



Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought

Stephen A. Mitchell , Margaret J. Black

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Freud's concepts have become a part of our psychological vocabulary: unconscious thoughts and feelings, conflict, the meaning of dreams, the sensuality of childhood. But psychoanalytic thinking has undergone an enormous expansion and transformation over the past fifty years. With *Freud and Beyond*, Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret J. Black make contemporary psychoanalytic thinking—the body of work that has been done since Freud—available for the first time. Richly illustrated with case examples, this lively, jargon-free introduction makes modern psychoanalytic thought accessible at last.

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Date : Published August 9th 1996 by Basic Books (first published 1995)

ISBN : 9780465014057

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Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Nonfiction, Philosophy, Medicine, Psychiatry

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Jan Goericke says

Don't know much about psychoanalysis and want to know what it is all about? Want to know what has been done in the field since Sigmund Freud? This book is an exceptionally well done introduction to the field. The authors start with an explanation of Sigmund Freud's initial work and then progress along in time to the present day highlighting key contributors and directions in the field. Case studies of various patients illustrate the work of various lines of thoughts within the psychoanalytic community. The language of the book is such that novice readers (i.e., to the field of psychoanalysis) can understand and follow. Highly recommended! A joy to read!

Tom Syverson says

This is an excellent run-down of the history of psychoanalytic theory. It's not the easiest book to get through, but ultimately it's a highly worthwhile read.

For me, certain schools of psychoanalysis are far more interesting than others; unfortunately, this doesn't always correspond to the length of the chapter covering it. Inevitably, this means that you're going to be stuck reading about some stuff that doesn't interest you as much. Correspondingly, you're stuck with the feeling that not enough attention is being paid to the "good stuff."

But that's a problem inherent in a book of this breadth, which doesn't aim to be exhaustive on any topic. Rather, you're getting a broad cross-section of all the major stuff out there (although I'd welcome a new edition that incorporates a chapter on Hyman Spotnitz and modern psychoanalysis).

At times the writing is a bit unclear or just difficult to understand, but on the whole the authors speak in plain language and use straightforward clinical examples to illustrate the theory.

Recommended for anyone truly interested in the many divisions and reinterpretations of psychoanalysis that have occurred since Freud. It leaves you with the interesting notion that while psychoanalysis is not all about Freud, it kind of is all about Freud.

Arash Farzaneh says

Simply loved this book! It is informative, insightful and very well-written! There's a wealth of information that is clearly outlined and presented here. If you are curious about or interested in psychoanalysis or mental health and psychology in general, I would highly recommend this book. My only regret is that the book could be longer, while I would have also liked them to mention and present the ideas and theories of Carl Gustav Jung.

Freud and Beyond gives a great survey and overview of general trends and movements within the field of psychoanalysis. In fact, many people have preconceived and sometimes erroneous or incomplete information about it. Sigmund Freud was the definite starting point and father of psychoanalysis but he is certainly not

the end point, nor should one disregard or ignore the myriad daughters and sons who have built upon as well as around his astounding legacy!

Paul Ataua says

I wanted a fairly accessible refresher on psychoanalytic thought before tackling Jacques Lacan and this book gave me everything I wanted and more. It did a fairly good job of starting with the early Freud, moving through the ego psychologists, the object relations school, psychologies of identity, contemporary revisionists, and ended with a short piece on Lacan. I feel a little braver about the journey to come thanks to this.

Arjun Ravichandran says

Competently-written introduction of the main branches of psychoanalytic theory, stemming from Freud. The authors, in fact, make the organic growth explicit, by re-iterating Freud's views at the beginning of the chapter before explaining how the theorist in question diverged from the orthodox viewpoint.

