STRANGER THAN FICTION

THE CASE HISTORIES OF SIGMUND FREUD

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In memory of my father
Peter Vivian Long-Innes (1913-1996)

And for my mother, Barbara

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The general aim of this study is to arrive at a critical assessment of the cultural-historical significance of Freud's major case histories, through a close examination of three of the most famous: the cases of "Dora", "Schreber" and the "Wolf Man".

My investigation of the case histories themselves is prefaced, in Chapter One, by a selective review of some major strands in the recent critical tradition. These include "stylistic" readings of Freud's text, which aim at a psycho-biographical investigation of the author himself, along with related readings within what has popularly become known as "French Freud". My major concern, however, is with those examinations of Freud's writing that contribute to what has been defined as "Literary Freud" - the critical initiative, that is, within which Freud's genius is acclaimed as "poetic" rather than "scientific".

The thesis tests the notion that it is the underlying allegiance in all these responses to a conception of science as a form of "neutral language" which has resulted in their tendency either to elide the place of language in Freud's work, or to convert it (if at times unwittingly) into evidence of his implausibility as a scientist. In questioning the conception of science as a neutral meta-language, and the view of Freud as "unscientific" when measured against that conception, my argument does not in any way take an "anti-science" position. What it is above all concerned with is not re-stating the alleged priority of the "literary" over the "scientific" in Freud, but displacing that very division. How the "scientific" and "literary" *relate* in Freud's text – and in these three exemplary case histories - is what the project is centrally about.

The first case history examined in detail, in Chapter Two, is that of "Dora" - the case, that is, which has most interested Freud's feminist critics. Historians of psychoanalysis have described the vilification of Freud by feminists as one of two principal themes in the overall critique of psychoanalysis through the twentieth century (the other being its status as a source of scientific authority). The examination of the Dora case thus necessarily entails a dialogue with this important strand of the critical tradition, dealing with the history of Freud's relation to feminism since the 1970's, and bringing a new dimension to the discussion by invoking the work of Quentin Skinner (doyen of the Cambridge History of Ideas school). Drawing on Skinner's work, my reading of the Dora case attempts to restore a sense I believe to have been lost, of its unique, foundational status in the history not only of psychoanalysis but also of "hysteria" itself, as a twentieth (and twenty-first) century pathology.

In Chapter Three, which investigates Freud's analysis of the memoirs of Judge Daniel Paul Schreber, we see Freud as much in the guise of literary critic as psychoanalyst. (Freud never met Schreber himself, and his case history is based exclusively on his reading of Schreber's written memoirs.) The second principal theme in the critique of psychoanalysis comes into play here – namely, its status as a source of scientific authority. Using a brief and unassuming, but to my mind deeply insightful essay by Carl Pletsch as a pivot, my reading of the Schreber case (and the critical tradition which supports it) is an attempt to move the debate beyond the question of the scientific accuracy or otherwise of Freud's conclusions in the case. Instead, the discussion tries to take cognizance of the case's significance as a contribution to a mode of knowledge which may well have no use at all for traditional conceptions of scientificity, and which needs to be recognized *on its own terms*. Providing a sense of what these terms might be, then, will be one of the objectives of this chapter.

Chapter Four examines the case of the "Wolf Man". This is the last of the great published case histories and, from a narrative point of view at least, the most complex by far. Since the 1970's, this case history has become what a major historian describes as a "test case for the truth of psychoanalysis", often

with negative results. There is a burgeoning tradition, in other words, which uses the case to attack both the institution of psychoanalysis and the integrity of Freud as its founder. The case thus affords an opportunity to confront another significant strand in the Freudian critical tradition - that typified in the recent remarks of critics such as Frank Cioffi and Frederick Crews, whose critical commentary has increasingly taken the form of an *ad hominem* attack on Freud himself, whom they are intent on establishing as an irredeemable charlatan and a liar. Taking an influential essay by literary critic Stanley Fish as representative, my return to the Wolf Man case constitutes a response to this new generation of "Freud bashers".

Freud's critics have often suggested that his work would have been more successful had it embodied their notions of scientific discourse. But there is evidence to suggest that the enabling dynamic of Freud's thought was the result of a constant transgression of the boundaries of these notions as instituted by the scientific community during his lifetime. The thesis concludes with the assertion that Freud's commitment, finally, was a commitment to scepticism - a scepticism which, in refusing the usual boundaries of science, made it possible to transcend them and explore a new continent of knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

> After all, it was patients, rather than theorists,
> who inspired many of Freud's major principles ...
> and what Freud failed to get from his analysands
> he usually picked up from literature.
>
> Maud Ellmann [1]

What do Freud's case histories mean to us today? The appearance, in the last decade, of at least three full length academic studies, each devoted exclusively to a single case, is testimony, at the very least, to their enduring significance in contemporary intellectual life. [2] Yet where exactly does this significance lie? Even Freud's followers would not deny what his critics never tire of telling us - that most of the case histories were therapeutic failures. As for the critics themselves, on this point they are unequivocal: as Seymour Fisher and Roger Greenberg remark in their 1977 study, "It is curious and striking that Freud chose to demonstrate the utility of psychoanalysis through descriptions of largely unsuccessful cases" (1977: 285). And as Frank Sulloway observes, in his own recent "reassessment" of the case histories, some of them present "such dubious evidence in favour of psychoanalytic theory that one may seriously wonder why Freud even bothered to publish them" (1991: 251). So why *did* he publish them? And why do intelligent men and women the world over continue not only to read them, but to devote considerable portions of their intellectual lives to them? Why, in the words of even the most strident of Freud's present-day critics,

namely Frederick Crews, are the case histories still so "inherently fascinating"? (1998: xi)

The general aim of this study will be to arrive at an answer to these questions – to arrive, that is, at a critical assessment of the cultural-historical significance of Freud's major case histories. How many case histories did Freud actually write, and when were they published? After the *Studies on Hysteria*, written in collaboration with Josef Breuer and published between 1893 and 1895 (SE II), Freud wrote only six detailed case histories. Two of these dealt with women, and were essentially incomplete. The first (published in 1905) concerned an eighteen-year-old girl called Ida Bauer, later named "Dora" in Freud's case history. [3] Treatment lasted only three months, after which the patient left of her own accord. Though Freud described the case history as a "fragment of an analysis" in the title, it was soon to become a classic in the psychoanalytic literature, and has since also been widely read outside psychoanalytic circles, generating a huge critical response, particularly from feminists. Freud's much later case of a female homosexual (published in 1920) also terminated after a short time. [4] Unlike the Dora case, however, it has not been particularly widely read and is seldom discussed at any length in the critical literature.

After Dora, the next case to be published dealt with the five-year-old "Little Hans", who was not actually treated by Freud. He saw the boy only once, and the analysis was in fact carried out by Little Hans's father, himself a devout Freudian. The case was, however, both supervised, and later written up by Freud, to be published for the first time in 1909. [5] Then came the case of the "Rat Man", also published in 1909 after its initial presentation at the Salzburg Congress in 1908. In a letter of 19th April 1908, Freud had complained to Carl Jung that he had no case that was "complete" and could be "viewed as a whole" to present at the Congress, which was to be held the following week. [6] He had considered presenting details of the case of Little Hans, whose treatment he was supervising at the time, but ended by discussing the Rat Man instead, emphasizing what he considered to be the therapeutic success of the treatment. The case history thus

became Freud's first public communication of a psychoanalytic cure (Sulloway, 1991: 255). [7]

The next case history to appear in print was that of Daniel Paul Schreber, a psychotic German magistrate whom Freud never met, but "analysed" from Schreber's own published memoirs. [8] Schreber's memoirs appeared in 1903, and included a detailed narrative of the series of mental breakdowns he had suffered towards the end of the previous century. Freud's case history was finally published in 1911. The last major case history (published in 1918) involved a young Russian (the "Wolf Man") whose analysis, as it turned out, was to be continued intermittently, with a number of different analysts, for some fifty years after his initial treatment with Freud. [9] Freud himself treated the Wolf Man for four years (from 1910 to 1914), while also conducting a brief second analysis five years later, to remove a remnant of "transference" that had remained unresolved during the first treatment. In subsequent years the Wolf Man was re-analyzed twice by Ruth Mack Brunswick, and by several others after World War II, in a process which continued until his death in 1978. [10]

Ideally, this study would have dealt with all six case histories, and included an examination of the early *Studies on Hysteria.* This was the initial plan, abandoned eventually, for practical reasons. Since my intention was to examine the case histories in close dialogue with the different critical traditions generated by each, and since the literature associated with each of these traditions turned out to be so vast, it seemed more sensible to limit the discussion to a maximum of three cases, where hopefully the issues raised would be applicable across the full canon of six. Having made the decision to restrict the project in this way, I had no difficulty with my selection of the cases, for the following reasons.

To have left out the Dora case would have been unthinkable. This is Freud's first great case history, and his longest of a woman patient, recently described by Hélène Cixous as an 'urtext in the history of woman' (cited in Appignanesi, 1992: 146). For obvious reasons then, it is the case which has most interested

Freud's feminist critics, and as such, its examination necessarily entails a dialogue with this enormously important strand of the critical tradition. The vilification of Freud by feminists, John Forrester suggests, has provided a stable cultural framework over the last thirty years for much discussion of psychoanalysis, and is one of two principal themes in the overall critique of psychoanalysis through the twentieth century (the other being its status as a source of scientific authority and therapeutic promise) (1997: 3). As such, any project taking a position on the value and significance of Freud's work must necessarily deal with the history of his relation to feminism since the 1970's at least. This I do in my reading of the Dora case, hopefully bringing a new dimension to the discussion by invoking the work of Quentin Skinner (doyen of the Cambridge History of Ideas school), and bringing it to bear on the canon of feminist voices in Columbia University Press's *In Dora's Case: Freud, Hysteria, Feminism* (1985). Drawing on Skinner's work (along with the Foucauldian perspective described in Chapter One), I have attempted, in my reading of the Dora case, to restore a sense I believe to have been lost, of its unique, foundational status in the history not only of psychoanalysis but also of "hysteria" itself, as a twentieth (and twenty-first) century pathology.

It would have been equally unthinkable, in a project of this nature, to have left out the case of the Wolf Man. This is the last of the great published case histories and, from a narrative point of view at least, the most complex by far. Whereas for writers such as Peter Brooks, the early case of Dora reads like a "flawed Victorian novel", the case of the Wolf Man represents one of Freud's "most heroic gestures as a writer", and places him on the same level with such masters of the modern novel as Joyce, Kafka, Proust and Mann amongst others. In Brooks' words, the case history is an intricately "layered text" - a "palimpsest" so innovative in its narrative pattern that it ends by "displacing the whole question of origins, to suggest another kind of referentiality" (1985: 277). With the textuality of Freud's writing as one of my major concerns (as I will later explain), the case of the Wolf Man was an obvious choice for this study.

Also, probably because the Wolf Man himself died relatively recently, and was thus able to comment at length for himself on the long-term consequences of his psychoanalysis, this, along with the Dora case, is one of the most controversial of the histories, eliciting much vitriolic comment from psychoanalysis' detractors, who have scoured the Wolf Man's commentary in search of any contradictions between his view and Freud's. [11] It thus affords an opportunity to confront another significant strand in the Freudian critical tradition - that typified in the recent remarks of critics such as Frank Cioffi and Frederick Crews, whose critical commentary has increasingly taken the form of an *ad hominem* attack on Freud himself, whom they are intent on establishing as an irredeemable charlatan and a liar. [12] As I will later point out, since the 1970's, the Wolf Man case history has become what Forrester calls "a test case for the truth of psychoanalysis" (1997: 209), often with negative results. There is a burgeoning tradition, in other words, which uses the case to attack both the institution of psychoanalysis and the integrity of Freud as its founder. Taking an influential essay by Stanley Fish ("Withholding the Missing Portion: Power, Meaning and Persuasion in Freud's 'The wolf-man'", 1986) as representative, my return to the Wolf Man case will constitute a response to this new generation of "Freud bashers".

Finally, in deliberating for my third choice between the cases of Schreber, Little Hans and the Rat Man, all of which fall between the early treatment of Dora and the climactic analysis of the Wolf Man, I settled in the end on Schreber, not least because here we see Freud as much in the guise of literary critic as of psychoanalyst. Freud never met Schreber himself, and his case history is based exclusively on his reading of Schreber's written memoirs. Most of the critical voices whose work has a bearing on my project write at the interface between psychoanalysis and literary studies, and many of them are in fact literary critics rather than analysts, so it seemed important to include a representation of Freud himself writing at this intersection.

As for the critical tradition in relation to Schreber, so vast is the literature in response to Freud's case study that scholars now refer quite unself-consciously to

the field of "Schreber Studies", almost as if it constituted a new academic discipline. Schreber's text is of course at the centre of this, but so displaced by Freud's case study as to have been recently described as the "most-quoted unread book of the twentieth century" (Geller, 1994: 180). This in itself seemed a curious enough phenomenon to be worth investigation. Interestingly enough, however, on first perusing this voluminous critical response, its focus (bar a few notable exceptions [13]), turned out to be surprisingly narrow, and indeed rather tedious, resting squarely (and unrelentingly) on whether Freud was "right" or "wrong" in the case of Schreber, on the confirmation or otherwise of his theoretical conclusions in the case - on the case's "truth" value, in other words, as a "scientific" document.

The second of Forrester's two principal themes in the critique of psychoanalysis thus comes into play here – namely, its status as a source of scientific authority. Using a brief and unassuming, but to my mind deeply insightful essay by Carl Pletsch as a pivot, my own reading of the Schreber case (and the critical tradition which supports it) is an attempt to move the debate beyond the question of the scientific accuracy or otherwise of Freud's conclusions in the case. [14] Instead, the discussion tries to take cognizance of the case's significance as a contribution to a mode of knowledge which may well have no use at all for traditional conceptions of scientificity, and which needs to be recognized *on its own terms*. Providing a sense of what these terms might be, then, will be one of the objectives of this chapter.

Psychoanalysis: Science or Literature?

The ongoing controversy over the status of psychoanalysis as a source of scientific authority will thus be central to my response, not only to the Schreber case history, but to those of Dora and the Wolf Man as well. This controversy is as old as psychoanalysis itself. It is, as Forrester recently suggested, the "constant companion of psychoanalysis, as much a part of its history as its infiltration and co-option by the movie industry" (1997: 3). It has been the subject of debate for a full century, as it was in Adolf Grünbaum's lengthy "philosophical critique" in

The Foundations of Psychoanalysis (1984), in which he puts to the test Freud's view that psychoanalysis is a natural science like any other. Leaving to one side questions of what exactly Freud himself meant by "natural science," this was a position he defended hotly throughout his career. Thus in one of his later papers, while "looking back over the patchwork of [his] life's labours," Freud makes his position plain: "While [psychoanalysis] was originally the name of a particular therapeutic method," he writes, "it has now become the name of a science – the science of unconscious mental processes" (SE XX: 70).

This position has not fared well over the years. In one of the more extreme recent responses, François Roustang argues that the "science" of psychoanalysis is a *myth* from its very beginnings, employed to disguise and play down the less reputable aspects of certain psychoanalytic practices - those connected with hypnosis, suggestion, thought-transference, telepathy and the like. In invoking this myth, he argues – a myth that "domesticates what cannot be integrated into a scientific, technological, rational world" - psychoanalysis simply extends the limits of science to cover the irrational, a domain from which science had hitherto been excluded. In renouncing this myth, analysis falls back into "occultism and magic … into the unsayable and the ineffable," condemned never to rise above the level of "faith-healing and witch-craft" (1983: 120).

Even psychoanalysts themselves have been hard put to defend Freud's point of view. Jacques Lacan, for one, was categorically *opposed* to the idea of psychoanalysis as a science. Indeed, as perhaps the most resolute critic of Freud's neo-positivist claims for the scientificity of psychoanalysis, Lacan's position on this question was unequivocal. In Andrew Ross's words, "Lacanian theory set out to put to the sword any distinctions between the scientific and non-scientific; distinctions which can themselves be seen to draw upon the rationalist categories of truth and error and are thus part and parcel of the ideology of science itself" (1990: 120-121).

Today, according to the historians, most psychoanalysts are not particularly bothered with questions of scientificity. When they are forced to address the

issue, they have a number of responses, the most common of which, John Forrester suggests, is to "beat a humble retreat, not wishing to become embroiled in semantic debates, whose heat does not derive from a passionate interest in discovering new and difficult things." He cites Robert Stoller's view, writing in 1985:

> Residing in a university and surrounded by colleagues who are scientists, I know not to inflate my work with allegations that it constitutes experiment (for example, "every psychoanalysis is an experiment") or science ("our science"). *Research* is not a synonym for *search* and should not appear in a psychoanalyst's sentence if it is there for propaganda. At our best, we analysts are naturalistic observers of behavior with techniques – unstable but powerful – that no one else has. That's a good start. I shall settle for words such as *work* and *studies* (cited in Forrester, 1997: 238).

Forrester himself is deeply interesting on the long history of psychoanalysis' relation to this debate, in a way that moves definitively beyond the tradition established by logical positivism, within which much of the discussion to date has been conducted (namely, that there is one model of how scientific explanations work, and that there is one ahistorical thing called science). But I will come back to Forrester later. Before doing so, however, I want to re-open the question of psychoanalysis' scientific status for a moment, by dwelling briefly on a landmark essay by Roland Barthes, with the symptomatic title, "Science vs. Literature" (1967).

What constitutes science and what constitutes literature, and the terms on which they are separated out within the division of intellectual labour, remains an ongoing and controversial question. One way into this is through Barthes' essay, in which he suggests that if their common constitution in language is one of the features which unites science and literature, it is also the one which divides them more surely than any of their differences. The reason for this, he argues, is that

science and literature do not assume, or if one prefers, profess the language which constitutes them in the same way. As far as science is concerned,

> language is simply an instrument, which it profits it to make as transparent as possible; it is subordinate to the matter of science (workings, hypotheses, results) which, so it is said, exists outside language and precedes it. On the one hand and first there is the content of the scientific message, which is everything. On the other and next, the verbal form responsible for expressing that content, which is nothing.

In the case of literature, however - or at any rate, that literature which has "freed itself" from classicism and humanism,

> language can no longer be the convenient instrument or the superfluous backcloth of a social, emotional or poetic "reality" which pre-exists it, and which it is language's subsidiary responsibility to express, by means of submitting itself to a number of stylistic rules. Language is literature's Being, its very world; the whole of literature is contained in the act of writing, and no longer those of "thinking", "portraying", "telling" or "feeling" (Barthes, 1967: 897).

By professing the language which constitutes them in these two conflicting ways, science and literature stand essentially in opposition to one another. Of the two, it is science which assumes a privileged position in relation to literature. In assigning itself a purely instrumental status, in which language is simply the transparent medium through which the "truth" of its content is conveyed, scientific discourse believes itself to be a superior code, a mere "instrument of thought", a form of "neutral" language from which a certain number of specialised languages (the literary or poetic languages for example) have derived, as so many "deviants" or "embellishments." This neutral language is then held to be the referential code for all the "ex-centric" languages, which themselves are merely its sub-codes. By identifying itself with this referential code, as the basis of all normality, scientific discourse arrogates to itself a right grounded

essentially in a misconception of the nature of language, which it is the role of literature - or "writing" - precisely to contest.

My reading of the case histories will be centrally concerned with what I see as their refusal (consistent within Freud's writing as a whole) to uphold the boundaries described above between the discourses of science and literature. Symptomatic of this refusal is the fact that though Freud saw himself as essentially a scientist - founder and father of the new science of psychoanalysis - and though, in his writings, he regularly and conscientiously defended the scientific status of his discoveries, the only public recognition he received from Germany in his lifetime was the Goethe prize for literature. Some years after this award, Einstein is reported to have told Freud that he particularly admired his work not from a scientific but from a literary point of view: "I do not know any contemporary who has presented his subject in the German language in such a masterly fashion," Einstein wrote in a letter to Freud in 1939. Later, in Stuttgart in 1968, a book-length study, focused exclusively on Freud's achievement not as a scientist but as a literary artist, appeared, [15] and for several decades since then, Freud's name has become commonplace in literary studies throughout the West.

Yet Freud's transcendence of the traditional boundaries between the discourses of science and literature has seldom been positively acclaimed by his critics, who have tended either to elide the distinctive place of language in his work, or to use it against him as evidence of his implausibility as a scientist. In his earlier mentioned review of the case histories, for example, Sulloway goes to some lengths to demonstrate how Freud's rhetorical style (his "literary technology" in Sulloway's terms) was simply a form of "cover up" for the failures of his "material technology" – his attempt, that is, to make psychoanalysis into a *practical* form of knowledge. To quote Sulloway: "After 1897 Freud's literary technology – or rhetorical style – became an increasingly important legitimating device for explaining why his material technology had been demoted from its usually prominent place in science. In the literary sphere Freud was, of course, a master. It was for his literary abilities, not his scientific ones, that he received the Goethe prize in 1930" (1991: 265). Thus we see from

this example just how easily Freud's "literary genius" can be (and has been) turned against him. We see how easily it becomes a weapon in the assault on his integrity as a scientist.

During the course of this study, I will discuss the "textual ambiguity" which marks Freud's writing as a whole (and is, I want to suggest, particularly apparent in the case histories), in its relation to sceptical receptions of Freud's work by the scientific establishment and others, and to the diverse response to Freud's writing in recent exchanges between psychoanalytic theory, literary theory and the practices of textual analysis. Precisely because of this textual ambiguity, I will suggest, a number of critics and commentators have sought to re-construe psychoanalysis as the proper object not of a scientific but of an essentially literary study, based in the stylistic sophistication, or the "genius" of Freud's writing. Though I myself write from the perspective not of science but of literary criticism, my own reading of the three case histories concerned will be opposed to this re-construal. Instead, I will argue that the singular contribution Freud's work has made to the history of what should now simply be called "writing" has less to do with his literary genius than with a conceptual advance based in a capacity to *transcend* the traditional demand that texts belong either to aesthetic forms on the one hand, or scientific ones on the other. It is precisely the capacity to transcend rather than awkwardly straddle this division, I will suggest, which accounts for Freud's unique contribution, his practical critique of that very borderline.

My investigation of the case histories will thus be prefaced (in Chapter One) by a selective review of some major strands of the critical tradition, including "stylistic" readings which aim at a psycho-biographical investigation of the author himself, along with related readings within what has popularly become known as "French Freud", the latter being a useful starting-point for addressing the whole question of subjectivity and language. I will, however, be most concerned with those examinations of Freud's writing contributing to what has been defined as "Literary Freud" - the critical initiative, that is, within which

Freud's genius is acclaimed as "poetic" rather than "scientific," and his major texts - the case histories in particular - compared to great works of fiction.

I will test the notion that it is the underlying allegiance of all these responses to a conception of science as a form of "neutral language" which has resulted in their tendency (as I suggested earlier) either to elide the place of language in Freud's work, or to convert it (if at times unwittingly) into evidence of his implausibility as a scientist. In questioning the conception of science as a neutral meta-language, and the view of Freud as "unscientific" when measured against that conception, I will not in any way be taking an "anti-science" position. What I am above all concerned with is not re-stating the alleged priority of the "literary" over the "scientific" in Freud, but displacing that very division. How the "scientific" and "literary" *relate* in Freud's text is what the project is centrally about.

Notes:

1. The quotation is from the Introduction to *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism* (Ellmann, 1994: 11). To illustrate the point, Ellmann suggests that it was the patient known as Little Hans who invented the castration complex, and the hysteric Anna O. who identified the 'talking cure'. What literature confirms for Freud, Ellmann goes on to say, is not so much his "doctrines" as his "insights into the unconscious, which persistently eludes his efforts to reduce it to an orthodoxy" (11).

2. See Davis, 1995, Lakoff and Coyne, 1993, and Santner, 1996.

3. Sigmund Freud. "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905), in *Standard Edition*, Vol 7, pp. 3-122.

4. Sigmund Freud. "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920), in *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, pp. 146-172.

5. Sigmund Freud. "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy" (1909), in *Standard Edition*, Vol. 10, pp. 3-147.

6. See Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung. *The Freud Jung Letters: The correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung*. ed. William McGuire, trans. Ralph Manheim and R.F.C. Hull (Bollingen Series, 94) (Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 141.

7. Sigmund Freud. "Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis" (1909), in *Standard Edition*, Vol. 10, pp. 153-318.

