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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. 27)

"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. 20) 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. Sigmund Schlomo Freud was born on 6 May 1856 in the Moravian town of Pribor 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. 22)

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. 38) 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. 30) 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. 32) 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 seq.)

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 willingness of the analyst to fight again and again for this maturity development.

Where psychoanalysts seek this attitude, psychoanalytical thinking and the abovementioned ability to listen are made possible. This is why psychoanalytical theory is less dependent on summarily growing expert knowledge and, rather, a function of the willingness to make a sacrifice. As already established: a thus defined independent thinking requires the ability to make an inner separation from the significant other while maintaining the empathic bond and relationship. It is only then that the "listening" of the analysis becomes a formative therapeutic approach, a growth-promoting framework of a psychotherapeutic working relationship which allows the analysand to achieve mental healing and maturation in the "talking cure".

This is not the place to introduce even the main theoretical and developmental lines of the history of psychoanalytic theory. Therefore, I will only briefly discuss some excerpts from the works of two psychoanalytic researchers. In their scientific thinking, Wilfred Ruprecht Bion and Jean Laplanche placed the importance of the unconscious at the centre. At a time when, after persecution and emigration of the Jewish psychoanalysts from continental Europe, and after the death of Sigmund Freud, there was a longing for certainty in "exact knowledge" even in psychoanalytic theory formation, both of them turned back to the "pillar" of psychoanalytic theory and reconfirmed the fundamental importance of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis.

In his work from 1912, "Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psychoanalysis" Freud announced a "single precept". Before naming this single precept five pages later, Freud described what he called "technical rules." (Freud, 1912e, p. 376) I want to cite three of them briefly here: 1. The "evenly suspended attention" (*ibid.*, p. 377) as a therapeutic attitude which is "unintentional [...] unbiased and without presuppositions" (*ibid.*). With which Freud recommends "not directing one's notice to anything in particular." (*ibid.*) 2. The analyst "should withhold all conscious influences from his capacity to attend, and give himself over completely to his 'unconscious memory' [...] He should simply listen and not bother about whether he is keeping anything in mind." (*ibid.*, p. 378) "The most successful cases are those in which one proceeds without any purpose in view, allows oneself to be taken by surprise by any new turn in them, and always meets them with an open mind, free from any presuppositions." (*ibid.*, p. 380) A further "technical rule" concerns the recognition of the importance of the transference: "The doctor should be opaque to his patients." (*ibid.*, p. 384). It is about the attitude of the analyst who "makes use of everything he is told for the purposes of interpretation and recogni-

tion of the concealed unconscious material without substituting a censorship of his own for the selection that the patient has forgone" (ibid., p. 381). Freud described his central thesis for the psychotherapeutic attitude as follows: "To put it in a formula: [the analyst] must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient" (ibid., p. 381). The short work from 1912 is aimed at an understanding of this technical rule announced by Freud in the introduction as the "single precept". Expressis verbis in the following sentences of the text Freud does not claim any general validity for the rules. He cautiously reminds the reader that "this technique is the only one suited to my individuality" (ibid., p. 376, emphasis A.H.) It is no coincidence, but actually very significant, that he chooses for that which he calls a "formula" - and I am talking about the intended central statement of his work - a different formulation, thus giving it a special weighting. Alongside the technical rules which he recommends in the hope that "that observance of them will spare physicians practising analysis much unnecessary effort and guard them against some oversights." (ibid., p. 376), his central "formula": the analyst "must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient" is not meant as a recommendation or a piece of advice for the doctor but as a "must" He emphasizes it especially as the only "rule".

Freud's work and writings, the "Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society" and the surviving correspondence illustrate how clinical experience and critical thought led to further-going theoretical positions which in turn had implications for the further development of the technique. In the meantime there are various forms or schools of psychoanalysis, "living under one roof." (Freud, 1914d, p. 96). A detailed discussion of the historical development of the technique would go beyond the scope of this magazine article. Therefore I will only describe very briefly my understanding of the theoretical resumption and extension of the aforementioned "technical rules" by Bion and Laplanche as a radical and uncompromising further development of Freud's central "formula", the recognition of the unconscious, the transference and the importance of infantile sexuality.

