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The radical implications of Psychoanalysis for a Critical Social Psychology

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The truth of psychoanalysis lies in its loyalty to its most provocative hypotheses. (Marcuse, 1970, p.61)

If one takes psychoanalysis ... into account, seriously, effectively, practically, this would be a nearly unimaginable earthquake. Indescribable. Even for psychoanalysts. (Derrida, 2004, p.179)

To include psychoanalysis in a volume dedicated to critical social psychology is not without contention. In its myriad forms from classical Freudianism, through the developments of Melanie Klein, Jacques Lacan and others, to the orthodoxy of ego-psychology in the United States, psychoanalysis has itself been subject to pertinent radical critique for, amongst other things, its truth status, its normative clinical function, and its political conservativism. In recent iterations of critical psychology, exemplified in Fox, Prilleltensky and Austin's (2009) collection Critical Psychology: an Introduction, the pervasive notion of a radical project comprises critiques of both individualising and exclusionary tendencies in traditional psychological practice. Here, mainstream psychology connects to regimes of truth in which a model of a white, bourgeois, heterosexual, non-disabled male epitomises normality and pursues goals of self-fulfilment that support and replicate capitalist economic systems. The demise of cooperation between participants and intolerance towards human difference within these regimes places the onus for psychological wellbeing on socially assimilated individuals and pushes those who can't adapt towards the margins. The response of this strand of critical psychology is, laudably, to highlight the oppression of marginalized groups and effect positive changes in the status and lifestyle of those excluded. Liberation and community psychologies dominate such thinking with an agenda of emancipation and a model of psychological health and wellbeing that, moving beyond individual concerns, has "psychopolitical validity" (Prilleltensky et al, 2009).

In such a critical model, psychoanalysis is often found wanting. In Freud's lifetime, for example, his work was criticised for an essential conservativism in the pages of Karl Krauss's radical newspaper Die Fackel (The Torch), which levelled accusations against the "cult" of psychoanalysis whose practitioners place "their knowledge and skills at the disposal of the ruling classes" (Krauss in Szasz, 1990, p.135). Krauss similarly denounces Freud's quietism over issues such as the illegality of homosexuality and the compulsory treatment of the mad; questions that Freud was well placed to challenge. The history of psychoanalysis since Freud's death also reveals a number of darker faces that question it as a radical enterprise. The complicity of certain psychoanalysts with the military Junta in Argentina during the late 1970s (Levinson, 2003), the failure of the (mostly Jewish) psychoanalytic community to anticipate and resist the rise of Nazism in Germany and then deal appropriately with its legacy (Landa, 1999; Frosh, 2005) are particular low points. Whilst both these examples demonstrate the extremes of a politically reactionary psychoanalysis, they also highlight a more quotidian spirit of conservativism in the general psychoanalytic project such as the relation

between clinical practice and normative processes, its individualized response to trans-individual phenomena and its often inflexible conceptual frame.

Since its inception, however, psychoanalysis has had a major impact on critical thinking in the humanities and social sciences that continues today. Stephen Frosh acknowledges a “cyclical pattern of repudiation and resurrection that psychoanalysis seems to undergo within academic settings” (2013, p.5), a polarised reception which testifies to uncertainty in what it offers. What Frosh highlights is that neither uncritical acceptance nor outright rejection is an adequate response to psychoanalysis and reflects instead a fundamental tension that Freud places at the heart the human subject. This is a tension, furthermore, that feeds into theory, making psychoanalysis from the outset a necessarily restless discipline built on a foundational conflict. As a result of this, and to the frustration of analysts and critics alike, there is no single and unifying theory of psychoanalysis and the contemporary landscape reveals a programme that, despite institutional attempts to the contrary, is internally divided and globally dispersed. As Sergio Benvenuto (2009) interestingly notes, unlike other academic and clinical disciplines, psychoanalysis does not have a lingua franca and responds anew to each linguistic and cultural context where it embeds.

Freud produced two substantive models of the psyche; a first topography, or dynamic model based primarily on his model of dreams and a second structural topography in which the psyche is divided into distinct agencies that interact. To suggest a simple progression between models, however, would be a generous reading at best. The various theoretical strands within Freud often rub against one another, producing confusing and often contradictory statements that cannot be ironed over. The post-Freudian context is in many ways defined by groups favouring either the earlier or later work and emphasising different aspects of these. In her examination of radical trends within psychoanalysis, Andrea Hurst notes how Freud’s “texts are not presented as the final ‘writing up’ of a theoretical foundation ... they are, rather, the provisional documentation of theoretical insights that remain open to modification” (2008, p.16-7). For many in the mainstream psychological traditions this poses a problem for coherence and respectability that cannot be ignored.

Rather than seeing the conflicted nature of psychoanalytic discourse as reason for dismissing its insights, however, I will argue that this impasse reveals instead something at the heart of the Freudian project that opens up its radical potential. Whilst the admirable focus on social justice, welfare and emancipation for all individuals is not disputed here, at the heart of any critical social psychology must always be the opportunity for the radical reimagining of ideas and the transformation of frames of understanding and the object or subject to be understood. Each element in the designation “critical social psychology” needs continual interrogation for it to avoid the claims of discursive mastery and expertise whose exercise in arbitrary power structures it so successfully highlights and challenges in mainstream psychology. Psychoanalysis provides impetus for this through Freud’s “discovery” of the unconscious, and its linking to sexuality, which places ineradicable conflict at the heart of the psyche and produces a decentred subject that is stripped of all prior philosophical assurances. This introduces fluidity into any conception of the individual that allows connections to be drawn between psychological, social and historical realms. Whilst psychoanalysis sutures together personal and social domains, Freud’s originary concepts also place their distinction and separation continually under question, allowing for critical reflection in both fields.

