Excerpts from

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW YOU KNOW

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INTRODUCTION:

Once, consciousness seemed primary, self-evident. It was through consciousness that the world revealed itself. What was below the surface of the mind or beyond its perceptions, the unknown factors that drove human motivation, they were thought to be available for discovery sooner or later – or else they were transcendent, supernatural, altogether outside the human.

But in the past century there has been a deep shift in our relationship to the realms of the unconscious. Consciousness, we now know, is variable and contingent. It can reveal only pieces of the world, and distorts what it displays. On the other hand, the territories of the unconscious are limitless and complex. The unconscious is now crucial to our thinking about reality, while consciousness has become problematic. Why do we have it? How can we agree on what it discloses? What is real? The unconscious, a figure in the ground of consciousness, has now become the ground itself.

The unconscious on which Freud concentrated his attention was a small fraction of what we are now coming to understand to be the hidden dimensions of human experience. Freud took a kind of gruff and wary pride in affronting human complacency he saw to be based on false notions of conscious awareness and control. For him, the unconscious was an exception to the general rule of reason and awareness. Discovering powerful hidden motivations among the baser instincts, he challenged human pretensions. And all the while he continued to try to redeem the unconscious by making it conscious.

But our new understanding of the unconscious is not just about repressed sexual or aggressive impulses forced into our mental basements. The unknown lurks in every corner of our world, on every

level. It pervades relationships not only with our families and friends but also with colleagues and bosses. It infiltrates our offices and schools, our businesses, our shops, our clubs, all the arenas of life that appear to be suffused with intention, will, planning and control. It shapes our economic policies, our politics and international relations. We used to think that the unconscious operated "inside" our minds, the result of essentially private mental actions to avoid, deflect or censor attention to its contents. Now, however, we know the unconscious is "outside," in social relations, as well, taking part in our every collaborative thought and action.

This "new unconscious," unlike Freud's, is protean and multifaceted. Repression is only one of its mechanisms. It operates through habit and convention as well as violence and fear; likewise, it operates through distraction and avoidance. It is driven by and manifested in the identities we assume, the groups we belong to, the assumptions we inherit, the language we use, all the elements that provide structure to our world. Trauma and terror can play a role in keeping thoughts out of awareness, but so can comfort and familiarity. Consciousness, we are coming to understand, is a thin shell that screens out most of what we could know and much of what might actually help us to know in conducting our lives.

This book is about this new emergent understanding, and how it forces us to rethink our relationships with each other as well as our beliefs about what it means to be a person, to have a self. It looks at the domains of research where knowledge of the unconscious is being expanded, and it describes the applications of that knowledge to organizations as well as the growing industry of psychotherapy. It is for all of those who need a better understanding of the real complexity of human motivation, whether as an executive faced with employees resisting change, an elected official trying to forge agreements among competing interests, a consultant brought in to restructure an ailing corporation, or an individual struggling to understand why we do the things we do – and how, all too often, our actions do not conform to our explicit intentions or to common sense.

The Beginnings

The unconscious sprang to the attention of the West a hundred years ago, and we are still struggling to absorb its full impact. People quickly grasped the idea that they were driven by motives they did not understand nor dared admit, that they were divided within themselves and suffused with conflict. Intrigued, fascinated by the evidence, they quickly made Freud famous, and the profession he founded grew and

gained extraordinary prestige, as psychoanalysts became the recognized guardians of this esoteric knowledge. But it was one thing to understand the concept, to see it and believe it, another to live with it, to take in fully its challenge to our deepest cultural assumptions. Today, as we expand our understanding of its reach, we are still coming to grips with what it means.

Can it be that we are all driven by the unconscious? Is it always there? At work? In politics? Is it true that it shapes our history just as much as it shapes our personal relationships? Patients suffering from emotional conflicts are obviously confused, and their disorders cry out for mental explanations. Children, before they reach the age of reason, act strangely, impulsively, and display odd forms of logic. We all are puzzled by our dreams, and occasionally we say things we don't intend. But are we always in the dark?

Freud correctly grasped that he was one of the intellectual pioneers who has "disturbed the sleep of the world." Coming to America in 1909, he commented that his hosts could not know he was bringing them the plague.[i] Clearly, he understood the immensity of his discovery and its disturbing implications, as he patiently planned to get his message across, amassing the evidence, clarifying his thoughts, and seeking out convincing applications. First, he turned to the explanation of dreams, a universal phenomenon and perennial puzzle, seeing them as the "royal road" to the unconscious. The dream book was published in 1900, followed the next year by his Psychopathology of Everyday Life, where he delineated other signs of its presence. In 1902, he assembled a group of colleagues with whom to share his ideas, and, in his early essays on sexuality, he fleshed out his ideas of infant development to account for our profound need to have an unconscious and to maintain it throughout our lives. He expanded his clinical observations and case reports, but then took time to write on how our sense of humor is grounded in our anxiety over barely suppressed, unconscious wishes. And so forth.

Knowledge of his work spread. His ideas matched all too well the experience that more and more people were unable to deny. At first, neurologists and psychologists, searching to understand the self-defeating behavior of mental patients, were compelled to pay attention because it illuminated what they saw and offered new hope for their treatments. After WW I, the entire world, obviously spinning out of control, was forced to take note of a theory that matched its appalling experience.

Today it is clear that the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious has infiltrated our culture. A century of cartoons has installed the couch as

the iconic representation of our irrational and contradictory selves, the portal to our hidden thoughts. This may be because the couch is where the now booming psychotherapy industry got its start, as psychoanalysis was the first credible means of treatment for mental conflict and disorders. Even though there has been an immense proliferation of other psychotherapies to service our pent-up irrationality and suffering -- new outlets that promise faster, cheaper, easier relief – for many the couch still symbolizes the site of our irrationality and the promise of contact with our hidden selves.

