

In order to get a better understanding of what people associate with psychoanalysis, a recent study by Blueml, Angermeyer, and Holzinger (2013) involved telephoning residents of Vienna, Austria and asking them to complete a brief survey. The number one association people made with psychoanalysis was with Sigmund Freud, after which they associated little else with the subject. Although Vienna was the residence of Freud for quite some time (Blueml et al., 2013) and therefore this result is a fair bit biased, it is none-the-less a good indicator of the man's status as both a cultural figure and the founder of the psychoanalytic method (Foss, 2013a). Freud is one of the most notable psychologists of all time and produced a large volume of books, papers and lectures. Freud began developing his many theories when psychology was in its infancy, which led to a lasting influence on the variety of sub-divisions in modern psychology today. However, the legacy of Freud is a grand one and it reaches beyond a single subject. For even before Freud began his forays into psychology, he was advancing theories in the fields of physiology and medicine (Guenther, 2013; von Wuefingen, 2013; Wieser, 2013). Yet, his influence extends beyond that of academia and into pop-culture, where his image immediately brings to mind phallic objects and sexual connotations. The full extent of Sigmund Freud's influence on the world today may be impossible to ever fully grasp, but to say the least, it is a great one. Therefore the purpose of this essay will not be to attempt the impossible task of describing every possible avenue of Freud's influence, but to highlight a small segment of the different topics Freud has touched on in hopes of conveying exactly how widespread his ideology has reached. Additionally, this essay will explore some of the ways in which Freud was correct in his theories while also drawing attention to some of the main criticisms of his work.

Although primarily known for his work as a psychoanalyst, Freud initially conducted research in physiology and medicine, under Ernst Wilhelm von Brucke (). He would stay in the field for over a decade and contributed to many theories, such as nuclear motility within a cell which would not gain acceptance for another 50 years (von Wuefingen, 2013). His studies of the nucleus of a cell have become a topic of recent speculation, where new literature examines the influence of his nuclear studies on his development of the unconscious (von Wuefingen, 2013). The idea comes from the way the nucleus acts as a central core and its (at the time) unseen processes influence and direct the rest of the cell. This inspired Freud to formulate the theory of the unconscious as the core of human being. Upon forming this theory, one of his main criticisms was also created. Freud could no longer show specific physiological evidence for his theories, therefore in many of his works there is a general ambiguity between physical and mental process (von Wuefingen, 2013). To Freud and many others, this criticism was and is of no concern because it may be impossible to ever get physiological evidence of every single mental process and it is enough just to be able to draw parallels between the two (von Wuefingen, 2013; Modell, 2013).

Freud's early work required a significant amount of microscopy, which at the time was also seeing many advances (Wieser, 2013). This allowed Freud the opportunity to physically see what others had only theorized before; to see the unseen. This gave Freud the inspiration for

many of his major theories because he could then reasonably believe that there were many unseen processes at work within a human and these process just need to be uncovered in some way (Wieser, 2013). This was not just a revelation for Freud, but for all of humanity. It marked a turning point, where science started to look inwards on humans and began to consider all our internal processes. This general advancement in ideology helped to maintain a wave of advancement in science and technology that continues on to this day.

Towards the end of Freud's life, he touched on the topic of telepathy. Possibly fueled by the current societal obsession with all things paranormal, his thoughts on telepathy have become a minor topic in recent literature (de Peyer, 2014; Massicotte, 2014). As with much of the current literature surrounding Freud, most of the content involves different interpretations of what exactly he meant. The debate within telepathy surrounds whether he truly believed in telepathy or whether it was a form of transference (de Peyer, 2014; Massicotte, 2014). Regardless of what he truly believed, Freud again did not dismiss what could not be directly observed but rather attempted to explain it. This speaks to the point made above, that Freud's ability to attempt to understand the unseen is one of his main contributions to modern science.

It could be argued that Freud's greatest contribution outside of psychoanalysis was to the advancement of the origins and understanding of cerebral palsy (Panteliadis, Panteliadis, & Vassilyadi, 2013). Freud worked directly on cerebral palsy for many years and continued to do so even after starting his work in psychoanalysis, although it did eventually bore him (Panteliadis et al., 2013). Yet he did manage to contribute a classification system that is used up to this day (Panteliadis et al., 2013). He additionally documented the poor correlation between symptoms and neuropathological lesions and various movement disorder syndromes in children (Panteliadis et al., 2013), both of which helped lead to better treatments. Finally, his theories on the origin of cerebral palsy during intrauterine life and not due to birth abnormalities represent a major shift in its understanding (Panteliadis et al., 2013).

