

Origins of Psychoanalysis as a Medical Profession

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Abstract:

The aim of this work consists in the presentation of those ideas and discoveries that allowed Freud to create psychoanalysis at the end of the 19th century. It is a brilliant theoretical synthesis that provided the tools that were necessary to treat nervous disorders, which at their time had very few solutions.

The historical research that was carried out in this document led to the discovery of four “traditions” (evolutionary, hypnotic, empirical-biological and philosophical), so-called because of the strong roots they had in the cultural environment at the time psychoanalysis was born as a medical profession.

Freud was not only a receptor of these approaches, but he also knew how to integrate them and develop a completely new theoretical corpus, which caused a significant social change: patients used to take their psychological sufferings to moralists, philosophers, and preachers and now they begin to tell their problems to doctors.

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I. Introduction

The aim of this historical investigation consists in discovering which is the background of psychoanalysis, considering as such those approaches in the scientific, and philosophical environment of the 19th century, which allowed the creation of a completely new theory. This one demonstrated its utility in the treatment of nervous disorders and in 1896, Freud gave it the name it carries (“psychoanalysis) (Freud 1981a).

The birth of psychoanalysis as a medical profession did not happen *ex nihilo*, but rather emerged from certain elements imprinted in the cultural environment of the moment, and it is possible to witness an evolutionary process that laid the foundations for the emergence of that brilliant theoretical synthesis. However, it is not a repetition of what was given before but from that ideological matrix and medical practice, it arose as something original, as a result of the creative impetus of a single person.

Thus, psychoanalysis can be considered one of the great legacies of humanity alongside other discoveries of the 20th century (theory of relativity, quantum theory, macroeconomic theory, etc.), and based on whose approaches neither the world nor society can be seen as before. In any case, Freud’s work cannot be assimilated into a “mind philosophy”, which is a series of assembled concepts, more-or-less distanced from experience and based on simple speculation. Something that stood out about the creator of this discipline was his great observation skills, and the constant foundation in the medical practice. It was such that if this practice showed something that was at odds with the developed material, he was willing to change it to make it more consistent with the clinical reality that was being studied.

If Freud’s discovery had to be summarized in a word, it would be the “unconscious mind” (Laplanche, Pontalis 1987), which is the central piece of all psychoanalytic theory. Although the inkling of a form of unconscious mental life was found in the work of many thinkers before him, Freud made a particular articulation, developing truthful knowledge around such an obscure object of study but, for that purpose, he employed the knowledge that he had at his time. By analyzing the sources he had, we can comprehend to a large extent the reason for many of the guidelines that the Viennese teacher bequeathed to medicine.

II. The four traditions.

The lines of thought that could be understood as true forerunners of Freud’s work will be successively shown below, which we will call “traditions” because they are strongly rooted paradigms that have a great capacity of transmission throughout generations of scientists.

1. The Evolutionary Tradition. In the 18th century, nature was understood as planned by “someone” and its image was captured in the scenic gardens that were fashionable at that time. In this context, the species (plants and animals) were fixed and immutable, and each one of them occupied a space to which it was adapted; this order demonstrated the power and wisdom of God. From this perspective, Linnaeus made his revolutionary classification of living beings.

On the other hand, in the 19th century, everything started to be seen historically and the first science to become historical was Geology. This turn took place with the study of fossils, initiated by William Smith in 1783; In the England of his time, this sagacious researcher, contemplating the different rock strata of the Somerset coalfield, concluded that an organism could not be found outside a natural sequence. From that moment, the known world began to have a readable history, starting from that great text that was the Earth itself. Charles Lyell, a follower of the above, established a kind of calendar, classifying different “eras” according to the fossil content he was finding.

Later on, this transformation reached Biology, which also became historic. Thus, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, in his *Zoological Philosophy, or Exposition with Regard to the Natural History of Animals* (Lamarck 2017), raised the problem of organic evolution, becoming the first creator and systematizer of evolutionism. His ideas contradicted the 18th-century matter of “simultaneous creation”.

Subsequently, it was Darwin who proposed this new (evolutionary) explanation of life in a developed way, which began in 1836, the date on which he returned from his trip on the Beagle through the Pacific Islands; He completed it in 1859, the year in which he published his most remarkable work: *The origin of species* (Darwin 2003). This creation was possible thanks to the fact that the ship in which he traveled, despite being small, was equipped with a library of more than 250 volumes that occupied 15 meters of shelves.