The couch today continues to be a good source of jokes, even though, in practice, it is virtually empty. Unused by patients, even scorned by other professionals, it still symbolizes the furtive disclosures and intimate revelations that we all have come to understand lurk on the margins of daily life. The couch is a reminder that there are things about ourselves that are disconcerting, shocking, unknown.

Today, we also are aware that dreams contain messages we can decode with the help of our glossary of "Freudian symbols." If we forget an appointment or an anniversary, we immediately suspect an unconscious wish. If we make a "Freudian slip," now we know exactly what to make of it. No special training is required to see others being "anxious" or "defensive" or "hostile," especially when they do not see it themselves. People self-diagnose their hysteria, obsessional "anality," "inferiority complexes," insecurity, and, sometimes even their narcissism. If our minds go temporarily blank, we know we are "blocked" – that is if we are not enjoying a "senior moment," which makes us a potential target for a competing set of mental health treatments.

These have become clichés of contemporary folk wisdom. But the knowledge gleaned from the couch has penetrated even more deeply into our culture, becoming part of the ways in which we now understand ourselves.

We live, as W.H. Auden said, in "An Age of Anxiety," not only because the world has become unfamiliar and threatening but also because we suffer from a special modern form of fear, a vague dread that pervades our lives, a legacy of irrational expectations and frightening reminisces that we cannot fully recall but also cannot ever completely extinguish.[i]

What we want is never simple, what we do is never aimed at a single purpose, subject to one interpretation. Freud taught us to think that our impulses well up from a powerful and peremptory core: an unregenerate Id (or It). Now these warring entities of Ego and Id have multiplied into a chorus of selves, fragments and bits uneasily co-existing at best. The

modern self is discontinuous, contradictory, fragmented. Anxiety arises from many sources. Today we speak lightly of our conflicting "parts" or "sides," our "levels" of consciousness, "layers" of motivation, our "identities," our different "personae." We wrestle with the question of our authenticity, our "true" selves imprisoned within compliant selves, guilty selves, frightened selves – or, at worst, "false" selves.

Many of us take for granted now that while we may want to change, to live more in the present, see things as they are, we also do not want to change. We may feel an urgent need to alter our ways, but we do not want to give up our habits, our established patterns of being. The modern condition is equivocation, ambivalence, oscillation. We do change, but then we slide back; we move forward but then we move sideways.

We have also come to understand that we need the continuous confirmation of others to sustain our identities, to fend off threats to self-esteem, to maintain membership in our communities. Perpetually on the alert, either we avoid situations in which we would be vulnerable to feelings of inferiority or inadequacy, or we cling to communities and relationships that affirm the ways in which we want to be seen. As individuals, of course, we are seldom alert to the specific dangers we face. Indeed, self-esteem requires we avoid knowing just how contingent and fragile our identities actually are. But that obliviousness scarcely makes us stronger.

Today's "political correctness" fosters the fantasy of an ideal community of respect, a belief that we could be simple to each other, accepting and open. But it also supports our sense of ourselves as easily damaged, requiring protection and continuous shoring up by others. "Sensitivity training" and "diversity training" are among the techniques that have been developed to proscribe injuries to self-esteem – or to punish those who have transgressed our new norms of vulnerability. Their very existence confirms our fragility.

Today, as a result of a century of the couch, we understand that much of this vulnerability is a residue of our childhoods when, in our prolonged dependency on parental figures, we were often powerless to make ourselves understood or to attain the safety we craved. The fears and disappointments of childhood persist, along with many of its desires, threatening us in adulthood with impressions and impulses we do not recognize and often cannot understand. Side by side with our more mature understanding of the real possibilities offered by the world, limited possibilities we may have worked hard to accept, these fears and

desires express themselves in a language we can no longer decode. Bewildered, we know only that we are anxious.

Another legacy of childhood we now also take for granted: the mature ties of adulthood are haunted by the ghosts of old relationships. It is commonly -- if somewhat simplistically -- understood that the women we marry are likely to resemble our mothers – the men our fathers – that is, if we do not just endlessly seek what we are afraid to find and never settle down at all. The familiar alternative strategy, looking for someone totally different, often leads to an unconscious enactment of precisely what we sought to escape. Our bosses loom in our minds like distant memories of menacing adults. Fathers and grandfathers hover over the political process as voters seek figures they can trust. We understand we are all looking for something we do not know, or fleeing what we no longer see.

As a result we have a new respect for the needs of childhood – and a slew of new concerns about attenuating the legacy of anxiety in the children we raise. In former times, food, clothing and shelter seemed an adequate listing of life's basic requirements. Parents were expected to provide that for their children. Now we understand ourselves to be more far more dependent on the fulfillment of needs less easy to detect or define, lacking the status of clear, essential demands: the need for protection, for love, needs for recognition and understanding, the need for security, for predictability, for hope.

After a century on the couch, the past is no longer inert for us. It always flickers beneath the surface of the present, never quiet, never gone. We exist on multiple levels, pulled in different directions.

But there is yet another source of psychic vulnerability we are coming increasingly to understand: The mental injuries that result from the insults of the present world. We have always known the dangers of illness, storms, earthquakes and epidemics, but today we live in a world where cars and airplanes crash, where catastrophic industrial accidents have become almost routine, where economic crises recur. On a larger scale, the modern world is menaced by genocide and terrorism, the threat of annihilation from atomic or biological weapons or the slow death of pollution and global warming.

