

On Freud's philosophy and Erich Fromm's view on him

Aidana Gjermeni Lumi

"Freud's biographies are woven in such a way as to remind the ancient myths of heroes, where he is endowed with a supernatural power, fights his enemies, goes through many trials, gets into conflicts with the people around him or with those who do not understand the greatness of his ideas. The cultivated hero represents the powers of the cosmos".

Abstract

These are some of the words Fromm used to introduce the image of Freud. The whole work and biography of Sigmund Freud, contains all the elements of the classical myth; childhood, youth spent in the midst of difficulties, prejudices, etc.

His book "The Mission of Sigmund Freud" provides an analysis of the personality and how it has influenced his life. Many questions were raised, such as: What kind of man was he? What were his driving forces, forcing him to act, think and feel in the way that is typical of him? Did he have any personal flaws or deficiencies that deprived him of ambition and selfishness? These, and many other questions make it possible to clarify the impact of his personality on the structure of psychoanalysis. The most astonishing and perhaps the most powerful, emotional power of Freud was his ardent love of truth, his uncompromising belief in reason. To him, reason was the only ability which could help solve the problem of human existence or at least alleviate the inevitable suffering for human life. The reason is the means by which we can get rid of the illusions, break free from external power in order to gain the independence of internal power.

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Introduction

This belief in the greatness of reason shows that Freud was the son of the Enlightenment era. The discrepancy between the official ideology and the facts of real life diminished the belief in the words, slogans and assertions of the authorities, which favoured the development of critical thinking. Referring to how external influences had engraved his personality, many facts that encouraged this impetus are mentioned.

His father, an aspiring small manufacturer from Freiberg (Bohemia), was forced to quit his job due to the changes in the Austrian economy, which destroyed and shattered the city to poverty. This harsh experience made Freud learn since he was a child, that social stability could not be trusted more than economic stability. He must have had some specific traits in his personality, which determine the unique strength of this thirst.

Jones considered Freud's ardent love of truth as "the deepest driving force of his nature" and "the only force that led him to innovative discoveries." He tries to express this love in orthodox psychoanalytic theory /psychoanalytic orthodoxy.

Speaking of Freud's ardent love of truth and reason, we must remember that reason in him was reduced to the way of thinking. Feelings and emotions are considered irrational, even lower when compared to thinking.

Rational scholars (including Freud) believed that if man understands the cause of one's misfortunes, intellectual knowledge gives him the power to change the circumstances from which affliction stems from. It was exactly this belief that had a profound effect on Freud, and because of this, it would take years for him to give up the hope of being able to cure neurotic symptoms with a simple intellectual knowledge on their causes. Because, even truth and reason themselves oppose common sense and social thought. In formulating his ideas and theories, Freud did not bend to compromises. Such manhood was also his greatest pride, as he valued this manhood as the most wonderful quality of his individuality. But on the other hand, this pride affected his theoretical formulations in a negative way.

Before we begin to show what Fromm thought of Freud, we must explain that his book itself is divided into explanatory passages on the various kinds of relationships in Freud's life. Among them are his relationships with his mother, father, women, men, politics, and his religious beliefs.

Starting from Freud's childhood and his relationship with his mother, the biographical notes avert her story. To explain the relationship they had, and to regulate the format of this picture in Freud's two dreams, Fromm entitled the first dream as "Three Fates". It is as follows:

"I went into a kitchen in search of some pudding. Three women were standing in it; one of them was the hostess of the inn and was twisting something about in her hand, as though she was making Knödel. She answered that I must wait till she was ready. (These were not definite spoken words.) I felt impatient and went off with a sense of injury. I put on an overcoat. But the first I tried on was too long for me. I took it off, rather surprised to find it was trimmed with fur. A second one that I put on had a long strip with a Turkish design let into it. A stranger with a long face and a short pointed beard came up and tried to prevent my putting it on, saying it was his. I showed him then that it was embroidered all over with a Turkish pattern. He asked 'What have the Turkish (desings, stripes ...) to do with you?' But we then became quite friendly with each other"

It was stated that in this dream, Freud reveals the desire to be nourished by his mother. He insists on this, he is impatient, he gets angry because she does not "feed" him immediately. Through it, he expresses the desire for immediate and complete attention. He gets angry and faces the role of the great man - the father, or the children's fear from stately men who might even be unknown.

From what Fromm explain and as much as I understand from my study so far, Freud's philosophy is first experienced by himself, his desire for his mother, the fear from his father, etc. This means that this creator of revolutionary systems, firstly applies his theories on himself.

The content of the second dream was:

"It was very vivid and showed me my beloved mother, with peculiarly calm sleeping countenance, carried into the room and laid on the bed by two (or three) persons with birds' beaks."