Turning towards the bulk of Freud's theories which lay within psychology, one of the main themes Freud discusses is the unconscious. Although many before him had describe the unconscious or something resembling the unconscious, it was Freud that put the unconscious at the forefront of modern psychology (Guenther, 2013). He was the first to link the unconscious with higher functions and the interaction between the unconscious and conscious mind became the main component of all his theories (Guenther, 2013). Although he was wrong about many aspects of these interactions, such as the unconscious being able to directly effect the waking conscious (Modell, 2013), again it is not necessarily whether he was right or wrong. Freud described many patients who by today's standards could be diagnosed with specific mental illnesses but at the time were only diagnosed in broader terms and sometimes incorrectly (Mollon, 2014). It was the fact that his theories led to the ability to make predictions and attempt treatments, which opened the doors to others to replicate his methods and continue to make advancements.

One of Freud's central works is *Totem and Taboo* (1913), which he himself considered major. This work in part deals with patricide and the consumption of a father figure in totem form. On one hand, this is seen as advancing the role of the father figure in human development (Foss, 2013). On the other hand, it draws many parallels to Christianity and Freud goes so far as to say that a god is a creation of the human mind (Foss, 2013; Massicotte, 2014). This has led to Freud being used in many sides of religious arguments (Combres & Askofare, 2013). In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud makes many claims regarding anthropological topics and draws parallels between it and psychoanalysis. These claims were almost immediately widely discredited, as early as 1920 Alfred Kroeber pointed out several major theories not upheld by current anthropology such as totemism being the source of incest prohibition via ancient patricide (Zilcosky, 2013). For a long time this work mainly seen as flawed, however recent literature discusses the possibility of it being a fundamental work. Some see this as the point in which Freud begins to self-deconstruct and speculate about his theories, which is what makes psychoanalysis different and gives it a defining quality (Zilcosky, 2013).

To some, the ability to revise previous theories highlight a problem with Freud. To criticise him for the ability to change would be to argue against the very foundation of science, for to change one's thoughts following new evidence is standard procedure. It is more so about how Freud revised his theories. Freud worked on many theories at once, sometimes presenting them as whole theories, other times a parts (May, 2013). The problem was the he often failed to mention exactly how each theory related to one another (May, 2013). Also, when he introduced new theories, he failed to mention if they replaced the old ones or if they integrated with them. For example, this caused confusion when trying to explain his previous theories of the ego and his new theories of Eros and the death instinct integrate (May, 2013). For the most part Freud maintained the acceptance of his old theories along with his new ones (May, 2013). Since Freud is often presented in introductory settings, many criticize that his theories may not be as easy to understand as previously thought (May, 2013).

The general consensus is that Freud is the father of psychoanalysis (Foss, 2013a), so direct criticism of the psychoanalytical technique applies to him. One current criticism of the technique involves the long periods of time involved in psychoanalysis and the structure of the therapy. If a patient has inward directed aggression, such as in severe depression, the cost and suffering of going through a lengthy psychoanalysis therapy may actually be a source of self-directed aggression (Foss, 2013a).

Additionally, patients become so involved in the therapy that when they are finished, they relapse due to the removal of the social interaction of the therapist and the structure of having appointments set through a given week, month or year (Foss, 2013a). Many more modern

therapies which are common are less involved time-wise so they do not have this problem (Foss, 2013a), but again the theme of establishing some sort of methodology that can be worked upon is present.

In Freud's *On the Beginning of Treatment* (1913), he uses the first person many times. Although itself not a big deal, it does represent a deviation from a standard technical paper. Freud was concerned with mechanization of technique, where the individuality of the analyst is lost in the process (Foss, 2013a). To this extent, there is some debate among current literature as to whether psychoanalysis is best understood through technical writings or through case studies (Foss, 2013a). Technical writings give a definitive structure to a process, but limit creativity. Whereas case studies do not give a definitive structure and are subject to the criticism that there is no definitive process at work, but maintain creativity.