Even before the specific theoretical concepts that Freud develops and the challenge that these pose to the scientific and philosophical ideas of his day and ours, there is a radical spirit in his investigations that underpin their formalization. This spirit is born of the conflict that Freud traces in the human subject and whose understanding he attempts to contain in language and concepts that

are never adequate. Psychoanalysis offers critical social psychology a multi-faceted consideration of how the self is produced from disparate and often contradictory demands, giving rise to unstable subjectivity. Not only does this enable its programme of individual emancipation and social transformation, but there is also an additional sense of profound resistance to straightforward understanding and interpretation in the object of investigation which opens up any account to the uncertain ground of its own formulations and assertions. The psychoanalytic enterprise is continually undermined by its object and any related discipline that draws on or is drawn into its orbit must contend with this disturbance. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, this is not necessarily negative, although it can and has led to defensive measures against dissolution that have produced institutional stasis. Like the individual and social milieu it engages, cohesion and instability are in constant tension in theory such that the threat posed by its object is also the promise of its future reimagining and survival.

The three motifs of conflict, decentring and resistance that I have identified in this introduction will feed through the remaining consideration of the radical implications of psychoanalysis for critical social psychology. I will first identify the psychoanalytic challenge to traditional psychology and its stubbornly held notion of centred subjectivity which Freud recognised as untenable but that seems inexorably wedded to western understandings of selfhood. Unusually in a volume such as this, the focus of critical attack will not be another type of psychology but a particular North American characterisation of psychoanalysis that shares much common ground with mainstream psychology. A critique of its own internal forms will not only have implications for any psychology predicated on a unified and transparent notion of selfhood, but will also demonstrate a problem inherent in psychoanalysis itself that I will trace back to Freud's work. This problem is the tension between conservative and radical tendencies that psychoanalysis locates in the human subject and which feeds into its own theories and practice. For reasons that I will explore, radical insight too often gives way to a more tempered and culturally assimilable form of psychoanalysis that supports rather than challenges existing psychical and social arrangements. Psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche argues that this is where Freud and his legacy often "goes astray" (1999, p.82) and misrecognises the significance of its insights. The rebuttal of these reactionary positions is provided in the tensions that inhere in psychoanalytic concepts that become radical as their roots are interrogated. I will focus on what are for many the two exemplary and revolutionary psychoanalytic theories, those of the unconscious and sexuality, and demonstrate how these concepts are founded on radical principles that have profound ramifications for (social) psychological understanding.

Psychoanalytic orthodoxy: the problem of/with the ego

For many critical theorists the reactionary formulations that dominate public understandings of psychoanalysis are derived from its reception and development in North America (Marcuse, 1955; Jacoby, 1975; Frosh, 2010). The American Psychoanalytic Association (APsaA) was formed in 1911 and, in opposition to Freud's (1926) views on the selection of analysts, pursued between 1938 and 1987 a training agenda that excluded non-medical practitioners. As such, the practice of psychoanalysis was firmly embedded in psychiatry, and the medico-scientific respectability of this connection was opposed to the laxness of training statutes in the psychoanalytic institutions of other nations such as Britain and France. This approach fed into a golden age of psychoanalytic popularity in the United States as the APsaA rose to dominance on the global stage and reflected an image of its practice out across the world. Producing "training regimes that reward conformity and militate against creative and critical thinking" (Frosh, 2010, p.14), however, this created an aura of stiffness and conservatism within the APsaA and treatment followed a similarly conformist trajectory.

Curative ideals were founded on models of normative development that in its most influential iterations, posited identity formation and ego integrity as their goal.

The central work of Erik Erikson (1950), for example, focuses on identity and posits a stage theory of development in which stability and unity of ego function are the ultimate achievement. Such a developmental aim coincides with social relationships that are ultimately adaptive, thus creating harmony and continuity between psychological health and appropriate social interaction and behaviour . In the clinic, similar ideals gave rise to ego psychology as the distinctively American face of psychoanalysis. A term coined by Heinz Hartmann in 1939, ego psychology is a theory and therapeutic technique that focuses on the organizing functions of the ego as it develops autonomy. This understanding derives from Freud's second model where the psyche is divided into distinct agencies, and the ego "puts itself forward as the representative of the whole person" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988, p.452). In this structure, the ego is seen as being subject to unreasonable demands from internal drives and the external environment and needs to protect itself.

As the child develops, its newly formed and vulnerable ego employs defence mechanism to manage the various threats and tensions that assault it. As Anna Freud noted in her 1936 text The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence, these are invariably maladaptive in the infant and seek to protect through exclusion. Conflict thus returns as if from outside in unexpected and distressing ways. Successful development, which provides a model for psychotherapeutic practice, coincides with producing more adaptive responses that deal with conflicts directly in an increasingly autonomous ego, enlarged through progressive internalization (i.e. representation) of instinctual and external forces. Mental health and psychopathology are conceived in terms of this adaptive function, with therapy identifying maladaptive defences that constrain the individual and building ego integrity more securely so that forces imposing negatively on the self can be mastered and thereby overcome. The ego becomes a centring structure that responds appropriately to and autonomously of social strictures, and tames a drive life perceived to threaten both the self and the established social fabric. By focussing on the ego, ego psychology was assimilable to psychiatry and enjoyed a close correspondence with the general psychological revolution in twentieth century America that made the individual its focus.