Darwin’s book, revolutionary for its time, clearly was at odds with the immutability of the species (the “Divine Plan”) and despite the strong impact it caused, it was not a decidedly provocative text for the social environment intended to receive it since, when speaking about human evolution, it indicated that “the origin of man would be clarified”; let’s think his proposals fully questioned the content of Genesis. We currently know that Freud felt a special attraction towards Darwinian ideas, even from his time as a student at the Vienna Medical School (Gay 1990).

In his famous text, Darwin (2003) made a prophetic observation: in the future, psychology would also be evolutionary. Indeed, it happened this way because the central nervous system and human behavior began to be understood (with Freud) as rooted in an animal past.

It is, without any doubt, a revolution in the understanding of personality, which had to be formed layer by layer (just like rock strata) and, below the superficial conscious mind, there are other preconscious and unconscious ones and all of these are based on very old foundations, which we may not be able to see and which we are not aware of, but which are there supporting the entire system.

These issues produced a significant change in our culture, namely: the nature experts had been preachers, moralists, and philosophers; Man, within this matrix, was understood in his relationship with God and the basic terms were reason, conscience, and will. Only a few thinkers had firmly established man in nature, like Hume or Schopenhauer, but Darwin had decisively tilted the argument, enabling the appearance of a new theory: psychoanalysis, in which concepts had to be others: biological impulses, emotional economy, aggressiveness, and sexuality. Moreover, it was to be expected that a vision would appear in which a decidedly genetic (historical) approach to the human psyche would prevail. This phenomenon, without apparent importance, led to a notable social change, since people began to take their affliction and problems, not to preachers, but to doctors (Table 1).

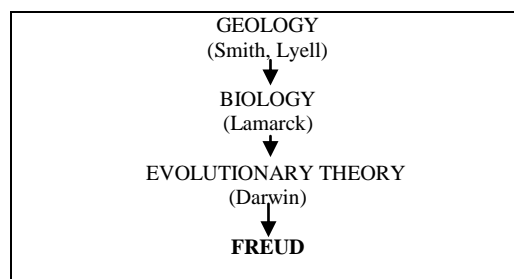


Table 1. Evolutionary Tradition

2 The Hypnotic Tradition. The discovery of the hypnotic phenomena influenced decisively in the conception of an unconscious mental life. It is known that this practice existed in ancient civilizations and was initially performed by witches and shamans. However, it progressively separated from its magical origin and took part in the official medical field, so reluctant to accept it at first.

The first we know of to carry out actions of this nature was the Renaissance doctor, Paracelsus, with his “planetary magnetism”, understood as the energetic influences that the planets exerted on humans. This controversial figure, in his work *The diseases that deprive man of his reason*, formulated an allusion to the unconscious with the idea of the physic etiology of madness and the intervention of primitive factors in its genesis. Zilboorg (1968) considers Paracelsus the discoverer of the unconscious in the pathogenesis of neurosis.

These ideas were not left behind, since Van Helmont developed the “animal magnetism”, a kind of invisible fluid radiated by all living beings, including man.

Thereafter, in Vienna, these phenomena were rediscovered by Franz Anton Mesmer, who conducted experiments with humans that he reported in 1766 and that, from then on, became known as “Mesmerian”. This doctor, brilliant and controversial at the same time, provided a rational side for the “fluidic theory”, understanding that nervous diseases come from the imbalance in the distribution of the universal fluid that runs through living organisms. Mesmer invented the *baquets*, large vats filled with magnetized water, around which patients were placed, whose bodies were touched by metal rods that protruded from them. With this device, he had great success in curing a large number of patients and his fame increased, but authorities questioned his methods and a commission from the Paris Academy of Sciences ruled that the events that this doctor held, did not exist and depended only on the patients. The commission was not aware of the true finding of the Mesmerian experiments: that the individuals themselves could produce or eliminate certain physiological changes. For this reason, Ellenberger (1976) saw Mesmer as the discoverer of the unconscious, since he caused the shift from exorcism to “dynamic psychotherapy”.

James Braid, a doctor from Manchester, is the next in the saga since in his work *Neurohypnology* (from 1843) he introduced the term “hypnosis”. With it, he attempted to characterize a series of techniques that made it possible to induce a particular state (hypnoid) with therapeutic purposes. Braid eliminated the “fluidic” explanation for another one of a physiological nature and consequently, the “mesmeric trance” became a “nervous dream”.

