

## Freud's Theories: Lie or a Symbolism

Aakriti Lohiya<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Sigmund Freud's clinical theories were deeply influenced by his childhood and his environment before his exile in England. In this article, the author illuminates his different works and the metaphors in it. The clinical relevance of Freud's theories is much disputed and chatted, but rarely has any psychoanalytic writing touched upon the way in which his theories are linked with life experiences. Exploring the metaphors in Freud's theories will take us into the uncharted paths of how the experience of life events meets experience in the clinic. A sincere and critical reflection of the ideas proposed by Freud would certainly help us to locate its unfamiliar stages. Many of his theories and ideas attempted to create contact with his early childhood experiences. Freud was Jewish by birth but atheist by nature which was reflected in many of his theories. The ways in which Freud theorizes the psychosexual development of a being and many of his mammoth theories are elucidated in this study. On the other hand, some of his ideas remain a challenge, which requires remembering, restating, and functioning through the clinical and mystical elements in his writing.

**Keywords:** *Sigmund Freud, Exile, Psychoanalytic, Metaphor, Psychosexual*

Sigmund Freud born Sigismund Schlomo Freud on 6 May 1856 was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for evaluating and treating pathologies in the psyche through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. Freud was born to Galician Jewish parents in the Moravian town of Freiberg, in the Austrian Empire. He qualified as a doctor of medicine in 1881 at the University of Vienna. Upon completing his habilitation in 1885, he was appointed a docent in neuropathology and became an affiliated professor in 1902. Freud lived and worked in Vienna, having set up his clinical practice there in 1886. In 1938, Freud left Austria to escape Nazi persecution. He died in exile in the United Kingdom in 1939.

In founding psychoanalysis, Freud developed therapeutic techniques such as the use of free association and discovered transference, establishing its central role in the analytic process. Freud's redefinition of sexuality to include its infantile forms led him to formulate the Oedipus complex as the central tenet of psychoanalytical theory. His analysis of dreams as wish fulfillments provided him with models for the clinical analysis of symptom formation and the underlying mechanisms of repression. On this basis, Freud elaborated his theory of the unconscious and went on to develop a model of psychic structure comprising id, ego, and super-ego. Freud postulated the existence of libido, the sexualized energy with which

<sup>1</sup>BA., MSc Clinical Psychology, India

\*Corresponding Author

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mental processes and structures are invested and which generates erotic attachments, and a death drive, the source of compulsive repetition, hate, aggression, and neurotic guilt. In his later works, Freud developed a wide-ranging interpretation and critique of religion and culture. Though in overall decline as a diagnostic and clinical practice, psychoanalysis remains influential within psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, and across the humanities. It thus continues to generate extensive and highly contested debate concerning its therapeutic efficacy, its scientific status, and whether it advances or hinders the feminist cause.

Nonetheless, Freud's work has suffused contemporary Western thought and popular culture. W. H. Auden's 1940 poetic tribute to Freud describes him as having created "a whole climate of opinion / under whom we conduct our different lives". In 1886, Freud resigned from his hospital post and entered private practice specializing in "nervous disorders". The same year he married Martha Bernays, the granddaughter of Isaac Bernays, a chief rabbi in Hamburg. Freud was, as an atheist, dismayed at the requirement in Austria for a Jewish religious ceremony and briefly considered, before dismissing, the prospect of joining the Protestant 'Confession' to avoid one. In the event, a civil ceremony took place on the 13th of September and a religious ceremony the following day with Freud having been hastily tutored in the Hebrew prayers.