For a critical social psychology framework there are considerable issues with this approach to psychoanalytic theory and technique. Writing at the high point of its popularity in the 1970s, Russell Jacoby rejects ego psychology as inherently reactionary because it ignores the impact of social forces in the constitution and positioning of the individual subject. This "social amnesia" in its theory produces a defensive individualism that repeats and feeds into the capitalist structure of North American society. In treatment, the innovation and critical reflexivity required for radical change (initially in, although not restricted to, the individual patient) is eschewed in favour of a clinical practice that measures cure in terms of how successfully the analysand indentifies her ego with that of the analyst. The impact of social forces on the individual, particularly as these generate the oppressive conditions that frame the personal repressions and conflict so central to Freudian theory, is largely ignored. Influenced by Freud's later works on civilisation and the mutual impact of social and psychical structures, the Frankfurt School theorist Herbert Marcuse (1961) acknowledges how every internal barrier that generates repression was first an external obstacle knitted into the fabric of the historical process that constitutes a society. Before the individual can self-determine, they are determined by a network of historical and social relations that are then distilled in the psyche. Social oppression and psychical repression are intimately related in ways that eschew the simple formulations that a discrete and autonomous individual must accept the laws of social living, despite conflict with its instinctual demands. Instead, social and historical processes are traced into the heart

of subjectivity to the extent that even the concept of the individual is constructed through specific ideologies. The autonomous self so celebrated in late capitalist ideology is one such distillation of the historical process at the level of the individual.

Jacoby sees how “ego psychology grinds down the cutting edge of psychoanalysis” (1975, p.41), separating the psyche from its relational and contextual milieu in a way that is more palatable for the individualist market place in North America. This criticism against US psychoanalytic orthodoxy is echoed by a number of psychoanalytic schools in mostly European and South American contexts. It is the force of this response which reminds us of the critical edge that psychoanalysis still fosters in its classical Freudian guise and its key reimagining in the works of Melanie Klein and the object relations theorists in Britain, the work of Jacques Lacan and the innovative post-Lacanian generation in France, and the varied developments and combinations of these approaches in the rest of the world. There is a sense in these related positions that ego psychology is somehow a misreading of Freud that sanitises his key insights and seeks to resolve an irresolvable foundational conflict with notions of selfhood that return to a unified subjectivity he had already undermined. Whilst ego psychology is a limited reading of psychoanalysis that removes its potentially radical spirit, it does, however, represent a very distinct trend within Freud’s corpus that cannot be ignored and opens up profound questions for the possibility of conceptualising that which fundamentally resists comprehension; these questions will be explored in due course.

Ego psychology derives from Freud’s mature reflections following his text The Ego and the Id (1923) and the construction of his second topography. Here, the first topography which opposes the unconscious to the preconscious-conscious as different levels of representation in a dynamic system, is supplanted by distinct and localizable psychical agencies. In the first topography, Freud understands the psyche as a closed system around which drive energy flows and that functions according to the primary process (or pleasure principle). The uninterrupted flow of a manageable quantity of energy maintains homeostasis which can be interrupted when pressure is allowed to build up at various points. Pressure generates discomfort which is inherently pleasurable when released. In his 1915 texts Repression and The Unconscious, Freud clarifies the relationship between the body (soma) and the psyche as that of the iInstincts and their representatives. The instincts are not a direct component of the psyche, and are in themselves unknowable, but their force is imprinted on the psyche through the ideas they attach to in the course of an individual’s development. Freud speaks of Vorstellungsrepräsentanz (the ideational representatives) to denote this transfer from the functioning of the body to that of the psyche. Different levels of consciousness are determined by the quality of representation and how these allow drive energy attached to be expressed and hence discharged. As the expressions of instincts that are unbounded by moral pressures, the ideational representatives are subject to censorship as the developing self undergoes necessary reality testing. This process removes the possibility of conscious articulation from certain representatives as these are deemed personally or socially transgressive. This censorship of psychical material and its crystallization into various unspeakable complexes is what Freud describes as repression, and in his first topography denotes the formation and contents of the unconscious. Pressure from the unconscious persists unabated and its satisfaction must be sought through partial means in the form of compromises. Modelled on his theory of dreams, the transfer from repressed content to its disguised expression accounts for a whole range of largely disruptive psychical phenomena including, most significantly, the symptoms manifest in neurotics.

