

# History and Evolution of the Unconscious Before and After Sigmund Freud

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## Prologue (2011)

Talk therapists are pleased with a 2010 article by Jonathan Shedler in the *American Psychologist* that supports “The Efficacy of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy.” The author states in a footnote (p. 98) that psychodynamic is interchangeable with psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis was founded by Sigmund Freud, who wrote about his theory and method from 1895 until he died in 1939. Over those years, and after his death, he attracted both admirers and detractors. In the mode of the denigrators, Shedler’s described the founder’s classical psychoanalysis as “outlandish and inaccessible speculations made by Sigmund Freud roughly a century ago” (p. 98). Another pro-psychodynamic article that cites Shedler, written by Cortina (2010), said “word is out that Freud was wrong about everything he wrote and there is no scientific backing for any of his discoveries” (p. 44); he uses *The New York Review of Books* as his authority (footnote on page 98). Their denigration is consistent with the anti-Freud tone of some publications that I cited in this 1997 paper about the unconscious.

Vituperative comments about Freud were not uncommon and the following article reflects the disharmony amongst scholars. As the unconscious is a central element of Freud’s creation, it focuses feelings about him. An indication the negative feelings may be decreasing, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, a prior critic (1984), wrote an “Introduction” to a new 2010 release of *The Interpretation of Dreams*\* with more charitable comments about its original author. Masson begins with “Freud had two remarkable gifts: he could think and he could write” (p. v). He provides this perspective: “If we are able to subject Freud’s book to psychological criticism, it is important that we recognize that the very endeavor owes its existence to Freud” (p. viii); and: “As is often the case with Freud, his insights are valuable in and of themselves, even if they are not entirely or strictly ‘true’” (p. ix).

Freud considered dreams the “royal road to the unconscious” — a mental construct that behaviorists did not believe existed. Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept evolved and Freud was maligned by differing theorists. Competing schools claimed the psychoanalytic rubric and tried to replace classical psychoanalysis, attempted to redefine the unconscious to foster their theory (Fayek, 2010). Then, cognition was added to behavioral psychology and began to adopt theories of the unconscious processes. Present research not only draws upon cognitive science and psychoanalysis but includes neuroscience, evolutionary theory, and developmental psychology (Cortina & Liotti, 2007). Norman (2010) provides vignettes about research into motivation, emotion, decision making, and attitudes. Both of these references dispassionately contrasted contemporary views of the human mind with those of Freud. Perhaps, someday personal diatribes will not be considered necessary.

**Cortina, M. (2010).** *The future of psychodynamic psychotherapy. Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes, 73(1), 43-56.* [<http://www.atypon-link.com/GPI/doi/pdf/10.1521/psyc.2010.73.1.43>]

**Cortina, M., & Liotti, G. (2007).** New approaches to understanding unconscious: implicit and explicit memory systems. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis, 16*, 204-212.

**Fayek, A. (2005).** The centrality of the system *Ucs* in the theory of psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 22(4)*, 524-543.

\***Freud, S. (2010).** *The interpretation of dreams: the illustrated edition.* With an introduction by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson; translated by A. A. Brill. NY: Sterling Publishing Co.

**Norman, E. (2010).** ‘The unconscious’ in current psychology. *European Psychologist, 15(3)*, 193-201.

**Shedler, J. (2010).** *The efficacy of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. American Psychologist, 65(2), 98-109.* [<http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-65-2-shedler.pdf>]  
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## Executive Summary

An understanding of Sigmund Freud, his brainchild psychoanalysis, and its core feature the unconscious, requires an understanding of how he was portrayed in the literature. It is it is useful to see the emotional approbation and denigration that pervades the writings of supposed scholars. Freud did not operate in a cultural vacuum and was aware of other thinkers. To show that others conceptualized unconscious process does not diminish his contributions, as some claim. Of course, as stated on page 9, “Freud’s, and his follower’s, ‘pathologizing’ of the opposition did not win him many friends,” but he died in 1939 and the intensity of criticism has not abated. When he started behaviorism was also coming on strongly, which summarily rejected the unconscious. Decades later cognitive psychologists began to accept processes occurring outside the conscious mind. While some continued to demonize Freud, others explored new theories that described the unconscious mind.

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## Introduction (1997)

Psychodynamic psychotherapies are based upon psychoanalytic theory that considers the unconscious an essential element in all of its branches (Alonso, 1988; Hirsch & Roth, 1995). Conversely, behavioral psychotherapies, which emanate from the work of John Watson (1913), summarily reject the unconscious (Hunt, 1993). Cognitive psychotherapies, having initially grown out of the behavioral movement, evolved from the initial study of purely conscious (Baars, 1986; Gardner, 1985) mental processes. George Miller’s (1956) seminal article on span of immediate memory is considered the start of cognitive psychology. Subsequently, cognitive approaches began to incorporate unconscious influences (Kihlstrom, 1987). The unconscious was not and is not a static construct and its history and how it changed over time and across theories, models, and paradigms (Hirsch & Roth, 1995; Sandler & Sandler, 1994) is useful information for the academic, the practicing psychotherapist, and the student if psychology.