The influence of being forced to recognize the state of being separated too early, the premature separation from the mother, was visible throughout Europe during and after the Second World War. The understanding which proceeded from England at the time of children affected too early in their development has, in the meantime, given rise to a technique oriented towards the meaning of internalized objective experiences and towards the consequences which, unlike Freud, is devoted much more to the "analysis of preverbal experiences" (Groen-Prakken, 1990, p. 84). Today we are more familiar in our therapeutic technique with the simultaneity of transference and communication offers from the verbal, infantile-oedipal phase and with preverbal, archaic interaction which is always the first, and sometimes, particularly where traumatizing experiences and unsuccessful communication have had an enduring effect on the development of the ego, initially the only communication offer that the analysand is familiar with. Bion

was a pioneer of this further development. He scientifically substantiated the theoretical works of Melanie Klein and is, as far as I know, the one who made Freud's central "formula": the analyst "must turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient", more uncompromisingly and radically than anyone else, the central point of understanding analysis. Bion was thus returning to Freud's central position. In "A Theory of Thinking", in reference to the abilities of the mother, he called the therapeutic attitude a "reverie" and in "Learning from Experience", which appeared in the same year, he described "reverie" as "a dream-like release, [as a] state of mind [...]. In short, reverie is a factor of the mother's alpha-function." (Bion, (1962) 1997, p. 84) Bion "links elements of the drive theory with the object relations theory." (Wiedemann, 2007, p. 203) 50 years after Freud, Bion's "reformulation" (Wiedemann, 2007, p. 202), in its first version was: "The ability to remember what the patient said has to be linked with an ability to forget, so that the fact that each session is a new session and therefore an unfamiliar situation which has to be examined psychoanalytically is not muddled by an already over-enriched store of prejudices and misconceptions." The first version in 1962 of Bion's in the meantime popularized demand on the attitude of the analyst during the therapy session, characterized by Wiedemann as "initially reserved and balanced" (Wiedemann, 2007, p. 203), was formulated in the later works in a more condensed manner and "more radically" (ibid., 203) as "without memory and desire" and "no understanding". Bion reintroduced the unconscious as the decisive agent of the analytic couple. In 1970 he wrote: "The psychoanalyst cannot allow the aforementioned characteristics ['memory', 'desire', 'understanding'] free rein without impairing his analytical ability." (Bion, (1970) 2006, p. 40) "Regardless of how thorough an analysis is, the person who undergoes it will only partially reveal himself; at every point of the analysis the proportion of what is known is small relative to what is unknown. This is why the unknown personality, and not that which the subject or the analyst think they know, is the dominant feature of the session." (ibid., p. 101)

The origin of the unconscious conceptualized by Laplanche in 1985 is also a renewed centring of the unconscious in the sense of Freud's "pillar". He turned away from Freud's endogenously and phylogenetically oriented ideas, but in his works he reintroduced the central significance of the unconscious, the significance of infantile sexuality and of transference. Laplanche understood, "like Lacan, the unconscious and thus the drive not as something biological, archaic or congenital, but as the result of developing as a human being after birth. For Laplanche there is no super-individual, preformed unconscious. As early as 1959 Laplanche elaborated the thesis of a realism of the unconscious. The unconscious exists. The unconscious does not represent any hidden meaning that can be uncovered with the aid of psychoanalytic hermeneutics, but corresponds, rather, to an (unconscious) psychic reality." (Hock & Sauvart, 2011 (2010), p. 19) Just like Bion, he places the significance of the unconscious and Freud's "technical rules" conceptually at the centre. He used a "model which allows us to understand the origin of the unconscious in the human primal situation of child-adult. This also contains the idea that the

'core' of our being is and must remain alien to us as it takes its origin from the other, from the other's unconscious." (ibid., p. 22)