The inadequacies of this model were revealed in the clinic as Freud encountered cases that did not neatly fit his understanding of neurosis. These non-neurotic cases, as André Green describes them, (2005) included disorders of the personality (e.g. nNarcissism), self-distortions (e.g. melancholia) and

numerous borderline phenomena (straddling both neurotic and psychotic experiences) which all somehow implicated the development and operation of the ego. This required a new understanding of the psyche with a focus on the ego as a centring structure of the self and the way this is constructed in relation to processes of investment (love) and identification with significant others. The ego mediates between instinctual demands, the demands of reality and a further demand from the parental and social expectations that we internalise as we enter civilised community. Instincts, along with repressed material, are now placed in a new conceptual agency termed the id (das es), whilst the agency that judges and criticises the self according to the standards of the internalised parents is denoted the superego. The ego develops out of the id as a surface "which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world" (Freud, 1923, p.25). Constituted as the perception system represents and affords a basic reflection upon pleasure seeking activities, it is formed of various precipitates as it mediates and represents its relationships with significant objects in the world "transforming the id's will into action as if it were its own" (ibid. p.25) and directing instincts to more acceptable ends. Development of the ego as a discrete psychical entity requires it to be loved and invested by the id as though it were an object, which leads Freud to postulate his key concept of narcissism in a text of the same name from 1914. Not simply the vanity and self-obsession of certain adult pathologies, narcissism becomes a necessary stage in psychical development that allows the tenuous self-boundaries of the infant to be shored up before opening out onto object love.

Freud's focus on the ego and the narcissism necessary for its construction is a defining aspect of the transition from first to second topographies and shifts the theoretical emphasis from conflict to defence. The ego psychologists exploit Freud's description of ego formation and transform it into a prescription for ideal therapeutic outcome and an imperative for late-capitalist living. In its theorisation of narcissism as a fundamental stage in psychical development, psychoanalysis "indirectly favoured narcissism's cultural primacy", giving way to a "troubling cult of one's own psyche" (Benvenuto, 2009, p.18) where the pains and frustrations of conflict are no longer engaged with as a fundamental instability in the subject but are defended against with the ultimate goal of their resolution and removal.

This ego-centring and its celebration of narcissistic individualism is clearly at odds with critical social psychology. For many psychoanalysts it is also a tempering of Freud's revolutionary insight that, as Green (2005) argues, is a feature of his second topography in particular. The centring on the ego already noted is pre-empted by a corollary centring of the psyche on the id in which the unconscious is often reduced to instinctual processes explicable in a biological register. As Jaboby (1975) notes, the Freud of the later period seems caught between a psychology of the ego that is in danger of reverting to pre-Freudian notions of the humanist self and an id psychology that is strays closely to biological essentialism. An original decentring of human subjectivity often succumbs to a counter-tendency that re-centres the individual according to new psychical agencies. This creates a psychoanalytic project that fits more readily into an institutional mould, but is also its greatest betrayal. The ego and id psychologies that Freud vacillates between are two sides of an inward turn that tempers the radical edge of the psychoanalytic revolution by ignoring the social, relational and contextual factors that produce and yet put in question the sanctity of the individual. Laplanche sees this reactionary centring action as almost inevitable, as ego integrity and its corollary notion of biological instinct covers over harsh realities of psychological fragmentation to justify unquestioned appeals to greater social and psychological cohesion. With such politically problematic and fundamentally deceptive tendencies, he highlights the necessity of returning to what is most radical in Freud's work, especially the notion of unconscious and its intimate links with sexuality, to present a counter-trend to these common-sense formulations. He notes a "domestication of the

unconscious" (1999, p.67) that is effective both at the level of the developing individual and, through what he terms theoreticogenesis, at the level of the theory that describes this. Freud's work falls into this pattern almost from the outset as he attempts to systematise the unconscious and establish its economic principles. His first model of repression, for example, postulates the existence of unknown content in the structure of the self, but for the most part (until he considers the thesis of primal repression) these contents were once experiential traces whose ability to be expressed has simply been removed by censorship. Locked away in the depths of the psyche they are still tangible and can make logical (hence economic) connections to restore them to comprehension. Like Freud's recourse to biological instincts, the centring on ego structures is simply replaced by a centre that is hidden from view in the unconscious. Laplanche uncovers this fundamental "going astray" (fourvoiement) in all the major post-Freudian schools, even, those that demonstrate radical openings such as the Kleinians and Lacanians.

The radical implications of unconscious alterity and its roots in the sexual

Laplanche returns to the meaning of Freud's self-proclaimed Copernican revolution and its foundational gesture of decentring. He examines Copernicus's radical displacement of the earth (and hence Man) from the centre of the universe as an unfinished revolution in which heliocentrism (that the earth spins around the sun) is one step in a repeated movement of eccentricity (i.e. does the sun itself spin around a centre which in turn spins around a centre and so on). What Laplanche clarifies is that the Copernican revolution is the continual refusal of any centring action (at least as a permanent fixture). Here, the construction of systematic description is both essential to avoid the chaos of incomprehension, but also necessarily incomplete. This point echoes Hurst's argument as she considers deconstructionist responses to psychoanalysis. She highlights an irresolvable tension in the conceptual apparatus of Freud that vacillates between sense, in which a coherent economic system can be formulated, and something that points beyond and rubs against this. This latter realm, which Hurst refers to as the aneconomic, is the condition of "unpredictability, chance, anomaly, irreconcilabilty, and conflict" (2008, p.42) that generates and opposes the economic. Drawing on Jacques Derrida's use of the Greek term aporia to denote an intractable logical contradiction, she determines Freudian concepts as poised between economic explanation and aneconomic conditions that must be continually and yet impossibly assimilated. With only partial success possible, psychoanalytic understanding produces a remainder that is both a persistent threat and the promise of its (continual) future elaboration. Hurst explains here the necessity of restlessness in Freudian theory and the fraught legacy it creates.