The Freuds had six children: Mathilde (b. 1887), Jean-Martin (b. 1889), Oliver (b. 1891), Ernst (b. 1892), Sophie (b. 1893), and Anna (b. 1895). From 1891 until they left Vienna in 1938, Freud and his family lived in an apartment at Berggasse 19, near Innere Stadt, a historical district of Vienna. By mid-September 1939, Freud's cancer of the jaw was causing him increasingly severe pain, and had been declared inoperable. The last book he read, Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin*, prompted reflections on his own increasing frailty, and a few days later he turned to his doctor, friend, and fellow refugee, Max Schur, reminding him that they had previously discussed the terminal stages of his illness: "Schur, you remember our 'contract' not to leave me in the lurch when the time had come. Now it is nothing but torture and makes no sense." When Schur replied that he had not forgotten, Freud said, "I thank you," and then, "Talk it over with Anna, and if she thinks it's right, then make an end of it." Anna Freud wanted to postpone her father's death, but Schur convinced her it was pointless to keep him alive; on 21 and 22 September, he administered doses of morphine that resulted in Freud's death at around 3 am on 23 September 1939. However, discrepancies in the various accounts Schur gave of his role in Freud's final hours, which have in turn led to inconsistencies between Freud's main biographers, have led to further research and a revised account. This proposes that Schur was absent from Freud's deathbed when a third and final dose of morphine was administered by Dr. Josephine Stross, a colleague of Anna Freud, leading to Freud's death at around midnight on 23 September 1939. After his wife, Martha, died in 1951, her ashes were also placed in the urn. Three days after his death, Freud's body was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium in North London, with Harrods acting as funeral directors, on the instructions of his son, Ernst. Funeral orations were given by Ernest Jones and the Austrian author Stefan Zweig. Freud's ashes were later placed in the crematorium's Ernest George Columbarium (see "Freud Corner").

Although Freud's theories had a huge impact, they were heavily criticised both then and after his death. His concepts have spread throughout our culture, with expressions like "Freudian slip," "repression," and "denial".

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Freud's theories include:

### *Unconscious mind*

One of his most enduring theories is that the mind is a reservoir of ideas, memories, and feelings that exist outside of conscious awareness.

### *Personality*

The id, ego, and superego, according to Freud, are the three main elements that makeup personality. The superego is the moral or ethical framework that directs how the ego functions, whereas the id represents the unconscious. The ego is the conscious state.

### *Life and death instincts*

According to Freud, human behavior was controlled by two classes of instincts: life and death. Death instincts include aggressiveness, self-harm, and destruction; life instincts include reproduction, survival, and pleasure.

### *Psychosexual development*

According to Freud's theory of psychosexual development, people's personalities and sexual selves go through five developmental stages, i.e the oral stage, anal stage, phallic stage, latent stage, and genital stage.

### *Mechanisms of defense*

According to Sigmund Freud, people use different coping or defense mechanisms to cope with or overcome anxiety. For eg: displacement, repression, sublimation, and regression.

## **THEORIES**

### *Oedipus Complex*

According to psychoanalytic theory, the Oedipus complex is a stage in normal development that includes a strong desire for sex with the parent of the other sex and a concomitant sense of competition with the parent of the same sex. The idea was first presented by Sigmund Freud in his book *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). The feminine counterpart, the Electra complex, is named for another mythological figure who assisted in the murder of her mother. The term originates from the Theban hero Oedipus of Greek legend, who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother.

### *Dream Theory*

According to Sigmund Freud, the unconscious (id) uses dreams to express itself and deal with suppressed or unpleasant emotions, experiences, and violent impulses. In order to build his dream theory, Sigmund Freud made a number of assumptions. The most significant ones are as follows:

Freud believed dreams are short. He also believed that they were most likely to occur just before waking up and are about the past day's events.

Dreams are wish fulfillments.

Wish fulfillment is one of Freud's most famous theories, which holds that when wishes cannot be fulfilled in our waking life, they are carried out in dreams.

He believed that most people forget the majority of their dreams.

Numerous sexual symbols can be found in dreams. Freud compiled a comprehensive list of the numerous sexual symbols that dreams might contain.

Dreams should be analyzed by a therapist or a psychologist.

### Penis Envy

In Sigmund Freud's 1908 article "On the Sexual Theories of Children," he introduced the idea of interest and envy of the penis in females. He characterized some women's development of a male ideal as "a relic of the boyish nature that they themselves once had" in *On Narcissism* (1914). As Freud steadily improved his understanding of sexuality, the phrase came to signify a mental transition he believed took place as one moved from the phallic stage to the latency stage. Freud claimed that girls develop penises envy from a young age when they understand that boys have more sexual pleasure from their penises than ladies do from their own sexual organs in a presentation titled "Femininity" from 1933. The desire to have a son is the closest thing a woman may have to have her own penis, according to Freud, therefore this penis envy develops through time and emerges in a daughter's love for her father.