If these two dreams come together, in their center is a boy who expects his desires to

be fulfilled by his mother and fears the thought that she can die. Other facts known to us from Freud's life show that because of this love, he was jealous of his brother and he never loved his sister, Ann, who was two years younger than him. Freud, never found any free time for anyone, nor even for his wife later on. Every Sunday morning, he went to visit his mother and often invited her to Sunday's lunch, doing so till he got old. This maternal worship gave him a sense of security, victory and success. Perhaps this was the fact why the Oedipus complex was born, explained completely in a rational way by Freud, as a mother's affection, the sexual attraction of the boy towards the woman who was closer to him. It seems that this dependence, the sensation of being and feeling unprotected, represent the central elements and the structure of the character in the neurosis explained by Freud. The feeling of being vulnerable, a characteristic for oral-receptive individuals, in Freud, is expressed by the fear of starvation and death (Freud, 1991).

As a better example we can mention his fear before train trips. He used to go to the station one hour before the departure and never travelled alone. People who are strongly connected to their mother, often perceive the journey as a danger, to which you should be prepared by taking all the precautions.

The elements of the mother's interdependence, in some way, also defined Freud's relationships with women and the love of his life. It is not surprising that Freud's dependence on the mother appeared in his relationship with his wife. The most surprising is the contrast between the relationship before and after marriage.

During the years of his engagement, Freud, was a fiery, uncontrolled and extremely jealous lover. He was conquered by the fiery desire to control the life of Martha, his fiancée. He forced her to break the relationship with her cousin who was a good friend of hers, even changing the way she called him from Max to Mr. Major. But his jealousy was not limited only to the boys, it would affect Martha's feelings for her family too. He asked his wife, not only to criticize her mother and brother but also to deprive them of her feelings, reasoning that they were his enemies and she should share the same hatred for them.

All this sensation, Freud's views on male supremacy, involves knowing the natural right of the spouse to control his wife's life. A typical example of this, is the criticism to John Stuart Mill.

To Freud, views on "emancipation of women and female issues in general", recognizing the woman, the woman able to win as much as her husband, were in contradiction with Freud's ideas on this issue. His criticism is as follows:

"This is the point where Mill cannot be considered human. This is actually an idea dead since it was in its embryo- putting the woman in the struggle for existence just like men"

To him, nature has predetermined the fate of the woman, giving her beauty, magic, and love, where her role would be a wonderful lover in her youth and a loving spouse in her maturity.

This view was typical of the visions of the society of the 90s in the last century.

What is surprising about Freud's behavior?

In his works, Freud was against some of the rooted prejudices of his time, but in this problem, he adhered to the most traditional line, calling Mill's views as 'absurd'

and 'not human'. Freud adhered to these ideas even half a century later when he criticized the American culture for its 'matriarchal' character. These thoughts are also expressed in the letters to Fliss, where the relationships with women are not mentioned as a source of happiness. Freud had a relatively small interest for women, his sexual instinct was insignificant, but such a fact could be explained as a sign of loyalty to his wife.

When Fromm explains his theory, he connects it to the evidence of Freud's sexual suppression. He emphasized that the sexual act gives limited pleasure to the civilized man. Because the importance of sexuality itself as a source of satisfaction and accomplishment of vital goals, is significantly diminished.

Freud's theory has had a rationalizing function. His thesis was:

Civilization and culture have been the result of the suppression of the instincts. It may seem that the thesis for Freud's sexual inhibition clashes with his own theory where the sexual instincts are placed in the center. Freud, the great defender of sexual theory, was a typical Puritan. He makes the expression '*Do what I say but do not do what I do*' work. To him, the purpose of the civilized man's life is to change emotional and sexual impulses in order to achieve civilization. This form of thought was intellectual accomplishment, up to be followed by the elites who, in contrast with the crowds, are capable of putting aside their affections, to sublimate them for higher purposes. Because, the civilization itself is the result of the non-fulfillment of instinctive impulses. Because Freud belonged to the bourgeoisie, he believed that the division of society into classes was a natural guidance, and he truly believed in their differentiation.

It was stated above that Freud had no interest towards the opposite sex. According to Fromm's study he had dependence on men, emphasizing that this dependency was not of sexual interest but a request for moral support. There, we can see expressed the types of his relationship with many other well-known or unknown scholars.

Brower, was one of them. To Freud he was like a father, like a great friend. Starting from this relationship and all the others we will mention, we will see that they are characterized by a dead end if people contradict or do not accept his thoughts.

His friendship with Brower came to an end, because he did not support Freud's theory of sexuality.

Freud was dependent on people. At the same time, he was ashamed and hated his dependence. By accepting help and sympathy from others, he denied addiction. If the contrary, he interrupted relations by leaving them out of his life.