There is no greater example of the tension between economic and aneconomic moments in Freud's work than in his introduction and continual reformulations of the concept of the unconscious. The idea, as Freud acknowledges, is not his own, but has a long history in figures such as Plato, Goethe and Schopenhauer recognizing that humans are fundamentally self-deceptive and cover over troubling aspects of existence such as lust and aggression. In Freud's early clinical work, he had direct experience of this resistance to knowing in hysterical patients. His famous formulation that "hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences" (Breuer & Freud, 1897, p.7) recognizes how an aspect of experience can be refused conscious articulation because it is traumatic and yet is still retained in the psyche. In its non-acknowledgement it continues to act on conscious life in the form of disruptive and symptomatic behaviour. Freud sought to systemtize this basic description of the unconscious to remove its spiritual and metaphysical roots and use it to understand a number of disparate and inexplicable clinical phenomena. It is this systemitization of the unconscious that is Freud's greatest contribution to the history of ideas as he sought ever more effective economic

explanations. The danger of such a move, however, is that “the economic constitution of any closed or regulated system, in any domain, necessarily goes hand in hand with the suppression of the anecomonic or that which in relation to a system remains errant, disordered, resistant, aleatory, unexpected or nonsensical.” (Hurst, 2008, p.98). To order the unconscious in a closed economy presumes a centre which, by not considering the system as necessarily incomplete and open to reimaginings, potentially loses sight of what in it remains radical. Freud’s theory of the unconscious is at its most innovative and revolutionary where it reveals the “aporetic logic that makes it necessary to avoid a choice between economic and aneconomic.” (ibid. p.101). Characterizing the unconscious in terms of “exemption from mutual contradiction, primary process (mobility of cathexes), timelessness and replacement of external by psychical reality” (1915b, p.187), Freud highlights the challenge of the unconscious to structures of proper and good sense. Laplanche extends this element of the illogical and draws on the notion of otherness inherent in the concept. This is an idea of the other that bears little resemblance to a second consciousness in a coherent dialogue, but is instead a radical alterity that cannot be found, systematized or successfully accommodated in the contours of the self and that continually disturbs its presumed integrity.

It is against this radical otherness that the self is constructed and must be maintained. The unconscious is foremost a foreign body that opens onto non-self structures and yet, whose alien-ness suffers continual domestication. Just as the ego’s defensive functions seek to quell its disruptive action, theoretical efforts similarly attempt to contain its elusive action in forms that render it once and for all. Freud’s notion of the id in his second topography, for example, is borrowed from his contemporary Georg Groddeck, but stripped of its intended sense to denote how we are “’lived’ by unknown and uncontrollable forces” (Freud, 1923, p.23). This sense of “it” (the more direct translation of das es) as an alien structure of demands to which the self must respond is lost, as Freud’s complex understanding of sexual life is forgotten in favour of a biological instinct that is included in the economy of the psyche. As Hurst recognizes, Freud seems caught in a “residual metaphysical commitment” (2008, p.134) that often prevents him from pushing the radical implications of his ideas or sees him return to ideas he had already overturned. It is the potential of his ideas on sexuality and how they underpin his original conception of the unconscious that is arguably where Freud is at his most radical and demonstrates the value of his insight for critical social psychology. Challenging instinctual models that fix the sexual aim in the reproduction of the species, Freud’s sexual theories resist the closing-in of the human being and remind us of our eroticised connection to other people as this generates subjectivity yet also, as Adam Phillips notes “makes us feel at odds with ourselves.” (1995, p.91). The security of social and psychological identity is always predicated on a renunciation of sexuality as a fluid and connective process, thus opposing self-knowledge to sexual pleasure and affection.

The radical nature of sexuality, which also removes it from a simple instinctual register, lies in the prematurity of human birth which places the helpless infant in a relation of absolute dependence on another person. Freud ascribes the primary care role to the mother who not only meets the child’s needs but also elicits pleasure and affords satisfaction. For Freud, the first relation is erotic through and through as the mother “not only nourishes [the child] but also looks after it and thus arouses in it a number of other physical sensations, pleasurable and unpleasurable” (Freud, 1940, p.188). Theorising a dynamic of physical and sensate relations between child and mother, Freud controversially introduces a theory of infantile sexuality which implicates another person in the eroticisation of the child’s body. Caught in this relational dynamic, human sexuality is no longer understood as a pre-programmed biological function, but instead characterised as “a whole range of excitations and activities ... which procure a pleasure that cannot be adequately explained in terms of the satisfaction of a basic physiological need.” (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988, p.418).

Freud uses the German word Trieb to distinguish the human sexual impulse from Instinkt , the hereditary characteristics of a species (this distinction is not clearly and consistently translated into English). Trieb (best rendered as “drive”) is the demand of the child’s body, firstly on maternal care and, through the progressive internalisation of this relation as the self forms, on the psyche. A concept at the limit of the psyche and soma, Trieb attaches to psychical representatives providing a motive for human life, but is in itself unknowable. Irreducible to the body, it is first experienced by the infant as unfocussed and non-specific pressures demanding satisfaction. Freud theorises the fragmented quality of drives at this early infantile stage and designates these as “polymorphously perverse” (1905, p.191) because their function resembles those of the perversions in later adult life. As maternal care focuses the child’s attention on different physiological and social processes such as feeding, potty training and the separation from dependency, ”his care affords him an unending source of sexual excitation and satisfaction from his erogenous zones” (Ibid. p.223), meaning that different aspects of the child’s body become eroticised, creating associated component instincts. All the developmental milestones that produce the sexual and socialised adult enter an economy of pleasure and unpleasure which is modelled on sensual sucking at the breast.