This becomes technique: "No answer is the last, and the end of the analysis does not form a definitive conclusion." (ibid., p. 19) His logical conclusion that "transference cannot be dissolved" (ibid., p. 23) is another distinction from Freud. Laplanche conceptualized psychoanalysis from the "special nature of its subject, i.e. the unconscious and sexuality." (Laplanche, (1987) 2011, p. 87) He uses the term "primal seduction" to describe "a fundamental situation in which an adult proffers to a child verbal, non-verbal and even behavioural signifiers which are pregnant with unconscious sexual significations." (ibid., p. 158 et seqq.) According to Laplanche, the unconscious arises out of the non-translatable residues of these "enigmatic signifiers". Laplanche made it clear that the "analytic rule should be understood as an absolute suspension of all reality judgments." (Laplanche, Pontalis, (1985) 1992, p. 13) Here we find not only Freud's "from unconscious to unconscious". He postulates that we are dealing with what is ultimately unachievable. Why and how, according to this understanding of the unconscious and its development, transference is "established" is explained by Laplanche as follows: "The cure must be established [...] The situation must never stop beginning itself anew, until the end, until the last moment of the analysis." (Laplanche, (1987) 2011, p. 189). And he emphasized: "particularly due to the refusals [refus] of the analyst." The therapy situation is "the reestablishment of the situation of primal seduction." (ibid., p. 190). This concept is substantiated in what he calls the "ethics of the psychoanalyst" (ibid., p. 191), in which Freud's 'rule' and Bion's 'demand' appear again: "The main thing is that the analyst, if he is to be in the position of the one who is assumed to have knowledge, always refuses the knowledge [refuser], but also and above all refuses it to himself." (ibid., p. 191 et seqq.) With the word "must", the "ethic" becomes a "rule". Laplanche and Bion return in the basic principles of their theoretical concepts to Freud, and each of them, to a certain extent, chooses his own Freud. The "absolute suspension of all reality judgments", here as a formulation of Laplanche, applies, as it already did for Freud, to both parties – the analyst and the analysand. Mainly, however, it is a "rule" for the analyst in the therapy session which cannot be fulfilled to the letter, but can help to come closer to the incomprehensible. In this sense, Bion's concept is a concept of becoming. What for Freud in 1912 was the "surgeon metaphor" , is formulated by Bion as follows: psychoanalysis "stimulates growth of the domain it investigates." (Bion, 1970, p. 82) Psychoanalysis is therefore only curative when it dispenses with the manipulative claim of healing. "The reduction of the omnipotent denial and the acceptance of the independence of the object – whether spouse, lover, children and friends or patients – is an endless, life-long task and always remains relative and incomplete. Striving to achieve it is a trademark of the analytic perspective." (Whitebook, 2006, p. 1025)

Even brief comments on the life and work of Sigmund Freud would be incomplete without reference to the cultural theory writings. "As a depth psychology, a theory of the mental unconscious, [psychoanalysis] can become indispensable to all the sciences which are concerned with the evolution of human civilization and its major institutions such as art, religion and social order." (Freud, 1926e, p. 283) "Like Kant (1784), Freud regarded maturity, defined as the ability to critically evaluate the traditional convictions of a culture, as sacred as they may be, as a fundamental standard of enlightenment." (Whitebook, 2006, p. 1032)

Assmann pointed out that, in his last book, "Moses and Monotheism", Freud had become an "archaeologist". And "although his historical reconstructions of Moses the Egyptian up to the multi-century 'latency phase' of monotheism in the unconscious of the Jewish people must be rejected as unprovable," he emphasizes Freud's "brilliant insights into the dynamics of religious and cultural history," and counts the work of Sigmund Freud as one of the "fundamental works of the 20th century." He quotes Yerushalmi who, in his book "Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable" (1991), "elaborated the theme of the cultural memory as the centre of the work." (Assmann, 2006, p. 1042 et seqq.) Freud's "distinction between tradition and memory dynamics," is regarded by Assmann as "a decisive discovery which we must fix upon, also from a cultural-scientific point of view." (ibid., p. 1045) And he reminds us that we who are reviewing Freud's writings today are like "dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants, and can always see further than the giants themselves." (ibid., p. 1051)