What we have now come to understand is that, even if we have escaped or survived such real risks to our lives, we live on with the reverberations of dread that echo in our minds, the psychic shocks that destabilize them. It is not just that we will get sick, will suffer accidents, lose our jobs, our loved ones, but that those incidents will survive indefinitely,

repetitively. The world, which seemed to become more predictable and secure with the advances of science and industry, now feels less and less safe, and the threats have penetrated into the recesses of our minds.

The cost of war today includes the perpetual tax of PTSD. Returning veterans may still be heroes to many, but they often cannot resume normal lives. Burdened by fears themselves, they become frightening to others who try to resume normal lives with them. And terrorism, warfare on the home front, all too easily succeeds in making us all afraid to take the bus or subway, linger in crowded theatres or stores, cross bridges or enter tunnels. Ours is not only an Age of Anxiety, it has become an Age of Trauma.

Menaced by the dread of internal and external instability, we have all become familiar with the defense of denial. Life in the modern world with its accumulating threats almost seems to require the insulation it supplies, and we speak freely of enjoying it when we can and, sometimes, of enjoying it too much.

In the past, some few individuals pursued lives of contemplation; others sought detachment as they neared death. Freud told one of his early hysterics she was not responsible for her feelings; she could not help desiring her brother. That was an early example of how the process of the couch introduced a helpful detachment, driving a wedge yet further into the unity of the self.[ii] Acceptance and distance have become strategies for coping with our fragmentation and vulnerability.

Psychoanalysis in the twentieth century provided a good part of the psychic glue, the consciousness that helped to hold our shattered selves together, to enable us to endure the dislocation and disruption that increasingly came to characterize our world. It described the "inscape" reflecting our social landscape, the subjective discontinuities reflecting our objective alienation. Not only did it illuminate and articulate the world of desire that was fundamental to consumerist capitalism,[iii] it taught us about the anxiety and trauma that were among the costs of industrial competition and the increasing atomization of individual life.

These are some of the many ways that psychoanalysis has seeped into our culture, permanently changing our daily preoccupations and altering our picture of ourselves. It has not acted alone, of course, but it has been an integral part of the mix of influences that have made us uneasy and off-balance in a uniquely informed and modern way. It is clearly impossible to go back to what now seems a simpler world, where things were kept in place and were easier to grasp.

Psychotherapy has become an accepted recourse for those suffering from mental conflicts. We all know now there are monsters in the basement. But as Freud correctly saw, the unknown lurks in every corner of our world, on every level. It pervades relationships not only with our families and friends but also with colleagues and bosses. It infiltrates our offices and schools, our businesses, our shops, our clubs, all the arenas of life that appear to be suffused with intention, will, planning and control.

This is a difficult message for a century mesmerized by its dazzling technological and scientific advances. Extraordinary scientific and medical discoveries, immense industrial power, the inventions of airplanes and cars, new forms of instantaneous communication, television, computers – all tell us of our increasing power over distance and time, our expanding capacity for knowledge and interaction. The conventional wisdom of our age is that we suffer from information overload. How does that fit with the message of the unconscious? Can we accept the gaps in our understanding, the built-in limits to our knowledge, the shadow of inevitable darkness that accompanies us everywhere?

The Failure of Psychoanalysis

The profession Freud founded protected and developed his ideas. But it also restricted their development. It aimed to become a medical sub-specialty – just as Freud feared it would – and succeeded becoming technocratic and insular. Freud went on in the declining years of his life not only to revise his theories but also to write boldly on the conflicts underlying civilization, on religion, on leadership and groups. But his profession focused on rooting out internal dissidents, proscribing new ideas not directly linked to its founder, and slowly moving to consolidate its hold over the field of mental health.

After WW II, psychoanalysts succeeded in establishing its hegemony over psychotherapy, controlling departments of psychiatry in hospitals and medical schools, and convincing the public that they were the legitimate experts in this realm to which only they had the keys. Candidates flocked to institutes for training, which expanded and proliferated. New journals were published and new associations formed. To be sure, there were dissident voices and complaints. But in the aftermath of the war, psychotherapy boomed and psychoanalysis was its dominant voice. Even the dissidents profited as the rising tide lifted all boats.

The decline, beginning in the 1960's, became apparent in departments of psychiatry in the 1970's. Alienated by the dogmatic certainties of their

psychoanalytic colleagues and suspicious of their claims, many psychiatrists began developing shorter behavioral treatments and aggressively searching for effective drugs. Gradually but inexorably, psychoanalysts who had been heads of departments and deans were replaced; fewer psychiatrists went on for psychoanalytic training. The NIMH, which made 28 grants to psychoanalytic projects between 1953 and 1962, after 1978 made none. In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association adopted a new diagnostic framework that entirely eliminated psychoanalytic terminology and concepts. Psychoanalysis, which had claimed psychiatry for its own, lost its grip on the profession.

Then psychologists began to turn away. In 1961, over 40 percent of clinical psychologists had described themselves as "psychodynamic." Fifteen years later, that percentage dropped to under 20, and now it is even less. Gradually, fewer graduate programs taught psychoanalytic theories to aspiring psychologists, and fewer graduate students identified themselves as having a psychoanalytic orientation. By 1999, The American Psychologist reported that psychoanalysis was little cited outside of psychoanalytic journals, concluding that it is a self-contained camp. As one researcher recently put it: "Psychoanalysis is now on the fringe of scientific psychology, accepted by few and ignored by many."