A basic belief or disbelief in an unconscious fundamentally influences both the development of theory and how therapy is done. It is considered important to know the environments from which unconscious processes emanated, as psychotherapeutic method without knowledge is considered inadequate. Therefore, the history and evolution of the concept of an unconscious is useful because it places controversial literature in context. Although Freud, the “father of psychoanalysis” (Bettelheim, 1982), conceptualized a model of the unconscious that was useful for psychotherapeutic purposes, he was not the first (or the last) to consider its existence, structure, and process. Later psychoanalysts would further change Freud’s conceptions of the unconscious (Hirsch & Roth, 1995; Sandler & Sandler, 1994).

The awareness that there was knowledge of an unconscious before Freud is used by some writers to deprecate his work and character (Ellenberger, 1970; Sulloway, 1979; Masson, 1984). They insinuate that Freud’s having built upon a foundation of mesmerism (i.e., animal magnetism and hypnosis) plus prior developments of the Enlightenment, romanticism, and the physical sciences, discredits his work and even him as a person (Chapman & Chapman-Santana, 1995; Ellenberger, 1970; Sulloway, 1979; Young & Brook, 1994). Conversely, that there was a developing awareness and evolution of the concept of the unconscious for two centuries (Hunt, 1993) before Freud constructed his theories was extolled by his supporters (Alexander & Selesnick, 1966; Fine, 1962/1973).

Freud's knowledge of history and literature was never a secret or unknown. Freud's drawing upon ancestral knowledge was well known and reported. Sewell (1985/1992), perusing the *Index to Freud's Collected Works*, was instructed by the quantity and variety of his use of literature. The unconscious before Freud is instructive because it shows us from whence his ideas emerged. The history of the unconscious contains ideas and practices that are still with us in new age psychology and fundamentalist healing religions. Some form of the unconscious are incorporated into new theories. So, ideas come, develop, are superseded — and remain.

Reasons why Freud's detractors find his scholarship and his knowledge of history deplorable is better left to a psychohistorical analysis than speculated upon herein. Quotations will be used to illustrate the attitude and tone of proponents and detractors.

### The Conquistador

Freud considered himself a "*conquistador*" (Jones, 1953, I, p. 348). This name he applied to himself was used to both criticize and to praise Freud. Recent authors of an APA (American Psychological Association) sponsored book, *Interface of Psychoanalysis and Psychology* (Barron, Eagle, & Wolitzky, 1992), chose to do the former. A quotation from the preface to the Barron and his colleagues' book gives a flavor to the authors' bias:

Always thrall to the romantic myth of the lone genius-hero, Sigmund Freud usually denied any influence of contemporary psychology on his theories. His followers have shown a touching ability to subordinate skepticism or curiosity in this matter to filial piety, although that is one of the attitudes most easily subjected to reductionist deflation by psychoanalytic interpretation as transference. ...

From the start, then, psychoanalysis has been motivated to deny or to minimize any influence from psychology. Exaggerating the degree of his rejection and ostracism by the established medical and intellectual communities, Freud and his followers alike deliberately withdrew from the usual means of scientific exchange and remained outside the community of scholars. ... What he [Freud] wanted from others was not constructive criticism and a stimulating exchange of ideas, giving and taking, but to be hailed as their leader. His self-description as a *conquistador* was quite insightful. Since the part of the scientific world that was concerned with human thoughts, feelings, and behavior — psychology — did not embrace him as its savior and did not enlist as part of his band of disciples, he felt spurned by it. (p. xi)

The full quotation which was the source of the term "*conquistador*" is, from a letter to Marie Bonaparte: "You often estimate me too highly. For I am not really a man of science, not an observer, not an experimenter, and not a thinker. I am nothing but by temperament a *conquistador* — an adventurer, if you want to translate the word — with the curiosity, the boldness, and the tenacity that belongs to that type of being"(Jones, 1953, I, p. 348).

Rosenzweig (1985/1992) treats Freud more kindly than Baron et al. as he recants the case of a former patient and friend who tried to persuade him not to destroy his letters to Fleiss:

Marie Bonaparte once told him [Freud] she thought he was a mixture of Pasteur and Kant. He replied: "That is very complementary, but I can't share your opinion. Not because I am modest, not at all. I have a very high opinion of what I have discovered,

but not of myself. Great discoveries are not necessarily great men. Who changed the world more than Columbus? What was he? An adventurer. [A conquistador?] He had character, it is true, but he was not a great man. So you see that one may find great things without its meaning that one is really great.” (Jones, 1953/1981, II, p. 415)

Surely, there is a difference of opinion about Freud, the conquistador. Nonetheless, he did draw upon the foundation of knowledge that led up to his investigations. It is up to the reader to decide whether this makes him a sinner or saint.