8. Sigmund Freud. "Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)" (1911), in *Standard Edition*, Vol. 12, pp. 3-79; and Daniel Paul Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (Leipzig: Oswald Mutze, 1903), trans. as *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, trans. and ed. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (London: W. Dawson, 1955; Cambridge, Mass. London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

9. Sigmund Freud. "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (1918), in *Standard Edition*, Vol. 17, pp. 3-122.

10. See Ruth Mack Brunswick, "A Supplement to Freud's 'History of an Infantile Neurosis," *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 1928. 9: 439-476; and Frank Sulloway, "Reassessing Freud's Case Histories", *ISIS*, 1991. 82: 258.

11. The major source for the Wolf Man's own story of his experiences with psychoanalysis is Karen Obholzer's *The Wolf Man Sixty Years Later: Conversations with Freud's Controversial Patient*, trans. Michael Shaw (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982). These conversations have been eagerly seized upon by Freud's critics, in search of any

contradictions which might support the possibility that Freud had misrepresented the facts of the case in writing it up. Thus Frank Sulloway writes that, at last, owing to the "indefatigable efforts" of the Austrian journalist, Karin Obholzer, who located the Wolf Man in Vienna in the early 1970's, we now have access to the Wolf Man's own impressions of his analysis with Freud. According to Sulloway, from Obholzer's conversations we learn that "the Wolf Man himself considered Freud's interpretation of his famous dream to be 'terribly farfetched' and that he also felt betrayed by Freud, who had promised him that he would one day actually remember the traumatic event that had made him ill. 'The whole thing is improbable,' the Wolf Man pointed out, 'because in Russia, children sleep in their nanny's bedroom, not in their parents.' The Wolf Man has also reported that the 'wolves' in his famous dream were not wolves at all, but rather a special breed of wolf-like dogs – a curious and unexplained discrepancy" (Sulloway, 1991: 259). These are only a few of the examples Sulloway draws from Obholzer to support his contention that Freud was fundamentally dishonest in his reporting of this, and all his case histories.

Peter Brooks, on the other hand, finds Obholzer's judgements to be "unreliable" since, as he points out, "she apparently wants to discredit psychoanalysis, or at least score points against Freud's claims that his patient was 'cured'." While it is evident, Brooks writes, that the Wolf Man remained a "compulsive personality who was never entirely free from obsessions and delusions, whose erotic life remained marked by his 'sister complex'... and who never completely resolved the transference relation to Freud, it also seems clear that he managed to negotiate a reasonably normal existence" (1994: 352 n. 2). John Forrester is equally sceptical with regard to the purity of Obholzer's motivations (See, for example the discussion in Forrester 1997, pp. 208-217).

12. Providing a good sense of the tone of this particular strand of criticism is the recent unashamedly partisan collection of essays put together by Crews in *Unauthorized Freud* (1998). Eighteen different authors are represented, with the intention, writes Crews, of using them to restore the "mythified 'discoverer of the unconscious' to human size," in a book which claims to show psychoanalysis as "a mistake which grew into an imposture" (ix). The essays themselves are edited and abridged by Crews to suit his emphasis – re-tailored, in other words, to "take the full measure of Freud's well-documented conceptual errors, relentless apriorism, disregard for counterexamples, bullying investigative manner, shortcuts of reasoning, rhetorical dodges, and all-round chronic untruthfulness..." (ix-x) Contributing to the biased tone of the collection as a whole is the set of new, deliberately "irreverent" titles Crews dreams up for the essays he includes (Frank Sulloway's 1991 "Reassessing Freud's Case Histories: The Social Construction of Psychoanalysis", for example, is re-named "Exemplary Botches", while Rosemarie Sand's "On a Contribution to a Future Scientific Study of Dream Interpretation" (Sand: 1993) is now called "Manifestly

Fallacious"). The collection also includes Frank Cioffi's "Psychoanalysis and the Idea of a Pseudo-Science (Cioffi, 1970, here re-titled "Claims Without Commitments"), and his later influential article "Was Freud a Liar?" (Cioffi, 1974), predictably one of only two essays in the collection allowed to retain their original titles. Cioffi's first essay suggests that psychoanalytic interpretation is made up of arbitrary acts of conjecture that fashion a kind of coherence instead of discovering it within the person or text being studied. These ideas have recently been developed into a full-length study entitled *Freud and the Question of Pseudoscience* (Cioffi, 1998). As for the second article, originally a talk broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in 1973, and then printed in *The Listener* (February, 1974), this piece triggered an intense debate which continues to this day. Cioffi's talk deals with the transition between Freud's "seduction theory" of 1896-97 (his claim that people who became hysterical in adulthood must have been sexually molested as children) and his founding of psychoanalysis proper, with its central focus on "repressed fantasy".

13. These will be discussed in the first part of Chapter Three.

14. See Pletsch, 1982.

15. This was Walter Schönau's doctoral thesis, *Sigmund Freuds Prosa: Literarische Elemente seines Stils* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlag, 1968.) (cited in Mahony, 1987: 10).

CHAPTER ONE

VERSIONS OF FREUD

Much of the commentary on Freud's literary style and technique has come from specialists working at the interface between psychoanalysis and literary studies, and especially from psychoanalytic literary critics. The field of psychoanalytic literary criticism is by now enormous, and the work carried out within it quite bewildering in its diversity.[1] I will say only a few words about it before going on to investigate how the literary-critical approach Freud initiated has since been turned on its creator, and put to work in the interpretation of the founding texts of psychoanalysis itself.

Looking back on the ongoing dialogue between psychoanalysis and literary studies, most critics would probably agree on the emergence from within it of at least two schools of thought: the American and the French. In a review of a number of important collections of essays dealing with the relations between psychoanalysis and literature during the 1970s, John Forrester distinguishes the two schools as follows:

> From the former [evoked most easily by the name Harold Bloom] we have a theory of the practice of writing that inserts the Freudian mechanisms of defence and distortion at the heart of the "poetic process". From the latter [associated most immediately with the name Jacques Lacan] we have a wholesale revision of, and return to, the fundamentals of Freudian theory - a revision whose effects on the theory of literature, the theory of writing and the theory of language stem from a new

> conception of the relation between speech and language, between sign and referent and between signifier and signified (1981: 170).

In its classic form, psychoanalytic literary criticism is what Maud Ellmann has described as "person-centred" (1994: 3). It displaces the object of analysis from the text to some person, be it the author, the reader, or the characters, all of whom are viewed as independent personalities rather than as functions of the text itself. Within this tradition, as Ellmann points out, arguably the most famous psychoanalytic study of a literary character is Ernest Jones' *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949), in which Jones takes up Freud's suggestion in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) that Hamlet is unable to avenge his father's death because he secretly identifies himself with the murderer. Jones shifts the emphasis, however, interpreting Hamlet's hesitation as a symptom of his wish to kill his mother, which gets in the way of his attempts to kill his uncle. "When a man who has been betrayed is emotionally moved to murder, whom should he kill, the rival lover or the lady? It is a nice question," writes Jones (1976[1949]: 92). This question informs his reading of the play as a matricidal tragedy, closer to *Oresteia* than to *Oedipus*. But as Ellmann goes on to suggest, the problem with this, and all similar readings of literary character is their essentially (and unavoidably) speculative nature:

> Jones's reading, though inspired, makes the fundamental error of treating Hamlet as a real person, vexed by unconscious impulses unfathomable even to the text itself. Jones defends this error by protesting that the anguished prince has more vitality than the moribund majority of living people. True – but Hamlet has the disadvantage that he cannot contradict his psychoanalyst. Unlike a real analysand, he cannot lie down on the couch and free associate about his dreams or recapitulate the traumas of his infancy. Amusing as it is to speculate about his early history, Hamlet *never had a childhood.* Jones ignores the difference between a human being made of flesh and a character composed of words, and thereby overlooks the verbal specificities of Shakespeare's text to focus on its universal archetypes (1994: 4).

When the object of classic psychoanalytic criticism is not the literary character (as in Jones's reading of Shakespeare's play), it is more often than not the author. Freud himself was fascinated by the idea of an artistic consciousness. Though he once admitted that the mysteries of artistic creation lay beyond his explanatory powers ("Before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms" ("Dostoevsky and Parricide", SE XXI: 177)), this did not prevent him from speculating on the workings of a wide range of celebrated artistic minds. Along with his insights on Sophocles and Shakespeare, Freud wrote psychobiographical accounts of Dostoevsky and Leonardo da Vinci, and a study of Michaelangelo's Moses. He also wrote a sustained analysis of Jensen's *Gradiva* (1907: SE IX: 1-97), and an influential essay on Hoffmann's short story, 'The Sandman", which has inspired several new readings of the story in recent years. [2]

In the past few decades, psychoanalytic literary criticism has turned its gaze on the writings of its progenitor, Freud himself, setting out to "analyse" Freud, both as reader and interpreter, and as writer. Where Freud as reader and interpreter is concerned, for some he is the "great synthesizer", his strength lying primarily in his ability to make sense out of nonsense, to comprehend the significance of that which appears to be purely random or marginal, and to link together seemingly unrelated events. For others, such as Lis Möller (*The Freudian Reading*, 1991), Freud's power as a reader shows itself not so much in his capacity for persuasive synthesis as in his will to press his inquiry to the point where he encounters the unreadable - that which he *cannot* explain; that which does not fit in with his explanatory system; or that which he can only explain at the risk of overthrowing previous conclusions:

> Such moments of crisis, which one encounters everywhere in Freud's writings, are highly significant points of rupture: problems he believed he had solved suddenly presented themselves in a new and disturbing light, causing him to swerve from his original train of thought, or even to call in question the theoretical foundation of his interpretation. Coherence, comprehensiveness and closure may be what the analyst aims at; it is

however rarely what we get - and this may be the reason why we keep coming back to Freud's text, not just to *consult* it but also, and most importantly, to *read* it" (Möller, 1991: ix-x). [3]

As for Freud the *writer*, here too the diversity of interpretations is noteworthy, and it is to a selection of these that I would now like to turn, as exemplary instances of some of the major trends in this recent critical initiative. Starting with a stylistic study which takes its inspiration from the psychobiographical tradition alluded to above (Patrick Mahony's *Freud as a Writer*), I will begin my investigation by attempting to draw a distinction between this and those readings of Freud's texts associated with what has popularly come to be known as "French Freud" (in particular Derrida's reading of the second chapter of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*). While the underlying objective of both these readings might be said to be the constitution of Freud's scientific project as itself an example of figurative writing, the outcome of each is crucially different.

From here I will move to a discussion of the critical tradition for whom Freud's genius was "poetic" rather than scientific; his ideas more valuable as "metaphors" than as literal truths. Following this discussion, I will put forward an alternative approach, exemplified in Arnold Davidson's reading of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, which presents a version of Freud's genius as neither an imaginative nor a rhetorical one so much as a conceptual one. The next section develops on my remarks on Davidson's reading by examining a number of recent reflections on the epistemology of psychoanalysis, which together suggest the essential heterogeneity of the scientific endeavour for Freud. This leads into my examination of the case histories themselves in the chapters which follow.

I

PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY

Representative (in some respects at least) of the American school Forrester invokes above is Patrick Mahony's *Freud as a Writer*, first published in 1982, and popular enough to have been reissued in an expanded edition by Yale University Press five years later. Here, for the first time, Freud's literary achievement is used as a starting point for an analysis of his "identity as a writer." In his capacity both as practicing psychoanalyst and as professor of English literature at the University of Montreal, Mahony sets out to delimit this "identity" through a proposed "stylistic" exploration of some of his major texts.

Mahony's project, in other words, stands at the intersection described above between the two fields of psychoanalysis and literature – the area to which the editors of *Critical Inquiry* devoted their winter 1987 issue. In her introduction to this issue, Françoise Meltzer suggests that traditionally, when psychoanalysis and literature are brought together, psychoanalysis is assigned an active interpreting position, while literature plays the role of "slave to psychoanalysis' master", the object to be interpreted. Traditionally, "it is psychoanalysis which 'knows' and will tell literature what it is 'really' about. From psychoanalysis literature is supposed to learn what it itself 'means'" (1987: 219). In the usual exchange, suggests Meltzer, literature exists for the purpose of manifesting, almost in spite of itself, a psychoanalytic truth:

> Since fiction is made possible by the constitution of the subject, and since it is the role of psychoanalysis to demonstrate how that constitution occurs, then it follows, psychoanalysis would have it, that fiction becomes truth and thus useful only when decoded by psychoanalysis. Otherwise, it remains merely fable. Literature is then 'recognized' by psychoanalysis only as the producer of *Stoff* for interpretation and consumption - precisely the position of the slave in the Hegelian model. In this position, literature cannot afford to recognize itself. Even if

> literature is mystified, as it often is in Freud or Lacan, it is so because it appears to have an arbitrary conception, which psychoanalysis will unravel as the ineluctable and incessant unfolding of the unconscious - nothing accidental, finally, at all. Except that literature does not know this. Its coherence, further, will be destroyed by the psychoanalytic reading; but it is only a surface coherence - the deeper one, the one of which literature itself is ignorant, will be revealed by psychoanalysis (1987: 218).

Furthermore, not only literature is "partitive" in this way in the perspective of psychoanalysis, maintains Meltzer. The same would apply to all other disciplines: "Linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, history, feminism, `humanism` could all be said to remain incomplete and ultimately less than meaningful without the overarching vision offered by psychoanalysis" (1987: 219). It is precisely in their implicit opposition to this notion of psychoanalysis' "overarching vision" that the essays in the collection introduced by Meltzer find their common ground - by turning psychoanalysis, in other words, from the interpreter into that which is to be interpreted; by making of it not the "all-consuming master subject" of inquiry, but, for once, its object.

Potentially at least, Mahony's promised "stylistic" project belongs in the same group as the above, for here too it is apparently not the established notions of psychoanalysis that Mahony proposes to bring to the practice of reading, but the texts of psychoanalysis themselves which are to be "put on trial", as it were. But in the end, the project barely fulfills its potential: first, because of the author's failure to ground his exploration of Freud's style in any linguistic tradition which might conceivably lend his version of "stylistics" a less than purely arbitrary status; [4] and second, because of the project's consequent inevitable degeneration, as the work proceeds, from the promised investigation of Freud's writing itself into a series of crude and speculative remarks more concerned with the assignment of psychical motivations to the author than what he had to say.

Evidently, Mahony is of the school which subscribes to the notion that creativity is some sort of disease which (as Meltzer puts it) "once the author is cured, disappears" - the same school which, at a seminar for analysts at a psychoanalytic institute in a major American city, came up with a reading of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* which argued that he wrote it because he struggled with a "negative maternal introject." When it was suggested to the analyst concerned that to see a great work of art purely as a psychoanalytic symptom might be to adopt an impoverished view of the creative act, he responded to his critic (who happened to be a woman) that she too was in need of the cure: "From your reaction to my paper," he is reported to have said, "I am afraid that I must inform you that you too seem to have an unresolved conflict with your mother. Since you are a woman, this conflict has blocked your normal Oedipal development, and thus makes your relation to your father problematic. As I am the paternal figure here - male, older - I must conclude that you are resisting my interpretation of Baudelaire because you are personally defensive with me and what I represent." [5]

My own resistance in reading Mahony is to the multitude of such symptoms which he manages to uncover, in the course of his study, in Freud's creative output: Can there be any scholarly significance, for instance, in the revelation (a product of Mahony's scratchings through Freud's personal correspondence) that Freud's habit of addressing his lectures to a single member of the audience - very often to his great friend Lou Andreas-Salome, as he tells her in one of his letters - was, in Mahony's view, a manifestation of his "anxiety" about "exteriorizing his ultimately undefinable unconscious," a symptom of Freud's "personal insecurity" which "sought containment in a projected psychic space bounded and defined by good object relations"? (1987: 58) How does it help us to know that Freud's "creativity was at its highest when he was in a bad mood," or that he found a "symbolic paternal value in writing"? Or how are we to respond to the fatuous remark that writing was for Freud above all else a sort of masturbatory impulse - in Mahony's words, "a sublimating satisfaction for his drives," an attempt to "master them," or to give them "external realization"?

In his preface to *Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text*, Geoffrey Hartman remarks that ideally,

> psychoanalysis should provide a closer mode of close reading. Instead, it often blinds the "scientific" interpreter to the use of language, his own as well as that of the text at hand. The reductionist types of reading that result add nothing to theme, symbol, and archetype hunting. What does it matter that the drift of an interpretation is descendental rather than ascendental, that sex rather than a lofty ideal proves to be the key? Such concepts as sublimation or regression in the service of the ego or defensive mastery do not compensate for the crudeness and tactlessness of these ventures. That the patient - in this case the text - survives is something of a miracle (1978: xv).

Mahony's study is an almost parodic embodiment of the kind of "reductionist moves" identified both by Meltzer and Hartman, and which Hartman associates particularly with certain "older" kinds of psychoanalytic interpretations (Freud's excepted) which we read "only to know the worst... to get them over with..." or, as he puts it, "to admire the artist for the odds he overcame, or ourselves for staying relatively sane though born *inter faeces et urinas*" (1978: xv).

Hartman generously excludes Freud's own interpretive efforts from the reductionist forms of psychobiographical study he is attacking here. Yet it was of course Freud himself who, in a now notorious remark, effectively endorsed late nineteenth-century attempts to relate genius to madness, the artist to the neurotic: "An artist is once more in rudiments an introvert, not far removed from neurosis. He is oppressed by excessively powerful instinctual needs. He desires to win honour, power, love, wealth, fame and the love of women, but he lacks the means of achieving these satisfactions" ("Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis", SE XVI: 376). [6] And in an earlier essay ("The Interest of Psycho-Analysis from the Point of View of Aesthetics", 1913), the object of the whole artistic enterprise is reduced by Freud to the fulfillment of an infantile wish: "In the exercising of an art it [psychoanalysis] sees once again an activity

intended to allay ungratified wishes – in the first place in the creative artist himself and subsequently in his audience or spectators" (SE XIII: 187).

As Elizabeth Wright points out, however, psychobiography has its roots not in Freud but in what had come to be called 'pathography' by the end of the nineteenth century: the study of the artist not for the sake of the work or even the man, but for the purpose of classifying a particular pathology. Studies of this type appeared in a periodical called *Imago* (published in Vienna, Leipzig and Zurich), from 1912 to 1937 the chief organ for the publication of writings dealing with the relation of psychoanalysis and the arts and all aspects of culture. Freud himself was ambivalent in his responses to pathographical studies. Though he designated his Leonardo essay as such (SE XI: 130), he was critical of others working in this area, wishing to shift the emphasis from the validation of a particular pathology to the psychoanalytic process as such. It is this shift of concern, Wright suggests, which is reflected in the now more commonly used term 'psychobiography.' [7]

II
THE FRENCH CONNECTION

However we situate the form, and however we determine Freud's relation to it, it is crucial that Mahony's psychobiographical investigation (representative as it is of what Jacques Derrida might have called a form of "empirico-biographical explanation" whose function, ultimately, is to reduce the text to an excuse for the performance of an episode in the life of the author) be distinguished from that form of criticism concerned primarily with the relation between objectivity and subjectivity in discourse, one of whose functions is to foreground the place of the subject in his or her own work; to foreground, in other words, the fact that "every utterance implies its own subject" (Barthes, 1967: 898). Only the latter form of psychobiographical enterprise, in its capacity to demonstrate the necessity of the

subject's constitution within discourse, is in a position to participate in the Barthesian project to "de-throne" scientific discourse from the privileged position in which it is held by society as a meta-language... Only the latter form is appropriately positioned to demonstrate that, as Barthes writes,

> ...the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity or, if one prefers, the place of the subject in his own work, can no longer be thought of as in the halcyon days of positivist science. Objectivity and rigour, those attributes of the scientist which are still used as a stick to beat us with, are essentially preparatory qualities, necessary at the time of starting out on the work, and as such there is no cause to suspect or abandon them. But they are not qualities that can be transferred to the discourse itself, except by a sort of sleight-of-hand, a purely metonymical procedure which confuses *precaution* with its end product in discourse. Every utterance implies its own subject, whether this subject be expressed in an apparently direct fashion, by the use of "I", or indirectly, by being referred to as "he", or avoided altogether by means of impersonal constructions (1967: 898).

What is excluded in the utterance is always only the "person", psychological, emotional, or biographical, certainly not the subject - a point amply demonstrated by many of those readings of Freud's texts associated with what has popularly come to be known as "French Freud". [8] One of the objectives of this recent French initiative is to constitute Freud's scientific project as itself an example of figurative writing, by focusing most insistently on the *textuality* of his work. These deconstructive readings of Freud set out to throw into relief the tension in the writing, to invoke and elicit the contradictions through which Freud disturbs fixed logical categorizations. In Jonathan Culler's words,

> Freud begins with a series of hierarchical oppositions: normal/pathological, sanity/insanity, real/imaginary, experience/dream, conscious/unconscious, life/death. In each case the first term has been conceived as prior, a plenitude of which the second is a negation or

> complication. Situated on the margin of the first term, the second term designates an undesirable, dispensable deviation. Freud's investigations deconstruct these oppositions by identifying what is at stake in our desire to repress the second term and showing that in fact each first term can be seen as a special case of the fundamentals designated by the second term, which in this process is transformed. Understanding of the marginal deviant term becomes a condition of understanding the supposed prior term (1983: 160-1).

Pushing this initiative to its extreme, in his own numerous readings of Freud, Jacques Derrida not only deconstructs Freud's texts, but uses them to reflect upon the very activity of deconstruction itself. As Wright puts it, "For Derrida, Freud becomes a Derridean *avant la lettre*, paradoxically, by showing this very idiom to be a mere figure of speech/writing. There is no 'before the letter': the subject *is* the subject of writing, both its product (as already written) and its producer (as rewriting the written)" (1998: 121-22). Derrida's reading of the second chapter of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which he analyses Freud's account of the episode of the grandchild's game with the wooden reel, the fort/da episode, exemplifies this initiative in a way which can be usefully compared with Mahony. [9]

The game is played by Freud's grandchild who, at the age of one and a half, is observed by his grandfather playing with a wooden reel with a piece of string tied around it. "It never occurred to [the child] to pull it along the floor behind him, for instance, and play at its being a carriage," writes Freud. "What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skilfully throw it over the edge of his little curtained bed, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his meaningful 'o-o-o-o' [signifying 'gone']. He then pulled the reel out of the bed again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful 'da' [signifying 'there']. This, then, was the complete game - disappearance and return. As a rule one witnessed only its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act" (SE XVIII: 15).

Derrida's reading is based on the hypothesis that the process of repetition identified in the fort/da game is "re-enacted" in the account itself in a way which can be shown to "re-inscribe" the writer (Freud) in his own text:

> If we consider the argumentative framework of the chapter, we notice that something repeats itself, and this process of repetition must be identified not only in the content (the examples, the materials described and analyzed) but also in Freud's very writing, in the "steps" taken by his text, in what it does as well as in what it says, in its "acts" as much as in its "objects." What obviously repeats itself in this chapter is the movement of the speculator to reject, set aside, make disappear (fort), defer everything that seems to call the PP into question.[10] He notes that it is not enough, that he must postpone the question. Then he summons back the hypothesis of something beyond the pleasure principle only to dismiss it again. The hypothesis returns only like something that has not really returned but has merely passed into the ghost of its presence (1978: 114/115).

According to Derrida, the description of Ernst's game - of the "earnest game of Ernst, the elder grandson of the grandfather of psychoanalysis" - should no longer be read only as a theoretical argument, "a strictly theoretical speculation that tends to conclude that what we have here is the repetition compulsion or the death drive or simply an inner limit to the PP", but rather that the description of Ernst's game can also be read as an "autobiography" of Freud - "not merely an autobiography entrusting his life to his own more or less testamentary writing but a more or less living description of his own writing, of his way of writing *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1978: 119).

> [J]ust as Ernst, in recalling the object (mother, plaything, or whatever), comes also to recall himself in an immediately supplementary operation, in the same way the speculating grandfather, describing or recalling this or that, recalls himself, and produces what is called his text, making a

> contract with himself so as to be left holding all the strings of his line, descendants and ascendants, in an incontestable ascendancy (1978: 134).