In the last ten or fifteen years, this steep decline has become a collapse. Informal surveys suggest that most analysts today have between 1 and 2 patients in psychoanalysis. A former President of the American Psychoanalytic Association, estimates that between 40% and 50% of analysts in the Association have no analytic cases at all. Candidates no longer seek training in the numbers or with the competitive avidity of the past; in 2001, 65 candidates entered training in the institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association, down from an average of 116 the previous 3 years, and way down from previous years. The circulation figures of journals are significantly depressed, and the publication of books has declined drastically. Professional organizations face aging members and fewer applicants.[iv]

Psychoanalysis has lost stature in the scientific community as well. Researchers once committed to finding evidence for its key theories have largely abandoned their efforts. Philosophers of science have attacked it for either failing to verify its claims, or for making claims not subject to verification: hallmarks, as they see it, of "pseudo-science."[v]

Why this collapse? The numbers are irrefutable -- but what is the reason? The profession of psychoanalysis itself bears much of the blame. It became arrogant and complacent towards others in the burgeoning field of mental health; psychoanalysts' colleagues became resentful and

dismissive in turn. Many psychoanalysts, believing they had the final word on the unconscious, alienated patients with their rigidity and smugness. Training institutes, inwardly focused and incestuous, became unwilling and unable to adapt. Psychoanalysts constructed, in effect, a cage of institutions, policies and habits for itself, a kind of protective imprisonment.

Becoming an end in itself, the profession of psychoanalysis lost interest in the revolution that had spawned it. It became respectable, conventional. Worse, it ossified into a set of dogmas, orthodox beliefs that sapped its ability to generate new ideas. It demanded conformity, and discouraged new concepts. Its practices, more concerned with maintaining control than adapting to new discoveries, became repressive.[vi]

But the larger answer to the question of why the profession collapsed is that the world changed, though not in the obvious ways of political conflict or economic depression. Indeed, one of the paradoxes of the history of psychoanalysis has been how it was able to survive and even thrive in conditions of world-wide disaster. The changes that had such a profound impact on psychoanalysis have been subtle and incremental shifts in our economic and political arrangements, shifts that moment by moment were easy to ignore but which cumulatively transformed our social landscape. Operating in the background, these changes have influenced all the professions, but they have had a particularly devastating influence on the traditional forms of psychoanalytic practice.

There have been three major shifts: First, a collapse of trust in traditional authorities, all the forms of authority essential to managing social relationships, but particularly the authority required by professionals. Second: profound changes in our attitudes towards time, affecting how we live and work but also, of course, the psychoanalytic requirement for long and frequent sessions. Third, the new economy of global competition, in which all services are being reduced to commodities forced to compete in the marketplace.

Let me start with the issue of authority, our willingness to accept the control of others as legitimate. As Hannah Arendt pointed out, authority operates between the extremes of coercion and persuasion: it has failed if people have to be forced to obey out of fear; on the other hand, it isn't working if people have to be continuously persuaded to comply. Our communities, organizations or governments cannot function without the exercise of a force that is felt to be legitimate, at least to some degree, a power that can be taken for granted.[vii]

This is a general problem in the modern world as all traditional forms of authority have been undermined by wars, revolutions, and economic upheavals. Genuine legitimacy is hard to find. Moreover, corruption among those entrusted with authority is widespread. Virtually every day brings another indictment of a government official. Corporate executives, preoccupied with profit, are seen as indifferent to the needs of the public, or even as conspirators who subvert the law or thieves who loot their own coffers. Political figures, notoriously, are controlled by lobbyists and special interests. It is not clear if corruption or venality is greater now than ever, but today those who have authority or who attempt to exercise it inevitably arouse mistrust and skepticism. (The other side of this, of course, is an enhanced gullibility and a craving for fundamentalist purity and certainty.)

This failure of authority is particularly problematic in the professions. Entrusted with a high degree of control in determining their own standards of competence and ethical standards, professionals depend upon the public's perception of their integrity. But recently there are been countless revelations of religious leaders who turn out to have been sexual predators, as well as superiors who have protected them. Increasingly, lawyers and doctors are suspected of putting their own interests ahead of their clients. Accountants fudge their numbers to accommodate the firms that hire them. Teachers cannot be counted on to teach, and so on. The professions, which painstakingly achieved stability and acceptance over the past century, have lost much of their credibility.[viii]

Psychoanalysis has had its own catastrophic failure of authority. The leadership that Freud and his followers exercised over the profession, amounting to authoritarian control as they censored innovation and exiled dissidents, has gradually given way, though not without a substantial legacy of resentment and bitterness. And the idealizations that encrusted Freud have worn thin. Biographers and scholars scrutinizing his life uncovered a number of highly problematic issues: Freud's misrepresentations of his early researches; his strained and seemingly ungrateful relationship with his early mentor, Breuer, the co-author of the pioneering Studies in Hysteria; a possible affair with his sister-in-law; his analysis of his daughter Anna; his condoning of ethical violations by followers, and so forth.[ix] Moreover, custodians of analytic history have proved to be secretive and manipulative, as well as foolish and petty, as revealed by Janet Malcolm as well as Jeffrey Masson, former director of the Freud Archives, in his vindictive and iconoclastic behind-the-scenes account. Others have worked to dispel the myths of Freud's uniqueness.[x]

No public figure is likely to withstand the onslaught of such scrutiny, but Freud was particularly vulnerable because his authority had been so absolute. Indeed, for many years it seemed an article of psychoanalytic faith that Freud had anticipated every significant analytic concept, or else it was an error. No one was allowed to challenge or to eclipse the master; no deviation was to be tolerated.

Freud suffered a decline in his stature as a world historical figure as well. No doubt the "Freud bashers" contributed to this development, but larger historical developments sealed his fate. With the lessening and eventual end of the cold war and the corresponding "end of ideology," both Freud and Marx lost their significance as dominant intellectual authorities. If "Freud is Dead" as our mass media have proclaimed, it is partly because all our gods have died.