The number of different viewpoints can be surprising to someone who assumed that Freud was psychoanalysis and vice versa; but Freud died 70 years ago and other, equally brilliant minds, have expanded the basic tenets of psychoanalysis almost beyond recognition. This can be a bit disconcerting; I learnt that all one could say the various schools of thought of psychoanalysis had in common were just the following:

- 1) There is an unconscious mind which makes the conscious mind its bitch.
- 2) Early childhood is fundamentally important, especially the relationship with the mother.

But that's about it; beyond these two criteria, there is a wide variety of viewpoints, all of them explained competently. However, the writing is a little dour. You don't expect to get bored by a book on psychology, but the authors somehow managed to accomplish this for a few pages here and there. Also, there is a complete exclusion of Jung's theories that is inexplicable.

All in all a solid read and a decent overview.

Jeff says

The blurb on the book jacket is right, this book is quite "accessible". For its accessibility, though, it was also intellectually sophisticated enough to not come across as a "pop" history of psychoanalysis. For all its sophistication, it does not come across as a "for professionals only" kind of read, as many of the philosophy books I face do. My only criticism is that for some reason or other, a figure as significant (and popularly known) as Carl Jung gets the short shrift, not to mention the likes of Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, Wilhelm Reich, and Konrad Lorenz. The book claims to just be about Freud and all the psychoanalytic movements that are considered successors of the original Freudian paradigm (I always thought Jung was at least roughly in that Cannon). If I were to speculate, I would suspect some political agenda behind the exclusion, much the same way analytic philosophers neglect to mention continental philosophy outside the context of history or of "mistakes to avoid". Perhaps the title is just a little too accurate. Bottom line; quite good at what it talks about, but as a general reader you may feel there are gaps in the history it presents, and will want to look

elsewhere for your intro to Jung and company.

Tatal says

Doing my MA in Psychology now and loving this book, very well written, comprehensive and easy to understand.

James Hansen says

Outstanding historical and scholarly overview of the significant movements in psychoanalytic thought, including current controversies in theory and technique - accessible, highly readable, engaging, deep, and intellectually satisfying - fantastic!

Drobg62 says

One of the best of its kind

Mitchell provides a thorough in-depth comparative analysis of psychoanalysis. This work should be helpful to those new to psychoanalysis as well as those more informed. In my opinion, this is perhaps the best resource of its kind outside of Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory by Greenberg and Mitchell.

Ian Felton says

<http://psychologistcoder.com/2017/12/...>

When it comes to Freud, many have little to no understanding of him, or a simplistic understanding of his relationship to psychotherapy. When I've mentioned Freud to some of my educated friends, they scoff, roll their eyes, or mutter something about "penis envy." While it's true that many of Freud's ideas have been discarded or modified, the core of Freud's genius is in tact. Whether we like it or not, we still live in Freud's world. In "Freud and Beyond" the late Stephen Mitchell and still-alive Margaret Black take on the history of Freud's ideas and how his impact has rippled through the psychoanalytic profession.

Like many worthwhile books, the lessons can be summarized succinctly. In Mitchell and Black's work, "Clinical psychoanalysis is most fundamentally about people and their difficulties in living, about a relationship that is committed to deeper self-understanding, a richer sense of personal meaning, and a greater degree of freedom," is that summary.

While there is much to debate dialectically regarding psychoanalytic concepts, Mitchell and Black make the case for why psychoanalysis is still as relevant as ever. Starting with Freud himself, the authors take the reader on a journey from the inception of the unconscious and Freud's theories, through other theories: ego psychology, interpersonal, Kleinian, Object relations, identity and self, and contemporary conceptions. By the end of the book, the reader has not only been exposed to the trajectory of psychoanalytic thinking, but has also read about the current dialectics regarding theory and technique.

By the end of the book, I crystallized some synthesis of my leanings. I feel that in general, an interpersonal stance resonates with me the most. Ditching two of the most problematic aspects of core-Freudian theory: the body-centered conceptualizations as well as the psychoanalyst as expert, I found myself able to nod approvingly to much of how interpersonal psychoanalysis was presented. People aren't consistent. They are enacted idiosyncratically as a function that encompasses environment, actors, and the psychophysiology of the organism. Interpersonal psychoanalysis accounts for that and more. We are constructed. Our illusions serve us for survival in an ever-changing world. Psychotherapists can never be an "expert" when confronted with such an overwhelming amount of information that currently even a supercomputer cannot synthesize.