### Freud's Detractors

Ellenberger's (1970) monumental and classic book, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, in spite of its main title, mainly traces the history of its secondary title. The evolution of psychodynamic psychiatry drives the awareness of and then the definitions of the unconscious. Two intellectual and visceral paths seem to have converged at Freud. One was governed by the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, that consumed most of the seventeenth century and spilled into the early nineteenth century (Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 1993; The New York Public Library, 1989). The other movement was romanticism, which started in the late eighteenth century and ran through the nineteenth century. The Enlightenment celebrated our ability to reason and romanticism was a reaction to the Age of Reason and stressed the essential goodness of human beings and emphasized nature and atmosphere. Consider the *Zeitgeists* that are reflected in both of these movements.

Schopenhauer (1788–1860) was a German post-Kantian (1724–1824) philosopher, who strongly influenced Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Proust, Thomas Mann, and Sigmund Freud. Schopenhauer conceived a will that had blind, driving forces which have a dynamic character (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 208). “Luis S. Granjel says that Schopenhauer and Freud have three main points in common: an irrationalistic conception of man, the identification of the general life impulse with the sexual instinct, and their radical anthropological pessimism” (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 209). From these three main points we can derive a biological construct of mankind having drives, with libido, plus a dual-instinct (i.e., libido and aggression) theory. It is noteworthy that this was not a humanistic, pristine view of human nature. Also, the unconscious was not the only feature of Freudian theory that can be traced back to Schopenhauer. Furthermore, Kant (1724–1804) introduced the term “noumenal self” that fit the typographic theory (see page 9, herein) of the system unconscious; an inner self that was unknown to the conscious self, but profoundly influenced the sense of self experienced (Chessick, 1992). Thus, again, there is proof that there was prevailing knowledge of unconscious events that were available to and known by Freud as he developed psychoanalytic theory. It is interesting that supporters and detractors of Freud both share the same basis of facts from which they draw opposite conclusions about the man, his theories, and his techniques.

Criticism of Freud's foundation sources continues. Recent articles have correlated Nietzsche's ideas with those of Freud's (Chapman & Chapman-Santana, 1995; Lehrer, 1996). Detractors concluded from “systematic correlation” (Chapman & Chapman-Santana, 1995, p.166) and comparisons that Freud was influenced by Nietzsche, even though he repeatedly stated that he had never read this popular philosopher. Nietzsche was a towering figure in 1870's Vienna and by the 1890s in the German-speaking world (Lehrer, 1996), but so was Schopenhauer (Young & Brook,

1994). If Schopenhauer was the impetus to many after him it seems plausible that two geniuses might draw overlapping ideas from the same German philosopher.

Young and Brook (1994) gave compelling evidence, both “circumstantial and direct” (p. 116), that Freud read Schopenhauer *before* he conceived his theories. They challenged Freud’s claims that his ideas were arrived at independently. Their evidence, while it may leave “reasonable doubt,” might win a case on “preponderance of the evidence.” This is a fine exercise for academicians but its practical value is questionable for the practitioner, except when used to propound a counter-theory (e.g., Masson, 1984). *Argumentum ad hominem* replaced discussion of ideas. It is interesting that scholarly perseveration centers around Freud and not Schopenhauer or Nietzsche. Examples provided by Young and Brook (1994) from Schopenhauer’s (1966) *The World as Will and Representation*, published in two volumes in 1819 and 1844, provide clearer explanations (to me) than the parallel writings of Freud. Nevertheless, somehow Freud made a greater impression on the profession of psychotherapy than did Schopenhauer. This dichotomy will be examined shortly.

Ellenberger reports, the term unconscious was introduced and described in 1869 by Eduard von Hartmann (1972) in his famous work *The Philosophy of the Unconscious*. Von Hartmann’s unconscious had three layers:

- (1) the *absolute unconscious*, which constitutes the substance of the universe and is the source of the other forms of unconscious;
- (2) the *physiological unconscious*, which like Carus’ unconscious, is at work in the origin, development, and evolution of living beings, including man;
- (3) the *relative or psychological unconscious*, which lies at the source of our conscious life [italics added]. (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 210)

Thus, there are precursors to the unconscious of Freud, even to using the word. It will be seen that post-Freudian concepts of the unconscious were also portended by von Hartmann. In addition, to my reading, the collective unconscious of Jung is represented by von Hartmann.