How, then, to persuade patients to submit to the rather strong and unusual demands of the psychoanalyst? In this climate of mistrust, how can they accept what have been some of the standard conditions of psychoanalytic treatment: confiding their most secretive thoughts to their analyst, accepting that their questions will not be answered, relinquishing control of their statements, allowing their minds to wander while their painful feelings and symptoms become objects of their analyst's scrutiny and they wait for a response? Faith of that kind is harder and harder to come by. To be sure, many analysts have learned to work at earning their authority with patients, developing trust rather than taking it for granted. Recent generations are far more flexible and less inclined to be authoritarian. But that is a shift in what many had come to understand about how psychoanalysis works.

Along with this change in our attitudes towards authority has come a second change: an alteration in our experience of time. The world now runs on one clock, and it runs faster, with instantaneous digital communication and global trade linking us in an expanding community of ideas and images.

These pressures particularly afflict Americans, but as global competition increasingly sets the standards for worklife they are affecting everyone. They disrupt families; they eat into the leisure time required for friendship, and other activities that have traditionally provided opportunities for restoration and reflection. The pace of the modern world no longer seems compatible with the long, drawn-out, open-ended processes of free association and reverie that have long been seen as essential elements of psychoanalytic process. In this context, as the Italian psychoanalysts Antonio Suman and Antonino Brignone have pointed out: "Suggesting four or five sessions a week of psychoanalytic

treatment to a patient who does not belong to the profession is increasingly being perceived as being 'out of step' with the times, or as being a request on the part of the analyst for complete submission, or as an implicit acceptance that the analyst is in control of the patient's whole life."[xi]

Time is changing in other ways as well. Digital technology makes the reproduction of visual and aural experiences commonplace. As a result, experience itself has become unmoored from its anchorages in time and space. Time is no longer something we feel subject to, some greater force to which we must submit. Today, in the age of TiVo and instant replays, time can be seen as something to be manipulated and controlled.

All of this is making it apparent, as we shall see, that the "new unconscious" is not about time so much as it is about reflection. As Malcolm Gladwell has recently argued in his best-selling book Blink, many unconscious processes that lead to insight and understanding -- as well as deception and error -- occur in a flash. The unconscious does not require time in which to be uncovered; it requires detachment and distance to see what otherwise might remain hidden. It requires attention and insight.

The great benefit of time in exploring the unconscious has been in overcoming resistance to seeing and accepting what is buried. As psychotherapists quickly learn, there is little point in telling patients what they do not wish to know until they are ready to hear; often they need to come upon it themselves. The mere fact that time now is in such short supply intensifies the quest for efficient exploration.

The key fact, though, is that the unconscious is not to be found in time or in space, though we use metaphors of distance and detachment to describe it. It is about the mind, a mind that may be based in the brain but, as we understand now, cannot be precisely located or clearly bounded.

The third major change has been the extraordinary rise of global competition, with the pervasive effect of increasing pressures to cut costs, improve efficiency, and turn services into commodities than can be quantified and controlled.

Today most of us are working harder than ever before, simply trying to maintain our standards of living. Typically, in families with children, both parents now hold down jobs to make ends meet or to acquire the goods and services that have come to seem essential. Corporations relentlessly cut back on expenses, downsizing or outsourcing to meet the

expectations of investors. Governments are pressured into curtailing social safety nets. Inevitably the levels of anxiety and stress among workers go up.

Moreover, as services become streamlined and automated, digitized and distributed, we increasingly lose touch with those on whom we rely for help. Robots may not repair our washing machines yet, but computers answer our calls, schedule appointments, follow up with reminders, ask for evaluation, and send our invoices. Increasingly, help is a commodity that business and government are working to produce more and more cheaply.

Psychotherapy, of course, is one of the services affected by these trends. It has become one of the major growth industries of our time, no doubt because heightened competition takes its toll on individuals, exacerbating personal difficulties but also creating new sources of strain. People want and need help, and they turn to psychotherapists for understanding and guidance.

Recent studies have suggested that fifty percent of all Americans will suffer from mental illness sometime in their lives.[xii] And this matters not only to the individuals who suffer but also to the economy that absorbs the loss of their productivity. Rising conflict and stress produce inevitable effects of physical illness, absenteeism, and burnout. It is also likely that more people today are experiencing depression, anxiety, and rage -- and asking for help from an expanding range of practitioners who are being asked, in turn, to provide more effective services at cheaper prices.

At the same time that the strains of heightened competition are creating an increased need for psychotherapy, the same pressures are afflicting psychotherapists, forcing them to become more efficient in the services they provide. It's not just that insurance companies and hospitals are engaged in continuous evaluations and cost/benefit analyses; we are all living in a system that everywhere reminds us of comparative expenses, competitive pricing, and cheaper alternative products. For better or for worse, people now want to know -- and are pressured to account for -- what they will be getting for their money. Indeed, the studies just cited, predicting the increase in the incidence of mental illness, themselves reflect competitive pressures within an industry aggressively seeking to justify costs and increase market share; mental health "providers" must come up with compelling arguments and statistics to compete for scarce dollars.

In recent years, as we saw, the robust market for psychotherapy has been

devastating to psychoanalysis. A survey initiated by The American Psychoanalytic Association found that groups composed of mental health professionals -- psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers -- associated "psychoanalysis" with words like "rigid," "restrictive," "time consuming," "expensive." Psychoanalysts were seen as "passive," "intellectualized," "uninvolved." Psychoanalysis was "cult-like," "secretive," "authoritarian," "esoteric." But the most damning indictment by these mental health colleagues was that no one was inclined to recommend psychoanalysis.[xiii] In this scenario, drugs may be increasingly attractive as a treatment because they require less time to dispense and monitor. General practitioners and family physicians now routinely prescribe psychotropic medications, a development fueled by the advertising of drug companies aimed directly at consumers. Moreover, consumers often welcome this, embarrassed to disclose their mental suffering to strangers or afraid of the stigma attached to consulting professional therapists.