By proffering both a multiple subject for the text (Freud as writer, father, grandfather, "father" of a discipline) and a multiple object (the fort/da game; the relation of the pleasure principle to a "beyond"; filiation; dissemination, or the projection of psychoanalysis into the future while at the same time attempting to master that future by repetition) Derrida's reading demonstrates how Freud's text both accounts for and at the same time "acts out" the psychoanalytic processes - such as those of the dream-work - that Freud examined. [11] At the same time, he demonstrates how the subject is constituted within his own discourse. But what survives in the Derridean reading, even as it sets out to "re-inscribe" the writer (Freud) in his text, is a comment not on the man, nor on his life, but on the nature and texture of writing itself, on the fact that the "institutional character of the science of psychoanalysis stands in relation to the institutional character of writing itself" (Hartman 1978: xii), and on the fact of the impossibility, at significant moments, of the writer's achieving any discursive distance from or perspective on what is written:

> This text is auto-biographical, but in a completely different way from what was believed before... "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" is ... not an example of what we believe we already know under the name of auto-biography. It writes the autobiographical, and, from the fact that an "author" recounts something of his life in it, we can no longer conclude that the document is without truth value, without value as science or philosophy. A "domain" opens up in which the "inscription" of a subject in his text is also the necessary condition for the pertinence and performance of a text, for its "worth" beyond what is called empirical subjectivity (if, indeed, there is such a thing, since subjectivity speaks, writes, and substitutes one object for another) (1978: 135).

Ironically, Mahony's psychobiographical project can only be described as "pre-Freudian" by comparison. In its commitment precisely to delimiting Freud's

"identity as a writer", to identifying a single unitary self which would be the source and locus of Freud's entire oeuvre, Mahony implicitly rejects the very Freudian scenario which would have revealed to him the impossibility of his project - a scenario in which the notion of a unitary identity which waits to be revealed to all who take the trouble to uncover it is replaced by that of a subject inevitably partial and divided, consisting not in a single self but instead in a number of "quasi selves" (see Rorty, 1986: 7) which lurk beneath the threshold of consciousness, irrecoverable in toto even to the mind they inhabit.

If Mahony's project displays any sensitivity at all to the notion of an unconscious, it is to the reductive notion of the unconscious as a "seething mass of inarticulate instinctual energies" - a "reservoir of libido" - which, as Rorty has pointed out, is just another name for "the passions", the lower part of the soul, the "bad, false self" (1986: 7). To view the conscious/ unconscious distinction in this way is to see it essentially in terms of the Platonic reason-passion distinction; but had this indeed been the only sense Freud gave to the term his work would have left our self-image largely unchanged: "What is novel in Freud's view of the unconscious is his claim that our unconscious selves are not dumb, sullen, lurching brutes, but rather the intellectual peers of our conscious selves, possible conversational partners for those selves" (Rorty, 1986: 7). In the new, Freudian picture, complex and sophisticated sets of transactions between two or more "intellects" in a single body take the place of the older, traditional picture - apparently endorsed by Mahony - of one "intellect" (which is constituted in consciousness) struggling with a mob of "irrational" brutes (constituted in the unconscious). Mahony's psychobiographical investigation - representative as it is of at least one major interpretive tradition which has arisen at the intersection between psychoanalytic and literary theory - reveals a model of the unconscious which, ironically, denies to Freud's theory both its novelty and its complexity.

III

LITERARY FREUD

As part of his psycho-biographical investigation of Freud's writing, Mahony includes a gushing tribute to Freud's "literary genius." This places Mahony's reading amongst many recent essays in which Freud has been acclaimed as proto-novelist - in which his texts (in particular the case histories) have been compared to great works of fiction. Representative is Steven Marcus' influential reading of Freud's *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, better known as the case of "Dora".

In his analysis, Marcus compares the narrative course of Freud's history of Dora's illness and treatment to the general form of the modern experimental novel. Like a modernist writer, he suggests, Freud begins the case history with an elaborate introduction concerning the problematical status of his undertaking and the dubious character of his final achievement. In addition, like the familiar "unreliable narrator" of modernist fiction, Freud pauses at regular intervals to remind the reader that his insight into the complex of events composing the case history has remained "fragmentary", that his understanding of it remains in some essential sense permanently occluded (1985: 66). The set of "Prefatory Remarks" to the history are regarded by Marcus as a kind of "novelistic framing action", in which Freud "rehearses his motives, reasons, and intentions and begins at the same time to work his insidious devices upon the reader":

> First, exactly like a novelist, he remarks that what he is about to let us in on is positively scandalous, for "the complete elucidation of a case of hysteria is bound to involve the revelation of intimacies and the betrayal of ... secrets." Second, again like a writer of fiction, he has deliberately chosen persons, places and circumstances that will remain obscure; the scene is laid not in metropolitan Vienna but "in a remote provincial town." He has from the beginning kept the circumstances that Dora was his patient such a close secret that only one other physician - "in whose

> discretion I have complete confidence" - knows about it. He has "postponed publication" of this essay for "four whole years," also in the cause of discretion ... Finally he has buried the case even deeper by publishing it "in a purely scientific and technical periodical" in order to secure yet another "guarantee against unauthorized readers." He has, in short, made his own mystery within a mystery, and one of the effects of such obscure preliminary goings-on is to create a kind of Nabokovian frame - what we have here is a history framed by an explanation which is itself slightly out of focus (1985: 68).

During the course of his essay, Marcus compares the content of Freud's text to a play by Ibsen (1985: 64); its "forbidding" and "disconcerting" quality, in which the writer "succumbs to no impulse to make it easy for the reader" is said to be reminiscent of both Borges and Nabokov (1985: 69-70); and the elaborate "interweaving" of the various strands of time in the account or, as Marcus puts it, Freud's "geological fusing of the various time strata – strata that are themselves at the same time fluid and shifting" are described as virtually "Proustian" in their complexity (1985:73). Finally, as Marcus reminds us, the actual events of the case (quite apart from Freud's narration of them) are themselves "full of such literary and novelistic devices or conventions as thematic analogies, double plots, reversals, inversions, variations, and betrayals - full of what the 'sharp-sighted' Dora as well as the sharp-sighted Freud thought of as 'hidden connections'" (1985: 79-80). The work of the reading as a whole is thus to seek out the traces of modernist fiction in Freud's prose.

Similar comparisons are drawn between Freud and the great masters of modernist fiction in Peter Brooks' widely read essay on another of Freud's best-known case histories, that of the "Wolf Man" ("Fictions of the Wolf Man", 1984). Even before he comes to Freud in 1910, the Wolf Man is cast, in Brooks' reading, as a literary character: Emblematic of one aspect of European high bourgeois culture in its finest flowering - "the morbid narcissism of its most sensitive and artistic souls" - the Wolf Man reminds us, suggests Brooks, of the "decadent" des Esseintes, hero of Huysmans's *A Rebours*, indeed of "a whole

line of valetudinarian heroes reaching back to Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's Axel..." (267). Like the novels of Mann and Proust, Brooks continues, the Wolf Man's story seems to "draw up the balance sheet of European high bourgeois culture at the moment of its apparent triumph as it blindly prepares its self-immolation. By the time of his return to Freud, the social order that produced the Wolf Man, and his story, had been shattered, the 'proud power' of European civilization lay in fragments, its advanced culture stunned by reversal" (267, 268).

As for Freud the writer, in this account Brooks sees him as in a position analogous to that of a "Proustian narrator in relation to his own buried past or, better, to those Faulknerian narrators who must unearth, order, make sense of the past stories of others in order to make sense of history and their own understandings of life" (271). Furthermore, in as much as the investigative procedures of the psychoanalyst can be said to resemble those of the detective, and thus the narrative of the case history to invoke that of the detective story, Freud is said to move definitively beyond the "Holmes canon" in the case of the Wolf Man, almost inadvertently discovering "detection" and its narrative to be extraordinarily more "complex" and "problematic" than the creator of Sherlock Holmes could have imagined – "like the plots of modernist fiction, and indeed inextricably bound up with the fictional":

> In Freud's early case histories, those of *Studies on Hysteria*, finding the chain of events leading from the initial trauma, usually infantile, to its sexualized repetition, usually during adolescence, on to the present symptoms provided a seamless narrative that was thought to be cathartic and therefore in itself curative. The detective story in the case of the Wolf Man is evidently far more complex than anything in the Holmes canon; it resembles more the tenuous solutions to uncertain problems presented by *Heart of Darkness* or a number of tales by Jorge Luis Borges. Not only does Freud question whether one can, or need, claim that "in the beginning was the deed" – since the imagined can have the full originary force of the deed – he also proposes a radical revision of conventional notions of narrative causality (280).

Thus while the case of Dora reads to Brooks like a "flawed Victorian novel", one with a "ramifying cast of characters and relations that never can be brought into satisfactory form", with the case of the Wolf Man, Freud has, he suggests, progressed and advanced to a "more sophisticated presentation of complex narrative plots and a more subtle understanding of what the 'healthy' narrative of life may be" (282). And Brooks has little difficulty invoking all the masters of modernist prose he finds reflected in diverse elements of the Wolf Man's story as narrated by Freud - including Conrad, Joyce, Mann, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot, Gide, Kafka, Borges, Giradoux and many others. "A nonfictional genre concerning a real person," Brooks concludes, "the case history of the Wolf Man is *radically allied to the fictional* since its causes and connections depend on probabilistic constructions rather than authoritative facts, and on imaginary scenarios of lack and desire, and since the very language that it must work with, as object and medium of its explanations, takes its form from histories of desire consubstantial with what cannot be" (284, my emphasis).

One of the effects of readings such as Marcus' and Brooks', and of the initiative they represent, is to contribute to the popular perception of Freud as a "literary genius", simultaneously, and in the process, underwriting, even if only tacitly, representations of Freud as "unscientific". Yet despite Freud's own well documented enthusiasm for the novelist's art, it is not certain he would have cared much for either Marcus' or Brooks' efforts, nor even the embedded tribute to his literary skill. Indeed, historically, the public's recognition of his success as an artist had, more often than not, been synonymous with a refusal to acknowledge his validity as a scientist - a bitter reminder to Freud of the public's scepticism with regard to the *theoretical* value in his writing.

Such was the case on the occasion of the publication of the *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) for which the most substantial recognition came not from the scientific community but from the poet, literary historian, and dramatic critic, Alfred von Bergner, then professor of the History of Literature in the university and director of the imperial theatre in Vienna: "We dimly conceive the idea that

it may one day become possible to approach the innermost secret of human personality . . . " wrote von Bergner. "The theory itself is in fact nothing but the kind of psychology used by poets" (Jones, 1961: 224). In medical circles however, and in the scientific community as a whole, the book was not well received (Jones, 1961: 223 ff).

Five years later, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) was given a similar reception. Some eighteen months after publication, no scientific periodical, and only a few others, had so much as mentioned the book. According to Jones, it was simply ignored. Although the book was not entirely neglected by the psychological periodicals, its reviews here were almost as destructive as complete silence would have been: one proclaiming the danger that "uncritical minds would be delighted to join in this play with ideas and would end up in complete mysticism and chaotic arbitrariness"; another settling for the conclusion that "the imaginative thoughts of an artist had triumphed over the scientific investigator" (Jones, 1961: 307).

In the case of Marcus, his response to the Dora case pivots on the allegation that the "central moment" of the "central scene" of Dora's life (and Freud's text) - a scene which Freud orchestrates with "inimitable richness", according to Marcus, and with the "tact" and "sense of form" that one associates with a classical composer of music, or with Proust, Mann or Joyce - this central moment, which becomes thereafter the central "reality" of the case, is a "reconstruction" that Freud has "formed in his own mind":

> This pivotal construction becomes henceforth the principal "reality" of the case, and we must also observe that this reality remains Freud's more than Dora's, since he was never quite able to convince her of the plausibility of the construction, or, to regard it from the other pole of the dyad, she was never quite able to accept this version of reality, of what "really" happened (1985: 79). [12]

Marcus is eager to proclaim the "unquestionable genius" of this "pivotal construction", but it is clearly a "literary" rather than a "scientific" genius he has in mind. By suggesting that the "central character" in the action in this history is not Dora but Freud himself, that it is "his story that is being written and not hers that is being re-told," Marcus simultaneously repeats the claim, which is also his central thesis, that the history of Dora's case, as constructed in Freud's text, is essentially a fictional one. He emphasizes that the "reality" Freud insists upon is very different from the "reality" that Dora is claiming and clinging to. And he goes on to suggest that not only does Freud overlook for the most part this critical difference, he also adopts no measures for dealing with it: "The demon of interpretation has taken hold of him, and it is this power that presides over the case of Dora" (1985: 85).

In this way, what begins as a tribute to Freud's power as an artist ends as an attack, if only implicitly, on his integrity as a scientist - an attack in which the "demon of interpretation" is the principal target. What begins, in other words, as a potentially liberating gesture, promising in its inter-disciplinary nature to go beyond the opposition between science and literature, ends by surreptitiously reinforcing it. Like other masterpieces of literature or the arts, Marcus claims, Freud's case histories seem to possess certain "trans-historical qualities" - which if they are by no means easy to specify, are nevertheless clearly discernible. The implacable "march of science", he writes, has not - or has not yet - consigned them to "mere history": "Their singular and mysterious complexity, density and richness have thus far prevented such a transformation and demotion" (1985: 56). In effect, this is to place art and science on either side of an unbridgeable divide - one in which science is ephemeral, subject to the relentless passage of history, while art is "timeless" and lives forever; it is simultaneously to suggest, in effect, that if Freud's case histories are still in circulation, it is to their "trans-historical qualities", that is, to their "complexity, density and richness" as works of art not science that they owe their life.

In a more recent confrontation between literary criticism and another of Freud's best-known case histories - that of the "Wolf Man" - Stanley Fish makes

a parallel while singularly more direct attack on Freud's scientific integrity. I will respond to Fish's essay in detail in Chapter Four of this study. For now, note simply that the force of Fish's attack is invested primarily in the by now familiar allegation that the greater part of the final interpretation of the dream which is the centre-piece of the Wolf-man's analysis, is the product of "persuasion and force" on the part of Freud, the analyst, rather than the result of independent work on the part of the patient.

Fish's arguments against the "independence" of the Wolf-man's analysis, along with Marcus' claim that in the Dora case history, "it is Freud's story that is being written and not Dora's that is being re-told", are situated at the edge of a much broader (and continuing) tradition of criticism which attacks Freudian psychoanalysis on the grounds that it "acts by suggestion" - or, in Fish's terms, "that what the analyst claims to uncover (in the archaeological sense of which Freud was so fond) he actually creates by verbal and rhetorical means." Within this tradition, the principal objection to psychoanalysis follows Wittgenstein's observation that Freud is constantly claiming to be scientific, but what he gives is speculation - "something prior even to the formulation of a hypothesis." [13] In Wittgenstein's view, the only reason these "speculations" have gained a certain popularity in the mind of the public is through their "appeal" or their "charm" as explanations: "the picture of people having unconscious thoughts has a charm. The idea of an underworld, a secret cellar. Something hidden, uncanny... A lot of things one is ready to believe because they are uncanny" (Cited in Cioffi, 1969: 186). [14]

The same fundamental objection is embedded in Sebastian Timpanaro's reference in *The Freudian Slip* (1976) to the "captious and sophistical method, resistant to any verification, quick to force interpretations to secure pre-ordained proofs, employed by Freud and Freudians in their explanations of slips, dreams and neurotic symptoms" (1976: 14). Timpanaro's aim in this study, which concentrates on *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, is to "demystify a mode of reasoning which is also to be found in other of Freud's works – in particular *The Interpretation of Dreams* and in general, all those writings which are

dominated by the work of 'interpretation', which belongs to the 'anti-scientific' aspect of psychoanalysis. Timpanaro uses the word "anti-scientific" because he regards it as the most appropriate to designate the ensemble of diverse objections which can be made against psychoanalysis - objections which, as he points out, are interrelated if not identical. It is apparent that in both Fish's and Timpanaro's view, a method of investigation which admits the practice of interpretation cannot by nature be scientific. [15]

Traditionally, and prior to the work of the French women's liberation group *Psychanalyse et politique*, feminists have rooted their objections in similar ground. Historically, for many feminists, Freud has been, and indeed still is a prime target as a "male chauvinist" whose so-called "scientific" propaganda has been responsible for damning a generation of emancipated women to the passivity of the second sex (cited in Mitchell, 1974: 303). In her survey of traditional feminist attacks on the Freudian notion of femininity (*Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, 1974), Juliet Mitchell elicits the common claim on which their diverse arguments rest - namely, that Freud's theories are not based on what may justifiably be called scientific evidence. [16] Particularly pertinent here is the work of Shulamith Firestone who, taking her cue from Havelock Ellis's remark, in 1917, that Freud was a great artist but not a scientist, finds "poetic" rather than "scientific" genius in Freud's work:

> But was there any value in [Freud's] ideas? Let us re-examine some of them once again, this time from a radical feminist view. I believe Freud was talking about something real, though perhaps his ideas, taken literally, lead to absurdity. In this regard, consider that Freud's genius was poetic rather than scientific; his ideas more valuable as metaphors rather than literal truths (cited in Mitchell, 1974: 346).

In the same way, Marcus attributes the fascination of the Dora case history (as well as its ultimate failure) to Freud's genius as a story-teller, while for Fish, the appeal of Freudian propositions in general (and in the Wolf-man case history specifically) is directly attributable to the peculiar "discursive power" of which

and by which they have been constructed. The true content of Freudian explanations, according to Fish, is the story of their making, the story of "persuasion ... practised on a massive scale", in which the reader only believes what he is told because he has "fallen totally under the control of the teller."

Underlying all these readings is the implicit requirement that (in Barthesian terms), even if literature knows that language is never naive, never "transparent" – that is, that it can never convey any "truth" which is extraneous to writing, which is not a truth having to do with the art of writing itself - the language of science, on the other hand, must remain "innocent": a neutral utensil, an instrument merely, to convey a "meaning" or a "truth" or a "fact" which is beyond it, foreign to it. All these readings, in other words, end by endorsing the privileged position assumed by scientific discourse as the referential code for all the "ex-centric" languages, which themselves are merely its sub-codes.

IV
BEYOND PSYCHOANALYSIS AND/OR SCIENCE

It has been said that in the history of psychoanalysis, two competing myths about Freud have gradually developed. In a recently published reading of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,* framed as a challenge to both, Arnold Davidson characterizes these myths as follows:

> The first myth, that of official psychoanalysis, depicts Freud as a lonely genius, isolated and ostracized by his colleagues, fashioning psychoanalysis single-handedly and in perpetual struggle with the world at large. The history of psychoanalysis under the sway of this myth has become the story of Freud as triumphant revolutionary. The second, opposing myth pictures Freud as getting all of his ideas from someone

else - usually Wilhelm Fliess, although the names of Jean Martin Charcot, Havelock Ellis, and Albert Moll, among many others, are also mentioned frequently - and taking credit for what were in fact no more than minor modifications in previously developed theories. This is the myth of the career discontents, and the history of psychoanalysis dominated by it has become the story of Freud as demagogue, usurper, and megalomaniac (1987: 256). [17]

To these two myths we might now add a third, in which Freud emerges most strongly as a literary genius, whose imaginative and rhetorical powers occasionally enabled him to seduce his audience into mistakenly identifying his theoretical double-talk with scientific fact. This is the Wittgensteinian story of psychoanalysis as essentially duplicitous and dangerous, likely to do more harm than good: "Because although one may discover in the course of it various things about oneself, one must have a very strong and keen and persistent criticism in order to recognise and see through the mythology that is offered or imposed on one. There is an inducement to say, 'Yes, of course, it must be like that...'" (1972: 52). Under the sway of this representation, the history of psychoanalysis is itself the history of a "powerful mythology", the story of Freud as at worst hypocrite and dissembler, at best master illusionist. [18]

To the extent that the perpetrators of this myth both recognize and focus upon what many of Freud's critics ignore (namely, the place of language in his work), my own investigation would go along with them. I would, however, want to give this recognition a new emphasis away from the allegiance it so often appears to entail to the notion of science as a form of neutral language, an instrument of thought - which, if it has a certain need of language, is nevertheless not, like literature, *in* language. It is this allegiance, both implicit and explicit, that contributes inevitably to the perception that the so-called literary qualities of Freud's writing must necessarily disqualify it as science.

Consequently, and paradoxically, the very focus of these commentaries on the textuality of Freud's writing, far from encouraging the "mutation" in the

consciousness of scientific discourse called for by Barthes, ends rather by confirming its present notion of itself as a superior referential code in relation to which all others are mere embellishments. The question of how to avoid remaining trapped within the binary system of science and literature will be crucial in the readings of the case histories which follow. What would it mean, in other words, to read Freud so as neither to elide the place of language in his work nor to acknowledge it - whether intentionally or otherwise - only as a threat to its credibility as science?

It is in the response it offers to this question that Davidson's reading of the *Three Essays* seems to me particularly significant. In it, Davidson suggests that previous commentaries on these texts have been marked by an under-estimation of their historical, rhetorical and conceptual density - an under-estimation stemming from what he defines as historiographical assumptions which quickly misdirect us away from the fundamental issues at stake in Freud's work. What distinguishes his own reading is an attachment, as he puts it, to a different epistemological and methodological orientation from that at work in previous material – a "different and particular way of doing the history of psychoanalysis." Central to this new epistemological and methodological orientation is the archaeological perspective of Michel Foucault, a perspective he both "adopts" and "adapts" in his attempt to write a history of nineteenth-century psychiatric theories of sexuality (1987: 254-55). [19]

Davidson's reading sets out first to determine whether the structure of concepts associated with Freud's writings continues, extends, diverges from, or undermines the conceptual space of nineteenth-century psychiatry:

> What we need ... is a history of the concepts used in psychoanalysis, an account of their historical origins and transformations, their rules of combination, and their employment in a mode of reasoning. This task presumes, first, that we can isolate the distinctive concepts of nineteenth-century psychiatry, articulate their rules of combination, and thereby discern their limits of the possible. We must then undertake the very same

> enterprise for Freud's work, which, with sufficient detail, should enable us to see more clearly whether Freud's conceptual space continues or breaks with that of his predecessors (1987: 257).

His emphasis in this undertaking thus lies on the *conceptual* and *historical* dimensions of language - the conceptual as contingent on the historical - and it is this shift from the rhetorical to the historical and conceptual which distinguishes Davidson's Freud from the tradition of textual analysis exemplified in the earlier mentioned essays by Marcus and Fish. What then emerges in Davidson is a version of Freud's "genius" as neither an imaginative nor a rhetorical one so much as a conceptual one, grounded less in his manipulatory powers when dealing with the language of nineteenth-century psychiatry than in his ability, at the level of conceptual articulation above all, fundamentally to alter it: "Many writers before Freud possessed bits and pieces of his terminology and exhibited an inchoate, unself-possessed grappling with the problems brought to light by the *Three Essays*," writes Davidson. "But it was Freud who ascended to the level of concepts, who systematically and lucidly thought what had previously remained in a kind of precognitive blockage..." (1987: 275). The true source of Freud's "genius" thus emerges not so much in his ability to work *with* language as in his power to proceed *in spite of it*.

The particular concept on which Davidson focuses his attention in this essay is that of "sexual perversion". His analysis thus concentrates primarily on the first of Freud's *Three Essays*, "Sexual Aberrations". He begins with the observation that in order even to approximate to a comprehensive reading of this essay, it will be necessary to begin before Freud, with the prevailing concept of sexual aberration (or perversion) in the literature of nineteenth-century psychiatry - to "demarcate the conceptual space of which perversion was an element that dominated European psychiatry at the time Freud was writing the *Three Essays*." And he goes on to point out that the best way to begin to understand the nineteenth-century conceptual space encircling perversion will be to examine the notion of the "sexual instinct": "for the conception of perversion underlying clinical thought was that of a functional disease of this instinct. That is to say, the

class of diseases that affected the sexual instinct was precisely the sexual perversions" (1987: 258).

To be able to determine what phenomena are functional disturbances or diseases of the sexual instinct, Davidson proceeds, one must also specify in what the *normal*, or natural, function of this instinct consists: "Without knowing the normal function of the instinct, everything and nothing could count as a functional disturbance" (1987: 260). Indeed, by the time Freud inherits the concept of the sexual instinct, as Davidson goes on to demonstrate, there is virtually unargued unanimity not only on the fact that this instinct does have a natural function, but also on what that function is. The view of Krafft-Ebing (in his *Textbook of Insanity*) is offered as representative:

> During the time of the maturation of physiological processes in the reproductive glands, desires arise in the consciousness of the individual, which have for their purpose the perpetuation of the species (sexual instinct) ... With opportunity for the natural satisfaction of the sexual instinct, every expression of it that does not correspond with the purpose of nature - i.e., propagation - must be regarded as perverse (1987: 260).