In France, hypnosis regained momentum thanks to a doctor named Liébault, who started the so-called “psychotherapeutic movement.” With this technique he treats both organic (tuberculosis, peptic ulcer disease, etc.) and psychic problems, achieving great success. This famous doctor influenced two figures who were already in contact with Freud: Bernheim and Charcot. The first of them, the creator of the Nancy School, dedicated himself to studying the nature of hypnotic phenomena and came to classify them within normal suggestion; he attended people from the lower classes (the most suggestible) using words and discarding the look, which was widely used before him. The fame he gained was such that it attracted Freud to complete the knowledge of the technique, given the difficulties he had in applying it (Freud 1981b).

Freud studied with Charcot for a year after obtaining a scholarship (1885-86). The outstanding French neuropathologist, originator of the School of Paris, began treating hysterical women at the Salpêtrière and employing hypnotic techniques. Interestingly, the way Charcot began to dedicate himself to the study of hysteria; happened, as his disciple Pierre-Marie tells it, in an involuntary way (in 1871): after the Sainte-Laure building (de la Salpêtrière) was in poor conditions, the hospital administration ordered its evacuation and the subsequent regrouping of the patients hospitalized there. The hysteric and epileptic patients were grouped since both had seizures and, as Charcot was the oldest doctor in the hospital, those patients were automatically assigned to him.

Perhaps it was this French doctor who did the most to recover neurotic patients for medicine and, at the same time, who most influenced Freud and to whom the latter owed his interest in hysteria. In his lessons (*leçons du mardi*), the French teacher took the risk of presenting patients, having the humility to admit when he was wrong; In them he acted like a magician, exchanging the (hysterical) symptoms that the patients presented using hypnosis. By observing the similarities between hypnosis and hysteria, Charcot understood hypnosis as something specific to hysteria, comparing it to just another symptom. Furthermore, he sensed the relationship between hysteria and sexuality but, even still having a fine psychological sensitivity, his vision of these phenomena could not be more organic. Freud disagreed with this opinion, despite being equally intellectually involved in the mechanism of the time.

With his great French neuropathologist, hypnosis definitively entered the Paris Academy of Sciences, after previous rejections; This happened in 1882. However, the dispute was not completely won because, although Freud brought hypnosis to Vienna as a therapeutic technique, there he also encountered important confrontations between supporters (Krafft-Ebing and Forel) and detractors (Meynert).

Lastly, in the “hypnotic tradition”, we can not forget about a personality that had great importance in the conception of psychoanalysis: Josef Breuer. This distinguished Viennese doctor, a close friend of Freud, with whom the latter had published *Studies on Hysteria* (Freud 1981c), had treated a patient for a year and a half, known as Anna O (her real name was Bertha Pappenheim) and gave an account of the details of his therapy to Freud. The result of this treatment was the discovery of the “Cathartic Method” by Breuer, it consisted of the patient having to recall, during a state of suggestion, certain strongly significant scenes around which the symptoms were supposed to be organized to eliminate them one by one later on.

The creator of psychoanalysis started to apply this technique in 1889, with a patient named Emmy von N (her real name was Fanny Moser) and it helped him begin to postulate the existence of the “unconscious” and the mechanism of “repression” by which unpleasant contents became unconscious. Meanwhile, Breuer abandoned his patient (and also the cases of hysteria) because during the treatment certain phenomena arose that

he disliked. These had to do with the bond that Anna O created with her doctor, a form of relationship present in any therapy and that, over time, Freud called “transference”.

Later, Freud abandoned the “Cathartic method”, which he began to consider as part of a “pre-analytical stage” (Freud 1981d), in favor of promoting “free association” (the “fundamental rule”). The latter consisted of encouraging the patient to express, without any discrimination, every thought that came to mind. In this new conceptualization, Freud was influenced by his patient Emmy von N who, in a bad mood, told him that he had to let her speak as much as she wanted rather than asking her every time where this or that came from. Currently, the instrument of cure is the word, which in itself is therapeutic, leaving behind magnetism, the intervention of looks, or hypnosis. The discovery and application of the “free association” marks the birth of psychoanalysis, which happened between 1892 and 1896 (see Table 2)