Ellenberger (1970), however, treats Jung more kindly than he does Freud. A couple of quotes may convey the idea. “Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious has been applied to the psychology of philosophical insights and scientific” (p. 734). “Actually the contrast between the Freudian and the Jungian unconscious could aptly be illustrated by the contrast between the Walpurgis Night of the Blocksberg, with its demons and witches, and the Classical Walpurgis Night, with its mythological figures” (p. 737). “Thus, the same people who see in Freud the sorcerer who reduced man to his devilish instincts, are likely to visualize Jung as the wizard who was able to sway the moon” (p. 737). It is apparent that Ellenberger was more enthralled with wizards than with sorceries.

Suloway (1979) also takes a negative view of Freud’s accomplishments and titles one section of his Introduction: “The myth of the hero in psychoanalytic history” (p. 5). He pays homage to “Henri Ellenberger, in his impressively erudite if also much-disputed *Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970), has done more than any other student of Freud’s life to question these myths in a systematic manner and to sketch out their general proportions” (pp. 5-6). Mutual admiration by authors is used to support other authors with complementary points of view. Suloway (1979) peppers his book with other criticisms of Freud, but this is not a paper on Freud’s attackers. We need to remain focused on the unconscious and not the multiple facets of psychoanalytic theory that engender controversies.

Nonetheless, understanding personal proclivities are important to following and analyzing the literature, particularly as Freud engenders such passion for and against him, feeding *both ad hominem* attacks and admiring affirmations.

### Affirmations

Alexander and Selusnicj (1966) argued that Freud made *operational* the concept of psychological causation. Concrete study of individuals replaced philosophical speculations. Using his created science of psychobiography the patient's symptoms and history were merged to show, as did Pinel (1745–1826) over a century earlier, that life experiences contribute to mental illness. That is, nature contributes to nurture. The historical precursors to Freud's unconscious that Ellenberger and Sulloway vituperatively cast upon the unsuspecting as proof of the fraudulence were all known historical facts. Recasting history and presenting it in a new finding has the effect (on some people) of creating a new view of what happened. It is useful to examine how this is possible.

How, then, did Freud manage to amass such a following for his ideas about the unconscious, if all the work was done before him?

Fine (1962/1973) explains that as Freud was so broadly published games can be played with his preponderance of publications. It is possible to take Freud out of context to show him as a biologist, physiologist, or evolutionist and all are partially true. Fine maintains, however, that there is a fundamental consistency of Freud's position as a psychologist. Freudian theory is interconnected among all its elements in a system and each node reinforces all other nodes in the system. It is not possible to look at an isolated element and to disconnect it from the entity.

The argument in this article, however, is concerned with the specific history of the unconscious and the precursors that are used to cast doubt on Freud. What is the history that brings such praise and disdain to Freud? A psychohistory of the participants would be a better place to analyze the transference and countertransference associated with their attacks and unfailing support.

### History

The one track of the unconscious stems from Mesmer's (1734–1850) replacement of Gassner (1727–1779) in the year 1775 (Ellenberger, 1970). Gassner, a priest, was successful in using faith healing and exorcizing for curing a large following. Mesmer was a product of the new Enlightenment philosophy and his methods appealed to reason over blind tradition, superstition, and ignorance. Nemiah (1988) explains Mesmer's techniques of psychotherapy:

Mesmer's basic therapeutic maneuver was the magnetic pass. Patient and therapist sat opposite one another, knees touching, while the later moved his hand downward from the patient's head to his groin in repeated sweeping movements. In response the patient would feel warmth spreading over his body and would at length succumb to the therapeutic "crisis," a convulsion having all the earmarks of what is called a hysterical seizure, from which you could awaken symptom free. Equally effective crises could be produced by the touching of objects over which the mesmerist had made magnetic passes, the most common of these being the *baquet*, a large covered tub full of water, bits of glass, and iron filings. (p. 209)

A key factor in the move from Gassner to Mesmer was the development of a theory. Ellenberger (1970) expounds the theory:

Mesmer's system, as he expounded it in 27 points in the year 1779, can be summarized in four basic principles. (1) A subtle [unconscious] physical fluid fills the universe and forms a connecting medium between man, the earth, and the heavenly bodies, and also between man and man. (2) Disease originates from the unequal distribution of this fluid in the human body; recovery is achieved when the equilibrium is restored. (3) With the help of certain techniques, the fluid can be channeled, stored, and conveyed to other persons. (4) In this manner, "crises" can be provoked in patients and diseases cured. (p. 62)

Even if his methods were flummery they had sufficient success to draw the ire of professional colleagues who saw him as a threat (Nemiah, 1988). So, Mesmer gave us theory, a psychotherapy technique, and laid the foundation for psychodynamic therapy and theory, but he did not directly conceive of the unconscious.