The natural function of the sexual instinct then, is propagation, and the corresponding natural, psychological satisfaction of this instinct must then consist in the satisfaction derived from heterosexual, genital intercourse. Sadism, masochism, fetishism, and homosexuality must all then be classified together as perversions since, as Davidson points out, "all exhibit the same kind of perverse expression of the sexual instinct, the same basic kind of functional deviation, which manifests itself in the fact that psychological satisfaction is obtained primarily through activities disconnected from the natural function of the instinct" (1987: 262).

This then is the prevailing conception of the sexual instinct and its perversions which Freud inherits and with which he is obliged to work in his *Three Essays*. To this popular conception of the sexual instinct Freud introduces two new

technical terms: The *sexual object* is "the person from whom sexual attraction proceeds," while the *sexual aim* is "the act towards which the instinct tends" (1987: 263). As far as the "perversions" are concerned, these may now be classified in terms of (1) deviations with respect to the sexual object which, in relation to the prevalent conception of the natural function of the sexual instinct, must necessarily consist in deviations from the natural attraction exercised by one sex upon the other; and (2) deviations with respect to sexual aim, which must now necessarily consist in deviations from the natural goal of sexual union. These, as Davidson points out, are precisely the two conceptually basic kinds of deviations we should expect of those writers who subscribed to the popular conception of the sexual instinct (1987: 263).

It is important to recognize at this point that at the time Freud inherits it, shared opinion regarding this definition of the concept of the sexual instinct is *unquestioned*: in the nineteenth-century psychiatric theories that preceded Freud, both a specific object and a specific aim formed *part and parcel of the instinct itself*. The very nature of the sexual instinct manifested itself, according to these theories, in an attraction to members of the opposite sex and in a desire for genital intercourse with them.

In his discussion of those "perversions" which manifest themselves as deviations in respect of the sexual object, Freud gives his fullest attention to inversion (homosexuality) - the deviation to which most nineteenth-century psychiatrists had themselves devoted the most attention. And it is in the following passage, with which Freud concludes his discussion on deviations in respect of the sexual object, that, as Davidson will demonstrate, he deals his first "conceptually devastating blow to the entire structure of nineteenth-century theories of sexual psychopathology" (1987: 265). The passage is worth quoting in full:

> It has been brought to our notice that we have been in the habit of regarding the connection between the sexual instinct and the sexual object as more intimate than it in fact is. Experience of the cases that are

> considered abnormal has shown us that in them the sexual instinct and the sexual object are merely soldered together - a fact which we have been in danger of overlooking in consequence of the uniformity of the normal picture, where the object appears to form part and parcel of the instinct. We are thus warned to loosen the bond that exists in our thought between instinct and object. It seems probable that the sexual instinct is in the first instance independent of its object; nor is its origin likely to be due to its object's attractions (SE VII: 147-48).

In order to show that inversion was a real functional deviation and not merely a statistical abnormality without genuine pathological significance, Davidson reasons, one had to conceive of the "normal" object of the instinct as part of the very content of the instinct itself: "If the object is not internal to the instinct, then there can be no intrinsic clinico-pathological meaning to the fact that the instinct can become attached to an inverted object" (1987: 265). It is through claiming, in effect, in the above passage, that there is no natural object of the sexual instinct, that the sexual object and the sexual instinct are merely "soldered together", that Freud proves himself worthy of the name of genius, in Davidson's eyes. Freud's conclusion, he writes,

> is explicitly and directly opposed to any conclusion that could be drawn by using the [prevailing] concept of the sexual instinct. The relationship between the concepts of *sexual instinct* and *sexual object* found in nineteenth-century texts, a rule of combination partially constitutive of the concept of the sexual instinct, was completely undermined by Freud, and as a consequence of this cutting away of old foundations, inversion could not be thought of as an unnatural functional deviation of the sexual instinct (1987: 265-266).

In much the same way, as Davidson demonstrates, Freud's argument, his "structure of concepts," leads to the parallel conclusion that the "normal" aim of the sexual instinct, genital intercourse, is not part of the content of the instinct; or, in other words, in the terms of Freud's earlier conclusions about the sexual

object, the sexual instinct and sexual aim are merely "soldered together." If the resulting overall structure of Freud's argument is to show that neither a specific aim nor a specific object has any constitutive bond with the sexual instinct, and if the previously shared concept of the sexual instinct is thus effectively dismantled, then, remarks Davidson, it is difficult to see how any conceptual foothold could remain for the concept of unnatural functional deviations of this instinct:

> In the case of both sexual aim and sexual object, it is only the apparent uniformity of normal behaviour that directs us to think otherwise. But this apparently well-entrenched uniformity actually masks the operations of the sexual instinct, operations which, *when conceptualized by Freud*, show us that the idea of the natural function of the instinct has no basis whatsoever. We ought to conclude from what Freud says here that there are no true perversions. The conceptual space within which the concept of perversion functions and has a stable role has been thoroughly displaced - and displaced in a way that requires a new set of concepts for understanding sexuality and a new mode of reasoning about it (1987: 270-71).

Crucial to the difference, then, between Davidson's reading and the tradition of literary analysis exemplified by Marcus and Fish *et al*, and in Mahony's project as a whole, is Davidson's recognition, not only of the rhetorical, but especially of the historical and conceptual density of Freud's texts. By concentrating almost exclusively on the "literary" aspect of Freud's work, while defining it primarily as a function of its rhetorical power, the earlier-mentioned critics are led to under-estimate both its historical and conceptual dimensions. In Davidson's reading of the *Three Essays*, Freud's name itself – along with those of his predecessors, such as Bloch, Moll and others – are treated as "placeholders for certain sets of concepts and the way these concepts fit together to constitute a conceptual space." Davidson is appropriately placed to determine the way in which Freud's *Three Essays* provided the resources to "overturn" the conceptual space which made it possible for psychiatrists to make the statements about

perversion that so dominated the period - by fundamentally altering the rules of combination for concepts such as "sexual instinct", "sexual object", and "sexual aim", with the consequence that these shared objects, among others, were destroyed.

Davidson's innovatory approach has further important implications, I would suggest, in relation to the initiative in which Freud's texts, and particularly the case histories, are read as exemplary instances of modernist, or even post-modern narratives. Freud himself was not always able to grasp the import of his own work: thus, in the first of the *Three Essays*, he continued to use the idea of "perversion" as if his own conceptual innovations were not wholly accessible to him, while he often re-introduced - "behind his own back" as it were - in the *Three Essays* and elsewhere, identifications that he had shown to be untenable. The fact that Freud's "genius" was not always conscious of itself as such, is explained in Davidson's text by what he calls the "divergent temporality of the emergence of new concepts and the formation of new mentalities":

> Automatisms of attitude have a durability, a slow temporality, which does not match the sometimes rapid change of conceptual mutation. Mental habits have a tendency towards inertia, and these habits resist change that, in retrospect seems conceptually required (1987: 276).

Once this point is taken into account, the hesitations and ambiguities of Freud's texts appear less as the result of some "deconstructive indeterminacy or undecidability of the text", but are rather the consequence of the "dynamics of fundamental change": of the fact that "mentality" and "concept" are two different aspects of systems of thought, which we should not expect to be coherently connected all at once, "as if forms of experience could be dissolved and re-constituted overnight."

In my view, this approach has significant consequences for a re-assessment of major aspects of the critical response to Freud's case histories to date. Once substantial recognition is given to the conceptual and historical aspects of

language, to its constraining as well as enabling powers in the formulation of new discursive practices, an important and, to my mind, fruitful dimension is added to current perceptions of the rhetorical force of Freud's narratives, both within the case histories and elsewhere.

V

EXTENDING THE LIMITS OF SCIENTIFICITY

Beyond the terms of a purely historical inquiry, focused on how Freud shifts knowledge-paradigms by way of theory-driven concept-mutations, the question remains as to the nature of the knowledge produced by these mutations. What, so to speak, is the status of the cognitive product, and above all how does it relate to the overarching question of "science" versus "literature"? This is the point at which the phenomenon of the case history proves decisive. The case history is not simply a kind of laboratory for testing a theory (the failure or only partial success of the "experiment" then adduced as the proof of Freud's non-scientificity). As Carl Pletsch, amongst others, has argued, psychoanalysis delivers a quite distinctive kind of knowledge, intimately bound up with the transference, dialogue, story-telling, and recognition. Indeed, in recognising an intimate connection between the story of the patient's suffering and the nature of the pathology, Freud in effect re-introduces literary "style" as a tool of investigation in psychology. [20] The case histories thus need to be examined as repositories and vehicles of this knowledge, as the site of evolution of the character and epistemological status of psychoanalytic knowledge. It may be worth pausing for a moment at this point, to consider some recent reflections on the nature of this new epistemological practice, or discourse about knowledge.

In an essay called "Psychoanalysis: Telepathy, Gossip and/or Science?" John Forrester both reflects on the epistemology of psychoanalysis, and debates the effects of its existence on the ensemble of other discursive practices. Most

particularly, he considers the possible connections between the specific forms of knowledge (or non-knowledge) represented by psychoanalysis, telepathy and gossip. Invoking Derrida's article "Télépathie" as part of his own attempt to define the phenomenon, Forrester implies that the kind of intellectual shift Derrida calls for in the formulation of epistemological questions around telepathy is necessary for psychoanalysis as well:

> There's no knowing [Derrida writes, but in a voice clearly meant to be that of Freud himself...](and on this point I'm in a strong position because here there's no question of 'knowledge'. Everything in our conception of knowledge is so constructed that telepathy is impossible, unthinkable, unknowable. If there is such a thing, our relation to Telepathy won't belong to the family of 'knowledge' or of 'non-knowledge' but to another genre) (1991: 170).

If, for Derrida, the question of telepathy leads to an epistemological impasse, so too does the question of gossip. And so, by implication, does that of psychoanalysis. Crucial to this is the model Forrester draws up for the psychoanalytic dialogue, one based on a definition of psychoanalytic practice as a specific form of discourse between two people governed by specific sets of rules. The fundamental rule dictates that the patient agree to tell the analyst everything that comes to mind, while the analyst abstains from such free discourse, instead offering interpretations of what the patient has said. Further rules govern the relation of this "discursive dyad" to the outside world. The analyst gives an assurance that anything said during the course of an analytic session will be treated as confidential; the patient is not required to offer such an assurance, but is encouraged not to discuss the analysis with people "outside." As a consequence of these rules, what Forrester refers to as a "semi-permeable membrane" is placed around the two people talking.

In Forrester's view, the very existence of the membrane gives psychoanalysis and gossip something in common: that is, they are both conversations taking place in the "absence of the real." Gossip always takes place in the absence of the

parties being gossiped about (although naming them is crucial to the activity). Similarly, the rules of analysis require that all participating parties be absent, including those addressed in the second person. Even the analyst, that is, is absent when addressed in the transferential mode of the second person, the "you." Using the technique of transference interpretation, the analyst treats sentences containing "you" as if they were passing him by, as if he were passing them on. In Lacan and Derrida's formulation, he acts as a postman, relaying or redirecting all the messages that come to him. He tries to act like the lost and found department of the Post Office, ascertaining to whom these communications are addressed. In this way, a declaration of love or the heaping of abuse can be interpreted as being about someone who is not there.

If this semi-permeable membrane (which in Forrester's terms constitutes analysis) allows one to draw analogies between analysis and gossip, what happens when the membrane is broken, and the contents leak out? It is clear that either the analyst or the patient can do the leaking. In the case of the analyst, there are two possible forms for this: first, the so-called "scientific communication" - the case history of the patient. Second, the analyst may gossip about the patient. If we consider the patient as the source, a further two categories of leakage emerge: first, in the form of those analytic communications that have been displaced from within the analysis, which should have been spoken to the analyst, not to someone outside: what analysts call "acting out." Second, there is the category of gossip in the ordinary sense of the word - gossip about the analysis, gossip about the analyst, the sort of self-revealing chat that analysands sharing an analytic culture would indulge in.

How does all this bear on questions of science and the literary - of language, truth and knowledge? Traditional distinctions between knowledge and non-knowledge, the scientific and the non-scientific, truth and fiction, start to crumble here, in more senses than one: First, within the analytic dyad, psychoanalytic knowledge, usually identified with the "penetrating observation", the interpretation that uncovers the secret hiding-place of the repressed, is shown to have something in common with gossip (and, as everyone knows, knowledge had

by gossip barely maintains its claim on the word). Second, from either side of the membrane, a number of questions emerge (and with them a further blurring of the divisions between knowledge and non-knowledge, truth and error, science and...): Under what conditions does talk about an analysis qualify as a scientific communication, rather than as gossip? What do we make of the apparently uncanny kinship between the analysands' self-revealing gossip outside of analysis, and analysis itself? To the purist analyst, all communication about the analysis to a third party is taken to be misplaced communication to the analyst. To the outsider, however, to anyone other than the gossip's analyst, gossip about the analysis simply is gossip. And then a further question arises: what are the consequences of retaining the symmetry of assimilation, so that where the analyst assimilates gossip to acting out, the theorist of gossip assimilates acting out to gossip? In this way, Forrester's new emphasis ends in an implicit displacement of a whole range of standard epistemological oppositions.

In another recent essay, Cornelius Castoriadis brings these epistemological reflections back to the question of pedagogy, of what exactly it is that psychoanalysis can teach us. In the end, his understanding of the pedagogical value of the psychoanalytic dialogue - as what he will call a "practical/poetical activity" involving both participants as agents - lies in the challenge it poses to traditional views on the supremacy of the Lacanian "symbolic" as the instrument, or bearer, of all knowledge.

Castoriadis' argument begins with an extended consideration of the relation between what Freud once called the three "impossible" professions: psychoanalysis, pedagogy and politics. How accurate, he asks, are the historically often pessimistic and reactionary conclusions regarding the political implications of psychoanalysis? Is the (psychoanalytic) work directed towards the knowledge of the unconscious and the transformation of the human subject wholly unrelated to the question of freedom? Can the knowledge of the unconscious teach us nothing as regards the socialization of the individual, and, as a consequence, the institutions of society? Why should the practical

perspective adopted by psychoanalysis in the sphere of the individual automatically become void when passing over to the collective sphere?

His response to these questions entails re-interpreting, and in the end effectively re-writing Freud's famous maxim "Wo Es war, soll Ich werden" (translated, SE XXII, p. 80, as "Where id was, there ego shall be".) Contrary to what Freud seems to imply here, Castoriadis suggests, the object of analysis is not to eliminate one psychical "agency" or "instance" (the id) to the benefit of another (the ego), it is rather to alter the relation between them in the following way:

> If, as Freud's formulation unfortunately seems to imply when considered within the sequence of his text, we take the sentence to mean that the That, the Id, Es, has to be eliminated, conquered by the Ich, the Ego, the I, dried up and reclaimed like the Zuider Zee, then we propose to ourselves both an impossible and a monstrous objective. Impossible of course, since there can be no human being whose unconscious is conquered by the conscious, whose drives are fully permeated and controlled by rational considerations, who has stopped fantasizing and dreaming. Monstrous because reaching such a state would entail killing what makes us human. This is not rationality, but the uncontrolled and uncontrollable continuous surge of creative radical imagination in and through the flux of representations, affects and desires. Indeed one of the objects of analysis is to free this flux from the repression to which it is usually subjected by an Ego which is a rigid and essentially social construct. This is why I propose that Freud's sentence be completed with: "Wo Ich bin, soll auch Es aftauchen" - "Where I (Ego) am (is), That (Id) should/ought also to emerge" (1994: 4).

The object of analysis, then, is to work towards altering the relation between ego and id, essentially by transforming one of them: the I, the Ego or the conscious. The Ego is transformed by taking in the contents of the unconscious, by reflecting on them and by becoming able to choose lucidly the impulses and

ideas it will attempt to enact. In other words, the Ego has to become a "self-reflexive subjectivity, capable of deliberation and will". The altered relation between ego and id can thus be described as repression replaced by recognition of unconscious contents and reflection on them: inhibition, impulsive avoidance or acting out give way to lucid deliberation. The importance of this does not lie in the elimination of psychical conflict ("nobody ever assured us that we are entitled to a conflictless inner life," Castoriadis remarks). It lies in "the instauration of a self-reflecting and deliberating subjectivity which has not become a pseudo-rational and socially "adapted" machine, but on the contrary has recognized and freed the radical imagination at the core of the psyche" (1994: 4/5).

Castoriadis insists on translating Freud's werden by "become" and not "be", because the subjectivity he is attempting to describe is essentially a process, not a state reached once and for all. This is why, he suggests, we can "elucidate" the aim of analysis, but cannot strictly define it. What he calls the "project of autonomy on the level of the singular human being" is the transformation of the subject so that he or she can enter this process; this, in his view, is consubstantial with the aim of psychoanalysis. Most importantly, this aim cannot be reached, nor even approached, without the self-activity of the patient: remembering, repeating, working through. The patient is the main agent of the psychoanalytical process.

The process itself, Castoriadis continues, is analytical in so far as it is always both means and ends. Free associations, for example, are not just a means; as they unfold they express and realize the patient's developing capacity to free his flux of representations and thereby also to recognize his affects and desires. The flux of associations, punctuated by the analyst's interpretations, brings into action the reflexive activity of the patient: "he reflects himself and reflects upon himself, he returns to the material and takes it up again." In Castoriadis' characterisation, psychoanalysis is transformed from technique into activity - a form of "practical/poetical activity", with the patient as principal agent:

> Thus psychoanalysis is not a technique, nor is it correct even to speak of psychoanalytic technique. Psychoanalysis is rather a *practical/poetical activity where both participants are agents* and where the patient is the main agent of the development of his own self-activity. I call it poetical because it is creative: its outcome is, or ought to be, the self-alteration of the analysand, that is, strictly speaking, the appearance of another being. I call it practical, because I call praxis that lucid activity whose object is human autonomy, an activity which can only be reached by means of this same autonomy (1994: 5, my emphasis).

In Julia Kristeva's discussion on "Psychoanalysts in times of distress" in the same collection of essays, Castoriadis' "practical/poetical activity" is re-described as a form of challenge to the structuralist supremacy of language - or the "symbolic" in Lacanian psychoanalytical discourse; a means of restoring access to prelinguistic "semiotic" levels of experience. In this essay, Kristeva attempts to demonstrate, through reference to two concrete cases from her own psychoanalytic practice, the psychoanalytic access to a signifying process, prior to linguistic meaning, pertaining to the psychological drives. The sense of this process, she suggests, may be recovered in the highly individualized analytic transference situation through psychoanalytic work that is attentive to the indices or traces which the drives may leave - for instance, in physical gestures, or in the inflection of the voice of the analysand. Situating psychoanalysis specifically within its current confrontations with both the neurological sciences and a general cultural indifference towards psychological life, Kristeva defines the analytic dialogue as an interpretative work of art, a poiesis which is shown to apply to the vast areas of suffering not reachable by psycho-pharmacology. The psychic, Kristeva writes,

> may be the place where the somatic symptom as well as the delirious projection are elaborated and hence clear themselves up: the psychic is our protection, on the condition that one does not remain enclosed within it, but that one shifts it through an act of language into sublimation, into

an act of thought, of interpretation, of relational transformation (1994: 15).

For Kristeva, Freudian practice has revealed that the web of signifying relations which characterizes the symptom, the transference, the subject itself, while being a theoretical construction, remains at the same time, the one and only reality in which the psychic life realizes itself, as well as the only reality from which the analyst can act in order to modify it. From this, the question arises whether the destiny of the "speaking being" is then reducible to speech and language, or whether other systems of representation should be taken into consideration in order to think this being's logical particularities and/or to reach the psychic level on which sense reveals itself to the subject.

It is in Kristeva's answer to this question that she points to the significance of psychoanalysis in the battle against "linguistic imperialism": Since the 1960's, Kristeva writes, the development of semiology has led to the conception of different signifying systems (iconic code, musical code, etc.) that are irreducible to language (the latter being envisaged as a structure or grammar, a language or a discourse, a statement or an utterance). Concurrently, a return to Freud, and in particular to the Freudian concept of representation, takes into account a plurality of psychic representatives: thing-presentation, word-presentation, representation of drive, representation of affect. The ensuing result is a "laminated model" of the psychic signifying process with heterogeneous traces and signs. The analyst has to take this polyphony into consideration in order to hear the discourse addressed to her at these different linguistic and translinguistic levels (voice, gesture, etc.) and also to tune in to the one among them which makes sense in the transference, here and now.

The ethics of psychoanalysis, Kristeva goes on, thus rests on two exigencies proper to the western rationality to which it pertains:

> On the one hand, the maintenance of *one* sense, of *one* truth, valid and demonstrable in a given situation: this is the "normative" side of

> psychoanalysis, the "norm" being dictated by the state of analytic theory and the place which the actual analyst takes in it. On the other hand, the maintenance of a respect (in the guise of freedom) for the desire and for the *jouissance* of the patient, which makes it appropriate or not to welcome our interpretation... a respect which at the same time implicates the validity of this very interpretation and also unveils the *jouissance* of the analyst under the cover of the "truth" of her constructive interpretation. No other discourse in the history of western rationality reaches this aspiration to balance truth and *jouissance*, authorized and implicated by *jouissance*... (1994: 19).

In its attention both to linguistic and "translinguistic" expression of psychic determinants; in its attention both to the "truth" and the "dramaturgy of the drives" (the discourse of knowledge and the discourse of desire), psychoanalysis thus suggests new paradigms for the study of language and meaning. Even the very absence of words is accessible to this new "translinguistic" linguistics, thus adding itself to the "meaning of speech":

> After its linguistic phase and while being attentive, by way of its Freudian heritage, to the drive (and more attentive than before due to the pressure from the neurosciences), today's psychoanalysis and no doubt that of tomorrow will decipher the dramaturgy of the drives beyond it, *the meaning of language* where the *sense of the drive* disguises itself. Indications of this sense of the drive may be translinguistic: the voice, for instance, its intensities and its rhythms often carry the secret eroticism of the depressed who has cut his linguistic ties with the other, but who has nevertheless buried the affect in the obscure code of his vocalization where the analyst will seek a desire not quite as dead as that... (1994: 17)

Equally challenging to the limits of a structuralist linguistics is William Richardson's essay, "The Word of Silence", which explores the issue of silence as a fundamental element in analysis. By attending extensively to actual case material, Richardson elucidates different forms of silence and their varying

function in the analytic situation. In his reading, analysis is simply not a mutually shared exchange between two equal partners in an open wide-ranging search for truth. An appropriate analogue for the analyst, he suggests, might be Holderlin, the poet - "where he waits through the night for the coming of dawn, so that through his attentive response he may help the significant word come to articulation". For Richardson, the function of the analyst's celebrated neutrality consists precisely in leaving the word to the Other of Language. In Lacan's terms,

> It is to this Other beyond the other that the analyst leaves room by the neutrality through which he makes himself *ne-uter*, neither one nor the other of the two [subjects] who are there, and if he remains silent, it is to leave the word to [this] Other (1994: 180).

This is why, in the analytic dialogue "silence... is not something simply negative, but has a value beyond speech. Certain moments of silence in the transference represent in the sharpest form the apprehension of the presence of the Other as such." It is to Heidegger's account of the ability to be silent as one of the conditions for authentic human speech that Richardson then turns to throw further light on the Lacanian model. Silence or stillness becomes the very foundation of the spoken word and hence of the world according to Heidegger. "Language speaks as the ringing of stillness," writes Heidegger. And for Richardson, this "ringing stillness" testifies to an otherness which is similar to what Lacan sought to explore under the sign of the unconscious in the analytic situation. Such silence, indeed, is in the mode of speech itself - in Heidegger's terms, in the mode of "the highest form of thoughtful saying":

> The highest form of thoughtful saying consists in this: not simply to be reticent in saying what is properly to be said, but to say it in such a way that it is uttered in not being said: the saying of thought is a keeping silent. This [kind of] saying corresponds to the deepest essence of language, which has its origin in silence (1994: 179).

Standard epistemological oppositions - between truth and error, fact and fiction, knowledge and non-knowledge, and even between speech and silence - are thus thrown into question by the theory of psychoanalysis, in a way which must also potentially subvert traditional conceptions of the interpretive or reading process. In its emphasis on self-reflection and the development of critical consciousness, in its potential to liberate what Castoriadis calls the "radical imagination", psychoanalysis has obvious political implications as well. And finally, in its attention both to linguistic and what Kristeva describes as "translinguistic" expression of psychic determinants, in its attention both to the "discourse of knowledge" and the "discourse of desire", psychoanalysis suggests new paradigms for the study of language and meaning themselves.