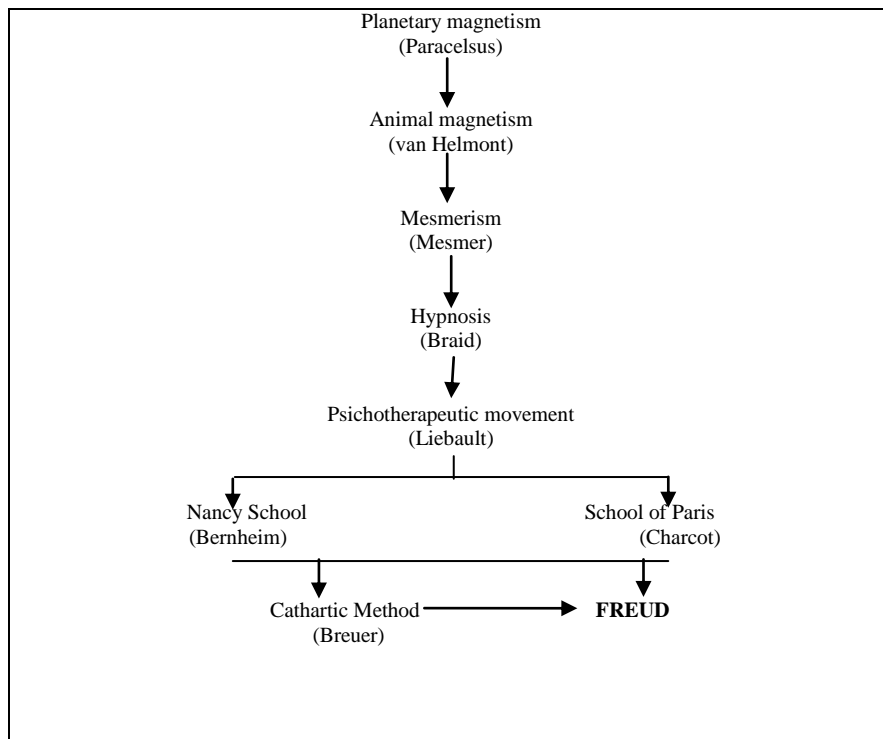


Table 2. Hipnotic Tradition.

3 Empirical-Biological Tradition. Besides the previous two traditions that were mentioned, the appearance of psychoanalysis was influenced, and in a decisive way, by the empiricist tendencies, proper of the natural sciences of the 19th century. From a very young age, Freud wanted to make great discoveries and dreamed of being a man of science and changing the world; to achieve this, he had to get involved in the discoveries of the time in which he lived.

Between 1876 and 1882, while still a medical student, Freud worked in the laboratory of the remarkable physiologist Ernst Brücke, a representative of the Helmholtz school who would, ultimately, influence him in his theoretical approaches. We know that Freud's early research focused on the sexual organs of eels, fish that no one had ever seen mate and which lacked reproductive organs; these activities failed. At the same time, neuroanatomy was among his activities, although he never became seriously interested in this subject (Jones 2003).

The influence of Helmholtz (through Brücke) can be seen in the principles Freud adopts, which are proper of “materialistic monism”. Acknowledging them implies thinking that there were no forces other than physical-chemical in the organism. But, the material that Freud presented in his texts seemed “dualistic”, dealing with two different realities: the psychological one (resulting from the influence of Charcot) and the physical one (in line with empiricist assumptions). The paradox was expertly resolved with the idea that the psychological factors had physical-chemical equivalents that the science of the future, with more tools in its power, would discover. Meanwhile, he, with his patients, would take care only of the psychic, but treating both levels independently and without trying to bridge the gap (Caparrós 1977).

Following the empiricist assumptions, Freud was convinced of the existence of a basic energy in nature, capable of being transformed into other forms of energy. Likewise, he presented the hypothesis of mental energy, which related the physico-chemical processes with the psychic ones, exposing the latter in

energetic terms (discharge, inversion, transformation, ...). With this procedure, he conceded the “monist” position, typical of the tradition he followed.

Instincts (now called “drives”), which were theorized from the influence of Darwin and which represented the animal past of the human being, were assigned an important role in the energy economy of the organism. The instinct (“drive”), by discharging, sought to reestablish the lost energy balance.