Intimately tied to the possibility of human subjectivity and active at all points as its motivation, sexuality also introduces alterity by placing the relation with another person at the core of being. Laplanche identifies two key aspects to this notion of otherness that offer radical possibilities for rethinking notions of the psychological and the social. The first of these is a notion of asymmetry; that the other precedes who we are, and despite the best efforts at ego integrity, it imposes its might and threat unabated. This intrusion of the other into the structures of the self is troubling and frequently evoked with the language of trauma as its necessary but unwanted demand shakes us to the foundations. The second aspect is its enigma, its fundamental unknowability that cannot be comfortably brought within the comprehension of an assimilating ego. This is alterity without form; the pre-linguistic sexuality that characterizes early relationships and which, through our latter repressions constitutes the economy of the unconscious and its aneconomic foundation. As Laplanche states, Freud accorded primacy to sexuality because it “opens directly onto the question of the other, and in the case of the child, onto the adult other in his or her alien-ness” (1999, p.64). As the prototype for the encounter with asymmetry and enigma, the eroticised first relation is traced as inassimilable infantile experience, defining the unconscious in its radical alterity.

Freud’s notion of the sexual eroticises the individual from the outset and compromises the concept of stable identity that underpins liberal humanist ideology and mainstream social psychological theories of self and identity. Sexuality is dangerous and a challenge to reactionary social structures and the psychological stability this underpins. Civilization requires not only the control of sexual forces, but also the occultation of erotic life in the process of repression. The tenuous and permeable boundaries of early infant experience are covered over and divested of their enigmatic sexual content as the ego increasingly steps out as autonomous subject. As a consequence of the civilising demand, psychoanalysis has also effected a “progressive shrinking of the field of sexuality” (Green ,2005, p.82) in its own theorising. The constraints on sexuality in the direction of civilized living are echoed in clinical and developmental theories, such as those of Erikson and Hartmann, that advocate the same or simply divest it of its alterity, just as Freud did in his return to the biological instinct. What is lost most fundamentally in this neglect of the sexual is a connection to the other that is more foundational than the self. The subject faces alterity from the outset of existence and must somehow construct itself against and in spite of this. Of course, what was once other can be accommodated within the structures of the developing ego, but this is never once and for all, as Freud’s radical notion of the unconscious attests. Conceptions of otherness in psychoanalysis are various as theorists have wrestled differently with the implications of a self constructed in the

intermediary space between the instinctual body, intimate relationships, and the socio-symbolic structures that frame these. Each of these aspects has been the focus of different psychoanalytic approaches for theorising the alterity at the heart of subjectivity.

The unconscious other, for example, can be inscribed in the drive as Freud increasingly contended, when pressure from the body erupts into consciousness as uncontained anxiety, or when mediated as a symptom or a dream, combines reassuring repetitions of behaviour with a disturbing unfamiliarity. For the object-relations theorists, in contrast, alterity is traced in the relation to the object and not to the id. The alterity of the external object is precipitated in the psyche through a representational process to become the inner world. Here, as Green elaborates, the object is a "property of the ego ... to ward of the strangeness of the object" but at the same time has a "part that is irreducible to any form of appropriation by the ego which calls for the recognition of difference and alterity." (p.117). Linguistic theories of psychoanalysis such as Lacan's add to the theory of the object by extending the notion of individual representation from the realm of the image and the personal relation to a consideration of what Green refers to as "the cultural tradition and its productions laid down as a 'treasure of the signifier'" (2005, p.105). The alterity of the object and the drives it arouses as if from another place are mediated by a structure of representation which is also not our own. We encounter language as an external force, the alterity of our social world, whose insistence that we engage in its community constructs our symbolic existence, but always as inadequate. The alterity of language carves out the unconscious as it constructs the unspoken (Lacan designates this the real which also describes the preverbal drives) and the unspeakable (the prohibited connection to and desired satisfaction of those drives as prescribed by socio-symbolic existence) aspects of subjectivity as an internal other; an alterity even more radical because it also compromises the inner-outer boundaries. Wherever the alterity inscribed in the subject is located by successive psychoanalytic theories, attempts to render the form and operation of the unconscious always prove inadequate. Theory here reflects the individual faced with a message or demand from the other which, in its asymmetry and enigma, calls for codes and deciphering that are never sufficient, leaving something out "something untranslatable which becomes the unconscious, the internal other." (Laplanche, 1999, p.101).

Despite the persistent attempts to sanitise psychoanalytic insight of its most radical aspects in the pursuit of institutional stability and respectability, Freud's original discovery of the unconscious and its foundations in sexual life provides a continually renewed opening towards alterity. This radical awareness of the causal nature of otherness in both personal and social life challenges typical accusations that psychoanalysis neglects the impact on the subject of social and historical forces. Psychoanalysis provides a structure for explaining ego development and its necessary role in assuring a sense of personal and social stability. For Freud, however, it is conflict that characterises the human being and this is largely generated as the civilising environment demands some renunciation of the instinctual body. Theoretical attempts which ignore this invariably repress the most radical psychoanalytic insights and produce reactionary accounts of subjectivity and instrumental therapeutic efforts that leave the sense of a critical project far behind. We only have to look at the social identity theories of Henri Tajfel and the social learning theory of Albert Bandura to see how mainstream social psychology ignores this psychoanalytic imperative. Reducing social behaviour and self-concept to the cognitive processes involved in group membership (Tajfel, 1974) or the identification with role models (Bandura, 1977), there is no substantive concept of the social beyond small group interactions,that would allow us to recognise its fundamental instability and alterity. Any understanding of the psychical mechanisms that enable us to inhabit these identity positions are similarly lacking, as consideration of the ambivalence that characterises the motivating

drives and their connection to the self and other people is replaced by empirical description and attempts at universal cognitive description.