The Marquis de Peysegur (1755–1848) is credited with being the true founder of magnetism, although Mesmer was the initiator (Charles Rishet, as cited in Ellenberger, 1970). With Peysegur's approach the patient was magnetized into a strange kind of sleep and did not have convulsions or disorderly movements and had a brighter mind than normally. They were able to diagnose their own illnesses and prescribe treatments. After the therapeutic session the person had no recollection of what happened (Nemiah, 1988). James Braid (1795–1860) would later evolve magnetism into hypnotism and by 1852 would attribute the effects to the idea implanted in the patients mind (Nemiah, 1988). The unconscious, however, was still only implied.

The participants in the evolution is getting long. Table 1, on the following page, is provided to summarize and clarify names and mortal duration of the key predecessors to the development of Freud's unconscious.

The concept of *suggestion* was advanced by Liebault (1823–1904) and Bernheim (1840–1919) and they developed the idea to the point where hypnotism almost disappeared (Nemiah, 1988). Quotes from Bernheim of 1889, cited in Drinka (1984), "a suggestion given during sleep may lie dormant in the brain, and not come to consciousness until the time previously fixed for its appearance" and "effects the unconscious transformation of the thought into movement unknown to the will" (p. 145).

Charcot (1835–1893) continued with hypnosis and followed a path with hysterics that led to dynamic psychiatry (Nemiah, 1988). It is a rare psychology student who has not seen Brouillet's painting, "[A Clinical Lesson of Dr. Charcot at the Salpêtrière](#)" (Drinka, 1984, p. 79), where a swooning hysteric is being attended by Charcot in front of a class of medical students; show below, as Figure 1. This was downloaded from the link, above, as the site noted that the copyright had expired. Charcot discovered that hysterical patients were easily hypnotized and that under hypnosis they could remember disassociated memories and functions which underlay their hysterical symptoms. It was also possible to produce anaesthesias, amnesias, and paralysis with hypnotic suggestions. The subject, moreover was not aware of the suggestions. These experiences suggested unconscious mental processes. It also tied in these processes to the production suggested unconscious mental processes, and it also tied in these processes to the production of symptoms. .

Table 1  
*Key Contributors to the Concept of The Unconscious*

Person	Birth–Death
Arthur Schopenhauer	1788–1860
Immanuel Kant	1724–1824
Father Johann Joseph Gassner	1727–1779
Franz Anton Mesmer	1734–1850
Marquis de Peysegur	1755–1848
James Braid	1795–1860
Auguste Liebault	1823–1904
Hippolyte Bernheim	1840–1919
Eduard von Hartmann	1842–1906
Jean Martin Charcot	1835–1893
Friedrich Nietzsche	1844–1900
Pierre Janet	1858–1947
Josef Breuer	1842–1925
Sigmund Freud	1856–1939

Figure 1  
*A Clinical Lesson of Dr. Charcot at the Salpêtrière*



Janet (1858–1947), a student of Charcot, believed that people were born with a quantum of energy that served to fuse their personality. Hysterics were deficient in this energy and that enabled them to be hypnotized (Nemiah, 1988). Charcot believed that normal people could not be hypnotized. Freud joined the enthusiastic group at the Salpêtrière from October 1885 until February 1886 (Jones, 1953/1981). Freud then returned to Vienna and joined Breuer (1842–1925), an older and established neurologist. Their association produced the work *Studies in Hysteria* (Breuer & Freud, 1895). Hypnosis was still used and suggestion applied. The essence of their treatment was cathartic in which memories were ventilated.

Breuer and Freud added the technical innovation of making the memories and related emotions tied to traumatic events conscious. This was the beginning of a truly dynamic psychology (Nemiah, 1988) and was the basis of psychodynamic psychotherapy.

In the 120 years (1775–1895) since Mesmer displaced Gassner and started with “enlightened” technique and theory the basis of hypnosis was laid as a road to the unconscious. A quarter century earlier (in 1869), Hartmann formally introduced the term unconscious, but, at least by implication, it was there from the time of Mesmer. Freud was aware of the Enlightenment, romanticism, and the path toward hypnotism that led up to his experiences with Charcot and Breuer (Alexander & Selesnick, 1966). These were the foundation years for the development of the unconscious.

### **Freud’s Unconscious**

The unconscious was considered by Freud as one of the pillars of psychoanalytic psychology (Fine, 1962/1973): “If he [Freud] had to refer to psychoanalysis briefly, he would call it the psychology of the unconscious or the psychology of the depths” (p. 35). Fine goes on to say “much of the opposition to psychoanalysis he [Freud] attributed to its discovery of the unconscious and the consequent blow to man’s fond narcissistic belief that he is in complete control of himself” (p. 35). Also, Freud’s, and his follower’s, “pathologizing” of the opposition did not win him many friends.