VI
CONCLUSION

I have already outlined one way of looking at Freud's relation to the scientific endeavour - as an historically grounded activity altering paradigms of thought through the mutation of concepts. Recent reflections on the epistemology of psychoanalysis have clearly shown, however, that this is not the only kind of scientific pursuit we find in Freud. On the one hand, Freud is a producer of concepts and theories; but it is arguable that the kind of inquiry illustrated by psychoanalysis as a whole – and the case histories in particular - belongs in another, and older, tradition of scientific inquiry: the "case-book" tradition, which, by virtue of its story-telling properties, is related to what is called the "literary" in Freud. However, the very convergence of these different modes of scientific inquiry in Freud tells us that those critics who have identified the "literary" as the site and demonstration of the "unscientific" in Freud have missed the point: they have overlooked the heterogeneity of the scientific endeavour, both historically and conceptually, and have accordingly measured the case histories by a yard stick that presupposes that there is only one kind of science.

What is called for, then, is a new emphasis which would end essentially by extending the idea of what it means to be scientific; and crucially, of what it meant to Freud to be scientific. Against the usual interpretations of the famous confusions and hesitations in Freud as to whether, in the case histories, he was indeed engaging in a "literary" activity, or a "scientific" one, I would thus want to argue that what is at stake here has to do less with the "indeterminacies" of the modernist literary endeavour than with the multiple senses for Freud of what it meant to engage in scientific inquiry. At least one of these takes us back to the "literary", but in a way that *displaces* rather than confirms the standard opposition between science and literature.

The readings of Freud's case histories which follow thus rest neither within the limits of a positivist history of science, nor within conventional definitions of the "literary" as essentially outside the bounds of science. I shall read the case histories not as *equivalent* to great works of fiction, but rather as representative of a particular moment in the development of discursive and narrative traditions which embody the relation between subjectivity and language, and the particular kinds of knowledge associated with it. It is not least in their articulation of this relation, I shall argue, and most importantly, in its implicit extension of traditional conceptions as to where and how the limits of scientificity are located, that the enduring historical significance of the case histories lies.

Notes:

1. For two excellent introductory studies see Ellmann, 1994, and Wright, 1998. Maud Ellmann's *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism* is a collection of essays by a variety of different critics, the aim of which is introduce students of literary theory to Freudian methods of interpretation, and to show how these methods have been transformed by recent developments in French psychoanalysis, particularly by the influence of Jacques Lacan. In her new edition of *Psychoanalytic Criticism*, Elizabeth Wright discusses all the major developments in psychoanalytic criticism since its beginnings. Adopting a critical perspective, Wright focuses on major figures and texts in psychoanalysis and in literary and art criticism, including classical psychoanalysis, Jungian analytic psychology, object-relations theory, French psychoanalysis and feminist psychoanalytic criticism.

2. These include Samuel Weber, "The Sideshow or: Remarks on a Canny Moment", *Modern Language Notes*, 88 (1973): 1102-33; Hélène Cixous, "Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche*, *New Literary History*, 7 (1976): 525-48; Neil Hertz, "Freud and the Sandman", in J. Harrari (ed.), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1979), pp. 296-321; rpt in Neil Hertz, *The End of the Line: Essays in Psychoanalysis and the Sublime* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 97-121; Bernard Rubin, "Freud and Hoffmann: 'The Sandman'," in *Introducing Psychoanalytic Theory*, ed. Sander L. Gilman (New York: Brunnel/Mazel, 1982), pp. 205-17; Francoise Melzer, "The Uncanny Rendered Canny: Freud's Blind Spot in Reading Hoffmann's 'Sandman'," in Gilman (ed.), *Introducing Psychoanalytic Theory*, pp. 218-39. (cited in Ellmann, 1994: 4, fn. 13.) See also John Noyes, "The Voice of History: Sigmund Freud/E.T.A. Hoffmann/G.H. Schubert", *Journal of Literary Studies*, 6: 1/2 (1990).

3. Möller's study is based on a wide range of Freud's writings, but concentrates on four central texts: *Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva*, *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*, "The Uncanny", and "Constructions in Analysis". Her readings of these texts constitute an analysis of Freud's interpretive practice, with special reference to his interpretations of literary texts, with the aim of persuading the reader to reconsider the traditional conception of a "Freudian reading".

4. For reference to a number of schools of thought in modern linguistics that have yielded significant results for the study of literary texts, see J.M. Coetzee: "Linguistics and literature", in Ryan, R. and Van Zyl, S. (eds.). *An Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theory* (Johannesburg: Ad. Donker, 1982). In this essay, Coetzee concentrates on two schools: that of generative-transformational grammar associated with the name of Noam Chomsky, and that of structuralism,

particularly the kind of structuralism defined in the writings of Roman Jakobson.

5. For the full account, see Meltzer, 1987.

6. See Wright, 1998: 34. Here, she points out that the study of an artist's life to explain his works, or the study of his works to explain his mind, was already an established mode in the latter half of the nineteenth Century, when pre-Freudian psychology made various attempts to relate genius to madness. Césare Lambroso, an Italian professor of legal medicine, argued that creative genius was a by-product of psychosis, in that the advance of this condition can turn someone with an average mind into a genius (Lambroso, 1891). This provoked a controversy as to who was sick, the creative genius (whose state of health does not in any case reflect on his work) or the society which chose to assign this status to decadents such as Wagner, Nietzsche and Baudelaire. The artistic products of the accused were investigated and brought in as proof of their decadence and as evidence of their lack of genius. Thus, Max Nordau writes, in his influential *Degeneration* (1895), "Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics, they are often authors and artists." What was at stake was not just the status of the artist, but what the criteria for morality were to be: "Books and works of art exercise a powerful suggestion on the masses," wrote Nordau (1895: vii).

7. The classic example of psychobiography, according to Wright (1998: 35), is Marie Bonaparte's full-length study of Edgar Allan Poe (Bonaparte, 1949[1933]). Freud's preface to it shows not only his approval, but also his awareness of the delicate ground "investigations of this kind" were treading on: "In this volume my friend and pupil, Marie Bonaparte, has directed the light of psycho-analysis upon the life and work of a great writer of a pathological type. Thanks to her interpretative efforts, we can now understand how much of the characteristics of his work were determined by their author's special nature; but we also learn that this was itself the precipitate of powerful emotional ties and painful experiences in his early youth. Investigations of this kind are not intended to explain an author's genius, but they show what motive forces aroused it and what material was offered to him by destiny. There is a particular fascination in studying the laws of the human mind as exemplified in outstanding individuals" (SE XXII: 254).

8. Exemplary of one application of so-called "French Freud" which I shall not discuss here, and in which Lacan is the seminal figure, are the essays introduced by Jeffrey Mehlman in *French Freud: Structural Studies in Psychoanalysis (Yale French Studies,* 48. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972). In his editorial introductory essay, Mehlman notes that "to the extent that the truth of Freud's theory *is* the fact of repression, the very resistance to that truth, the structure of its escape, constitutes an essential dimension of the discovery itself. So that

psychoanalytic theory after Freud, in this view, should not be (primarily) a "rectification" of Freud's theory on the basis of new data. Nor should it be an effort to purge Freud's writings of the elements (eg. the "death instinct") with no apparent empirical basis. Analytic theory, on the contrary, should be above all the theory of the contradictions in Freud's texts, of what we have referred to (all too succinctly) as the repression of the discovery of repression" (1972: 6).

9. Although Derrida's relation to psychoanalysis is often imagined to be quite simply one of anatagonism, his dialogue with psychoanalysis clearly goes deeper than a purely antagonistic relation with it would allow. For some further illustrations of this dialogue, see Derrida, 1978b and c, 1987a and b, 1996 and 1998.

10. "PP" is the initial for the French expression for "pleasure principle" - a concept developed early in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and in Derrida's text. At the same time, the French pronunciation of these initials sounds like the equivalent of "granddaddy" (pépé). This homonymy links the authority of the pleasure principle and that of the grandfather or grandfathers evoked in the text.

11. For a lucid summary of this aspect of Derrida's reading - of the way in which he not only "overdetermines the scene of writing" but actually "inserts the writer into it", see Hartman, 1978: xiii.

12. Marcus is here referring to the scene between Dora and Herr K. that took place when she was fourteen years old, and acted, Freud said, as a "sexual trauma". The scene is represented by Marcus as follows: "The reader will recall that on this occasion Herr K. contrived to get Dora alone 'at his place of business' in the town of B and then without warning or preparation 'suddenly clasped the girl to him and pressed a kiss upon her lips.' Freud then asserts that 'this was *surely* just the situation to call up a *distinct* feeling of sexual excitement in a girl of *fourteen* who had *never before* been approached. But Dora had at that moment a violent feeling of disgust, tore herself free from the man, and hurried past him to the staircase and from there to the street door." (All italics are Marcus's.)

13. Cyril Barrett (ed.). *Wittgenstein: Lectures and Conversations* (University of California Press, 1972, p. 44). For further references to the "huge literature focusing on the issue of evidence and testability" see Fish's list in *The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments between Language and Literature*, fn. 5, pp. 171-172.

14. In the course of the essay referred to here ("Wittgenstein's Freud", 1969), Cioffi repeatedly reveals his own scepticism towards Freudian propositions. This he does in a number of ways – for example, by likening the notion of the unconscious to the "invisible companion phantasies" of our childhood (188); by proffering physiological explanations to replace Freud's psychological ones (189); and by

attributing Freud's attempts to illustrate the operation of unconscious agencies (in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and elsewhere) to an unacknowledged and underhand "determination to describe familiar facts in a novel and congenial idiom" (191). Where Freud is most convincing, Cioffi evokes not the probability of his assertions but his "grammatical genius", his "ingenuity in devising unconstruable idioms" (194), or his "ingenious exploitation ... of confusion ... in the interests of the theory" (195). Alongside Wittgenstein, he suggests that psychoanalytic explanations in general are akin to aesthetic ones: " . . . aren't these [explanations] once again simply a matter of 'giving a good simile', of 'placing things side by side'?" And via the work of G.E. Moore *(Mind,* 1955), Cioffi infers that "the world, conceived of psychoanalytically, is just the everyday world taken over again with an altered expression" (209). In the end, he concludes that "there are good grounds for assimilating [Freud's] achievement to that of the anonymous geniuses to whom it first occurred that Tuesday is lean and Wednesday fat, the low notes of the piano dark and the high notes light. Except that instead of words, notes and shades, we have scenes from human life" (210).

15. Amongst those "diverse objections" put forward by Timpanaro are the Marxist claims that psychoanalysis is a "bourgeois doctrine" incapable of seeing beyond an ideological horizon delimited precisely by the class interests of the bourgeoisie; and that it is "anti-materialistic" in that it externalizes situations which are historically specific - for example, suggests Timpanaro, "it abstracts what truth there is in the notion of 'hatred of the father' from an authoritarian structure of the family, which remains transient even if it is slow to pass away, and transforms it into a sort of eternal destiny of mankind" (1976: 13).

16. While providing a comprehensive survey of, and response to this tradition, the work of Mitchell's text is to defend psychoanalysis against it, and to show that because those feminists in opposition to Freud try to discuss his concept of femininity *outside* the framework of psychoanalysis, their objections, and even their tributes, cannot be made to stand up. She also reveals that their rejection of the scientific status of psychoanalysis would be more accurately described as a rejection of its two most crucial discoveries: the unconscious, and infantile sexuality. Amongst those feminist writers discussed by Mitchell are Simone de Beauvoir *(The Second Sex,* 1949), Betty Friedan *(The Feminine Mystique,* 1963), Eva Figes *(Patriarchal Attitudes,* 1970) and Germaine Greer *(The Female Eunuch,* 1971).

17. The strand of criticism referred to in the Introduction, fn. 12 may be seen as both contributing to, and developing upon this particular mythology. See also the discussion on Frederick Crews' "The Unknown Freud" in Section IV (Freud Bashing) of Chapter Four.

18. For an interesting response to at least one dimension of this representation of psychoanalysis as a "powerful mythology", and of

Freud as "master illusionist", see Patricia Kitcher's *Freud's Dream: A Complete Interdisciplinary Science of Mind* (Kitcher, 1992). Here she quotes from the Harvard neurophysiologist and dream researcher Allan Hobson (also known as a close associate of Grünbaum and Crews in their outspoken criticisms of psychoanalysis), where he effectively complains that Freud was *too successful* to be a good scientist: "*The Interpretation of Dreams* was antiscientific because Freud so forcefully dismissed all previous writers that he actually aborted an emerging experimental tradition. Psychiatry and psychology have been *in Freud's thrall* for almost a century ... The tenacity of the psychoanalytic view remains impressively obstructive to integrative theorizing" (1988: 51, my emphasis). Kitcher suggests that this is a pervasive complaint about Freud – his huge success is attributed to his "magnetic personality, the tight control he exercised over the institutions of psychoanalysis, or his strategy of going over the heads or, perhaps, under the feet of the established scientific community to appeal to an uncritical lay audience." As she goes on to point out, however, these criticisms make little sense: "Although popular, the first two hypotheses are not very plausible. Freud did not have personal contact with the vast majority of people who came to accept psychoanalysis, and he could only control those who already wished to become members of the psychoanalytic community. Insofar as the third hypothesis is meant as a criticism, it is also wide of the mark. As John Dewey pointed out long ago, scholars should try to make their learning available to the larger society" (Kitcher, 1992: 148; cited in Forrester, 1997).

19. See Forrester, 1997, Chapter 5. In this chapter, Forrester reviews the historiography of psychoanalysis in the twentieth century. The chapter is introduced as follows: "Beyond the studies of Freud as a personal, historical, or intellectual figure, beyond the conceptual history of psychoanalysis as a set of doctrines and theories, the chapter points toward the necessity for a history of psychoanalytic cultures. These cultures are multifaceted: part medical, part scientific, part pop, part avant-gardist. The many faces of Freud's offspring, sometimes working together, sometimes in tension or in conflict, require a more subtle history than we have yet been offered. The chapter presents guidelines and guesses for such histories, drawing on figures as diverse as Michel Foucault, Alasdair MacIntyre, Ernest Gellner, Peter Swales, and Bruno Latour" (9).

20. Again, see Forrester, 1997. In response to Sulloway's suggestion that Freud's "literary technology" had been used to cover up for the deficiencies of his "material technology" (Sulloway, 1991: 265), Forrester agrees that Freud's literary technology did indeed "bypass a traditional conception of the regulation of scientific knowledge... Freud *did* go over the heads of scientists. But that is because his literary technology *was* his material technology." Thus Forrester concludes: "Psychoanalysis did bypass the normal scientific forum. In doing so, it embodied an extension of the supposedly democratic and open ethos of

science, recognising that an explanation of human beings must be judged by its objects as well as the scientists. Thus it set a new criterion that any human science – any psychology, sociology, anthropology – might now have to meet: the criterion of being judged by those human beings the discipline purports to describe rather than by the members of the academic community. Any human science that cannot pass this test might be said to have failed to be a science of the human, whatever the academic or 'scientific' world might say about it" (244-45).

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS IN DORA'S CASE

The subject of this chapter is Freud's first great case history, *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, better known as the case of "Dora" (the pseudonym given by Freud to Ida Bauer, a young woman who began an analysis with him in the autumn of 1900). From early childhood, Dora had suffered intermittent "hysterical" symptoms, and was finally presented to Freud for therapy at the age of eighteen, after her father's discovery of a note in which she threatened suicide. Dora herself had been unwilling to undergo treatment from the start: It was only her father's authority, Freud tells us, that induced her to begin treatment with him, "in spite of her reluctance" (SE VII: 23).

Freud never completed the treatment, which was called off by Dora herself after only three months – an action which has since prompted Michel Foucault (for one) to see in her a champion of those to whom the sexuality of men was 'foreign' and 'violating': "Dora was cured, not despite the interruption of her analysis, but because in taking the decision to interrupt it, she fully and completely took on herself the solitude of which her existence up till then had only been the wayward wandering" (Appignanesi, 1992: 146). [1]

Since its publication in 1905, Freud's account of his treatment of Dora has been widely discussed, not only by analysts but by literary critics as well. A rich and varied selection of essays on the case, many of them by literary critics, was recently published by Columbia University Press, in a volume called *In Dora's*

Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism (1985). This volume illustrates the extent to which Dora, whose treatment formed the basis of Freud's longest case history of a woman patient, has captured the sympathy of feminists in recent years. Indeed, in what is to my knowledge the most comprehensive study to date of Freud's dealings with, and relation to women in the course of his career (Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester's *Freud's Women* (1992)), Dora is described as the woman who "sums up for many what is both fascinating and repellent, most subtle and most bullying in Freud's relationship with women":

> 'The core example of the protesting force of women', 'a resistant heroine' for Hélène Cixous, the French theorist, Dora's case history has become an 'urtext in the history of woman'. She has become the symbol of that character-type of the nineteenth century, the hysterical woman, symbol of the 'silent revolt against male power over women's bodies and women's language'. The story of Dora provides a paradigm case for catching patriarchy with its pants down... Dora is a feminist before her time, 'the one who resists the system, the one who cannot stand that the family and society are founded on the body of women, on bodies despised, rejected, bodies that are humiliating once they have been used' (146). [2]

For almost a century, psychoanalysts have valued the "Dora" case study as a pioneering vehicle in theory and technique, admiring Freud for the courage he showed in publishing a case in which he had stumbled so badly. As the above quotation suggests, however, in the past couple of decades, feminist critics have read the case from a different vantage point, having found both the circumstances of Dora's life, and Freud's response to her illness, to support their contentions concerning the sexism inherent in modern Western culture. Far from praising Freud for his courage, these critics have focussed on what they see as his "imperialist tendencies" in the case, suggesting that his account of Dora's analysis be scanned "with the utmost suspicion". [3] For these critics, the value of Dora's case lies primarily in its exposure of the way in which the potentially emancipatory aspect of Freud's psychoanalysis in general – to let the "madwoman" speak, and to "liberate" the "hysteric" from her symptoms and her

suffering – fails in this instance, and conflicts with what they see as Freud's own political and social role as, in effect, an exemplary oppressor of women.

My aim in once again re-opening the case is to introduce a question thus far conspicuous only by its absence from current debate – one which historian Quentin Skinner has called the "basic question" which necessarily arises whenever an historian of ideas [4] confronts a work he hopes to understand: "Such an historian," writes Skinner,

> may have focussed his attention on a work of literature – a poem, a play, a novel – or on a work of philosophy – some exercise in ethical, political, religious, or other such mode of thought. But the basic question will in all such cases remain the same: what are the appropriate procedures to adopt in the attempt to arrive at an understanding of the work? (1988[1969]: 29)

In one of his earliest papers to deal with the methodology of history, social science and literary criticism ("Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas", 1969) Skinner outlines two conflicting answers to this deceptively simple question, both of which, he suggests, command a wide acceptance:

> The first (which is perhaps being increasingly adopted by historians of ideas) insists that it is the *context* 'of religious, political and economic factors' which determines the meaning of any given text, and so must provide 'the ultimate framework' for any attempt to understand it. The other orthodoxy, however (still perhaps the most generally accepted) insists on the autonomy of the text itself as the *sole* necessary key to its own meaning, and so dismisses any attempt to reconstitute the 'total context' as 'gratuitous and worse' (1988[1969]: 29). [5]

In Skinner's view, both these two "orthodoxies" share the same basic inadequacy: both commit philosophical mistakes in the assumptions they make about the conditions necessary for the understanding of utterances, and both can thus be held responsible for filling the current literature in the history of ideas

with what Skinner sees as a series of "conceptual muddles" and "mistaken empirical claims" (65). Not least amongst their shortcomings, Skinner holds, is the failure of either methodology to deal with conceptual questions raised by the interpretive activity. These would include the following: How can we prevent the models and preconceptions in terms of which we necessarily organize our own thoughts and perceptions from influencing our interpretations of the texts of a past or alien culture? In dealing with past ideas, how can we avoid conceptualizing an argument in such a way that its alien elements are dissolved into an apparent misleading familiarity?

Crucial, then, to Skinner's critique of these two methodologies is the question of the perspective (or, as he puts it, "point of vantage") from which historians survey the ideas of the past. There is a tendency, he suggests, to suppose that the best (not merely the inescapable) point of vantage from which to survey the ideas of the past must be that of our present situation, "because it is by definition the most highly evolved." In Skinner's eyes, such a tendency cannot survive a recognition of the fact that historical differences over fundamental issues "may reflect differences of intention and convention rather than anything like a competition over a community of values, let alone anything like an evolving perception of the Absolute" (67). What is needed, then, is a recognition that our own society is no different from any other in having its own local beliefs and arrangements of social and political life, as a first step towards arriving at a different and more salutary vantage point for viewing the ideas of the past. A knowledge of the history of such ideas, Skinner concludes,

> ...can then serve to show the extent to which those features of our own arrangements which we may be disposed to accept as traditional or even 'timeless' truths may in fact be the merest contingencies of our peculiar history and social structure. To discover from the history of thought that there are in fact no such timeless concepts, but only the various different concepts which have gone with various different societies, is to discover a general truth not merely about the past but about ourselves as well (67).

To neglect to incorporate philosophical problems such as these in the process of interpretation is to risk lapsing into one or other of many possible forms of what Skinner calls "conceptual parochialism" (48). The resulting misinterpretations in the history of ideas are many, Skinner holds, and he has little trouble in collecting enough examples both to illustrate the point, and to argue convincingly that even when an historian of ideas addresses himself solely to the description of a text, and even when his paradigms reflect genuinely organizing features of the text, the same essential danger still remains: "the danger that the very familiarity of the concepts the historian uses may mask some essential inapplicability to the historical material" (48).

My contention in this chapter will be that the same "conceptual parochialism" which, according to Skinner, particularly marks the history of ideas can be shown to have long been at work in the history of criticism of Freud's texts in general and, specifically, in the recent critical outpouring generated by Dora's case history. I shall argue further that in the process of absorbing this outpouring, the story of Dora's hysteria, as once re-told by Freud, has become all but submerged by the critics' story of Freud's failure to come to terms with it.[6] At the same time, its crucial place in the history of the development of psychoanalytic theory has been all but lost. In the course of my discussion, I will refer extensively to the essays published in the collection *In Dora's Case* – particularly that by Toril Moi (1981) – as well as to a later essay by Moi, entitled "Patriarchal Thought and the Desire for Knowledge" (1989). My reasons for focusing in unusual detail on the latter paper in the section immediately following, and its particular relevance to my argument as a whole, should become clear as the essay proceeds.[7]

I

(MALE) SCIENCE, THEORY, RATIONALITY

Focusing (in "Patriarchal Thought and the Desire for Knowledge") on psychoanalytic theories of knowledge, sexuality, and sexual identity, Toril Moi suggests that at one level, Freudian psychoanalysis can be characterized as an effort to *open up* and *extend* the field of rational knowledge: "Perhaps the analytic situation may be seen as a different model of structuring knowledge," she writes, "one that forces us steadily to reflect on the points of exclusion, repression, and blockage, in our own discursive constructions..." (1989: 196)

Moi is here referring particularly to what she calls the very specific "dialogic" situation created by psychoanalytic practice as it is known today, and as it evolved from the first analytical sessions between Freud and his hysterical patients. These sessions between analyst and mental patient were crucially different from any that had gone before. As Moi points out: "Unlike Charcot, who chose to exhibit his hysterical patients in a gesture of dominance, Freud decided to listen to them: psychoanalysis is born in the encounter between the hysterical woman and the positivist man of science" (1989: 196). It is in this reversal of the traditional roles of subject and object, of speaker and listener, Moi suggests, that Freud "more or less unwittingly" opens the way for a new understanding of human knowledge.

Moi has arrived at this point in her essay (to which I will return later) after a brief survey of some recent attempts amongst feminists to criticize, and propose alternatives to, certain forms of structured thought which have been variously labelled "male science," "male theory," or "male rationality." These traditional modes of knowledge, they have argued, are inextricably linked with traditional sexualized – and sexist – categories of dominance and oppression. Their claim (as represented by Moi) is that (male) science, philosophy, rationality – call it

what you will – constantly re-enacts the Cartesian mind/body divide, in which, the argument goes,

> … always and everywhere the rational, active, masculine intellect operates on the passive, objectified, feminized body. To be intellectual – to think? – under patriarchy … is willy-nilly to take up a position marked as masculine. If one doesn't, one has no option but to embrace the other side of the tedious series of homologous patriarchal oppositions, where irrationality and thoughtlessness is equated with femininity, the body, object-being, emotionality, and so on (1989: 189).