In 1887, he created a relationship with Fliss. When they became very friendly, Freud told him his thoughts, waiting to find in the listener the care and interest in him. His need for someone to support, encourage, stimulate and listen to him was delegated to Fliss. His friend had to hear and approve him, no matter what the listener thought. But soon Fliss was not comfortable with this form of relationship, saying that this could not be called communication.

Freud did not perceive that his friend could criticize him; he thought him to have other functions, supporters, listeners, etc. Perhaps this fact was attributed to the continual support he had had from his father.

It seems that friendship with Jung had the same destiny, although he thought Jung

could be his successor. His supremacy to himself and the bourgeoisie, led him to think that they should govern the world and psychoanalysis (as expressed in his letter to Karl Abraham in 1908). It is obvious that the threat of his psychoanalytic "movement" by the Viennese and the Jews, encouraged him to see Jung as the savior from the distress and make him the leader of the movement. The features of such personality composed his conflict: He loved independence, hated the role of man who was taken into defense and at the same time wanted the tutelage, care and admiration of others. This conflict remains unsolved to him and us too (Freud, 2006).

Interpersonal relations included his relationship with his father too. We mentioned above that Freud created friendly relationships only with men, he was somewhat emotionally distanced with them, without forgetting the element of dependence.

Where can this testimony and unit of his personality have stemmed from?

One hypothesis is Freud's relationship with his father. His attitude towards his father was the opposite of his attitude towards his mother. His father had an indifferent and even a bit aggressive attitude. He was constantly attracting attention when he urinated in bed up to the age of two. The most valuable expression of ambivalence to the father can be distinguished in the central elements of his system, the theory for the Oedipus's complex, according to which the boy hates his father, as his rival in love for the mother. Sexual interpretation of this rivalry darkens its real and essential causes. He wanted to "I keep his father off" his way; he wanted to be the hero.

Therefore, Fromm calls Freud as a rebel and nonrevolutionary. Because the rebel fights with the existing authorities, while he seeks to become authority and the others subject to him. He was a good dad for his sons (they always obeyed to him) and authoritarian with those who took the courage to oppose him. The seventeen-year-old Freud's dream to become a political leader finds a freeway in his friendship at school with Heinrich Braun, who later became one of the leading German socialists. Freud, under his influence, decided to study Law at university. Interest on socialism in his youth caused him to identify himself with Viktor Adler, the glorious leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Party.

As in the political aspect, Freud was fiercely interested in the interpretation of the image of Moses. He saw himself in the figure of Moses, not captured by his people, yet capable of restraining his anger and to continue working for the benefit of their salvation. His work, where they try to prove that Moses was not a Jew but an Egyptian, was published during Hitler's regime; the first part in 1937 the second part in 1939.

So, Freud deprived the Jewish people from their hero, for their historical favor or for the ambitious Freudian interests. He had dreamed to resemble the figure of Moses who sent new knowledge to the human race, which were the last word for mankind to understand themselves and the world. He regarded himself as the leader of this intellectual revolution with the name of the psychoanalytic movement.

Psychoanalysis represents the theory of neurosis and psychological theory as part of human nature, mainly of the unconsciousness that appears in dreams, symptoms and symbolic works.

Freud wanted to transform the world, his image of therapist and scientist represented the reformer of the beginning of the twentieth century.

But, in order for the psychoanalytic movement to take life, it should preferably be

spread just like the smell of perfume in the air. Freud thought that the best method, was to become part of the “international group for the elite and culture”, which was later called “the International Association of Psychoanalysts”. Its organizational principles were dictatorial. Debate over formulated theories was not accepted. After the first years of unity, quarrels began to advance the movement. An international organization with branches in many countries was created and clear rules regarding who had the right to call himself psychoanalyst were set.

In addition to the desire to solve the puzzle of human existence, he also had interest in the work of the human mind. He started his career as a doctor but at the same time being sensitive to his career as a politician. But under the disguise of science, Freud achieved his holy idea, to become Moses, a political and spiritual leader with his desire to show the promised land to the human race.

Then the question arises; was Freud really anti-religious? What religion was he against? Did he have any religious belief?

In the faith in God, he sees the fixation of man in the image of the father-protector, the expression of the desire to get help and to be saved. It is true that in reality human nature helps itself, but only after being awakened from illusions, in order to use its own forces, reason and ability. Just like his contradictory attitudes towards religion, so are his political views, where we can observe radical tendencies.

Civil society itself is under the threat of disintegration due to the initial hostility of people towards each other. One of the most basic weapons of this hostility, is private property, with the extinction of which, human aggression would lose its power.

Freud did not go beyond the limits of the concept of man, common to his society where the root of traditional concepts can also be found in the way libido acts. Only at the level of sexual suppression, which was considered normal for his time, did Freud move away from the traditional picture. Even in his role as governor, leader of the country, he put to life and applied his thesis: the rule of reason over instinct. To him, religion unanimously accelerated this thesis, because if reason were applied in religion, “lies” would emerge in it, because from people it requires only faith and not thought. If people were to ask for explanations in this area, then they would have no answer. The result would be the abandonment of religion and its end.