But though drugs can be effective in relieving symptoms and compensating for neural dysfunctions, it is becoming more and more apparent that they are most effective in conjunction with psychotherapies that work to uncover underlying conflicts. If the unconscious meaning of mental suffering remains unaffected by treatment, there can be little more than superficial, temporary progress.[xiv]

This is true as well for the behavioral and cognitive treatments that have been promoted as brief and effective.[xv] As we shall see, psychotherapists who sought shortcuts are discovering the complexities of unconscious motivation and resistances that psychoanalysts have known about all along. "Cognitive" and "behavioral" therapists, seeking to work with patient's rational ideas and actual behavior, are rediscovering the impact of unacknowledged aspects of their relationships with their patients and the powerful persistence of suppressed patterns of thought.

In short, the heightened pressure of competition has increased stress in the workplace but also undermined established ways of responding to it while calling for new and more efficient services. A better understanding of unconscious process can aid those struggling with these heightened pressures, but it is important to bear in mind that the unconscious itself cannot easily be distilled into particular commodities. Consultants often speak of providing services "off the shelf," standardized to meet specific types of problems. They too face pressures to streamline their services, to predict costs and ensure outcomes. But it is the nature of the unconscious to resist prediction and generalization. It requires process and exploration. Can our culture tolerate the difference to gain the understanding it needs?

The Unconscious Now

This book sets out to refresh and renew our understanding of the unconscious. It seeks to build on new research and recent discoveries – and, in the process, rescue our thinking about the unconscious from the dying hand of psychoanalysis, to make it more widely accessible and useful.

The essence of Freud's radical concept still holds: Driven by motives we do not understand, we are not in control of our own behavior. Moreover, as he pointed out, we are divided against ourselves, filled with contradiction and conflict. We dissemble and mislead others, but we start out by deceiving ourselves. We aim to achieve goals we disclaim and, even, at times, sincerely disavow. We collude with each other and we contend against each other, usually without noticing what we are about. But it is also true that the unconscious helps us to adapt more effectively than our conscious minds ever could, detecting information that is vital to our survival and well-being. We are smarter because of it, more intuitive and creative, but, under its influence, we can also be more stupid and venal, prone to disastrous mistakes.

Today, the unconscious is being explored by professionals eager to find explanations for events that elude conventional understanding. Specialists in education are focusing on the social and emotional aspects of child development, not just the teaching of ABC's. They worry about the obscure forces that lead to bullies and to cliques, to pregnancies and school violence. Focusing merely on scores from standardized tests is not enough. Experts in public health today must think of the consequences of psychological trauma for the victims of disaster, not simply broken limbs, bandages, and shelter. Policy experts must contend with how their perceptions and debates can be suffused by unconscious assumptions and their effectiveness undermined.

Economists, who used to rely on the concept of rational decision making to account for the behavior of markets, have become more "psychological" in their thinking as it becomes more and more clear that neither consumers nor producers are entirely rational in their behavior. Politics has also become a fertile field for research, as election campaigns often depend upon managing perceptions and feelings voters do not know they have – and so much is at stake. Researchers are getting into the business of political consulting.

Many top business schools here and in Europe have had psychoanalysts

on their faculties for years, providing help in probing the hidden dilemmas of leadership. And today, more and more executives, faced with the stress of constantly increasing expectations and changing demands, turn to psychoanalysts and psychologically sophisticated coaches for help. Those working to help businesses adapt to shifting environments, moreover, are discovering hidden resistances to organizational change. Lacking an understanding unconscious dynamics in the workplace becomes an impediment to the implementation new designs for work. As a result, a profession of psychoanalytically informed consultants is emerging.

More and more sophisticated services are being developed to respond to our increasingly complex awareness of the layers and the depth of human behavior. And while they increase, new problems and new tragedies leap to the front page, reminding us of how much we still do not understand. What drives some school children to massacre their schoolmates, and what keeps their classmates often unable to speak what they know? How can corporate executives collude in illegal schemes that obviously cannot be sustained, that are doomed to be uncovered or to fail? How can experienced government officials with access to sophisticated intelligence ignore key information and make disastrous decisions? Why are advertisers, media specialists and spin-doctors more influential in our politics than policy makers? What drives a sect to commit mass suicide?

Many psychoanalysts are working to understand such questions. Trained to probe into the murky realms of half-knowledge and denial, the unwanted truths and disclaimed perceptions that form the unconscious layers of human motivation, they see opportunities to expand the scope of their work. Others have trained themselves to work with organizations and schools, government agencies, executives, boards of directors and others, and they struggle to grasp the paradoxical and self-defeating human behaviors they encounter.

Let me give a brief but prominent example. The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, investigating the disastrously misleading intelligence reports about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, concluded that the failure was the result of an unconscious psychological process, “groupthink.” In this process dissenting ideas are discounted and neglected in order to allow for the emergence of a group norm, a dominant idea that, unconsciously, acts to suppress and eclipse all other ideas. Several sets of motivations combine to support “groupthink”: The desire to please the leader, the drive for group cohesiveness, and the craving for certainty in highly charged and complex circumstances

Irving Janis, a Yale sociologist, developed this concept originally using research into the decision making process that led to President Kennedy's invasion of the Bay of Pigs in 1962. He extended it to account for other disasters of inattention such as the run up to Pearl Harbor and the escalation of the Vietnam War, where intelligence and counter-arguments were similarly discounted and suppressed; it describes the "bunker mentality" that characterized the responses of President Nixon and his advisors during Watergate. "Groupthink" also helps to account for many recent corporate scandals, such as Enron, where top executives succeeded in convincing themselves that their illegal manipulation of accounts would go unnoticed.[xvi]

This work on unconscious collusion in presidential administrations was compelling to the Senate Special Committee and their staff members searching for explanations for this momentous failure. The classic conditions for "groupthink" were here: a leader who knew what he wanted to hear, pressure to come to a conclusion in the face of ambiguous data, and intelligence agencies that were all too willing to selectively dismiss, forget, or simply avoid thinking about the significant evidence that did not support the case they more and more wanted to make. Unconsciously responding to these pressures, they induced a false certainty among themselves.