Similarly, the phenomena of pleasure/displeasure (coming from the “hedonistic tradition” which will be seen later on) were integrated along the same line, that is, in quantitative-energetic terms. This point was inspired by Fechner, who, in his work *Elements of Psychophysics* (1860), determined that the phenomena of pleasure/displeasure could refer to quantitative-stimulating processes. Thus, the founder of psychoanalysis unites in a logical formula: imbalance-tension-displeasure and discharge-balance-pleasure

Brilliantly, as it usually is with Freud, he manages to present the energetic principles (of Helmholtz), the biological instinctivism (of Darwin), and the homeostatic mechanisms that Cannon would later describe (in 1932) integrated in the same scheme (Cannon 1941). Finally, he reached an impeccable conjunction between energetic and psychological aspects, under a “monistic” perspective (see Table 3).

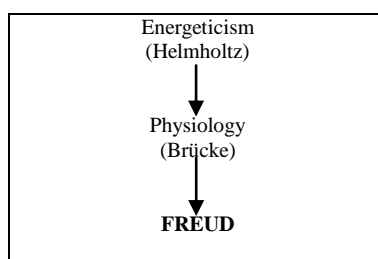


Table 3. Empirical-Biological Tradition

4 Philosophical Tradition. Despite exerting medicine and his determined empiricism (derived from the school of Helmholtz), Freud never ceased to be interested in the enigmas of existence and the great problems of man, which were more accessible to speculation than to science itself. It is not surprising, then, that philosophical conditions influenced him. For this reason, and to finish, we are going through those elements of the “philosophical tradition” of the time, which decisively influenced the creation of psychoanalysis.

The presumption of an unconscious mental life had been a perennial subject in philosophy since time immemorial, as Freud himself recognized (Freud 1981e); Along these lines, Kant attributed mental disorders to a conscious weakness that kept the individual from curbing the blind force of impulses. In 1783, Naudeau published *Therapeutic essay on disturbances of the soul*, in which he defined these disturbances as “alterations of the individual, independent of reason and will of an emotional nature.”

At a close time to Freud, the philosophical tradition took shape in the so-called “dynamic psychology” of philosophical origin which began with Leibniz, who replaced Descartes’ idea of static nature with a dynamic idea, and which culminated in Herbart. It was a psychological tradition that was more dynamic than mechanistic, with a certain predominance of motivational aspects that in some way anticipated the unconscious.

In 1816, Herbart’s *A text-book in Psychology* appeared, in which its author presented the psyche as a quantifiable dynamic, where the central element was “representation”. This model, typical of the German psychological tradition, will be the one that nourishes Freudian diagrams by establishing “representation” as the foundation of psychic activities. With this material, the integration between representation (a concept from Herbart) and affection (from Helmholtz) can be understood in a way that the second one comes together with the first one and constitutes its energetic side. Thus, privileged representations are those that are loaded with affection and the unconscious is defined as an alteration of the representational flow to consciousness. Freud likely came under Herbart’s direction through Meynert, a Viennese professor of psychiatry, with whom he worked from 1883 until 1885.

An author who significantly influenced the debate on the “unconscious spirit” was Hartmann, who published: *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (in 1867) (Hartman 2022), where he argued how it orchestrates us (“we are moved by the hidden threads of our past”), an idea that stirred quite a lot of enthusiasm at the time. The influences of the founder of “act psychology”: Frank Brentano were important as well (Brentano 2020). Freud himself attended his classes in Vienna, from 1873 to 1876, and his influence can be seen in the ideas about the intentionality of drives directed towards an object and in the organization of the “Id”, governed by the “reality principle”.

The connections of German romanticism and idealism with Freudian theorizations are not negligible. This fact is astonishing if we take into account that it is something quite far from the Helmholtz mechanism. But it is not strange if we think that Müller, the teacher of Helmholtz and Brücke, was in turn a disciple of Schelling. The rupture with the “philosophy of nature” of the latter marked the beginning or starting point of Helmholtz

(Jones 2003). Given these events, it is possible to establish a certain parallelism between Schelling and Freud; along these lines, it should be noted that Freud was a devoted reader of Goethe from a very young age (especially Faust and Werther). From all these assumptions Freud's interest arises in the search for meanings or latent meanings and the notable sensitivity that he possessed for the treatment of the problems of symbols and language.

Freud's passion for literature and art, which advances alongside his great erudition, can be felt in all of his texts, where true praise of classical authors can be recognized. Thus, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud 1981f), he quotes Virgil: "If I cannot dominate the gods above, then I will incite the underworld". This entire romantic line was strengthened by the Jewish religious tradition, in which he was involved.