When people began to think a little more about the factors caused by life, they were not satisfied with the religious explanation so they began to think more about them. The change of the religious age came from this reasoning, the same religion that is present nowadays, the religion of the believer and the believer of the religion.

Trying to summarize the flaws of Freud’s theories expressed in his work “The Greatness and Limitations”, we can briefly analyze that:

- 1- The search for the psychoanalytic movement had its periods of flourishment and deterioration. Freud did not know how to be flexible and consider the proposals of his contemporaries in order to pull the movement out of the crisis. Although he was against religion, he was acting on its same principle: in religion you either believe and are faithful or you have no connection with it at all. There is no middle ground, either you are with psychoanalysis or you are against it.
- 2- Another flaw was its authoritarian and fanatical character. It hindered the fruitful development of human theory which led to the strengthening of the positions of

the bureaucracy. "Curtainless observation" was seen only in one sector of reality, in libidinal studies and their suppression, in the other directions of reality, people continued to walk blindly. It is impossible to see clearly in one realm of reality and remain blind to the other.

3- The adaptation of psychoanalysis to the limits of the liberal-bourgeois view of society is one of the causes of its narrowness.

But what role did Freud's psychoanalysis play at the beginning of our century?

Psychoanalytic theory was widely accepted in all sectors of society, where there was a lot of aversion to true radicalism, but which tended to criticize the conservative morality of the twentieth century and depart from it. Psychoanalysis became the substitute for the pleasures of the deep-rooted intention in man to achieve the meaning of life. Psychoanalysis became the substitute for religion for the civic bourgeoisie. In the movement they found everything necessary, the dogma, the ritual, the leader, the hierarchy, the sense of mastered truth, and the man in charge of the functioning of everything.

But his movement degenerated into a new religion for the asylum seeker, so indispensable to man in this world filled with fear and confusion. Western thought was permeated by Freud's discoveries, and life was guided by these sources. However, Freud's theory represents the culmination of rationalism, but giving it the fatal blow at the same time as it showed that the sources of human action lie in the unconscious, where they are almost hidden from observation, that consciousness controls behavior only to a small extent. With this philosophy, he destroyed the passionate figure of man where the intellect was inextricably dominated.

The above analysis intends to show that Freud's aim was to establish the movement for the ethical liberation of man, to create a new mundane and scientific religion for the elite who called to lead humanity.

Conclusions

The results, which are clearly seen even nowadays, are thought to continue in the future. The expression of interest in the study of this thesis, Freud's theory, in the texts of academic studies and the statistical indicators of the demand for books with his thoughts, clearly express the desire for this thesis, movement or simply psychoanalysis to always remain alive, in order to be studied and practiced. Not to mention the fact that it always comes up as actual for both society and the reader, while reading you seem to find your own individuality in it. It often seems like he talked about you and finally found the solution. I believe that this is the merit of the thesis and the scholar, as this millennial thesis comes as fresh and new even nowadays.

Erich Fromm's next book, "Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought" presents not only the achievements of Freud's theory, but also where this theory becomes stagnant according to him. The greatness of Freud's discovery lies in the fact that he found and spread the method of discovering the truth in that area where man had no previous chance of discovering such information.

Can we say that Freud found the key to the truth that has hindered humanity for years?

The problems of truth are quite complicated, they have always been, and man has always asked for them. But often the truth is historically conditioned, it depends on the rationality and the absence of contradictions within society. Man can attain truths only when he is able to regulate his social life in a human, dignified and reasonable way, without trying to feel fear and at the same time have courage.

The question that Fromm poses is: Where does the cause of Freud's confusion lie?

There are two phenomena which to Freud were "meaningless":

- 1- The first is the theory of bourgeois materialization. The expression "There is no power without matter and no matter without power" found its grounds. Freud's goal was the understanding of human passions. He tried to show that there are some powerful physical forces, mainly physiological, whose roots are almost impossible to demonstrate.
- 2- The second group of "meaningless" ideas was inevitably connected with Freud's authoritarian-patriarchal bourgeois orientations. Societies where women were equal to men and where they could rule like them, were completely inconceivable to Freud.

To Fromm, the thought that does not deserve justification is his concept that the biological, anatomical and psychic half of man stands below the other half.

When explaining his theory, Freud had some attitudes which he did not change even when faced with criticism. Fromm shows these intentions to us:

- His therapeutic purpose was to control the tendencies towards instincts by increasing and strengthening the Ego (Id), they must submit to the Ego and Superego. The aim was to have

control over them (Fromm, 2003).

Therefore, every philosophy and the vision of its interpretation of the society is subject to a critique and interpretation which, if moving with time, will pull after a series of favorable and unfavorable factors.

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