Janis, of course, is not a psychoanalyst. Many academics and consultants exploring the unconscious dimensions of behavior are not. On the other hand, much of this work goes on under the name of "applied psychoanalysis," a sprawling, jerrybuilt assemblage of diverse enterprises that has grown up around the margins of the psychoanalytic establishment. Standards vary and are often lax ; disputes are rife. And yet there is an undeniable vitality in this burgeoning chaos. Apart from the mainstream orthodox institutions of psychoanalysis, this new world has branched out, expanded and eluded the deadening hand of its control.[xvii]

This book is a kind of primer to this burgeoning new world of thought, a survey what is now being done in this dispersed and fragmented field. On the other hand, it is not written by an outsider. I live and work in the midst of the developments I describe. Wherever possible, I include examples from my own work as well as my knowledge of the work of colleagues. My understanding is informed by personal experience. And my hope is that will make what it says clearer and more accessible to the reader as well.

The "new unconscious" isn't a new phenomenon, of course. The unconscious aspects of social relations, politics, and organizations have

been there all along. The future of work with the unconscious is one of extraordinary opportunity and promise for those willing to face its daunting obstacles and difficulties and able to tolerate its ambiguities and uncertainties. And, who knows, maybe even psychoanalysis will rejoin the effort?

Notes

[i] See "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," Standard Edition, vol xiv.

[i] W.H. Auden, The Age of Anxiety, originally published in 1947.

[ii] "Studies on Hysteria," SE, II, p. 157.

[iii] "The idea that the unconscious constituted an insatiable but also manipulable well of desire was crucial to the development of consumer culture." Eli Zaretsky, Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis. New York: Knopf, 2004, p. 144.

[iv] Newell Fisher made this point in 2004. The comments about the declining number of candidates world-wide is from a task force set up by the IPA: Report from the House of Delegates Committee on "The Actual Crisis of Psychoanalysis: Challenges and Perspectives." (1995). The statistics on candidates are from the two plenary talks given by Fisher as President, published in the newsletter of the American Psychoanalytic Association, The American Psychoanalyst, in 2002. For a trenchant and authoritative account of the decline in the publication of books and journals, see Paul Stepansky's paper, "The problem: Psychoanalytic 'balkanization' and the creation of part-professions with part-theories and part-journals," in his on-line seminar Uncommon Ground and the Creation of a Psychoanalytic Future, offered in 2007 by The Psychoanalytic Connection.

[v] See S. Fisher & R.P. Greenberg, Freud Scientifically Reappraised (New York: Wiley, 1996). Among philosophers of science, see Adolf Grunbaum, The Foundations of Psychoanalysis (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984); Karl Popper, 1962; Ernest Gellner, The Psychoanalytic Movement (London: Paladin, 1985).

[vi] For a fuller account of the internal problems of the psychoanalytic profession, see my "Psychoanalysis as a Profession: Past failures and Future Possibilities, Contemporary Psychoanalysis, vol. 39 (2003): pp. 557-582.

[vii] Hannah Arendt, "Authority," in Between Past and Future (New York: Viking, 1961).

[viii] An excellent account of how the profession of medicine achieved respect and standing is Paul Starr's The Social Transformation of American Medicine. New York: Basic Books, 1982.

[ix] See Ernest Jones, The Life of Sigmund Freud, 3 vols (New York: Basic Books, 1953-1957); Vincent Brome, Freud and His Disciples. London: Caliban, 1984. Paul Roazen, Freud and His Followers. New York: New York University Press, 1984; Peter J. Swales (1982), "Freud, Minna Bernays, and the Conquest of Rome." New American Review 1: 1-23. Peter J. Swales, "Freud, His Teacher, and the Birth of Psychoanalysis." In Freud: Appraisals and Reappraisals, P. Stepansky. Ed. New York: Analytic Press 1986; Peter Gay, Freud: A Life for Our Time. New York: W.W. Norton, 1988. More recently, additional evidence has surfaced supporting the conjecture of Freud's affair with his sister-in-law. See ??? American Imago.

[x] Jeffrey M. Masson, Final Analysis, New York: Addison-Wesley, 1990; Janet Malcolm, In the Freud Archives. New York: Knopf, 1984. On Freud's precursors, see Henri Ellenberger's The Discovery of the Unconscious (1970). He also refuted claims that Freud was a lonely pioneer who "discovered" the unconscious by himself. Frank Sulloway in Freud: Biologist of the Mind (1979) pointed out that the myths of Freud's "splendid isolation" and early neglect were highly exaggerated.

[xi] Antonio Suman and Antonino Brignone, "Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis: A Choice in Step with the Times," Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy: The Controversies and the Future, Sergio Frisch, Ed., London: Karnac, 2001, (pp. 91-109) p. 107. Interestingly, Freud criticized America precisely on this point: "the American has no time", he wrote in a passage he ultimately decided against including in The Question of Lay Analysis. "He has a passion for large numbers, for the magnification of all dimensions, but also for cutting the investment of time to an absolute minimum." Freud's words are to be found in Elizabeth Grubrich-Simitis, Back to Freud's Texts: Making Silent Documents Speak. New Haven, CT: Yale, 1996, p.181.