Implications of the "hedonistic" philosophical tradition are equally important, which proposes how human actions obey the desire to attain pleasure and avoid pain and dates back to the Greek Epicurus. In the 18th century and part of the 19th century. In the 18th century and part of the 19th century, the main theory of motivation was established, and Bentham and Stuart-Mill were its representatives (of whom Freud translated some articles in 1880). The British philosopher Spencer would facilitate the conjunction between biology and hedonism.

Similarly, the founder of psychoanalysis was interested in Eastern religions, especially in the idea of "nirvana" (Hindu), and, on this point, he was in the direction of Schopenhauer. The influence of this thinker is also glimpsed in the conception of the eros/thanatos dialectic, which is associated with the twist experienced in Freud's work in 1920, where he presents this drive duality (life/death). Furthermore, Freud was deeply impacted by Nietzsche's ideas, whom he admired profoundly and with whom he agreed in his criticism of culture and the anti-instinctive morality prevailing in European society and his approach to the change of "moral values" in "natural". He quoted Nietzsche in his notorious work on dream phenomena: "In dreams, some archaic relic of humanity is put into function" (Freud 1981f).

The last two philosophers that have been mentioned are framed within "vitalism", which maintains significant connections in some of its approaches with psychoanalysis and whose axis is the exaltation of the vital and affective, and a strong component against rationalism (Hegel, Comte). The work of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is understood as a "philosophy of life", which defends irrationalism and the vital affirmation, as a radical reality of the human being.

From all that has been said, psychoanalysis emerges as the logical crystallization of Western philosophy, and along this line, appears as an original synthesis of all those influences with the clinic, to which its creator was involved with frenzy. Despite starting from philosophical assumptions, due to the connections it establishes with the patients' discomfort, the Freudian corpus is detached from the properly philosophical plane and enters fully into the doctor's labor (see Table 4).

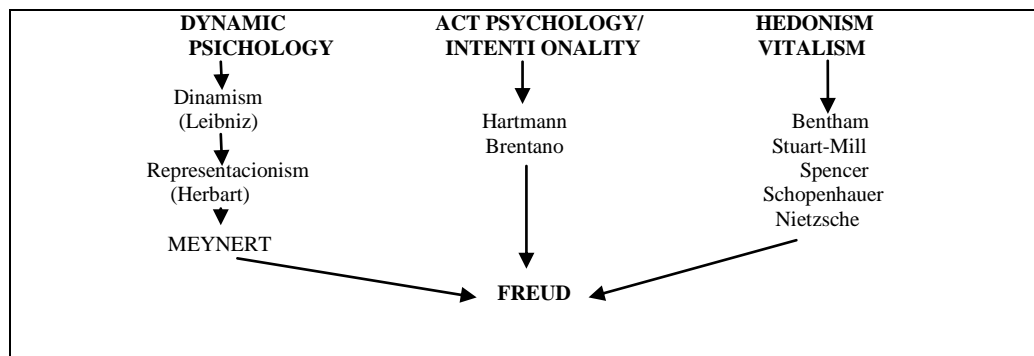


Table 4. Philosophical Tradition.

III. Relationship between the four traditions and the basic principles of psychoanalysis.

The "traditions" that were previously studied can be considered the basis of the so-called "metapsychological principles" on which the psychoanalytic edifice rests. The Freudian discovery par excellence is the "unconscious" but not in the "negative" sense in which it was proposed before Freud ("what is NOT conscious"), but "positive": the processes inherent to itself and what its effects are on the person are defined accurately (Freud 1981f). That being said, this discovery gives rise to consciousness no longer being in the foreground, which means a rupture with established knowledge and the creation of knowledge that is to a certain extent subversive. This action has led to a divergence of psychology, based on the study of conscious life, to focus on the unconscious. The set of assumptions on which Freud is based, which no longer revolve around consciousness, is called "metapsychology" ("beyond psychology") since psychology cannot explain them.