In Le Doeuff's account (as summarised by Moi), for example, woman (the singular here denoting the imaginary, universal fantasy of woman entertained by western philosophy) is perceived as lacking the phallus. In the patriarchal imagination, what a woman needs is a man, not philosophy. If a woman declares that she too feels the "philosophical lack", or a desire for knowledge, this can only be a compensation for her primary sexual frustration. According to this logic, then, the thinking woman necessarily becomes synonymous with the "blue stocking" – the frustrated spinster of patriarchal ideology. On the other hand, woman is also considered *incapable* of philosophy, or of rational thought, because of her "self-sufficient plenitude." Here, there is no question of lack or castration – rather, woman becomes the "very emblem of narcissistic self-sufficiency." According to this logic, women *cannot* think because they suffer no lack at all. Hence Hegel's classic formulation (in *Philosophy of Right*) that, though women may be "capable of education," they are not made for "the more advanced sciences" - for "philosophy, and certain forms of artistic production which require universality":

> Women may have ideas, taste, and elegance, but they do not have the ideal. The difference between men and women is like that between animals and plants; men correspond to animals, while women correspond to plants because they are more of a placid unfolding, the principle of which is the unity of feeling. When women hold the helm of government,

> the State is at once in jeopardy, because women regulate their actions not by demands of universality, but by arbitrary inclinations and opinions. [8]

According to Moi, the most influential arguments against the so-called "male science" have been put forward by Evelyn Fox Keller, whose main enemy is the concept of "objectivity", which she sees as the ruling ideological paradigm of the natural sciences.[9] In Keller's critique, scientific ideology divides the world into "two parts – the knower (mind) and the knowable (nature)", and insists that the relation between the "knower and known is one of distance and separation … that between a subject and object radically divided." Having divided the world, patriarchal ideology genders the two halves. Nature, objectified and oppressed, is female, whereas knowledge is characterized as male: "The characterization of both the scientific mind and its modes of access to knowledge as masculine is indeed significant. Masculine here connotes, as it so often does, autonomy, separation and distance. It connotes a radical rejection of any commingling of subject and object, which are, it now appears, quite consistently identified as male and female." Such ideology, Keller claims, excludes women from science by casting them as "non-objective," as "non-knowers." Feminists should refuse to accept this male vision of the subject/object division, she argues, proposing, instead, a "commingling" of the two, or an empathetic "feeling" for the object, where it is no longer reified but respected in its integrity. *Feeling* must thus be allowed a place within science, not relegated to a space outside it.

Moi is sceptical both about the decision to label traditional science "male" (Why not "patriarchal"? she suggests; just as all women are not feminist, not all males are patriarchal), and to call the new mode of knowledge "female". Why imply, she asks, that this new mode is somehow less suitable for males? She is also sceptical about the usefulness of seeing all forms of intellectual mastery simply as aggressive control and domination. To be consistent, Moi points out, the denunciation of all possible forms of mastery would logically have to include the rejection, not only of "rapacious exploitation of natural resources, nuclear weapons, and dictatorship, but of agriculture, house-building, and bicycling as well" (1989: 193).

Also, while Moi finds Keller's critique of dominant forms of what she calls Cartesian rationalism "inspiring;" her denunciation of the logic of domination and objectification at work in the ideology of science "timely;" while she warms particularly to the idea put forward by Keller of undoing the split between reason and emotion – of finding a place for *feeling* within science – on the whole, she finds Keller's analysis of knowledge and feminism "somewhat disappointing." This is because, as she argues convincingly, Keller's analysis never quite manages to break free of what Moi calls the "straitjacket of patriarchal binary thought," in the end remaining trapped by the very categories of the scientific ideology it sets out to read. "There is no attempt here to question the logic that underpins patriarchal metaphysics, or to contest the very meaning of terms such as masculine/feminine, reason/emotion. And so on..." For Moi, then, the problem with Keller's analysis of gender and science and philosophy is not only its "cultural essentialism," but the fact that

> the solution proposed ('commingling,' 'union' of subject and object) remains curiously timid and flawed. If the 'union' proposed reinforces the separate identities of subject and object, their grand vision of 'female science' promises no more than a certain elasticity of boundaries between separate, self-identical essences (1989: 193).

The Tyranny of Thought by Sexual Analogy

In preference, Moi turns to the "deconstructive onslaughts" on these very sets of (patriarchal) oppositions which have come from thinkers such as Hélène Cixous, and which, she says, contrast sharply with the "curious timidity" of the critiques offered by Keller and her followers:

> By focusing on the inevitable struggle, the warring relationship between such hierarchical oppositions [as for example, activity/passivity; culture/nature; head/heart; man/woman...] Cixous at once signals that the

> battle between the sexes insinuates itself in the very structure of the sign, and that in the case of such binary oppositions the sexual struggle is bound up with the effort to deconstruct phallogocentric logic... The deconstructive move is not to *abolish* oppositions, or to deny that such signifiers exist, but rather to trace the way in which each signifier contaminates and subverts the meanings of the others. Such an approach opens the sign up, insists that its meaning is always deferred, never fully present to itself. In its questioning of the metaphysics of presence and identity, deconstruction offers a more radical solution to the problem of subject and object raised by Keller and Bordo (1989:194).

It is from this point, via a brief look at French feminist philosopher Michèle Le Doeuff's account of knowledge and patriarchal ideologization, that Moi turns towards the Freudian psychoanalytic dialogue. For Moi, the analytical situation radically undermines the split between active subject and passive object denounced by Keller – not only because the doctor here turns listener, but also because the analytical session engages both analyst and patient in *transference* and *countertransference*.[10] For Moi (as for Lacan) the Freudian dialogue, caught as it is in a web of transference and countertransference, "unsettles and undoes any clear-cut oppositions between subject and object, self and other" (1989: 198). Moi turns to Shoshana Felman to draw out the implications of this point:

> By shifting and undercutting the clear-cut polarities between subject and object, self and other, inside and outside, analyst and analysand, consciousness and unconscious, the new Freudian reflexivity substitutes for all binary, symmetrical conceptual oppositions – that is, substitutes for the very foundations of Western metaphysics – a new mode of interfering heterogeneity. The new reflexive mode – instituted by Freud's way of listening to the discourse of the hysteric and which Lacan will call the "inmixture of the subjects" (*Ecrits*, p. 415) – divides the subjects differently, in such a way that they are neither entirely distinguished, separate from each other, nor, correlatively, entirely totalizable but,

rather, interfering from within and in one another (Felman, 1987, cited in Moi, 1989: 198).

There is then in the psychoanalytic situation (concludes Moi) a model of knowledge which offers no firmly established binary opposites, which cannot therefore be gendered either as masculine or feminine, and which thereby offers us a chance to escape the "patriarchal tyranny of thought by sexual analogy": "As feminists in search of new ways to think about objectivity," Moi writes, "we can ill afford to neglect the model offered by psychoanalysis" (1989: 198).

However – and here's the catch – Moi also points out that if Freud's (and Breuer's) act of listening represents an effort to *include* the "irrational discourse of femininity" in the realm of science, it also embodies their hope of *extending* their own rational understanding of psychic phenomena: "Grasping the logic of the unconscious, they want to make it accessible to reason" (1989: 197). In other words, if on the one hand Freud's and Breuer's "act of listening" can be said to constitute a "revolutionary effort to let female madness speak to male science," what lurks behind it at the same time is a "colonizing, rational impulse" which constantly threatens to undermine it, to "obliterate" the language of the unconscious, and to repress the challenging presence of the feminine in the process (1989: 197).

Having once drawn our attention to it, however, Moi dismisses this contradiction at the heart of the psychoanalytic project with a surprising rapidity; but not without first alluding, even if only in passing, to its significance in the case of Dora. In Dora's case, she suggests, Freud allows the "colonizing impulse" to gain the upper hand; here, according to Moi, what she now calls the "imperialist tendency" running right through Freud's writings, surfaces conspicuously.

Freud and the Demon of Interpretation

Indeed, the observation is not an original one. It has been made before, in one form or another, by almost everyone who has written on Dora in recent years, and in almost every one of the essays published in *In Dora's Case*.[11] In Steven Marcus' view ("Freud and Dora", 1974) the distinguishing characteristic of Freud's technique in this case is the aggressive manner in which he "forces interpretations on Dora before she is ready for them or can accept them" (1985[1974]: 88). According to Marcus, throughout this "extraordinary work" both Dora and Freud insist with "implacable will" upon the primacy of their own versions of "the truth," or "reality," which they then use as "weapons" against one another. It must be emphasized, he remarks,

> that the "reality" Freud insists upon is very different from the "reality" that Dora is claiming and clinging to. And it has to be admitted that not only does Freud overlook for the most part this critical difference: he also adopts no measures for dealing with it. The demon of interpretation has taken hold of him, and it is this power that presides over the case of Dora... In fact, as the case history advances it becomes increasingly clear to the careful reader that Freud and not Dora has become the central character in the action... Instead of letting Dora appropriate her own story, Freud becomes the appropriator of it (1985[1974]: 85).

The Freud we meet with in Marcus' reading is indeed a "demonic" figure, "pushing on no matter what" – the same "relentless investigator" in fact that we encounter in Toril Moi's 1981 reading of the case, in "Representation of Patriarchy: Sexuality and Epistemology in Freud's Dora." Here, Moi had developed to the full her allusion, in the later essay, to Freud's "imperialist tendencies" in Dora's case, while suggesting that his account of the analysis of Dora be scanned with the "utmost suspicion". In the Dora case, she writes, Freud's attempts to posit himself as the neutral, scientific observer who is merely noting down his observations and reflections can no longer be accepted: "The archaeologist must be suspected of having mutilated the relics he finds."

(1985[1981]: 189) As for Dora herself, her condition as a victim of male dominance becomes starkly visible in Freud's account, according to Moi: "She is a pawn in the game between Herr K. and her father; her doctor joins in the male team and untiringly tries to ascribe to her desires she does not have and to ignore the ones she does have" (1985[1981]: 191). If the "emancipatory project" of psychoanalysis fails in the case of Dora, concludes Moi, without mincing her words,

> it is because Freud the liberator happens also to be, objectively, on the side of oppression. He is a male in patriarchal society, and moreover not just any male but an educated bourgeois male, incarnating *malgré lui* patriarchal values. His own emancipatory project profoundly conflicts with his political and social role as an oppressor of women (1985[1981]: 193).

But if it can be held that, in Dora's case, Freud failed in the potentially "revolutionary" project to let the madwoman speak, to inscribe the madwoman's discourse into science; that the discourse of the hysteric was allowed only the slightest inroad into the "smooth positivist logic" of the man of science, becoming if anything submerged by it instead; if it can be held that in Dora's case, it is Freud's story that is being written and not hers that is being retold, can it not equally be held that in the storm of critical protest that has arisen in its wake, Dora's story has become no more her own, still less Freud's, but largely, and perhaps even overwhelmingly, that of his critics? Freud's story of Dora's hysteria has become the critics' story of Freud's failure to come to terms with it.

It is to salvage what has been lost in the telling of this tale that I would now like to turn once again to the text of Freud's *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*.

II

FRAGMENT OF AN ANALYSIS OF A CASE OF HYSTERIA

An "effort of self understanding"

Why did Freud publish Dora's case at all? If the analysis failed so dismally, and if (as his critics have often conceded) Freud was the first to admit it, what could he have hoped to gain from setting down on record this ignominious personal and professional defeat? The reasons Freud himself offers in the "Prefatory Remarks", and comes back to sporadically in "The Clinical Picture", are reiterated as follows in the "Postscript":

> In publishing this paper, incomplete though it is, I had two objects in view. In the first place, I wished to supplement my book on the interpretation of dreams by showing how an art, which would otherwise be useless, can be turned to account for the discovery of the hidden and repressed parts of mental life... In the second place, I wished to stimulate interest in a whole group of phenomena of which science is still in complete ignorance today because they can only be brought to light by use of this particular method. No one, I believe, can have had any true conception of the complexity of the psychological events in a case of hysteria – the juxtaposition of the most dissimilar tendencies, the mutual dependence of contrary ideas, the repressions and displacements and so on...

Some lines later, he moves on to the question of sexuality:

> I was further anxious to show that sexuality does not simply intervene, like a *deus ex machina*, on one single occasion, at some point in the working of the processes which characterize hysteria, but that it provides the motive power for every single symptom, and for every single

> manifestation of a symptom... I can only repeat over and over again – for I never find it otherwise – that sexuality is the key to the problem of the psychoneuroses and of the neuroses in general (SE VII: 114-15).

The usual response to Freud's own characterizations of his labours is to dismiss them with the same scepticism he was in the habit of directing at his patients.[12] Thus for Steven Marcus the above remarks have at most a "fractional validity." The real reason behind its publication, he claims, was clearly Freud's own "unsettled and ambiguous role" in the case; his need to write it out, in some measure, as "an effort of self-understanding" (1985[1974]: 67). This - in some measure - may well be so; but the critical energy which has been so forcefully directed in recent years, by Freud's feminist critics in particular, at his own "unsettled role" in the case has ended, I would suggest, by obscuring the substantial contribution it represents in the history of the development of Freud's theory as a whole; its crucial place in the building of the very psychoanalytic model of knowledge which, for Moi, holds such promise for feminists in search of new modes of intellectual activity.

Where exactly does the case fall in the history of the development of Freud's theory as a whole? It is by now widely known that although the first version of *Dora*, originally entitled "Dreams and Hysteria", was written in 1901, the year after the appearance of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud delayed publication until 1905, the year of the *Three Essays on Sexuality*. Amongst much speculation over the reasons for this, Jacqueline Rose has suggested that Freud's hesitancy in publishing the case was a measure of his theoretical uncertainty during this period: the period between the first formulations of the theory of the unconscious in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and the theory of sexuality in the *Three Essays*. In this sense, the history of the case, its "hesitancy", she writes, "speaks for itself":

> for [Dora's case] is caught quite literally between those two aspects of Freud's work, the theory of the unconscious and the theory of sexuality, whose relation or distance is what still concerns us today, as if the case of

> Dora could only appear finally at the point where the implications of its failure had already been displaced onto a theory of sexuality, by no means complete and still highly problematic, but at least acknowledged as such (1985[1978]: 130).

This marks the beginning of what is probably one of the most constructive analyses to date of the reasons for the case's failure, one in which its *transitional theoretical status* - falling (or "failing") as it does between Freud's theory of the unconscious and that of sexuality - is for once recognised and taken into account. Unlike most, this is an analysis whose *theoretical* density takes it beyond any fixation on Freud the man, and his narcissistic "fantasies of omniscience;" while also, as its author makes clear, going beyond the call for an "alternative reading," whose content would then be "the feminine," to recognise the problem of Dora precisely *as* the problem of the feminine within psychoanalysis.

Thus the history of the case - its original title; the date of its conception and the date of its eventual publication; the space between the two, punctuated, as Rose observes, by Freud's own comments on his hesitancy regarding a case that had promised so much, but had turned out "poorer than [he] could have wished" - would tend to bear out the double theoretical and methodological purpose stated above: to supplement *The Interpretation of Dreams,* and to demonstrate the importance of sexuality in the aetiology of hysteria. As for the second objective - "to stimulate interest in a whole group of phenomena of which science is still in complete ignorance today..."; and to give some conception of the complexity of the psychological events in a case of hysteria ("the juxtaposition of the most dissimilar tendencies, the mutual dependence of contrary ideas, the repressions and displacements and so on...") - this second objective marks the beginnings of precisely that "effort" Moi discerns in Freudian psychoanalysis to "open up and extend the field of rational knowledge" - an effort consisting in its theorisation of the properties of the unconscious - and it is clear that the significance of the case history for Freud lies not least in the *introduction* it provides to this new terrain. Indeed, at a number of points in the narrative, Freud makes it evident that he feels himself to be on the edge of a new region of knowledge - one which it will

nevertheless be impossible to chart completely in the space of a single case history.

A New Region of Knowledge

What is the shape of this new territory, and what is its significance in the development of Freud's theory? The first contours are outlined in the opening pages of the first chapter of the case history proper, "The Clinical Picture," in Freud's description of his patients' inability, in the early stages of treatment, to provide a coherent narrative of the history of their lives and illnesses. The first account, he tells us, is invariably fragmented and incomplete; comparable, in fact, to "an unnavigable river whose stream is at one moment choked by masses of rock and at another divided and lost among shallows and sandbanks" (SE VII: 16). This inability to give an ordered and consistent history, Freud stresses, is not merely *characteristic* of the neuroses; it also possesses great *theoretical significance* with regard to both the conscious and unconscious motivations of the patient.

In the first place, he writes, part of what the patient omits from the story will have been kept back consciously and intentionally, for reasons of shame, timidity or discretion: "this is the share taken by *conscious* disingenuousness." In the second place, what is left out of the story may have been normally available to consciousness, but may have disappeared from memory in the telling, despite the patient's having made no deliberate reservations: "the share taken by *unconscious* disingenuousness." In the third place, there may by true "amnesias" - "gaps in the memory into which not only old recollections but even quite recent ones have fallen" - and "paramnesias" which are formed secondarily to fill in the gaps and conceal the presence of the amnesias. In addition, even when the events themselves have been kept in mind, the purpose underlying the amnesias may be fulfilled by altering their chronological order, thereby destroying the connections between them (SE VII: 17-18).

From a theoretical point of view, the presence of such "amnesias" is fundamental, and a necessary correlate of the symptoms. Ideally (as the theory has it in this early stage of its development) in the further course of the treatment, the patient will supply the facts which had been withheld, or had not come to mind. The paramnesias will prove untenable and the gaps in the patient's memory will be filled in, until finally, all going well, the patient will come into possession of his or her own full and unbroken history.

Dora's case then, opens by focusing our attention on those very "points of exclusion, repression and blockage in ... discursive constructions" whose emphasis in the analytic dialogue Toril Moi invokes as the distinguishing characteristic of psychoanalytic practice, and because of which she advances it as a new - and, for feminists, more promising - model of structuring knowledge. In fact, this early discussion on amnesia marks one of the formative moments in what will later become the Freudian theory of *repression;* and a continuation of what Freud had first described in the *Studies on Hysteria* as a "psychical force" (or an "aversion on the part of the ego") in his patients which was opposed to pathogenic ideas becoming conscious or being remembered; a form of "not knowing," which was in fact a "not wanting to know - a not wanting which might be to a greater or lesser extent conscious" (1893-1895: 353). Indeed, so significant was the development of the theory of repression that in 1914, Freud declared it to be "the corner-stone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests." In the following year, he published his most elaborate formulation of the theory in the metapsychological paper entitled "Repression" and in Section IV of the paper on "The Unconscious" (see SE XIV: 180-85).

If repression is the "cornerstone" on which the structure of psychoanalysis rests, it also holds potential theoretical value, 1 would suggest, in Moi's search for new ways to think about knowledge and modes of intellectual activity. How so? Loosely speaking, repression may be defined as a psychical mechanism activated when the satisfaction of a drive (or instinct, as Strachey's translation has it), though likely to be pleasurable in itself, would be "irreconcilable with other claims and intentions," and would therefore "cause pleasure in one place

and unpleasure in another" (SE XIV: 147). If the motive force of unpleasure acquires more strength than the pleasure likely to be obtained from satisfaction, the instinctual impulse may pass into a state of "repression." In the "first phase" of repression, the psychical representative of the instinct is denied entrance into the conscious. In the second phase, "mental derivatives" of the repressed representative - or trains of thought which, while originating elsewhere, have since come into associative connection with it - undergo the same fate as what was primally repressed (SE XIV: 148).

The most striking feature of Freud's theory as fomulated in the paper devoted to repression in 1915 (and the most promising, I think, for the move away from "patriarchal systems of knowledge") is the continuing active force he ascribes to an instinct's psychical (or "ideational") representative *even after it has undergone repression.* Freud insists that "it is a mistake to emphasize only the repulsion which operates from the direction of the conscious upon what is to be repressed; quite as important is the attraction exercised by what was primally repressed upon everything with which it can establish a connection." In other words, it is essential to realise that repression does not hinder the instinctual representative from continuing to exist in the unconscious; from "organizing itself further, putting out derivatives, and establishing connections." Indeed, Freud goes on to say, the instinctual representative develops with *less* interference and *more* profusely if it is withdrawn by repression from conscious influence:

> It proliferates in the dark, as it were, and takes on extreme forms of expression, which when they are translated and presented to the neurotic are not only bound to seem alien to him, but frighten him by giving him the picture of an extraordinary and dangerous strength... (SE XIV: 149).

We are now coming very close to another of Moi's preferred models for knowledge - that suggested by the French feminist philosopher, Michèle Le Doeuff. Le Doeuff's analysis marks the transition, in Moi's paper, from the "somewhat disappointing" critiques of so-called "male science" offered by Keller

and her followers, to the more promising one suggested by psychoanalytic practice:

> Focusing [Moi writes] on the double problem of the empirical exclusion of women and the theoretical repression of femininity in western philosophy, Le Doeuff argues that traditional western philosophy exhibits a striking contradiction at its centre. On the one hand, philosophy is an activity based on the recognition of *lack*: philosophy, in other words, exists because there is something that *remains to be thought.* On the other hand, philosophy also works from the imaginary assumption that the knowledge produced by philosophy creates completion, that its aim is to construct a flawless structure *without lack*... (1989: 194)

The problem for feminists is that invariably, western philosophy posits woman as the symbol of lack and negativity, thereby, the argument goes, turning her into the ground of its own existence: "by her very inferiority she guarantees the superiority of philosophy" (Moi, 1989: 195). Moi supports Le Doeuff's call for an alternative philosophy which would be conscious of its own lack, which, "aware of its own open and unfinished nature can hope to avoid being caught in the sterile dichotomy between reason and unreason, masculinity and femininity" (1989: 196). For Moi, the advantage of Le Doeuff's account (over that of Keller, Bordo et al.) is that it "allows us to analyse and deconstruct the opposition between inside and outside which structures knowledge itself. In this respect, Le Doeuff's deconstruction of the boundaries between knowledge and non-knowledge is not only reminiscent of Derrida, but of the very specific dialogic situation created by psychoanalytic practice" (1989: 195).

It is *also* reminiscent, I would suggest, of Freud's theory of repression: In its emphasis on the "deceptive (psychical) strength" of the subject's repressed instinct - or "amnesia" - normally considered as a form of *loss* of knowledge, but which is now shown to be more powerful in its influence over the subject than what he or she *knows,* or has available to consciousness, Freud's theory of repression - in its first evolutionary stages in Dora's case, and central to

psychoanalytic practice in general - provides just such a "deconstruction of the boundaries between knowledge and non-knowledge," perhaps in fact the first radical questioning of the metaphysics of presence and identity which must be the starting point of *all* deconstructive logic, and, ultimately, all movements away from those systems of knowledge trapped in Moi's "straitjacket of patriarchal binary thought."

In the light of Moi's earlier-mentioned dismissal of Dora's case as a "failure," and Freud's account of her analysis as one to be regarded "with the utmost suspicion," this is ironic indeed. But what of her more specific charge against his "imperialist tendencies" in the case?

There has been little dispute over the basic theory underlying Dora's case, namely, that hysterical symptoms are "compromise formations" that express repressed sexual wishes; nor over the fact that, since Dora did indeed display such hysterical symptoms, she must have had a "secret" - an unconscious desire. The controversy, and most of the opposition from feminists, arises not in relation to the existence of Dora's "amnesias," but to the *anamnesis* through which we are conducted in the psychoanalytic narrative which tells of her treatment, during the course of which, it is held, Dora's story becomes Freud's. For Moi, this *anamnesis* is coincident with the point at which Freud's "imperialist tendency" surfaces in the case, thereby all but obliterating the discourse of his patient.

Since Dora's "discourse" - the "language of the irrational and the unconscious", or the "discourse of the madwoman", as Moi has it - is by definition unavailable to consciousness, then it must be in the process of "translating" it into conscious thought-language, that this "obliteration" takes place. And if repression is the process through which the patient's "intimate" and "secret" wishes are made unavailable to consciousness in the first place - through which they are converted into the symptoms of hysteria - then the dream, according to Freud, is one of the roads along which consciousness can be reached by the psychical material which has been cut off from it, and become pathogenic; it is one of the "detours by which repression can be evaded..." (SE VII: 15). Freud's

interpretations of Dora's dreams have been much discussed, while frequently held as evidence of his tendency in Dora's case to substitute his own version of reality for hers. But the dream is not the only path along which consciousness may be reached by repressed psychical material, and in the following section, I would like once again to put Moi's charge against Freud to the test, this time by tracing his "translation into conscious thought-language" not of her dreams but of another of her "indirect" psychical representations - of what he calls her "supervalent" train of thought regarding her father's relations with Frau K.