Most of the controversies in psychoanalysis can only be taken seriously as a matter of emphasis. It's not nature vs. nurture, external vs. internal, trauma vs. fantasy. It's nature and nurture. Internal and external. Trauma and fantasy. Each person is part of a mutually specified environment. The person acts on the environment and the environment acts on the person. Internal and external are perpetually at work. Inside the person is a network of biological subsystems that are known to be amazingly complex, yet are still largely not understood.

As a result of the overwhelming complexity of the environment and internal workings of the brain, the psychoanalyst must depend upon critical information that is essential to modern psychoanalysis. Modern psychoanalysis depends upon transference and countertransference. How the patient makes the therapist feel must be considered as a point of exploration. What defenses and history the therapist carries must also be considered. It would be a stretch for psychoanalysis to be considered empirical. A hermeneutic conceptualization is the only alternative to an approach that sabotages its credibility by proclaiming a quantifiable, measurable process to exist when it certainly does not.

By now, I'm interjecting my own dialectical responses and would prefer the reader to make up their own mind. If you read the book, you will have plenty to think about.

Ian Felton
The Psychologist Coder

Aaron says

Ambitious work that doesn't quite do it. The language is often much too abstract and dense. I've reread this several times, and still find it just as hard to follow. The authors I have read on here (Sullivan, Horney, Fromm, Erikson, A. Freud) all do a much better job explaining their work in their own books and are far more interesting in their own words. Perhaps the same can be said for the rest.

Besides style, my main complaint with this book is it's presented as though there has been a steady and balanced progression from the early days of psychoanalysis until present. Most of these figures made their names by *breaking* with the dogmatic traditions of psychoanalysis, but there's no feeling for that here; it's just business as usual. There is no mention of either Jung or Adler - striking absences. Their role in the history of psychoanalysis is worthy of mentioning, even if it were only to discount their relevance. I think that illustrates this feeling I have reading it - that the story has been sanitized and the accounts are biased to the point of being wholly untrustworthy.

What stood out were the last two chapters, discussing issues in technique and issues in theory. I would like to have learned more, but once again their writing was dense and did more to confuse the material than to clarify it.

Matt says

A wonderful and detailed primer on different psychodynamic ways of thinking. Mitchell and Black explain each theory nicely, and seem to walk a fine line, never vilifying or damning theories, instead stating the differences. It is an excellent review of the different dynamic ways of thinking and I believe, should be read in graduate level courses on psychoanalysis.

Steve says

Stephen Mitchell is a really good writer, and this is his most accessible book (though I haven't read his last one, I've read all the others). He wrote this book with his wife, who I've never read before, and I'm going to assume he wrote most of it.

I read this before going to the institute, and after. I'm on the last two chapters but it's a really good summary of recent developments, and if you can get past the Freud chapters, it's probably the one book on psychoanalysis I would recommend, if you could only read one book.

Rereading it, I got a deeper appreciation of the issues Mitchell and Black grapple with. Things have changed so quickly within the psychoanalytic world, it's amazing and there's a lot going on. This book is a good summary of it. Mitchell is one of the great minds of psychoanalysis.

Joel Adams says

// finally finished -- dense, thorough and thoughtfully written -- a definitive tour from classical psychoanalysis to contemporary modes and interactional methods

Jordan says

A wonderful introduction and overview of psychoanalytic thinking. Makes things accessible through careful building of terminology with application to cases to bring it to life.

Highly recommended for anyone who wants an introduction to the subject. It was great for me as a Psychiatry resident but think it would be suitable for the motivated lay audience or someone undergoing therapy themselves.