Freud found that deviant behavior was the result of irrational unconscious processes and moved humankind away from belief in organic disease and possession of spirits (Epstein, 1994). This was the third great narcissistic blow to our species — after the discoveries of Copernicus (1473–1543) and Darwin (1809–1882) — that is, people were not in control of their minds.

A purposive role is given unconscious in Freudian theory and in it resides source of hopes, wishes, desired outcomes, etcetera (R. B. Miller, 1992). Unrelenting, persistent power was invested in the unconscious by Freud (Herron, 1995). Thus, Freud gave it status. We are totally ignorant of unconscious mental processes. Even if we were aware of the thoughts in the past they are now pushed from consciousness for various reasons, including repression. The job of psychoanalysis is to uncover the forgotten memories of childhood, “infantile amnesia” if repressed, and show how they affect later development (Friedman, 1968).

Freud started by trying to understand himself in the 1890s, which culminated in “Interpretation of Dreams” in 1900. Additions were made in “The Psychology of Everyday Life” in 1904 and “The Unconscious” in 1915. For almost the first quarter of this century he concentrated on what is called the topographic model of the mind, which consisted of the conscious (Cs), preconscious (Pcs), and unconscious (Ucs). This focus remained until 1923 when the Structural model was added in “The Ego and the Id.” Ego psychology — with its Id, Ego, and Superego — was needed to explain the total personality, not just hysterical neurosis. Another model was motivated by World War I, when

“shell shock” forced the expansion of the paradigm. World War II renamed the phenomenon “traumatic neurosis” (Fine, 1962/1973). Later, the treatment contributions or war therapy will be described from the work of Fromm-Reichmann. Psychoanalysis continued to develop with Freud himself refining his theories until his death and last publication, “Moses and Monotheism,” in 1939.

### **The Environment in Freud’s Time**

Much of Freud’s work was done during the “Behavioral Ages” which overtook American academic psychology. For forty-three years (1913–1956), behaviorism grasped the mainstream of psychology. From 1913, when John Watson, the “father of behaviorism” (Hunt, 1993) published the “the behaviorist manifesto” (Watson, 1913), the unconscious was an outcast. “To behaviorists, the mind, invisible, nonmaterial, and conjectural, was an obsolete metaphysical concept that no experimental psychologist concerned about his career and reputation would talk about, much less devote himself to” (Hunt, 1993, pp. 511-512). Later, in 1956, George Miller (1956), the “father of cognitive psychology,” ushered in the cognitive revolution (Gardner, 1985). Early in this revolution the unconscious was not a prime subject, because cognitive science was based on the behavioral tradition. In the last decade a move to understanding the unconscious moved into cognitive psychology, as it became aware of the need to explain processing that took place beyond awareness.

### **Cognitive Unconscious and Beyond**

A good summary article by Kihlstrom (1987), carried on the divisive tradition in discussing the unconscious.

One achievement of contemporary cognitive psychology is a clear theoretical framework for studying the nonconscious mental structures and processes that interested Helmholtz, Freud, James, and Janet. Such theories have led to the development of new experimental paradigms, and the improvement of old ones, that tentatively reveal a tripartite classification of nonconscious mental life that is quite different from the *seething* [italics added] unconscious of Freud, and more extensive than the unconscious interference of Helmholtz. (p. 1451)

Perhaps the last decade of cognitive psychologists was not prepared to have its unconscious “seethe.” Kihlstrom traces the cognitive unconscious back to the 19th-century, before the two-score and three years of behaviorism, when mental life and consciousness were the subject of interest to scientific psychology. Shevrin (1992) questions if “the versions of the unconscious developed by psychoanalysis and currently being explored by cognitive science will ultimately be identical, or will they form a distant, if fraternal, twinship” (p. 314)?

Early cognitive psychologists realized quite quickly that mental life is not limited to conscious material. To draw this conclusion, there has to be an acceptance of consciousness, a behavioral anathema. Then, the cognitive unconscious was needed to explain mental structures and activities that influenced conscious experience, thought, and action, although they operated outside phenomenal awareness. The common aim of all forms of cognitive psychology is to explain the link between mental stimuli and organismic experience.

Both cognitive psychologists and psychoanalysts are now interested in the *unconscious which can only be reached at the point of consciousness*. Also, they are both interested in how consciousness becomes unconsciousness and conscious again. The fundamental question: Is the

psychical unconscious psychological? Freud uses the success of treatment, using discovery of unconscious material, as proof of the psychological unconscious (Shevrin, 1992). Grunbaum (1984) calls this a “tally” argument, using the cure as the proof of the assumed. (Grunbaum’s criticisms of Freud are based upon a different line of reasoning and not the historical pre-knowledge cast herein). Freud assumed, however, that there are gaps in the conscious process and these gaps are psychological in nature and not accessible to us. Erdelyi (1988) assumed that an unconscious is needed to assume an underlying order necessary for a science of the mind. He sees fundamental problems revolving around language used to describe the concepts. To wit, Shevrin (1992) develops a vocabulary, and Knapp (1988) and Horowitz (1988) developed lexicons.

