts and actions. "The fixation on the filial identification is an obstruction to the full development of the creative." (ibid., p. →) It is only these two development steps, the deliberate rejection of narcissism and the intensified engagement with his own identity and restrictions, that make it possible, from a very much more independent position, to listen to the other, his patients and his colleagues, and to develop his own thoughts in response. This gave rise to "Freud's ability to wait and to listen, [his] talent to reject knee-jerk solutions of which many were available, and to hold problems in suspension over a long period." (ibid., p. →) The decisive first step was thus his willingness to make a sacrifice. In this sense he became as a practising doctor "a therapist against his will."

"Freud struggled with financial difficulties for a long time, but so did many other great thinkers. The same applies to the fact that Freud lost people he dearly loved. Freud becomes heroic in his fight for the recognition of his work and against death, in the battle against his illness." (Federn, 1988, p. 11) In 1922 he was diagnosed with cancer of the mouth. "He came through his first cancer operation in April 1923 with great stoicism. 'I don't take it very hard', he wrote [at the age of] 66, 'one will defend oneself for a while with the help of modern medicine and then remember Bernard

Shaw's warning: Don't try to live forever, you will not succeed.' But Freud's martyrdom had only just begun; it was to last 16 years. He still had to face more than 30 quite torturous surgical interventions. In the second operation, in October 1923, the doctors removed large sections of the right jawbone and of the palate and the tongue. Later they gave him a jawbone prosthesis which Freud could only insert and remove with help, and which had to be constantly re-adapted. The mechanical jaw prosthesis became a life-long torment; it made it difficult to speak, chew and, even worse, to smoke cigars. Although the tumour in his mouth was undoubtedly caused by smoking, Freud refused up to his death to give up his dangerous habit. As he explained to his doctor, Max Schur, he simply could not work creatively without his cigars. He forced himself to work regularly and treat his patients up to the last days of his life. Even in London, to which he emigrated in 1938, he continued his psychoanalytic practice. Here, in exile, he was operated for the last time. The nonetheless rapidly following recurrence of 'my dear old carcinoma' (Freud) was treated by the doctors with X-rays, but in vain: the tumour continued to proliferate unabatedly. On the 21st of September 1939 Freud had Doctor Max Schur - also an emigrant - call on him. He asked him to put an end to the pointless torment. Schur, who had promised his patient this last service a long time before, gave Freud two morphine injections, putting him into a sleep from which he never awoke."

Freud's life and psychoanalysis are inextricably linked. Nonetheless the following comments are more concerned with psychoanalysis and, in particular, the central significance of the acceptance of the unconscious. Psychoanalysis can be understood as a special cultural achievement in a time of enlightenment. Since then, psychoanalysis has established itself worldwide and continued to develop as a living science. And it is



undoubtedly one of the disciplines that can come very close to the ever new and apparently puzzling reality of the human being. King sees a special value in the "ambiguity of psychoanalysis" and assumes, along with Zaretsky, "that psychoanalysis, as the 'first great theory and practice of personal life' (Zaretsky, 2006, p. 15) can be seen as part of the modernization processes in the change from the 19th to the 20th century that made an important contribution to reinforce the potentials of autonomy and individual emancipation from the determinations of one's own life history." (King, 2006, p. 980)

At the end of the 19th century Freud published his "Interpretation of Dreams" with which he distanced himself from the then predominant doctrines of psychology and psychopathology. In 1898 Freud wrote to Fließ : "Biologically dream life seems to me to proceed directly from the residues of the prehistoric stage of life (one to three years), which is the source of the unconscious and alone contains the aetiology of the psychoneuroses: the stage which is normally obscured by an amnesia similar to hysteria." (Masson, 1986, p. 329 et seqq.)

After some detours via what were called at the time cathartic methods and via hypnosis, Freud had presented with his "Interpretation of Dreams" a theory of mental transformation processes which fundamentally changed our understanding of psychopathological processes. This gained him the recognition of Bleuler and of academic psychiatry. For several years the "Burghölzli" in Zurich became the centre of psychoanalysis. Doctors came from all over the world to Zurich to familiarize themselves with the new psychoanalytic method. Karl Abraham, Max Eitingon, Sándor Ferenczi, Ernest Jones, Carl Gustav Jung and many others gained their first experience with psychoanalysis as assistant doctors at the "Burghölzli". With the

"Interpretation of Dreams" Freud created the central theoretical structure of psychoanalysis, a new understanding of the mind as a constant reprocessing, as a necessary distortion and protection in the interests of the mental stability of man as a social being.

New editions of the "Interpretation of Dreams" were repeatedly revised and extended by Freud over decades . Freud developed a theory of the mind as an instrument, as a transformation apparatus. In the "Interpretation of Dreams" Freud used the motto "Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo." (Freud, 1900a) "At any rate, the interpretation of dreams is the 'via regia' to a knowledge of the unconscious element in our psychic life. By the analysis of dreams we obtain some insight into the composition of this most marvellous and most mysterious of instruments [the psychic transformation apparatus]." (ibid., p. 613 et seqq.) The effects of the unconscious are the subject of psychoanalysis. Like the remembered dream narratives, symptoms are interpreted as stagings, as compromise solutions in the interests of psychic stability. Even though Freud later warned against the "fabrication of world view" (Freud, 1926d, p. 123), he calls the "recognition of unconscious mental processes" (Freud, 1923a, p. 223) the first "pillar" (ibid.) of psychoanalytical theory formation. In his work with hysterical patients, Freud, along with Breuer, understood the "unconscious" as the definitive agent of neurotic symptoms. This is the basis for the special nature of the psycho-analytical epistemological process: certain knowledge is not possible. The symptoms recurring after hypnosis led to an understanding of the mental "resistance" against becoming conscious of unbearable, painful fantasies and memories, and thus ultimately to the development of the "talking cure" . The treatment of "Anna O." (1893, 1895) and the "Dora case study" (1905) allowed insights into the meaning and function of "transference". "The technique of

transference, invented by and for psychoanalysis through the process of free association, is not ubiquitous, but unique in the analytic situation." (Bollas, 2006, p. 934) "Freud believed that what the patient regarded as the most important thought [...] was not really the most significant, but in complete contrast, the least important idea. He made it clear: the most important associations are the apparently irrelevant ideas." (ibid., p. 936 et seqq.) "The logic of the thoughts appears in [the] gaps [of the narrative]." (ibid., p. 937)

With the acceptance of the "unconscious" and, from this, with pronounced "transference" and with the insight into the significance of "infantile sexuality" as the driving force of individual development, the main "pillars" of psychoanalytical theory formation are identified. The recognition of these "pillars" allows the capacity for psychoanalytical thinking and is inextricably linked with the curative effect of psychoanalysis as a psychotherapeutic method. Why is this the case? The abovementioned ability of Freud to acknowledge limitations and to reject narcissism allows us to understand it. The acceptance of the unconscious as an agency we cannot influence, as primarily effective and as unavoidable, is not possible without a basic acknowledgement of one's own limitations. This individual development step marks the separation between the proponents and the, often vehement, opponents of psychoanalysis. Even the discussions of various schools of theory within psychoanalysis, our technical discourses, often run along this separation line. The human ability to dispense with "exact knowledge" which only ever supposedly promises security and stability is an ego function which cannot be raised as an ethical requirement. The curative quality of psychoanalysis as a psychotherapeutic method is limited not by psychoanalytic theories but by the individual