In many countries, the Psycho-analytic approach is right now detained. The sole reason for that was that Freud exclusively experimented on white males. The reason people do still believe in Sigmund's theories like Penis Envy, Oedipus Complex, etc is that those people have faced it themselves or have seen others face it.

### Psychosexual theory

Sigmund Freud noted that a child's behavior is focused on particular body parts throughout the predictable periods of early childhood development, such as the mouth during breastfeeding and the anus during potty training. He maintained that adult neurosis (a functional mental condition) frequently has roots in childhood sexuality and, as a result, suggested that neurotic adult behaviors are outgrowths of childhood sexual fantasy and desire. Given the predictable timeline of childhood behavior, he proposed "libido development" as a model of typical childhood sexual development, according to which the child develops through five psychosexual stages, including the oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital, each of which has a different erogenous zone as the source of pleasure.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### *Oedipus Complex*

(Martins, F. (2005)) This study points out metaphors taken from oral tradition or performed by patients in psychotherapy, as a royal way to Oedipus complex in analysis working through the process. First, the position of the metaphor in clinical works and in philosophy is presented and its importance for clinical practice is shown even though it was excluded from the field. Some examples of psychotherapy using metaphors are displayed and analyzed as well.

### *Dream Analysis*

(Sparrow, G. S. (n.d.)) In this study, the author describes how the Co-Creative Paradigm of dream theory renders the dream as a successive coalescence of metaphoric imagery along a narrative framework created by the real-time interaction between the dream observer and emergent, generic, domain-level content. When one embraces this view of the dream, one can analyze dream metaphors as a product of the interaction of domain-level content with the dream ego's response set—a position originally described by Rossi (1972) and anticipated by Jung (2014b; 2014c), Ullman (1969), Lakoff (1993), and Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The hypothesis presented by this paper is that the co-creative view of metaphoric imagery construction opens up new questions, and fosters insights unavailable from the standpoint of traditional content-oriented dream analysis. It is yet to be tested, and the

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dimensions of dreamwork practice that would constitute a suitable treatment protocol have been delineated for future research.

### ***Penis Envy***

*(Thompson, C. (1943))* The conclusion states that it is clear that the clinical picture of penis envy has implications for all facets of life and primarily has little to do with sexual activity. If the notion that a sense of biological deficiency causes emotions of inferiority in women is rejected, then follows that the phrase does not reflect a clinical entity with a consistent beginning but has instead evolved into a symbol and justification for varied sentiments of inadequacy in women. The circumstance of cultural underprivileged lends the justification for the appearance of authenticity.

*((Greenacre, P. (1953))* Discussion in his study is more about a mental and emotional condition that is more accurately referred to as penis awe than penis envy. It appears likely that many females experience penis amazement and penis envy in various relationships with one another, and that the specifics of this interrelation have a significant role in the unique views of the woman toward herself and toward her partner. We may not have emphasized this enough in our psychoanalytic studies.

### ***Psychosexual theory***

*(Garcia, J. L. (n.d.))* By analogy with Freud's psychosexual stage theory of personality development, the author of this essay conceptualizes counseling and its results. The similarities between the oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital stages of the counseling process and Freud's conception are his particular area of study. The heuristic character of metaphorical comparisons is suggested by the fact that new interpretations can be made of these parallels, providing new information about the nature of the therapeutic alliance.

*(Melnick, B. A. (1997))* The author argues that ongoing work in cognitive linguistics affords a better understanding of how metaphor functions, both in psychic life and in the formulation of psychoanalytic theory. Lakoff and Johnson have shown that a great deal of our thought and perception depends on mainly unconscious metaphors, drawn in large part from basic bodily experience. Their findings can be most immediately related to psychoanalysis via the theory of libidinal development.

### **Metaphors and Symbols in Freud's theories**

As the articles suggest, we have found some symbolism or metaphors in Sigmund Freud's theories; these may be insignificant as they have different essence in different cultures. We are not here to debate the criticisms given to the following topic, we are just here to share different metaphors or symbols that we found in his theories and state some that other researchers and/or writers shared.