It is a well known fact that Freud analyzed himself (Masson, 2013) and that he had many relationships that any self respecting psychoanalyst would kill to analyze. It is also a well known criticism of his, that his own personal experiences and thoughts interfered too much with his theories (Foss, 2013a). However, to some these personal stories do not diminish his theories but add to them and allowed Freud to advance his own thought (Foss, 2013a). For if you view the stories not as interfering with theories, but as explanations to the origins of his theories, you can begin to see where his whole thought process began and therefore the begins of psychoanalysis itself. Indeed, his use of personal stories as well as relating to popular literature such as Shakespeare, made his theories more accessible and allowed for the exploration of underlying psychological themes which continues to this day with the psychoanalysis of the *Lion King* (Kegerreis, 2013) or the popular TV series *Girls* (Buchberg, 2014). Infact, the ability to use media like the *Lion King* to explain psychoanalytical properties makes Freud a popular introductory topic which acts as stepping stone into other psychological topics (Kegerreis, 2013).

Some of Freud's theories have become largely discredited and have never found a basis in current psychology, such as his Oedipus complex theories (Sick, 2013). On the other hand, some of Freud's discredited theories are turning out to be true. One such instance is his theory that the unconscious primary process is differentiated from the conscious secondary through free and bound psychic energy (Modell, 2013). Recent studies in neuroscience have confirmed that there are different neurobiological substrates for both processes (Carhart-Harris & Friston, 2010; Modell, 2013).

One of the central dogmas of neuroscience is that mental processes are intrinsically unconscious (Modell, 2013). This is a point that is attributed to Freud, again showing his lasting influence. Yet, it also is a point that leads to a paradox started by Freud that still plagues us today (Modell, 2013). It is known as the mind-body paradox and can put as the following: dreaming is a neurophysiological function that has a specific set of physiological characteristics that can be observed, however the contents of the dream are not a neurophysiological function and can only be seen by the dreamer. Therefore, is it possible to resolve every single aspect of the human

psyche down to a biological function, or are there somethings that will forever remain outside the reach of science? This is a question that may never be answered.

The nature of dreams is such that they can never be seen by a secondary source and even the primary source, the dreamer, can only remember the dream and not relive it in its entire whenever they choose. As many of Freud's theories deal with the unseeable, dreams seem like a logical area for Freudian thought. This is indeed the case, as Freud's ideas are still quite commonplace within dream interpretation (Avello, 2014; Curtis, 2013; Masson, 2013). In particular, his use of metaphors to analyze the meaning of dreams is still widely used. For example, an article by Abi (2013) seeks to expand what Freud's mushroom metaphor exactly means. This metaphor is taken from Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), which is one of the main sources of his still widely cited dream theories.

Freud published many books, which is a great achievement on its own, but what speaks a great deal about his legacy is that multiple people have wrote books about him and continue to do so (Williams, 2012). The books cover his life, his theories or any thing revolving around Freud. These books are then reviewed in peer-reviewed journals and then these reviews receive responses (Snell, 2014; Steinberg, 2013). There are also journal articles examing the relationships Freud had with various psychologists at the time and how they exchanged theories and influenced one another (Avello, 2014). All of these books and articles continue to be published, year after year. What this all means is that Freud is a man whose idea's remain central to psychology, regardless of how many of them were correct and to what extent. His theories touched on many different topics such as dreaming, childhood development, the unconcious mind, religion and telepathy just to name a few. His understanding of natural processes led him to make discoveries outside of psychology that are still used today, such as a classification system for cerebral palsy. His influence extends so far, that his home at Berggasse 19 in Vienna, which has been converted to a museum, is now the main source of influence for creating a whole new type of musuem, called the conceptual museum (Morra, 2013). In the future, Freud will only continue to find his way into the discussion as his works continue to be translated into Asian languages, where they are used as the main source for introducing psychoanalysis to the Asian peoples (Plaenkers, 2013; Plaenkers, 2013).

Many of Freud's theories have lost traction over the years, while some have found a resurgence. As was mentioned many times throughout the essay, the point was not whether he turned out to be right or wrong. The true legacy of Freud is in how he inspired so many to either embrace his theories or challenge them, creating a legitimacy in the new field of psychology and spreading its message. If one is still left with doubts as to the extent of his influence, consider this, if Freud were to be removed from the history books and everyone who ever talked to him, heard of him or read his ideas had to develop all of their own theories from scratch, how many years would we be behind current scientific standards?

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