As Benvenuto acknowledges, however, psychoanalysis provides a "revolutionary paradigm of a new type of knowledge and practice" (2009, p.20), at the heart of which a radical notion of the unconscious connects to social critique. As something alien at our core, the unconscious constitutes the psyche as a hybrid space in which the separation of inner and outer realms is never complete and notions of ego-mastery are continually undermined. Selfhood is constructed between often incommensurable social and personal realms and as such has a provisional character that also opens it up to potential transformation. Psychoanalysis can and must theorise this just as it posits various reasons why it too often does not happen.

Psychoanalytic theory is poised over a fundamental non-knowledge in its object, the unconscious. The provocative and unique theses that psychoanalysis offers for the range of human experiences and behaviours always rub against a primary uncertainty. Whilst its conceptual tools revolutionised the understanding psychopathology, psychotherapy, selfhood and social processes, perhaps the most valuable contribution of psychoanalysis is its legacy of equivocal formulation that produces "a way of describing both the limits of what we can know and the areas of our lives in which knowing, and the idea of expertise, may be inappropriate." (Phillips, 1995, p.17). Whilst psychoanalysis enables us to theorise subjectivity in terms of the intersection of bodily drives, social demands, object representations and the symbolic systems that organise them, the concept of the unconscious does not afford us any certainty in locating its parameters or a stable point of inquiry. Analysing how specific forces acting in and on the subject can be brought into contact with each other ties psychoanalysis to critical traditions within social and psychological theory as "the criss-crossing of bodily and symbolic networks ... create points of coherence that fade away and re-form." (Frosh, p.120). The intersectionality of various human realms in the production and understanding of the human being necessitates a conceptual frame that is itself dynamic and critical of its own ability to centre authoritative commentary.

This critical tension that psychoanalysis introduces into human inquiry can also be demonstrated in the research environment. Using psychoanalytic ideas to study young masculine identities, Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003) reflect on the status of their theoretical frame with reference to the object under investigation and how this informs the understanding of male identity as ambiguous; an underpinning that problematizes any research findings. Psychoanalytic concepts are introduced alongside discourse analysis to describe not only how identity positions are inscribed within a socio-cultural domain, but also what motivates the inhabiting of identities in particular individuals. Whilst the authors recognize the importance of culture in structuring gender positions, their greater insight is in what they describe as the "ambiguity of the social" (2003, p.40) which makes any identity position (here masculinity) inconsistent and marked by contradiction. This ambiguity inherent in the discursive construction of gender positions is also matched by the ambivalence of attachment to these identities, which the authors describe in psychoanalytic terms. Each of the three research participants given as examples, demonstrate a number of conflicts in the masculine identities that they assume, highlighting the necessity and limitations of considering identity in terms of both social positioning and agency. Psychoanalytic concepts are not simply applied to cases to redress the inadequacies of discursive methods but are themselves interrogated and critiqued in the process, with neither social nor psychological dimensions afforded explanatory dominance over the other. As the constitution of subjectivity is understood in the tension between social coercion and the various resistances this engenders, a critical model begins to emerge that aligns with the direction of my argument. In the one case where the research participant has assumed a seemingly unproblematic

hegemonic masculine position, the authors conclude that this is predicated on the "occlusion of alternate possibilities" and is furthermore "a psychic structure always in danger of collapsing" (2003, p.51). Citing Judith Butler's assertion that "crafting a sexual position … always involves being haunted by what is excluded" (1997, quoted in 2003, p.51), the authors note how this also describes the structures of masculine (and other) identity in general. More than this, however, Butler's notion of haunting denotes the research process undertaken and the conceptual apparatus that frames this, as it contends critically with the multiplicity of possible understandings. The introduction of psychoanalysis to a model of discursive positioning is not simply to redefine the truth of masculine subjectivity, but also to create a critical tension where complexity reveals "no certainty of interpretation" (2003, p.52). The research, therefore, has a partial form which maps a significant aspect of what is being investigated (whilst furthermore providing an allegory of masculine identity), but a remainder – the "unsaid" as the authors describe – continues to disrupt coherence and make appeal to a future of possible reimagining.