### ***Penis Envy***

Many have criticized penis envy as it's seen to be a non-feminist, white male concept but we are not here debating on that concept but to signify its meaning in a different way. Talking about Asian cultures, Males are considered superior to females and are given more opportunities in social, professional, and personal aspects. In a professional context, far more jobs are available for males than females. There are noted studies that talk about how there are major salary differences between both genders and how women have to work three times more to reach a position than the man in the same environment. More noted difficulties arise when women are either hesitant or not considered to work night shifts.

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In society women are considered weak, a liability, and should have someone to take care of them. This has been proven wrong by many females these days as they are the sole earner in their families, and they have big positions socially. But in many rural areas, females are still prohibited to attend social gatherings without some kind of cover or are not allowed in religious places. They are considered impure when their menstruation cycle starts. Hair in public areas is considered bad for women but works for men. Women have to change to society's needs. Women are not given equal freedom by society as compared to men. Women are not allowed to stay out of home late fearing for their safety.

In their personal life, women are treated harshly by their family members, they are expected to work around the house all by themselves, cater to every need of a family, sacrifice their own needs and fulfill others. Due to these reasons women in their lifetime, once get thought and imagine their life as men, thus envying a penis, the metaphor for penis envy.

### *Oedipus Complex*

The Oedipus complex is a Freudian term that was named after a man that unknowingly killed his father and slept with his mother. Freud said that a boy develops an unconscious infatuation with his mother, and simultaneously fears his father to be a rival. This happens at an unconscious level. Girls experience a similar conflict called the Electra complex. A result of an unresolved Electra complex may be that a woman would seek out a man who treats her similarly to their father.

For a psychoanalyst, Oedipus is the history of all histories. Sophocles held together a very long tradition of telling tales. Thus, a psychoanalyst expects their patients will bring a new and elaborate, creative, and original Oedipian history in their speech. It is also supposed that each patient retains cultural metaphors linked directly to his Oedipus complex from his childhood and from his parents and acquaintances. That is our general hypothesis. It also means that during his life route, every man will face the Sphinx.

In the paternal metaphor, Lacan combined the linguistic procedure with what Freud called the Oedipus complex, which is for Lacan a symbolic operation of the substitution of two signifiers: the signifier of the mother (the basic pair of her presence and absence in front of a child), and the Name-of-the-Father as a signifier that replaces this initial maternal signifier in the symbolic. This actually relates to Freud's description that he gave of the observation of his grandson, who was playing with a reel of cotton on a thread, pronouncing Fort (away) when he threw it into the unseen, and Da (here) when he pulled it back into the field of the visible. This phonemic pair (Fort-Da) is a minimal symbolic difference, a first signifier that takes place in an attempt to symbolically inscribe the absence of the real object, namely the mother. Lacan, in his paternal metaphor, inscribes the cause of this capricious appearance and disappearance of the mother as an x, something unknown for the child, or, as he also puts it, "the signified for the subject". And it is precisely that signified the subject which is an enigma that has to be named by the name of the father.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, we can say that Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychology and the father of psychoanalysis, managed to present all his theories in a metaphorical or symbolic manner. As it was mentioned in the previous section of our paper that his major theories like the dream theory, the Oedipus complex, Penis Envy, etc. he used visible symbols. We have also seen the same in other writers' research papers and have added their thoughts and observations to ours. This paper, along with other research papers, is proof that

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Freud really did use symbols instead of stating in a direct manner. Freud's theories can also be seen as a metaphor to his own life. As we know from history, Freud wanted to marry his own mother and saw his father as a rival. This is an example of how Freud used his own life and made theories revolving on it. We would like to clarify that these are purely our views which are not in any way criticizing or supporting someone's notion of some specific gender. Neither do we favor someone's view nor do we deny it's a practical instance. As signified in the paper we have penis envy can be seen in our day-to-day living. The theory is mostly seen in its bits and metaphors. It knowingly or unknowingly hinders the basic living of females as they navigate through social, cultural, professional, and personal life.

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