[xii] New York Times, June 7, 2005, p. A18.

[xiii] Zacharias, B. L. (2002). Strategic Marketing Initiative. American Psychoanalytic Association. Chicago. See also Newell Fischer, (2002a). "The numbers tell the story." The American Psychoanalyst. Vol. 36 (4), pp. 3,8.

[xiv] See "Psychodynamic psychotherapies: evidence-based practice and clinical wisdom" by Fonagy, Roth & Higgitt, Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 69 (1), pp.1-58 (2005), for a current overview of the field.

[xv] See, for example, Michael J. Mahoney, Constructive Psychotherapy, Guildford Press, 2005.

[xvi] See Irving L. Janis, Groupthink. (2nd Edition) New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1986. The Report of the Senate Committee was published in on the front page of The New York Times, July 10, 2004.

[xvii] An impressive array of professional organizations has been developed in the past 20 years to promote this expanded interest in the unconscious. The International Association for Applied Psychoanalytic Studies (IAAPS) has formed to encourage and support social and political applications of psychoanalysis. The International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO), formed in 1985, helps academics, managers and consultants exchange ideas about the psychodynamic aspects of businesses and other organizations. The Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS), founded in 1994, supports the study of the unconscious determinants of social and cultural problems. In the UK, OPUS, the Organization for Promoting Understanding of Society, attracts psychoanalysts and consultants to explore social and organizational issues.

From *CHAPTER ONE: THE NEW UNCONSCIOUS*

The study of consciousness – or the "problem of consciousness" as it has come to be known – is highly controversial and contentious. John Searle, the philosopher, noted that when he first became interested in consciousness, now about 30 years ago, "most people in the neurosciences did not regard consciousness as a genuine scientific question at all." He recalled a renowned neuroscientist telling him "It is okay to be interested in consciousness, but get tenure first." All that has changed; where there was neglect there is now competition and controversy, programs and departments, and libraries of books and journals. Today, the study of consciousness attracts philosophers, psychologists, neurologists and neuroscientists, specialists in artificial intelligence (AI), developmental biologists, computer scientists and information theorists.

From *CHAPTER FOUR: PERSONS, IDENTITIES AND ROLES*

Who is the "I" that seems to sit at the center of our worlds? Is it merely a linguistic trick, a habit of speech we have come to invest with substantial existence? Perhaps the very notion that there is a coherent entity that sits behind our eyes, that moves our limbs, thinks our thoughts, and utters our sentences is nothing but a fiction. A number of philosophers have arrived at this same, very disconcerting conclusion, from David Hume who thought the subject was a mere bundle of perceptions to Frederich Nietzsche who thought that there was no doer behind our

doing. The post-modern emphasis on how language constitutes experience has given new life to this question of what exactly is this "I."

The very idea of the unconscious challenges the unity or coherence of the subject. If any one of our actions can be understood as a product of the cognitive unconscious responding in concert with the emotional unconscious, shaped by the autonomic nervous system, and if, furthermore, that behavior takes place in a group context, reflecting the pressure of the group, and responds to active social issues, how should we think about our own agency? The multiple ways in which the world impinges on us inevitably elicits a multiplicity of responses, though the gaps and contradictions may not be easily discerned. The issue may be more that our unconscious systems do work together, as do our organs, but that our image of ourselves as unitary directors of our actions is an illusion.

From ***CHAPTER FIVE: ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE***

Our world is a densely packed, overlapping mosaic of organizations, creating deeply ingrained expectations of predictability and order. Today, we anticipate wages will be paid as expected, dividends as promised, loans repaid as agreed. Trains and planes should leave on time. Products and supplies should be reordered and replaced as needed, deliveries made, promises kept. New social trends will be monitored, new regulations put forth. Corruption and fraud should be prosecuted. Police will continuously patrol our streets, while fireman are on call to cope with emergencies. Should these expectations not be met, we tend to be outraged and turn to the courts and elected officials for redress; sometimes we organize protests and political action groups. When, inevitably, disaster strikes in the form of earthquakes, storms, epidemics and wars, we turn to organizations for help with the disruption of our lives and, eventually, the restoration of our familiar worlds. And if those organizations fail to act effectively, we call for task forces to investigate and report. . . .

To a remarkable degree, the rise of organizations parallels and shadows the invisible, continuous work of consciousness. As we saw in Chapter One, our brains work ceaselessly to construct a world we can rely upon, one that organizes our perceptions and responses to provide coherence and predictability. While our brains edit out discontinuities so that the world appears seamless and consistent, the world through its organizations also works perpetually to renew itself and impose order.

Our organizations tell us what we need to know and how to act. They foster our sense of agency, our belief that we are responding to events. Within their organizations, executives and managers, not just presidents and CEO's, are prone to believing that they really are in charge of events.

From *CHAPTER SEVEN: THINKING IN A POST PROFESISONAL WORLD*

Over the past 150 years, the professions gradually became the guardians of society's specialized knowledge. They were entrusted with the responsibility for developing that knowledge and the skills to use it, for setting standards, and for monitoring the ethical behavior of practitioners. But today the professions bear little resemblance to what we once took for granted they had to be. In many cases, the terms, the concepts and the old professional organizations persist -- the identities live on in the minds of practitioners and clients -- but the familiar substance is gone.

How does the new unconscious affect those who work with their minds, who market their services as specialists in professional knowledge? The question has two parts. First, how do knowledge and skills need to be reconceived to make them compatible with what we are learning about the new unconscious? How does it alter our traditional understanding of knowledge? And then, how can traditional "knowledge workers" offer their services to others in reliable and effective ways? The first question is about how the new unconscious alters the nature of what we know and how we know it. The second is about the social arrangements and delivery systems required to apply that knowledge to problems and needs.