In conclusion, some comments on the dangers to which psychoanalysis has always, but in particular since its institutionalization, been exposed to. "I considered it necessary to form an official association, because I feared the abuses to which psychoanalysis would be subjected, as soon as it became popular. There should be some head-quarters whose business it would be to declare: All this nonsense has nothing to do with analysis. This is not psychoanalysis." (Freud, 1914d, p. 85) Ferenczi wrote in 1930: "Analysis has become an [...] object of superficial interest, so that the number of those calling themselves psychoanalysts, often with little justification, are shooting up like mushrooms after the rain." (Ferenczi, 1930, quoted in Harmat, 1988, p. 121) Psychoanalysis is not endangered by its declared enemies, but rather by the psychoanalysts themselves. Kernberg and Wallerstein emphasize growing convergences of various theoretical opinions despite continued divergence. "The major convergences include earlier interpretation of the transference, increased focus on transference analysis, as well as growing attention to countertransference analysis and increasing concern with the risks of 'indoctrinating' patients. Greater emphasis on [...] the unconscious meanings of the 'here-and-now' [...] Divergences also continue regarding reconstruction and recovery of preverbal experience." (Kernberg, 1993, p. 296) He represents the thesis that modern psychoanalysis is condensing into two dominant contemporary currents. One is the 'the contemporary psychoanalytical mainstream, derived from contemporary Kleinian, contemporary Freudian (the mod-

ern form of ego psychology) and British independent sources (a group of object relations theorists)" and indicates the "increasing mutual influencing [and] fusion in the area of therapy-related application." The "other is the intersubjective-interpersonal self psychology." Kernberg places "the French perspective as a third way alongside this." (Wallerstein, 2006, p. 815)

"In the opinion of the French, both perspectives neglect Freud's basic theory of drives and the archaic infantile sexuality. In principle, the French position [...] clings to the early Freud of the drive and libido theory" and criticizes the "deviation or [the] withdrawal from Freudian unconscious." (ibid., p. 817) Looking to America, Wallerstein asserts: "While the English concluded the famous 'gentlemen's agreement' after the 'controversial discussions' of 1941-1945, the American traditions [the Freudian and the interpersonal] continued to live alongside each other [and] mutual recognition was only achieved decades later. There was never a comparable [to the middle group in England] group in America." (ibid., p. 819) "Gabbard points out that the mutual transfer in the analytical theory formation and its clinical application increasingly became the focus, thus forming a joint basis. [He] saw in this the growing consensus between Kleinians and Freudians to regard the interactions between the transfer-mutual transfer matrix as a 'joint creation', whereby the centre of gravity oscillates between the patient's contribution (the original Kleinian position) and the analyst's contribution (the present Freudian position)." (ibid., p. 820) Wallerstein expects that psychoanalysis will grow together to form an "ultimately coherent, uniform theoretical structure which, like similar scientific structures, is suitable for examining the theory systematically." (ibid., p. 826)

Psychoanalysis acknowledges the subjectivity of the analysand through "decentering of one's own perspective." (Whitebook, 2006, p. 1026) This decentering is, as described above, not possible without the acquired ability to reject narcissism. The "separation line" described above between various theoretical positions also marks the "endangering" of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is not threatened by the controversial opinions on the question of scientific testability or by new developments and concepts in psychotherapy. Psychoanalysis is only at risk when someone calls himself a "psychoanalyst" and is in fact doing something completely different. Where the "exact knowledge" steers the psychotherapeutic treatment, the thoughts and actions of the analyst, there is no room left for psychoanalysis. A psychotherapy that fails to place the formative role of the "unconscious" at the centre of its theoretical concept may be a good treatment concept, but it cannot "live under the same roof" (Freud, 1914d, p. 96), as the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud, whose bearing pillar is the "unconscious".

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