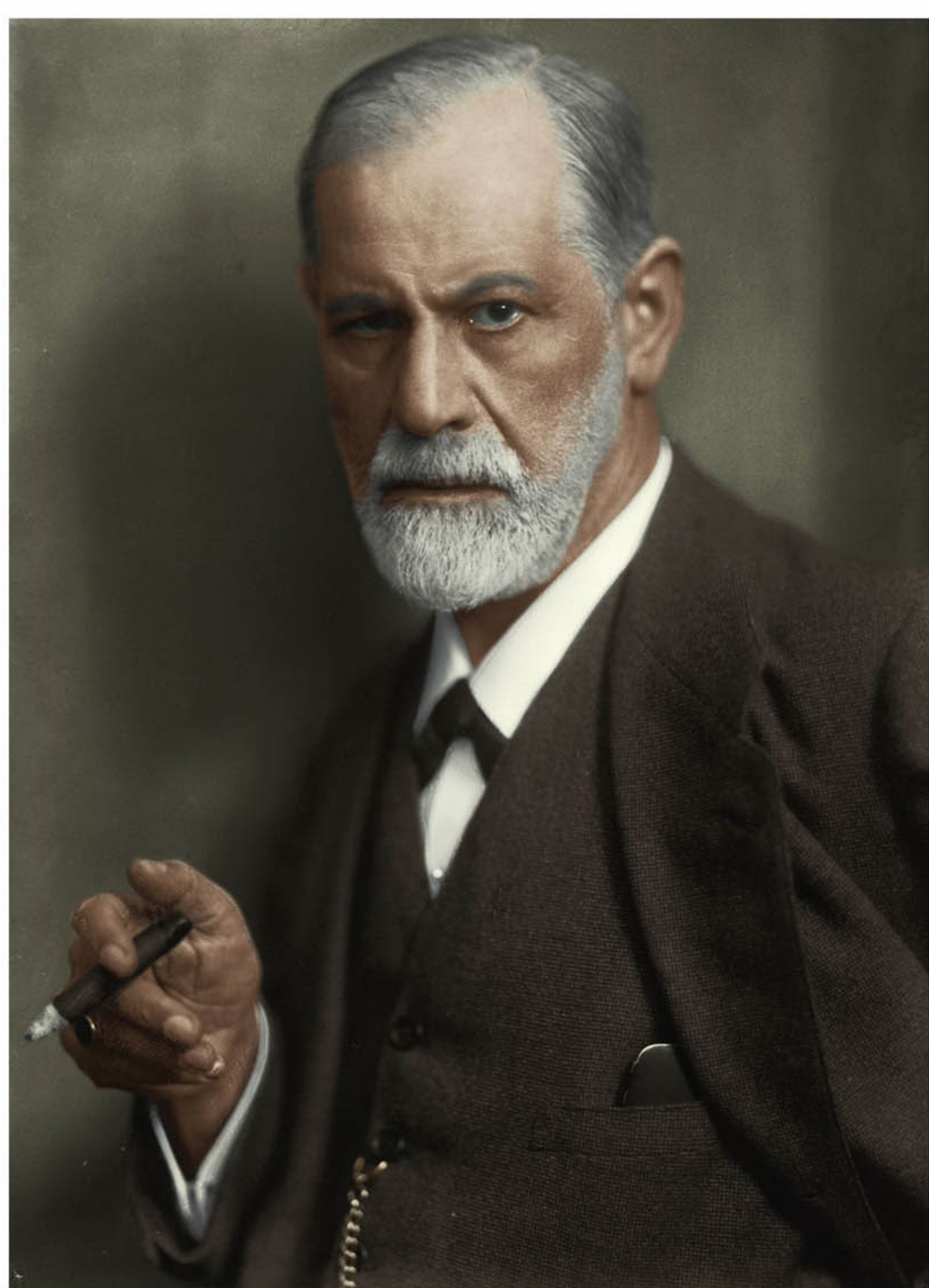


July 15, 1939: p. 16

Dr. Sigmund Freud



Freud Emphasized Sex as a Factor

INTO the vocabulary of the layman, Dr. Sigmund Freud has put new words: inhibition, neurosis, the subconscious mind. Some of his basic assertions are now lay platitudes—that man, for instance, is still an animal, although he has learned some of the graces of civilized living. Because of Freud, man's concept of his own mind has been revolutionized.

Freud is the founder of psychoanalysis. In his own judgment, he has made no important contribution to the science for 15 years. Waiting for death, he has taken a strenuous intellectual holiday. He has occupied himself in writing books about the psychology of whole peoples.

Last week, in his newest book, called *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud gave an explanation for anti-Semitism. Hatred of Jews, he declares, arises because their belief in one God conflicts with the primitive instincts of other peoples to worship many gods. No anti-Semite would give this as his reason for disliking Jews. But few persons, says Freud, realize why they act as they do.