III
THE NARRATIVE OF DORA'S DESIRE

In his 1915 paper "Repression", Freud emphasizes that it would be incorrect to imagine that all the derivatives of what was primally repressed are withheld from the conscious by the mechanism of repression. If these derivatives become sufficiently far removed from the repressed representative, he suggests - "whether owing to the adoption of distortions or by reason of the number of intermediate links inserted" - they have free access to the conscious (SE XIV: 149). This is significant since the appearance of such "derivatives," produced by the patient during analysis in the form of "associations," may lead the analyst to the content of the repressed material. Thus Freud writes,

> In carrying out the technique of psychoanalysis, we continually require the patient to produce such derivatives of the repressed as, in consequence either of their remoteness or of their distortion, can pass the censorship of the conscious. Indeed, the associations which we require him to give without being influenced by any conscious purposive idea and without any criticism, and from which we reconstitute a conscious translation of the repressed representative - these associations are nothing else than remote and distorted derivatives of this kind (SE XIV: 149-50).

If the condition for such derivatives gaining access to consciousness is a function of their remoteness (through distortion) from the repressed representative, then their initial formation is a function of the existence of a "continuous pressure" exercised by the repressed itself in the direction of the conscious, so that if the repression is to be kept from breaking through to consciousness, this pressure *must be balanced by an unceasing counter-pressure:* "Thus the maintenance of a repression involves an uninterrupted expenditure of force, while its removal results in a saving from an economic point of view" (SE XIV: 151). In Chapter IV of his 1915 paper on "The Unconscious" Freud describes this process - the process whereby the repression is not only established but continued and maintained – as an *anticathexis* "by means of which the system *Pcs.* protects itself from the pressure upon it of the unconscious idea" (SE XIV: 181). It is this which represents the permanent expenditure of energy of a primal repression, and which also guarantees the permanence of that repression.

The notion of "anticathexis" is prefigured in Freud's analysis of the unconscious force underlying Dora's reaction to her father's affair with Frau K. According to Freud, Dora herself complained that she could not account for its apparently disproportionate strength:

> "I can think of nothing else", she complained again and again. "I know my brother says we children have no right to criticize this behaviour of Father's. He declares that we ought not to trouble ourselves about it, and ought even to be glad, perhaps, that he has found a woman he can love, since Mother understands him so little. I can quite see that, and 1 should like to think the same as my brother, but I can't. 1 can't forgive him for it" (SE VII: 54-55).

Dora's inability in the face of her own repeated attempts to dissipate or remove this particular train of thought leads Freud to suspect the presence of a pathological component: "A train of thought such as this," he writes, "may be described as excessively intense, or better *reinforced,* or 'supervalent'... It shows

its pathological character in spite of its apparently reasonable content, by the single peculiarity that no amount of conscious and voluntary effort of thought on the patient's part is able to dissipate or remove it. A normal train of thought, however intense it may be, can eventually be disposed of" (SE VII: 54). Freud concludes that such a thought must owe its reinforcement to the unconscious: "It cannot be resolved by any effort of thought, either because it itself reaches with its root down into unconscious, repressed material, or because another unconscious thought lies concealed behind it" (SE VII: 55).

In the latter case, Freud goes on, the concealed thought is usually the direct contrary of the supervalent one: "Contrary thoughts are always closely connected with each other and are often paired off in such a way that *the one thought is excessively intensely conscious while its counterpart is repressed and unconscious.*" This relation between the two thoughts is proffered as an effect of the process of repression, in which repression is in fact achieved by means of the excessive reinforcement of the thought contrary to the one to be repressed. The "reactive thought" keeps the objectionable one under repression by means of a certain "surplus of intensity;" at the same time it itself becomes "damped" and proof against conscious effort of thought. In this scenario, *conscious thought itself becomes a symptom of the repressed,* and the task of the analyst to strip the supervalent thought of its excessive intensity by bringing its repressed contrary into consciousness.

A "fine poetic conflict"

Freud's response to this particular point of "exclusion" or "blockage" in Dora's discourse is given in two essentially contradictory narratives, each of which (following the above formulation) serves as an attempt to identify and give substance to the "repressed contrary" to which the supervalent thought owes its existence, and the second of which significantly displaces the first.

Following what most critics have identified as the general scheme of Freud's interpretation of the case as a whole, the first scenario is based on what Rose describes as a "simple identification of the oedipal triangle." The starting point for this is Dora's protest at her place in the relationship between Frau K and her father; that is, her objection to being "proferred as a pawn" to Herr K. Her repudiation of Herr K is then the inevitable consequence of an outrage that takes Herr K as its immediate object, and yet behind which is the figure of the father, who is the object of real reproach (see Rose, 1985[1978]: 132).

Specifically, at this point in the narrative, the obsessive character of Dora's preoccupation with her father's relations to Frau K - along with her "ultimatum" to him ("either her or me..."), her "scenes," her suicidal intentions - is taken to constitute a form of behaviour which, exceeding filial concern, would be more appropriate in a "jealous wife" and must therefore signify her newly revived (unconscious) sexual attraction to her father, now manifested in an (unconscious) identification with "both the woman her father had once loved and the woman he loved now." This, in turn, is diagnosed as a "reactive symptom" to cover the suppression of her love for Herr K." [13]

Thus, as in Freud's analysis of Dora's second dream (see Rose, 1985[1978]: 132), Dora's infantile love for her father is here summoned up *secondarily*, as a defence against her continuing love for Herr K. In this scenario, then - and in Freud's general interpretation of the case as a whole - Dora's rejection of Herr K is defined as simultaneously oedipal and hysterical (repudiation of her own desire); and her desire itself as unproblematic - heterosexual and genital.

But if this is the point at which Freud's interpretation can be seen to endorse a patriarchal definition of Dora's desire, it is also the point at which the narrative which contains it strains most insistently against such an endorsement. For if the above scenario provides a motivation for the revival of Dora's infantile affection for her father, it nevertheless fails (as Freud himself implies) to account satisfactorily for the fact that she was almost incessantly a prey to "the most embittered jealousy" (SE VII: 58). Neither does it explain Dora's earlier prolonged period of

complicity in the affair between her father and Frau K, nor her persistent loyalty to the woman who had ostensibly replaced her in her father's affections. Furthermore, it cannot account for Dora's "unmistakable identification with her father," revealed in the symptom of the cough, nor her further "masculine identifications" at various points in the case history (see Rose, 1985[1978]: 133).

Most crucial of all, however, the first scenario cannot explain the "obstinacy" with which Dora retained the particular amnesia concerning the sources of her "forbidden" knowledge - the knowledge whose main source, as Freud realizes only too late, "could have been no one but Frau K," and which Frau K will later use to betray her. And it is Freud's refusal to let go of this most "remarkable" of Dora's blockages and repressions - ("her knowing all about such things and, at the same time, her always pretending not to know where her knowledge came from...") - which prompts him finally to resist the temptation to settle for less when he offers in the concluding pages of "The Clinical Picture" to "obscure and efface" what he now revealingly refers to as the "fine poetic conflict" it has thus far been possible to ascribe to Dora. The second scenario which Freud now puts forward in its place - and which he describes as a "complication" of the first, but which in fact crucially displaces it - reveals Frau K rather than her husband as the real object of Dora's desire and obsessive jealousy, and the reason for her exaggerated reproaches against her father. Although what Freud now perceives as the "strong homosexual current" in Dora's mental life becomes submerged again in his analysis of Dora's dreams, the deep significance he attached to its discovery - however belated - is stressed in a lengthy footnote to his closing remarks on the case (SE VII: 120, fn. 1).

Thus the *anamnesis* through which we are conducted in this sequence - the product of Freud's attempt to "fill the gaps" in Dora's memory - appears in two contradictory narratives, each with its own central character. In the first, the protagonist, and the object of Dora's repressed desire, is Herr K; in the second, it is his wife. It is the persistence with which Freud clings to the first of these two narratives, while marginalising the second, that has attracted most hostility, particularly from feminists. What is emphasized in the response is first, that the

"reality" Freud insists upon here is very different from the "reality" Dora is claiming and clinging to; and second, that not only has Freud assigned Herr K a far more favourable position than he deserved in Dora's mental life, in doing so he has at the same time - in his identification with Herr K, and in his failure to recognize the counter-transference (the place of his own desire in the narrative) - made *himself* rather than Dora the central character in the action.

Indeed, there is no denying that Freud underplays, or is perhaps simply blind to the extent to which his second tale - the tale of Dora's homosexual desire for Frau K - contradicts and undermines the first, his only offer to deal with this problem appearing in what Rose perceives as a "mandatory appeal" to the properties of the unconscious itself ("in the unconscious contradictory thoughts live very comfortably side by side" (SE VII: 61)). Rose notes the tenacity with which Freud hangs on to a notion of a genital heterosexuality throughout the case - so much so that in consequence, he is led to pursue a number of blatantly false trails in his interpretation of both her dreams.[14] Yet Freud's apparent failure to grasp the full significance of his move should not be allowed to undermine it, nor to efface the brief but telling comparison inscribed within it between his vision of himself as "man of letters" in the first tale while "medical man" in the second; creator of a "fine poetic conflict" in the first scenario and a "world of reality" in the second. Nor, finally, should the *theoretical* distance be underestimated, and thus the radical break it represents, between the notion of a problematic, differential and component sexuality suggested, however tentatively, by Freud's second narrative - and elaborated in his *Three Essays on Sexuality* - and the nineteenth century medical conceptualization of the sexual instinct from within which it was produced.

For Rose, Freud's unconvincing attempt to resolve the contradictions he himself has created reveals a theory of interpretation functioning as "resistance" to the pressing need to develop a theory of sexuality - whose "complexity" and "difficulty," as she points out, manifests itself time and again in the case. But what is not mentioned here is the *already existent,* and indeed powerfully institutionalised, theory of sexuality from within which Freud was working at the

time. Freud's "resistance," according to Rose, appears most strongly in relation to Frau K's status as an object of desire for Dora: "Thus this aspect of the case surfaces only symptomatically in the text, at the end of the clinical picture that it closes, and in a series of footnotes and additions to the interpretation of the second dream and in the postscript" (1985[1978]: 134). Read against the conceptual and historical background of nineteenth century psychiatry, however, the marginal status of this aspect of the case becomes symptomatic, I would suggest, not so much of *Freud's* resistance as that of the psychiatry of the day; of the absence of any conceptual backing for an analysis of Dora's homosexuality which could assign it a central position in the narrative without converting the story of her hysteria into a tale of perversion instead.

Coming back to Arnold Davidson's account (1987) of the historical background against which Freud wrote his *Three Essays on Sexuality* (and thus Dora's case history too), we learn that in nineteenth century psychiatric circles there is virtually *unargued unanimity* both on the fact that the "sexual instinct" has a natural function and on what that function is. Krafft-Ebing's view is given as representative:

> During the time of the maturation of physiological processes in the reproductive glands, desires arise in the consciousness of the individual, which have for their purpose the perpetuation of the species (sexual instinct)...
>
> With opportunity for the natural satisfaction of the sexual instinct, every expression of it that does not correspond with the purpose of nature – i.e., propagation - must be regarded as perverse (1987: 260).

Should anyone doubt the representativeness of Krafft-Ebing's conception, Davidson cites a long passage from Moll's *Perversions of the Sex Instinct* (1891) (since, he suggests, Moll is often considered to be a direct anticipator of Freud) which demonstrates that Moll's conception of the nature of the sexual instinct and Krafft-Ebing's are quite literally interchangeable. [15] "Nineteenth-century

psychiatry silently adopted this conception of the function of the sexual instinct. It was often taken as so natural as not to need explicit statement..." writes Davidson (1987: 261). "In fact," he adds later, "many writers before Freud used the terms 'sexual instinct' and 'genital instinct' interchangeably, as if the latter were simply a more precise name for the former. This identification was not in the least bit arbitrary, since the sexual instinct was conceived of as psychically expressing itself in an attraction for members of the opposite sex, with genital intercourse as the ultimate aim of this attraction" (1987: 273). Since the natural function of the sexual instinct was thus taken to be propagation, and the corresponding natural, psychological satisfaction of this instinct to consist in the satisfaction derived from heterosexual, genital intercourse, then any deviation from this function, including homosexuality, was taken to be a perversion.

Beyond Patriarchal Models of Knowledge

Juliet Mitchell has warned against the dangers of extrapolating Freud's ideas about femininity from their context within the larger theories of psychoanalysis - a practice which, she suggests, can be held responsible for much of the hostility his work has provoked amongst feminists. For, as Mitchell points out, it is only this context which prevents such notorious concepts as for example, "penis-envy," from becoming either laughable or ideologically dangerous: "In the briefest possible terms, we could say that psychoanalysis is about the material reality of ideas both within, and of, man's history; thus in 'penis-envy' we are talking not about an anatomical organ, but about the ideas of it that people hold and live by within the general culture, the order of human society" (1974: xvi). The same hostility must naturally result from any attempt to read Freud without constantly bearing in mind both the conceptual framework in which he was working, and the ideological and social order in which he lived.

Further, while it is one thing to pay lip-service to the question of history, it is another to integrate it into the practice of interpretation itself. There are, of course, many patriarchal judgements to be found within Freud's work, and the opportunity to point them out is seldom passed by - particularly, and no doubt

understandably, where his feminist critics are concerned. Not infrequently, the link between these judgements and the prejudices of Victorian society is also both recognised and made explicit. Yet, more often than not, if the question of history is not being raised purely as a way of rejecting psychoanalysis as the "culture-bound product of a small-minded 'Victorian' patriarch," it is raised only to accuse Freud of having had a part in it at all - as if his complicity with the ideology of his day were something he might easily have avoided - while what is ignored is the *explanatory potential* of history with respect to the processes of intellectual production, both for Freud and in general. Thus we can now turn again to Moi, in her essay on Dora:

> Now if the hysterical woman is gagged and chained, Freud posits himself as her liberator. And if the emancipatory project of psychoanalysis fails in the case of Dora, it is because Freud the liberator happens also to be, objectively, on the side of oppression. He is a male in patriarchal society, and moreover not just any male but an educated bourgeois male, incarnating *malgré lui* patriarchal values. His own emancipatory project profoundly conflicts with his political and social role as an oppressor of women (1985[1981]: 193).

This is eloquently put, but it is insensitive - as, I would suggest, is the essay as a whole - to the complexity of the charge it lays. For if the "conflict" that it raises is essentially an historical one, and if behind it, in the final analysis, lies the reason for the case's failure, then why is this the single occasion in the space of Moi's discussion that the category of history is allowed to surface at all? Also, if Freud is an "incarnation" *(malgré lui)* of patriarchal values, then what, in this equation, we can only wonder, is the content, for Moi, of *lui*? Important though it is to distinguish and bring to light the moments at which, bourgeois patriarchal male that he was, Freud reproduced the values of his bourgeois patriarchal society, these should not be allowed to obscure those other moments when, *malgré lui,* he moved decisively, irreversibly, beyond them.

IV

DORA IN HISTORY

What has been lost in most recent commentary on Freud's *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* is any abiding sense or acknowledgement of its groundbreaking significance in the history of psychoanalytic thought. Read in conjunction with the *Studies on Hysteria, The Interpretation of Dreams* and the *Three Essays on Sexuality* (as Freud explicitly intended it to be), Dora's case can be seen to straddle three of the founding moments of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. How then can the case at the same time be said to represent its failure? [16] Would it not be more accurate to suggest that Dora's case, rather than representing the failure of psychoanalytic theory - "in its inability to account for the feminine" - represents the point at which that theory *begins;* the first significant attempt, in fact, to "write the history of femininity, to understand female subjectivity, or simply to imagine woman as mythical and social subject" (De Lauretis, 1984: 131). Rather than the moment at which Freud s "colonizing impulse... gains the upper hand", Dora's case represents the moment at which that "colonizing impulse" is first relaxed, however tentatively or incompletely; the moment at which the "language of the irrational and the unconscious" makes its first, tremulous appearance in the discourse of science.

Clearly, one of the aims of the recent wave of feminist literary critical response to Dora's case was to clear the way for a reading in which Dora's "desires" would no longer be submerged within the narrative of her chauvinistic analyst, in which the story which emerged from the case would at last be Dora's, rather than Freud's. Ironically though (as already suggested), it has in fact been Freud himself who has remained the protagonist in Dora's case throughout this storm of feminist critical protest - as villain, rather than hero, to be sure, but as protagonist nevertheless.

A very different narrative has emerged with the appearance of Hannah Decker's historically based study (*Freud, Dora, and Vienna 1900* (1992)) - and it

is precisely in this, I would suggest, that the interest of her exploration lies, both for feminism, and in general. [17] Now, as an historian, Hannah Decker sets out to "mine Freud's text as one would a rich lode, following its many glimmering veins..." (xi). The result is a narrative in which, perhaps for the first time (and despite the theoretical claims of Freud's feminist readers), Freud's young patient emerges as an historical figure in her own right. Let us dwell for a moment on this narrative.

Freud, Dora and Vienna 1900

Decker's methodology is intriguing. The book's nine chapters take as their titles quotations from Freud's case history itself, and the procedure is to elaborate on these at length with an accumulation of details which lend historical substance to Freud's words. Thus the title of Chapter One ("In Spite of Her Reluctance") is a reference to the line in which Freud reveals, famously, that it was only Dora's father's authority which had induced her to see him at all, so that the analysis had proceeded without her spontaneous consent and "in spite of her reluctance." The chapter itself gives substance to the word "reluctance" by surveying, in often gruesome detail, the history of Dora's unsuccessful medical treatment *before* she had been brought to Freud - a history guaranteed to have made just the thought of placing herself in the hands of yet another doctor a terrifying one for the patient.

Indeed, some physicians at the turn of the century still held to what was known as the "uterine" theory of hysteria. This was based on the belief that the uterus (*hysteria* in Greek) was an independent entity in a woman's body, that it had an ardent desire to create children, and that if it remained empty too long after its owner's puberty, it became unhappy and angry and began to travel throughout the body. In its wanderings, it pressed against various bodily organs, creating "hysterical" - that is, uterus-related - symptoms. So, if a woman felt she could not breathe, it was because the uterus was in the throat, or pressing against the bronchial tubes. If a woman was lethargic, it was because the uterus was impinging on blood vessels going to the brain. According to the uterine theory,

palpitations occurred when the womb, in its meanderings, bumped up against the heart. The mind boggles to think of the treatments dreamt up to deal with prognoses such as these.

By the onset of Dora's symptoms, most physicians had in fact discarded the uterine theory, diagnosing "hysterical" symptoms as nervous in origin, and responding with a wide variety of treatments including, in Dora's case, electro-therapy and hydro-therapy. Yet after several years of subjection to a range of different physicians, none of their efforts or experiments had produced any positive effect on Dora's symptoms. The array of unpleasant reactions she would have suffered at their hands, however, makes her eventual "reluctance" to try her luck with Freud, or anyone else, only too understandable. Common reactions to electro-therapy, for example, included dizziness, nausea, trembling, feelings of faintness, involuntary defecation, muscle pain, headache, insomnia and increased nervousness. Minor electrical burns were inflicted, inducing pricking and burning sensations, redness, pimples and welts, followed by the formation of scabs, which left small indentations and permanent, pigmented scars after they dropped off. And so on... By the time Dora was presented to Freud, at the age of seventeen, she had been enduring effects such as these for years, and had already lost all confidence in the abilities of physicians.

Within this first chapter, then (and in many of the chapters to come), we are given more than just the cursory glimpse granted us by Freud himself into the "pre-history" of the case, in a way which turns out to be essential for any depth of understanding as to the patient's psychological state as she began her analysis. Crucial to this were the effects of repeated unhappy experiences at the hands of medical practitioners; no less so were the deeply misogynistic and anti-Semitic attitudes to which Dora had been exposed throughout her childhood and early adolescence in Vienna.

As Decker points out, Dora's family was representative of many hundreds of Bohemian Jews who had emigrated to Vienna in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, largely in response to the violence, general hostility, and

economic hardship which had been their lot in the neighbouring rural areas. By 1910, Vienna had become the largest Jewish city in Europe after Warsaw and Budapest, both of which had unusually high Jewish populations of about 25 percent. Yet, despite odd periods of relative dormancy in anti-Semitic sentiment in the Austrian capital around the turn of the century, the experience of Viennese Jews here would, in the end, turn out to be no better than it had been in the rural areas. Decker is particularly thorough on the complex history of the growth of anti-Semitism in Vienna throughout the course of Dora's life, culminating in her eventual emigration to the United States in 1938, the same year Freud was himself finally to escape to England.

So by the time she was eighteen, Dora had been a victim of both the primitivism of the medical establishment, and an ever-strengthening Viennese anti-Semitism. Added to this were the society's increasingly repressive attitudes to women. Anti-Semitism and misogyny went hand in hand, the combination apparent in the publication of what Decker describes as the "psychological hit of 1903" in Vienna, Otto Weininger's expanded doctoral dissertation, *Sex and Character* (Weininger, 1903). Originally a student of philosophy, Weininger was himself the son of a Jewish anti-Semite, and his highly acclaimed bestseller was a diatribe against women and Jews, remarkable not least for the linkage it displayed between the author's self-hatred as a Jew, and his misogyny. Weininger wrote that even the most superior woman was immeasurably below the most debased man, just as Judaism at its highest was immeasurably beneath even degraded Christianity. Judaism was so despicable precisely because it was shot through with femininity. As women lacked souls, so too did Jews. Both were pimps, amoral and lascivious. Women and Jews did not think logically, but rather intuitively, by association. Weininger declared his era to be not only the most feminine but the most Jewish of all eras. Jews were even worse than women; Jews were degenerate women (39).

Such was the social and cultural climate in Vienna by the time of Dora's first visit to Freud - a milieu in which it would not have been unusual for a woman of

Dora's intelligence and background to develop symptoms of severe depression. Decker sums up her situation as follows:

> Consider, then, Dora's state of mind at eighteen. She belonged to the very first generation of Jews to be born to equal legal status after hundreds of years of officially decreed inferiority and familial disruption. But neither the state nor the populace was reconciled to emancipation, and as the years went by Dora encountered more, not less, anti-Jewish sentiment. As woman, she heard the faint beginnings of cries for female equality, but the hard fact is that the confident voices that preached women's inherent inadequacy drowned out any contradiction. It was the general consensus that women were inferior and the insistent proclamation of anti-Semites that the proof of the Jews' deficiency lay in their exhibition of traits commonly associated with women. Thus did anti-feminism and anti-Semitism unite at the turn of the century. A young Jewish woman like Dora could be filled with even more self-doubt, and even self-loathing, than a Jewish man (1991: 40).

Dora's life within her immediate family did nothing to alleviate the depression brought on by the broad social milieu in which she was raised. From her earliest years, Dora had lived amongst chronic illness, both psychological and physical. Her mother, Käthe, had married at the age of eighteen, unaware at the time that her husband had syphilis. From him, she contracted gonorrhea, thus condemning herself to a life of chronic abdominal pains and a permanent vaginal discharge. To give an idea what it is like for a woman to have gonorrhea before antibiotics had been discovered, Decker quotes from a German physician's discussion of the disease in 1908:

> The infection of a woman with gonorrhea... is a disaster... Gonorrhea selects by preference the internal reproductive organs of woman; upon the extensive mucous membranes of these organs the gonococci find the most favorable conditions for their persistent life... "They grow luxuriantly, like a weed... They induce ulceration, they cause adhesions, and they give

> rise to sterility... This disease has... a miserably depressing effect, and in contradistinction from men, [women] are likely to suffer for many years from intense pains... often horribly severe... In most cases they are condemned to a life of deprivation and misery - not usually for any fault of their own, since most women are infected by their husbands" (cited in 1991: 51/2).

Because of both her parents' illnesses, Dora spent much of her early life in the atmosphere of the numerous health spa's and resorts surrounding Vienna. For as long as she could remember, her mother had been obsessed with attempts to cleanse herself of her venereal disease, the activity of cleaning itself becoming the ruling passion of Käthe's life. One of her son's friends described her as "a literal Puritan [who] strove for total cleanliness." Another concluded: "It is clear that a wife and mother, who dwelled under this compulsion, was never in the position of giving her husband or children joy, or indeed, any warmth." Käthe was far more preoccupied with her gynaecological complaints and her persistent constipation than with her children, and she insisted on absolute cleanliness in the house, to the point where it became almost unlivable.

