

A unique communitiy resource: Cincinnati's psychoanalytic institute and Frederick Kapp Memorial Library

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Psychoanalysis was considered a Jewish profession from the beginning, both because Freud was Jewish and because most of his followers were as well, according to Dr. Mia Biran, a professor in the psychology department at Miami University and a member of the psychoanalytic institute's faculty.

through the portals of hysteria and hypnosis.

Unlike biological research that gains insights by direct observation through dissection, through a microscope lens or through relatively simple mechanical or chemical manipulations that readily permit linking cause and effect, the unconscious is studied through talking.

Freud developed methods of

Austrian who like Freud fled the Nazis, but at a much younger age and landed in the U.S.

After completing medical school, he began his career as a psychiatrist, then shifted his focus from the practical world of medicine to scientific inquiry.

As a professor of physiology and psychiatry at Columbia University, Kandel studied the biological changes that accompany learning and memory development in the simple sea slug. In 2000, Kandel was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for this line of research.

In a 2004 interview with Columbia University's internal publication, *The Record*, Kandel asserted that Freud's work is now worthy of scientific consideration — an important statement coming from a neurobiologist.

"If psychoanalysis is satisfied with its current position, that's fine," said Kandel. "Freud will be read like Shakespeare and Homer, as great works of literary insight. But if they want to become a science, they need to get an empirical basis. Certainly the discovery of implicit memory storage, which is the unconscious recall of information, shows a biological basis of the unconscious. Freud had some interesting notions — some of which are now in a position to be tested by neuroscience — but baby has not grown scientifically since 1910."

Traditionally, Freud has been taught to medical students studying to become psychiatrists and to practitioners who find his observations useful in a clinical setting, according to Dr. Biran.

It is because Freud's work occupies a unique position in academia of being neither fish nor fowl — neither kosher nor non-kosher — that Cincinnati has a psychoanalytic institute that is separate and distinct from the local universities and colleges, yet draws upon faculty from them, particularly medical doctors.

Nonetheless, it offers the community a significant, and unusual, resource. Of particular value to the community is the institute's library.

Begun in 1981, The Kapp Memorial Library's holdings include some 4000 books of which one-half is about Freud. The other half of the collection contains materials on developmental, social, adolescent and child psychology. In addition, there is much in the collection relevant to Freud's influence in the humanities, the arts and literature.

Recently, the library has

embarked on an expansion that includes an online catalogue and computers for library patrons. It is proceeding despite suffering a loss of 1/3 of its endowment in the recent economic downturn, as did the institute itself.

For Cincinnati residents so inclined, the closest other psychoanalytic institute is in Cleveland. But it lacks a research library. The closest such resource with a library is in Chicago, with holdings that include some 12,000 books.

Anyone in the community may join the library. Membership offers the services of a professional librarian for research projects as well as access to events



Librarian Lori Jones and Dr. Mia Biran in the institute's library

Born an Ashkenazi Jew in 1856, Sigmund Freud began life in what is now the Czech Republic. His family settled in Vienna nine years later. There Freud was educated, got married to Martha Bernays, the granddaughter of Hamburg's chief Rabbi, and supported a large family. In response to the Nazi threat, Freud moved to London in his last years.

Freud was educated as a neurologist during the late 1800's when physics and chemistry began to influence biology. After doing laboratory research on the testicles of eels, the anatomy of fish, cerebral palsy and cocaine, and after earning his medical degree in 1881, Freud's intellectual life underwent a sea change.

In 1885, Freud studied with Jean Martin Charcot, at that time a leading — if not the leading — neurologist in Europe. Charcot introduced Freud to the unconscious

investigating the unconscious and then, using these methods, he developed an "anatomical" theory of the human mind as well as operational principles. Terms in common use such as ego and repression arose from this research.

But talking to small numbers of subjects instead of gathering "responses" from statistically significant "sample populations" led Freud into a research arena considered not amenable to scientific inquiry by the scientific establishment. Hence, to this day, Freud's influence is felt in literature, the arts and other areas of humanities — considered a more proper home for his form of inquiry as well as to a limited extent in psychology.

But Freud's observations are intriguing to scientists, nonetheless, if only for the questions his work poses — or so thinks neuroscientist, Eric Kandel.

Eric Kandel, a Jewish