FREUD is a Jew. He was born 83 years ago in the small town of Freiburg, then in Austria-Hungary, later in Czechoslovakia and now in Germany. When he was four, Sigmund moved with his parents to Vienna. After being consistently at the top of his classes in the public schools, he entered the University of Vienna at the age of 17 to study medicine. He studied only what he wanted to, and slighted the subjects required for his degree. He did not graduate until 1881, when he was 25.

"Neither in my youth nor later," Freud has confessed, "was I able to detect in myself any particular fond-

OldMagazineArticles.com

F R E U D

ness for the position or work of a doctor." Nevertheless, he began to practice in Vienna's General Hospital, specializing in neurology. He became famous for the uncanny accuracy of his diagnoses, but he was not satisfied.

In Paris, one Jean Martin Charcot was having incredible success with a new and thoroughly unorthodox method of treating nervous diseases. Charcot hypnotized his patients and commanded them to shed their symptoms. The fact that some of them actually recovered gave Freud his first clue that many apparently physical diseases have their roots in the mind.

After visiting Charcot, Freud was convinced. He returned to Vienna in 1886, married, and settled down to practice with a brilliant family physician, Dr. Josef Breuer. It was Breuer who related to Freud the strange and now famous case of Anna O.

Anna was a young girl who suddenly had developed paralysis of her right arm and both legs. Her illness had come on her while she was nursing her father during a fatal illness. Under hypnosis, she told Breuer that while she was tending her father, she had wished to go out dancing and have fun like other girls. When he heard the story, Freud concluded that her suppressed desires had become translated into physical repressions.

By 1906, the basic outlines of Freud's theory were complete. His conclusions, one of his biographers has aptly remarked, burst on his colleagues "like a pistol shot in a church." For Freud pictured man as a creature primarily of instinct rather than reason. He emphasized sex as a factor in human behavior; shocked Victorians shut their ears.

ACCORDING to Freud, the mind is like an iceberg, which is 12-13ths submerged. That part which everyone can perceive is the conscious; the vastly greater part which is hidden is the subconscious (or unconscious). Buried deep in the unconscious are man's primeval urges. Because of the restrictions of society, these urges often are unsatisfied. In dreams, man does what his conscious mind will not permit; but even the subconscious mind has a censor (called the super ego) which makes it dream in terms of symbols. Thus, a man who dreams of chopping down a tree may have an unfulfilled urge to murder someone.

In thousands of patients who came to him, Freud found a continual conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. These conflicts resulted in neuroses. Some of Freud's patients drank too much; others were sexual perverts; many were suffering from nervous breakdowns; a few, like Anna O., had hysteria resulting in paralysis. By explaining to them the basic reasons for these neuroses, Freud was able to work cures.

Man, Freud contends, has two basic motives buried in his unconscious. First is the libido—the desire for life, for creative work and for sexual satisfaction. Second is the death instinct—a deep-buried drive sometimes ex-

F R E U D

pressed in the habit of biting finger-nails. Of the two, the more important is libido. Nervous upsets arrive when an individual cannot transfer his childhood love for his mother into adult channels such as marriage or earning a satisfactory livelihood. Neuroses, Freud says, are all "disturbances of the sexual function."

For Freud's contemporaries, this pronouncement was too much. Dr. Breuer quit his partnership with Freud. To the end of Freud's association with the University of Vienna, where he taught for several years, he was not promoted above the rank of assistant professor. Even some of the scientists who joined Freud in founding the International Psychoanalytical Association in 1910 were unable to swallow his ideas whole.

DESPITE his work's importance, Freud has lived for most of his life in complete obscurity. In his *Autobiography*, he does not even mention the name of his wife, who bore him six children. For more than 40 years, psychoanalyzing and writing 14 hours a day, he lived in the same rented quarters in Vienna. After the Nazi occupation last year, he and his wife went to London, where his son Ernst was established as an architect. With him went another son, Martin, a lawyer, and his daughter, Anna, herself a distinguished psychoanalyst.

Virtually retired, Freud looks back on two occasions as the peaks of his career. First was in 1909, when at Clark University in Worcester, Mass., he gave five speeches on his theory and was warmly applauded by American men of science. Second was in 1930, after his basic ideas had been widely accepted, when Germany awarded him the Goethe prize.

For 16 years, Freud has been resigned to the idea of death. In 1923, he was found to be suffering from cancer of the jaw; 16 operations have not removed it. Even now, however, he continues to treat a few patients. For the rest, he plays cards with his sons, watches his five grandchildren play and continues to write. Outbursts in Germany and the Orient he sees as an expression of man's animalistic instincts; yet even he cannot believe that man is incurably animal.

"We may insist as often as we please," he once wrote, "that the human intellect is powerless when compared with the impulses of man, and we may be right in what we say. All the same, there is something peculiar about this weakness. The voice of the intellect is soft and low, but it is persistent, and continues until it has obtained a hearing. After what may be countless repetitions, it does get a hearing. This is one of the few facts which may help to make us rather more hopeful about the future of mankind."

PATHFINDER