Shevrin (1992) advanced the line of inquiry developed around attention. Research has shown that the brain is activated by stimuli below the level of conscious experience. These direct subliminal recordings can later influence conscious processes. There is an intermediate form of memory, the *preconscious*, which serves as the meeting ground between conflict-free and potentially conflictual unconscious experiences. With effort, the contents of the preconscious can be accessed or remembered. Shevrin feels that attention is the potential bridge between psychoanalysis and cognitive science making crossover possible. A problem that he sees is that the hydraulic metaphor of Freud and information metaphor of cognitive psychology are just a translation of the German experience into English and not helpful in advancing our knowledge. Therefore, Shevrin believes that a new metaphor is needed to generate relationships between unconscious and conscious experience. The key point is we are just beginning to develop models to understand the process and not ready to accept or discount either the psychoanalytic or cognitive psychology view of the mental.

Recent work is expanding the roles and types of unconscious. Vygotsky’s sociohistorical psychology is being used to explain the cognitive and social aspects of the unconscious (Ratner, 1994). Herron (1995) argues for an ethnic unconscious based upon shared material of ethnic groups. It is evident that interest in the unconscious is broadening and expanding.

Horowitz (1988) takes an amenable embracing attitude towards psychoanalysis. He is credited by Cooper (1992) as introducing ground-breaking theoretical and empirical methods for studying defenses. Horowitz accepts Freud’s topographic view of the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious, and provides for schemas residing in the unconscious. He transforms the structural theory of id, ego, and superego into motivations, self-schemas, and values representing various types of schema. Motivational schemas provide safety and a means of coping, or gaining pleasure or avoiding displeasure. These are inner drives and wishes that motivate us to act impulsively or by intention. From our past actions we learn ways of performing customary functions associated with roles. When we have competing or conflicting schemas, value schemas help the person to decide between motives. The worth of Horowitz’s work, however, is not in providing a new vocabulary, but in providing a methodology for studying defenses using ratings from psychoanalytic psychotherapy sessions (Cooper, 1992). Rather than rejecting the modality of psychoanalysis as a basis for research, the recording and evaluation process is routinized. Inner views and the actual transactions taking place are formed into a working model (Horowitz, 1988).

The effects of psychic trauma are well modeled by Horowitz (1992). His model seems to follow the topographical and pre-oedipal stage of Freud’s theory development, although it contains object relations and self psychology advances. Complications introduced due to contradictory relationships

and inability to integrate conflicting actions can result in disassociated schemas. For example, an abusive alcoholic father who is very loving when sober produces contrasting schemas for his child that are difficult to integrate. There are external-internal conflicts, and not the difficulty of the sexual and oedipal themes that Freud advanced for internal-internal conflicts.

Horowitz (1992) sees attempts at repetition of trauma memories as being resisted by defenses against the memory. This dynamic leads to symptom formation. Removing the repressive barrier by facing memories was seen as trauma cure. Horowitz now sees the repression as serving a purpose of allowing the *leaking* of the trauma in measured amounts that can be handled by the person. The toxic material is stored in the unconscious until it can be systematically structured and released. It is a long process of not only revealing repressed memories, but building new schemas around the event(s). Human traumas are events for which we do not have previous person schemas by which to match and thereby incorporate the experience into our lives (Horowitz, 1992).

Wartime experience and dealing with trauma was explained by Freida Fromm-Reichmann (1959) and fits with Horowitz's theory. Soldiers and civilians with traumatic experiences were best seen immediately after the trauma. This meeting with the psychiatrist could be at the location of the accident, an air-raid shelter, or causality station. Immediacy, not place, was the important variable. Traumatized patients were encouraged to recount the history of the event including accompanying emotional reactions. Fromm-Reichmann reported it was found that complete cure was accomplished and that the debriefed victim's endurance to later air raids improved. It appears that if one quickly exorcizes a traumatic experience the resistance and defenses are circumvented. Also, new schemas seem to be quickly established which are enduring against future trauma. These, however, are gatekeeper functions, defenses if you will, governing communication with the unconscious. One wonders if the intrusive journalists and newscasters at a disaster might not be performing a cathartic service.