With the notion of the unconscious signalling a formative alterity and insufficiency at the heart of subjectivity, the idea of human completeness that is available to absolute description disappears. As a clinical practice, the imperative to integrate ego functions or adapt these to prevailing social structures is increasingly inadequate as a developmental aim or curative ideal. The stable and adaptable structures that ego psychologists make the pinnacle of successful individuation are unrealistic and maintained only within a reactionary social environment where self-knowledge is also a mechanism of forgetting. A radical psychoanalytic practice would eschew such ethically contentious premises and re-establish conflict and alterity as the basis of selfhood. As Phillips contends, the aim of psychoanalysis is less to make people intelligible to themselves than "to tolerate and enjoy the impossibility of such knowing" (p.101). Psychoanalysis is a way of making strange our taken-for-granted assumptions and the patterns of reaction, interaction and behaviour that repeat themselves as seemingly fixed characteristics. Unpicking and unsettling these ego-formations confronts the individual with the limitations of identity and the restrictions it places on freedom. Psychoanalysis returns the subject in therapy to the unstable grounds of subjectivity where, far from fostering the collapse of selfhood, the tension between ego integrity and unconscious other should be persistently exposed to entice curiosity and experimentation with a more fluid (although certainly not unrestricted) appreciation of human existence. As Freud recognised from the outset, the aim of psychoanalysis is not to remove conflict but allow us to live it more keenly, recognising it as a motor-force of existence and its transformation, as much as a cause of unhappiness.

Although its institutions are often criticised for excessive dogma in clinical technique, Freud always held that psychoanalytic theory should be ready to adapt to what it encounters in therapy. This imperative to imagine, challenge and rethink, however, is not so easily translated into other domains of inquiry. The attempt of psychoanalysts across the twentieth century to impose an interpretative frame on related disciplines is one that is beset with problems, as Shoshana Felman (1982) famously notes in relation to literary interpretation. Psychoanalysis persistently fails to appreciate the specificity of new objects of research from diverse fields and simply imposes its schemas on what it analyses to finds its own truths. Processes within the object of interpretation that are intrinsic to its function and which exceed the psychoanalytic frame are reduced to its concepts. Frosh (2010) reiterates this point with regards to the psychoanalytic examination of social processes that could provide the basis for critical social psychology. He discusses the problems of psychoanalysis functioning as a colonising discourse that exerts mastery over related disciplines through the extension of unmodified concepts. Drawing on Felman's notion of implication (which opposes blank application), to which the title of this chapter alludes, Frosh reiterates Freud's insight, that

psychoanalysis must itself be transformed as it enters into new domains and less familiar encounters.

The unconscious already implicates social and relational processes in the self that resist the appropriations of consciousness and of theory. The exploration of these must be at the heart of a critical social psychology, and for this, psychoanalysis provides a theoretical vocabulary and a set of tools . As a theory of subjectivity it also places the individual back in a perpetual dynamic with social forces that extend to intimate relations, the historical and ideological contexts that frame these and the symbolic systems that provide mediation. Each of these aspects is played out in the individual and different critical psychologies explore the various intersecting levels that impact on and constitute the human subject. From radical family therapies, to Marxist and discursive analyses of subjectivity, each facet has its critical representative. Unearthing the bio-socio-sexual substratum of the individual, the critical investigator is faced with the destabilised knowledge of the unconscious that underpins the necessarily protean concepts of psychoanalysis. The alterity inscribed in this exemplary psychoanalytic object is transformed as it crosses disciplinary boundaries, leaving the problematisation of these in its wake. No longer the expert discourse that its institutional forms mistakenly believe, the most radical aspects of psychoanalysis shake the very grounds on which related discourses stand providing critical social psychology with the spirit of Freudian subversion that provokes breaks in common sense and notions of authoritative truth. Extending this radical function into critical social psychology, psychoanalysis is itself changed in the interaction as it reminded of and forced to engage once more what Jacques Derrida describes as "the idea of a "subject" installing, progressively, laboriously, always imperfectly, the stabilized – that is, nonnatural, essentially and always unstable – condition of his or her autonomy: against the inexhaustible and invincible background of a heteronomy" (2004, p.176). Its challenge, if it is to remain radical and relevant is to map this strange and shifting "subject" in a discourse that recognizes its own destabilised foundations and yet provides hope of revolution that, like its Copernican prototype, opens questions and a process that cannot rest and whose interminable promise of transformation (psychological, social, theoretical) is still to be felt .

In summary, this text has examined the relation of psychoanalysis to critical social psychology as one beset by tension. Psychoanalysis has been rightly criticized, especially as ego psychology, for its inward turn and re-centering of subjectivity that forecloses critical social engagement. Building on radical psychoanalytic and social psychological trends, in the work of Laplanche, Green, Frosh and others, attempts to centre psychoanalytic discourse and its vision of the subject through recourse to instincts, ego building and so on, have been counterpoised to a more revolutionary conception of the human psyche that psychoanalysis also introduces. Explored here through the key notion of the unconscious and its continual displacement of subjectivity through Freud's revised notion of sexuality, the constitution of selfhood, takes on a very different form from traditional humanist and psychological descriptions, emphasizing instead the instability at the heart of human existence. Placing subjectivity in a network of biological, familial and social forces, none of which can dominate in the formation and explanation of self, this radical psychoanalytic insight can offer critical social psychology a conceptual apparatus that pushes psychological understanding beyond the narrow parameters of ego to examine the alterity it is built against and that continually threatens to undermine it. This disciplinary encounter, however is not one of assimilation or colonization. In the crossover of conceptual frames, what resists the appropriation of the other discipline creates tension and produces space for critical reflection in both fields. It is therefore as much the restlessness of psychoanalytic discourse as its concepts that offer radical potential to critical social psychology. Disturbing a stable theoretical platform and introducing uncertainty and temporality

into social psychological enquiry is a threat of course, but one that also offers the possibility of its future renewal and relevance.

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