Metapsychology has four principles: “economic”, “dynamic”, “topical” and “genetic”. Hereunder, this research will gather the four traditions that were previously exposed with the metapsychological assumptions, an association that was discovered while carrying out this analysis and, therefore, unpublished until now. Let’s go through it:

a) The “evolutionary tradition”, of historical content, is related to the “genetic principle”, by which the doctor inquires into the origin of the symptoms, finding it in a more-or-less remote past of the individual’s life. Note that “genetic” has no relation to biology (heredity) but to psychological (historical) material.

b) The “hypnotic tradition” is possible to associate with the “topical principle”, a point of view that implies a differentiation within the psychic apparatus of a certain number of systems endowed with different characteristics and functions and organized in a certain order, which entitles considering them metaphorically as psychic “places”; a figurative spatial representation can be made of them (Laplanche, Pontalis 1987). Hypnosis brought to light unconscious phenomena (the “second mind” that Charcot defined), hence the close relationship established with the topical point of view.

c) The “empirical-biological tradition” relates to the “economic principle”, according to which psychic processes are made of the circulation and distribution of quantifiable energy, that is, susceptible to increases, decreases, or equivalences. Freud even thought that this (quantitative) magnitude could be the object of measurement in a more-or-less distant future.

d) The “philosophical tradition”, is connected with the “dynamic principle”, which is the point of view that considers mental processes as resulting from conflict and the composition of opposing psychic forces, in turn, the product of an active struggle between two psychic groups.

Finally, we must point out that these “traditions” were transmitted by personalities that were in contact with Freud and to whom they influenced decisively in his conceptualizations, namely: Charcot (hypnotic tradition), Brücke (empirical-biological), and Meynert (philosophical). In the case of evolutionism, there is no direct contact with the personality in question (Darwin), but rather indirect contact through the early reading of his work (see Table 5).

TRADITIONS	METAPSICHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE	RECHERCHER INVOLVED
EVOLUTIONARY	Genetic	Darwin
HYNOTIC	Topical	Charcot
EMPIRICAL-BIOLOGICAL	Economic	Brücke
PHILOSOPHICAL	Dynamic	Meynert

Table 5. Relationship between the four traditions and the metapsychological principles

IV. Conclusion

The content that was delivered was an attempt to outline a general scheme of the “background” of psychoanalysis and its corresponding role in the creation of this theoretical framework, as the basis of a medical activity that tries to solve certain nervous problems that were treated with futile means (massages, electrotherapy, ice water showers, genital stimulation, etc). These therapies caused great frustration to doctors and it lasted over time until the arrival of psychoanalysis, which brought to light to the world an effective way of curing (or improving) these illnesses.

The research work undertaken here, on the origins of this specialty, has revealed four “traditions”, understood as ideological and scientific matrices that were imprinted in the environment in which Freud lived. These have been named: “evolutionary”, “hypnotic”, “empirical-biological” and “philosophical”. In the cultural context of Europe at the end of the 19th century, these guidelines were dispersed at the time when the Viennese doctor finished his education. Freud’s merit is threefold:

1st) Bringing together elements of each of the traditions in a single conceptual scheme, which accounts for certain clinical phenomena that until then, were unexplainable (hysterical seizures, anesthesia, paralysis, pain without organic cause, loss of consciousness, perceptual alterations, etc.).

2nd) The development of a work technique capable of helping the patients in their suffering that aims to “make the unconscious conscious”, while at the same time, the symptoms disappear (or improve).

3rd) The proposal of an alternative system that has caused a certain impact, by displacing consciousness from the privileged position that it had in the history of thought, while placing in the foreground the unconscious phenomena that have become, from that moment on, the true driving force of behavior. This decentralization, which has caused the rupture of a long-established organized knowledge, made psychoanalysis a discipline that was not so well received from its beginnings. On the contrary, the subsequent reality has been different, since psychoanalytic discoveries have influenced almost all the humanities and, there is nearly not a single field in which the Viennese doctor is not mentioned.

In this way, while Freud followed the prevailing traditions, he broke with them and because of that came to be a subversive thinker. This can be seen in relation to hypnosis since, even if he was educated in its practice, he broke apart from it in order to encourage the patient to express himself freely within the framework of a clarity of consciousness, thus freeing him from the last remains of “magnetism”. On the other hand, helping the person who suffers to express himself, in an intimate atmosphere where he can say whatever he wants, allows him to put words where there was previously silent pain and thus, find a meaning that calms the anguish. When this happens, the subject will discover things that he did not know about himself and eliminate those falsehoods on which he sustained his life. Freud analogized the analytical cure with an exorcism, but he did not judge sins, or promised absolute happiness; he settled for guiding the person through self-knowledge and self-acceptance, this distinguishes him from previous teachers.

For all that has been said, we have to agree with the famous Scottish psychiatrist Ronald Laing when he said: “whether Freud was wrong or not, in some or many things, is of no importance compared to the fact that he was the first to come down into the hell of the mind and having the courage to stay and explore its geographies”.

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