Epstein (1994) has developed a theory of dual-cognitive systems — the experiential system and the rational system. Information is processed in an intuitive-experiential and analytic-rational system. Therapy is accomplished by three basic procedures: “(a) using the rational system to influence the experiential system (e.g., disputing irrational thoughts, as in cognitive therapy), (b) learning directly from emotionally significant experiences (e.g., through ‘working through’ in real life, and through constructive relationships with significant others, including therapists), and (c) communicating with the experiential system in its own medium, namely fantasy” (p. 721). Epstein's personality theory is an amalgam of four fundamental need systems — Freud's pleasure principle; Rogers' stable, coherent conceptual system; Bowlby and Fairbairn's object-relations relatedness need; and Adler and Kohut's self-esteem enhancing and the overcoming of inferiority (Epstein, 1994). Behavior is a compromise formation among these four needs. Calling CBAT (Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory), Epstein has pursued much empirical validation for his theory.

Hirsch and Roth (1995) and Sandler and Sandler (1994) both use the term “template” to describe what may be considered transference, repetition, “parapractic distortion” (Sullivan, 1953) or schema (Beck, 1995, Ellis, 1994). These terms, unfortunately, are different both semantically and pragmatically. The linguistic road ahead complicates convergence of concepts of the unconscious. Getting at the unconscious is not an easy task or the unearthing of concrete facts or unmasking of truths. “Remember that our knowledge of the child within is based almost entirely on informed

reconstruction. We construct the past, we do not excavate it” (Sandler & Sandler, 1994, p. 290); and it should be added: nor do we construct it from *our own* belief system. Psychoanalysis has moved away from the model of the dispassionate analyst who acts as an interpreter on an “archeological dig,” unearthing buried “hidden truths,” to an interpersonal model, in which the “here and now” relationship is reflected upon (Hirsch & Roth, 1995). Hirsch and Roth trace the models of the unconscious from the classical model, through the developmental-arrest model, to the interpersonal models. The unconscious is truly an evolving and multifaceted concept. Each paradigm requiring a different approach and skill on the part of the psychotherapist. It is not only necessary to know what to do but why it is being done.

## Discussion

It was shown that the historical development of the unconscious is drawn largely from the practice of magnetism and its descendants. We could not go into detail regarding all aspects of the tripartite (theory, research, and treatment) field called psychoanalysis. Nor, can we delve too deeply into the theory of repression and the unconscious. There are many excellent and straightforward basic summaries of psychoanalysis; including Friedman (1968) and Hall (1954/1979), which are two simple summaries of psychoanalytic theory, and Brenner (1973) and Fine (1962/1973), which are reasonable ways to embrace another level of depth in understanding Freud. Beyond that, the literature and opportunities are ubiquitous and go all the way up through psychoanalytic institute training. It is felt that the therapist needs to understand the underpinnings of theory to not become an automaton to misunderstood method.

Wakefield (1992) took a positive attitude toward psychoanalysis and Freud’s “answer to the all-important question, ‘What does it take to understand another human being?’” (p. 77). Wakefield’s seven precepts are summarized (from p. 78) as:

- (1) “mind as a system of dynamically interacting intentional states,”
- (2) “the existence of unconscious mental states,”
- (3) “motivation providing causation of ideas actions,”
- (4) “emotions are conceptualized as cognitions combined with bodily feelings,”
- (5) “modularity of mind,” as opposed to “a unified and inherently integrated entity,”
- (6) “complete explanation of a person’s behavior” integrating “intentional, trait, and biological levels of personality explanation,” and
- (7) “importance of intentional self-manipulation of cognition, as a defense process.”

Freud “insisted that intentional states can be unconscious. Indeed, it is arguable that Freud’s greatest contribution to modern psychology is the separation of intentionality from consciousness” (Wakefield, 1992, p. 81). In the last hundred years psychology has advanced from a science largely of consciousness (James, 1890), to an excursion through behaviorism (Watson, 1913), to systems of mental representation, where mental does not exclusively mean conscious or unconscious.

The history of the unconscious might be divided into three eras:

The Foundation Years	(1775 to 1900)
The Developmental Years	(1900 to 1956)
The Integration Years	(1956 to present)

The initial transition period coincides with the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900/1965). This was the first delineation of the typographic model having the Cs (conscious), Pcs (preconscious), and Ucs (unconscious). If the methodological path that marked the first period was followed, Freud's self-analysis and use of free association, the transition period would be up to 5 years earlier. In any case, it seems important to not fuel the controversy by considering these revolutions or stages. Development of an appreciation of the unconscious seems like an evolution where there were spurts in knowledge. Great ideas seem to be a culmination of evolving thoughts whose time has come for a formulation of those concepts into a theory which propels further inquiry. Many, however, use this prior knowledge as the basis for devaluing Freud. This paper summarized the debate and showed its emotional content. Psychotherapists need to understand the Zeitgeist, gestalt, the nature of supporters and detractors, facts and politics. Each person then needs to determine where he or she chooses to be positioned in the brouhaha. Then psychotherapy can proceed on the basis of knowledge with rational thinking informing our emotional process. Or intuition is best when based on facts.

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