As Decker puts it, in a life where so much was out of her control, Käthe sought, by ruling the household with an iron hand, to retain some fragments of power. Her incessant housekeeping was one outlet for her anger, aroused by her forced move from Vienna to a health resort owing to her husband's ill health, the venereal disease she had contracted from him, his consistent infidelity throughout their marriage, and her daughter's contempt. Käthe's cleaning was a hostile action, and her daughter felt it as such. While it was relatively easy for Philipp, her husband, and Otto, her son, with their paths to autonomy largely open, to acquiesce to Käthe's obsessions, and even support them to some extent, Dora, in an essentially powerless position herself, rebelled as much as she could, and relations between mother and daughter were always poor.

Thus Decker's accumulation of historical detail concerning the circumstances of Dora's early life lays the foundation for Dora's psychopathology, leaving the

contemporary reader with a curious sense that there should never have been a problem at all deciphering the causes for Dora's hysteria: common sense alone should have been enough to explain her psychopathology by the time she was brought before Freud. How could her reactions have been otherwise? In the case history itself, however, Freud makes little connection between the roots of her illness in the larger social world, focussing instead on their relation to one of the more specific circumstances of her family life - the special friendship between Dora's family and another family, the K's.

At the heart of this was her father's extended affair with the young and attractive Frau K - in response to which her husband, Herr K, turned his attention to the fourteen year-old Dora, making several attempts at seduction between then and her first visit to Freud. These attempts, whose effect on Dora was clearly traumatic, were ignored when she complained of them to her father (since of course, it suited him to have his daughter distract the attention of his lover's husband, thereby keeping him out of the way). Thus, at the impressionable age of fourteen, Dora found herself a pawn in a sordid love-triangle, ruthlessly exploited by the three adult figures closest to her, all of whom were bent on using her for their own gain. Little wonder she had become suicidally depressed by the time she turned eighteen, and little wonder she was "reluctant" to comply with her father's demand that she undergo treatment with Freud.

While recent critical history has figured the outcome of the case largely in terms of the battle of wills it entailed between analyst and analysand, Decker's historical investigation helps shift the emphasis to the complex conflicting motives and goals determining the roles of its three principal characters - Dora, her father Philipp, and Freud. Freud recognized that Philipp had brought his daughter to him in the hope that he would convince Dora to accept her father's relationship with Frau K, stop threatening suicide, and make things easier for everyone at home; that his motivations, in other words, were largely selfish. At the same time, he became aware that Dora had her own goals: she wanted Freud to recognize the injustices done to her, convince her father that Herr K's seduction attempts had actually taken place, and persuade Philipp to end his love

affair. Of course, he too had his own motivations in pursuing the analysis, which differed both from Dora's and her father's.

Besides hoping to cure his patient of her symptoms, Freud had theoretical goals, hoping to use Dora's case to prove the validity of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Earlier in the year, he had been criticized in reviews for not providing detailed case material that showed how dream interpretation could remedy a neurosis. Now an opportunity to do just that had presented itself in Dora's analysis. Indeed, the original title of the paper he wrote on Dora's treatment was "Dreams and Hysteria." Only later did it become "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria."

Thus, as Decker's reading shows, Freud hoped to use the treatment to "subject [certain theoretical] assumptions to a rigorous test" (96). He wished to verify his new theory of instinctual infantile sexuality; to demonstrate the detrimental effects of masturbation on mental health (since he believed that Dora's illness had begun as a result of her masturbating); and to consolidate his ideas on the existence of bisexuality and its application in psychoanalysis. Freud also wanted to use the case to explore more fully his ideas on the motives for illness in hysteria, on the two kinds of "gain" - primary and secondary - a patient could derive from an illness. The neurosis itself was the "primary gain"; albeit an uncomfortable or disabling symptom, it was the person's unconscious, psychological solution to a mental conflict. The "secondary gain" involved staying ill to "gain" attention. It was this type of gain that Freud sought to prevent Dora from attaining lest it result in her remaining permanently ill.

Indeed, there can be no doubt that Freud attempted to use Dora's case as an arena for conducting theoretical research, and that his research interests at times took precedence over the treatment. In fairness to Freud, however, it should be said that balancing research interests with strictly therapeutic ones remains a troublesome issue in psychoanalytic practice today. As Decker puts it, "How can the therapist who is trying to gather clinical data or test a hypothesis do so without affecting the treatment?" (123) The influence of contemporary medical

attitudes about hysterical patients further contributed to Freud's "failures" in the case, as did nineteenth-century views about women, and late Victorian customs and conventions.

At the end of the day, however, it is Freud's relative successes in the case rather than his failures which are thrown into relief by Decker's historical analysis. In Decker's words, "at least Freud did not physically torture Dora," as did some of his colleagues with their own hysterical patients. There is ample historical data to show how doctors' recommendations included suffocating hysterical women until their fits stopped, beating them across the face and body with wet towels, ridiculing them and exposing them in front of family and friends. One gynaecologist trained his patients not to have hysterical attacks by inserting tubes into their rectums after each episode. Another advocated "making a strong mental impression" by threatening hysterical women with the application of hot irons to their spines. For a while, the famous gynaecologist Alfred Hegar (1830-1914), and his pupils performed ovariectomies in cases of "intractable" hysteria, and the renowned neurologist, Nikolaus Friedrich (1825-82), was at the forefront of a medical cohort who cauterized their patients' clitorises.

Freud was thoroughly convinced, by the time he saw Dora, that all such methods for the treatment of hysteria were both inhumane and futile. By comparison with his peers, his own approach to the problem was progressive to say the least. Decker's contribution, then - both to the Freudian critical tradition, and to feminism - is to shift the emphasis from Freud's narrative in Dora's case, to its historical context, so that in the end, it is history itself, rather than Freud, which emerges as villain in the story of Dora's psychopathology.

V

CONCLUSION

It is ironic that the very "drive for knowledge" (Freud's own theory, in fact, of *epistemophilia)* which Moi holds responsible for Freud's failure in the Dora case (see Moi, 1985[1981]) is also the theory she invokes in her later essay as most promising for feminism in the directions it offers for a departure from the "dualisms" of patriarchal thought. In particular, Moi claims, since the Freudian drive for knowledge, or the capacity for intellectual speculation, takes the human body as its point of departure, the theory of epistemophilia can be seen to provide us with a first outline of a theory of knowledge which undoes and displaces the reason/emotion (or head/heart; mind/body) dualism which is invariably read through the male/female paradigm (For elaboration, see Moi, 1989: 198-203). The theory is further valuable, in Moi's view, for its demonstration of the imaginary nature of (male) philosophy's "dream of self-contained plenitude":

> Self-defeating, always frustrated by the limitations of the body, the Freudian drive for knowledge is structurally incapable of achieving total insight or perfect mastery: the philosopher's dream of self-contained plenitude is here unmasked as the imaginary fantasy it is. Freudian theory posits the drive for knowledge (epistemophilia) as crucially bound to the body and sexuality. If reason is always already shot through with the energy of the drives, the body, and desire, to be intellectual can no longer be theorised simply as the "opposite" of being emotional or passionate ... (1989: 203)

Thus Moi invokes the theory of epistemophilia as the rationale behind her own conviction that a new feminist philosophy of science has much to gain from Freud and Lacan. Curiously, however, her own criticism of Freud would seem to demand of him the very achievement of "complete elucidation," "total insight" or "perfect mastery" whose impossibility she would now seek to endorse. The same might be said of much recent criticism of Freud's account of the Dora case. Yet it

is only if we take an interpretive stance which insists on seeing the *whole of* psychoanalytic theory as present in one piece of writing - in effect ignoring the historicity of intellectual production in general - that we can easily make such demands.

In this chapter, I have tried to do two things: First, to restore some sense of the theoretical moment represented by the Dora case, particularly in its anticipation of later formulations of the crucially significant theory of repression, and in its movement - however halting - towards a new theory of a problematic, differential and component sexuality. Second, I have tried to re-introduce the question of history into what has become the critics' story of Freud's failure to get to the bottom of Dora's case. In doing so, 1 hope to have suggested a way beyond the contradiction in which Freud is persistently invoked, in feminist criticism, as both liberator and oppressor, hero and villain. The distinction drawn by Mitchell between Freud's *theory* itself, and the ideological uses to which it is put (1974: xxii) seems especially pertinent here. As Mitchell points out, psychoanalysis, like any other system of thought, was formed and developed within a particular time and place: "but that does not invalidate its claim to universal laws, it only means that these laws have to be extracted from their specific problematic - the particular material conditions of their formation. In this connection we need to know of the historical circumstances of their development mainly in order *not* to limit them thereto" (1974: xx).

The difference between ignoring the historical circumstances of the production of Dora's case history, and incorporating them in the process of its interpretation, I would suggest, amounts to the difference between reading it as the moment at which the "emancipatory project" of psychoanalysis fails, and the moment at which it in fact begins.

Notes:

1. As Appignanesi and Forrester (1992) point out, however, the way in which Dora walked out on Freud is "not unambiguously the victory of her desire for self-determining solitude, it is not necessarily a 'proto-feminist political vote'." For these writers, Dora's departure may not have been so much the "incarnation of the revolt of women forced to silence", but rather a "declaration of defeat" (146-7). The question of whether or not she was ever finally "cured" of her hysterical symptoms is also debatable. For an historically-based response to this question, see Decker, 1991 and 1992.

2. For an interesting discussion of Cixous' position on the Dora case history, see "Keys to Dora" in Gallop, 1982. Here, Gallop suggests that Cixous' portrait of Dora is "also a portrait of Hélène Cixous is also a portrait of women (in general)." Her response to Cixous and Dora is written in the context of her view on the necessity for a creative encounter between psychoanalysis and feminism. In order for each to exercise their strength and flexibility, Gallop suggests, psychoanalysis and feminism must meet.

3. See Moi, 1985[1981] and 1989.

4. For an analysis of the now confusing variety of ways in which this phrase has been used, Skinner's reference is to Maurice Mandelbaum, "The History of ideas, intellectual history and the history of philosophy", in *The Historiography of the History of Philosophy, Beiheft 5, History and Theory* (Middleton, Conn., Wesleyan University Press, 1965), 33n. For his own part, he notes, he uses the term "consistently but with deliberate vagueness, simply to refer to as wide as possible a variety of historical inquiries into intellectual problems."

5. Skinner takes his quotations from one of the many confrontations in the debate at the time among literary critics between the 'scholars' and the 'critics'. The terms and issues of this debate, he suggests, seem to be repeated in an identical (though less conscious) manner in histories of philosophical ideas. The belief in 'contextual reading' comes from F.W. Bateson, "The functions of criticism at the present time", *Essays in Criticism*, 3 (1953), p. 16. The contrary belief in the text itself as 'something determinate' is taken from F.R. Leavis, "The responsible critic: or the functions of criticism at any time', *Scrutiny*, 19 (1953), p. 173.

6. The titles of many recent essays - even those written from a sympathetic perspective - reflect this obsession with Freud's failure in the case. See for example, "Dora: An Exemplary Failure", in Appignanesi, 1992.

7. I choose Moi's work as one of the clearest examples of a certain feminist critique, in which (as I shall point out later) Freud is persistently invoked in a contradictory light - as both liberator and oppressor of women, both hero and villain in the feminist cause. The ongoing history of feminist responses to Freud and psychoanalysis is of course extensive. For a brief but excellent outline of some of the most significant strands of this critical history, and of its present state, see Ellmann, 1994, pp. 20-26. In an illuminating summary of this complex field, Ellmann starts with Karen Horney's challenge to the theory of penis-envy as early as the 1920's (Horney, 1967), moving to developments on Horney's position in such classics as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). From here, she discusses the seminal work of Juliet Mitchell (in Mitchell, 1974, and Mitchell and Rose, 1982), explaining how Mitchell's defence of the psychoanalytic theory of castration in her 1974 study served to liberate feminist theory from a narrow-minded hostility to psychoanalysis (21). She outlines Elizabeth Grosz's position, in her feminist introduction to Lacan (1990), in which Grosz challenges Lacan's claims that the phallus is a 'neutral' term functioning equally for both sexes, insisting instead that the prestige accorded to the phallus in psychoanalysis derives from the privileges of the penis in reality. She also discusses the shift of focus to the pre-Oedipal dimension of the female psyche in French feminism, exemplified in the work of Luce Irigaray (1985 and 1991) and Julia Kristeva (1980 and 1986), along with Judith Butler's "trenchant critique" of Kristeva in Butler, 1990. A selective bibliography of works in the field of Feminism and Psychoanalysis is given (pp. 269-271). In particular, see Brennan, 1989 and 1992, and Wright, 1992. For a useful summary of the femininity debate in psychoanalysis see Hazel Rowley and Elizabeth Grosz, 1990.

8. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, para. 166, Zusatz, trans. Knox (modified by Le Doeuff), pp. 263-4; quoted in Michèle Le Doeuff, "Women and Philosophy", reprinted in Toril Moi (ed.) French Feminist Thought (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 190.

9. For a useful selection of varied positions on the competing discourses of science and their material effects on women, see Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller and Sally Shuttleworth (eds.), *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science* (London: Routledge, 1990). The volume includes essays by Donna Haraway, Mary Poovey, Susan Bordo and Mary Ann Doane, amongst others.

10. Transference is roughly defined by Moi as "the process whereby the patient transfers earlier traumas and reactions, whether real or imaginary, on to the analyst". Countertransference, may be characterized as "the analyst's more or less unconscious reactions to the discourse of the patient." Transference and countertransference, she goes on, engage analyst and analysand in a "complex, differential set of interactions, which may literally 'make or break' the analysis. The truth of the analysis, its power to cure, is the discursive construction of this

transferential network. Transference and countertransference turn the analytic session into a space where the two participants encounter each other in the place of the Other, in language" (197). For Lacan, the fact that the analysis is constructed in language implies that analytic dialogue is essentially *triangular*, rather than dualistic: "[It] is not a dialogue between two egos, it is not reducible to a dual relationship between *two* terms, but is constituted by a third term that is the meeting point in language ... a linguistic, signifying meeting place that is the locus of ... insight." (Transcribed from a recording of a talk by Lacan at the Kanzer seminar, Yale University, 24 November 1975, translated by Barbara Johnson, quoted by Shoshana Felman in *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight: Psychoanalysis in contemporary Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 56.

11. For example: for Maria Ramas ("Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria") such is the obliterating force of Freud's blindness in his treatment of Dora that in the end her hysteria – her "repudiation of sexuality" – is not explained by Freud but, rather, "explained away"; in the course of the analysis, according to Ramas, Freud literally "abandons" his initial concern – the elucidation of Dora's hysteria – to present us instead with a series of "ideological constructs" manufactured purely as a defence for his own "patriarchal fantasies of femininity and female sexuality" (1985[1980]: 151). Particularly striking to Neil Hertz ("Dora's Secrets, Freud's Techniques") are Freud's moments of "exuberant intellectual narcissism" in the case, his moments of "investment" in the "beautiful totality" of his own imaginative products, the "vigor" with which he "differentiates" himself from Dora, his own "mode of knowing" from hers. For Hertz, while Freud's "overflowing fondness" for his subject in the Dora case is noteworthy, it can hardly be said to include Dora herself: "if anything, she is diminished by it, seen thoroughly through" (1985[1983]: 233-34).

12. It may be worth noting, at this point, Skinner's deep scepticism regarding the "astonishing" while "not unusual" assumption amongst historians of ideas that it may be quite proper, in the interests, for example, of extracting a message of higher coherence from an author's work, to discount the statements of intention which the author himself may have made about what he was doing, or even to discount whole works which would impair the coherence of the author's system. In the case of Hobbes, for example, he writes, it is well known from his own explicit statements what character he intended his political thought to bear: "*Leviathon*, as Hobbes put it in the review and Conclusion, was written 'without other design' than to show first that the 'civil rights of sovereigns and both the duty and liberty of subjects' could be grounded 'upon the known natural inclinations of mankind', and second, that a theory so grounded would centre on the 'mutual relation of protection and obedience': a politics of rational calculation is thus predicated on something like an assimilation of politics to psychology. Yet it has still seemed possible to insist that this 'scientific part' of Hobbes's thought

is nothing more than a rather ineptly detached aspect of a transcendent 'religious whole'. The fact, moreover, that Hobbes himself appeared unaware of this high order of coherence provokes not retraction but counter-assertion. Hobbes merely 'fails to make clear' that his discussion of human nature 'in fact' subserves a religious purpose. It 'would have been clearer' if Hobbes had 'written in terms of moral and civil obligations' and thus brought out the 'real unity' and basically religious character of his whole 'system'." (1988[1969]: 41; for Skinner's sources, see the original.) In Dora's case history, Freud's statements of intention are simply ignored or dismissed by his critics, while he is regularly accused of not having achieved a level of coherence in the analysis to which, as the very title ("*Fragment* of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria") indicates, it lays not the slightest claim.

13. "I could not avoid the assumption that she was still in love with him," Freud writes, "but that, for unknown reasons, since the scene by the lake her love had aroused in her violent feelings of opposition and that the girl had brought forward and reinforced her old affection for her father in order to avoid any further necessity for paying attention to the love which she had felt in the first years of her girlhood and which had now become distressing to her. In this way I gained an insight into a conflict which was well calculated to unhinge the girl's mind. On the one hand she was filled with regret at having rejected the man's proposal, and with longing for his company and all the little signs of his affection; while on the other these feelings of tenderness and longing were combated by powerful forces, amongst which her pride was one of the most obvious. Thus she had succeeded in persuading herself that she had done with Herr K. - that was the advantage she derived from this typical process of repression; and yet she was obliged to summon up her infantile affection for her father and to exaggerate it, in order to protect herself against the feelings of love which were constantly pressing forward into consciousness" (1905[19011: 93).

14. Thus Rose points out how Freud is led, first, "to identify the fantasy of childbirth that analysis revealed behind the second dream as an 'obscure maternal longing', outdoing in advance Karen Horney's appeals to such a longing as natural, biological and pre-given, in her attacks on Freud's later work on femininity, and second, to classify Dora's masculine identification and desire for Frau K. as 'gynaecophilic' and to make it 'typical of the unconscious erotic life of hysterical girls', that is, to use as an explanation of hysteria the very factor that needs to be explained" (1985[19781: 134).

15. For an amusing account of Freud's response to Moll's *The Sexual Life of the Child*, see Gay, 1988: 195.

16. In relation to this point too, Skinner's findings are illuminating, in particular the examples he gives of those instances in which classic writers are criticized according to the - wholly *a priori* - assumption

that they must have intended whatever writings they produced to constitute the most systematic contributions to their subject which they were capable of executing. To quote just a few of the examples Skinner summons to illustrate the point: "...if it is first assumed that one of Machiavelli's basic concerns in the *Prince* is 'the characteristics of men in politics', then it is not hard for a modem political scientist to go on to point out that as such, Machiavelli's poor effort is extremely one-sided and unsystematic'. Again, if it is first assumed that Locke's *Two Treatises* include all the doctrines he might have wished to enunciate on 'natural law and political.society,' then doubtless 'it might well be asked' why Locke failed to 'advocate a world state'. And again, if it is first assumed that one of Montesquieu's aims in *L'Esprit des lois* must have been to enunciate a sociology of knowledge, then doubtless 'it is a weakness' that he fails to explain its chief determinants, and doubtless 'we must also accuse him' of failing to apply his own theory (1988[1969] 1: 38; for Skinner's sources see the original). But, Skinner continues, with all such alleged "failures", we are still left confronting the same essential and essentially begged question: "the question of whether any of these writers ever intended, or even could have intended, to do what they are thus castigated for not having done" (1988[19691: 38). For the most part, the question of whether Freud ever intended, or indeed *could* have intended to do what he is so regularly accused, by his feminist critics in particular, of not having done in Dora's case, is similarly left begging.

17. For a similarly historically-based view on hysteria in general, see Showalter, 1985 (*The Female Malady*) and 1997 (*Hystories*). In *The Female Malady*, Showalter demonstrates how cultural ideas about "proper" feminine behaviour have shaped the definition and treatment of female insanity for 150 years, and given mental disorder in women specifically sexual connotations. Along with vivid portraits of the men who dominated psychiatry, and descriptions of the therapeutic practices that were used to bring women to their senses, she draws on diaries and narratives by inmates, and fiction from Wollstonecraft to Doris Lessing to supply a cultural perspective usually missing from studies of mental illness. *Hystories* is the name Showalter gives to the "cultural narratives of hysteria," which, she suggests, are multiplying "rapidly and uncontrollably in the era of mass media, telecommunication and e-mail" (5). As hysteria has moved from the clinic to the library, from the case study to the novel, from bodies to books, from page to stage and screen, Showalter writes, it has developed its own prototypes, archetypes, and plots, which are themselves adapted from myth, popular culture, folklore, media reports, and literature. Drawing on that literature, she attempts, in this study, to "unravel some of the threads that make up the narratives of epidemic hysteria in the 1990's" (6).

CHAPTER THREE

CULTURE AND PSYCHOSIS IN THE CASE OF DANIEL PAUL SCHREBER

With the publication in 1903 of his psychotic narrative, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (*Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*),[1] Daniel Paul Schreber was to become arguably the most famous patient in the history of psychiatry. Indeed, he himself predicted as much in a wish he formulates at the end of his book: "And so I believe I am not mistaken in expecting that a very special palm of victory will eventually be mine. I cannot say with any certainty what form it will take. As possibilities I would mention ... that great fame will be attached to my name surpassing that of thousands of other people much better mentally endowed" (*Memoirs*, 214). Not just your average personal memoir, but rather (in the words of a recent commentator) a "grandiose fantasy combining theology with science fiction" (Robertson, 1996: 16), Schreber's extraordinary account of his nervous breakdown continues to fascinate a wide range of readers, from psychoanalysts to political and cultural historians, from language theorists to social anthropologists to literary critics.

But who exactly was Daniel Paul Schreber? A lawyer by profession, and second son of a well-known German physician, educator and social reformer, Schreber began his encounter with psychiatry following a breakdown apparently connected with a momentary political failure – his unsuccessful candidacy for the Reichstag in 1884. After some months under the care of his psychiatrist, Professor Flechsig, Schreber recovered, only to suffer a second, much more

severe breakdown some years later, this time following his appointment to the prestigious position of *Senatspräsident* (presiding judge of the appeal court for Saxony) in 1893. Around this time, Schreber remembers a curious incident which made a strong impression on him – waking in bed one morning, he feels overcome by a strong desire to be a woman "submitting to intercourse", as he describes it in the *Memoirs*. This incident seems to have sewn the seeds of his later conviction that his psychiatrist, in cahoots with God, was plotting to transform him into a woman. In response to this idea, Schreber spins out an elaborate and highly imaginative scenario in which Flechsig and God conspire to take possession of his soul and commit "soul murder", while his body is turned into a woman's, subjected to sexual abuse, and finally left to rot.

The murder of Schreber's soul is carried out by divine "rays" directed at him by God over a number of years. These rays manifest themselves in abusive voices, which harass him with nonsensical or disparaging remarks. They also effect a number of radical and painful physiological changes – substituting another heart for his own, squeezing and misplacing his internal organs, removing his penis, and implanting female nerves in his body. But if his transformation into a woman begins as a fantasy of degradation, by the end of Schreber's *Memoirs*, it has come to signify the opposite – a state of "self-contained limitless pleasure for which Schreber has been singled out by a cooperative God" (Robertson, 1996: 16) [2]. Furthermore, Schreber's sufferings turn out to serve a sublime purpose: having previously destroyed the rest of mankind, God now needs Schreber, transformed into a woman, to re-populate the world with a new race of men. To this end, he commands Schreber to engage constantly in the "voluptuous enjoyment" that Schreber imagined to be characteristic of the feminine response to sex.

During the past century, Schreber's autobiographical account of his mental illness has become the *locus classicus* for the study of paranoia in the psychiatric and psychoanalytic literature, and beyond. As mentioned earlier, so extensive is the body of commentary now in existence on Schreber that scholars refer, quite unselfconsciously, to the field of "Schreber Studies", almost as if Schreber's text

had become the basis for a new academic discipline in its own right. Yet had it not been for Freud, it seems almost certain that this unusually substantial (and ongoing) critical history would never have come into being. This is implicit in the most recent full-length contribution to it that I know (Eric L Santner's *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity*, 1996), where the author suggests that after Freud, one cannot read Schreber except in some sort of dialogue with his case study, however agonistic this may be: "...because of the interpretive force and strong canonical nature of Freud's study, Schreber is always, at some level, still Freud's Schreber," he writes (1996: 17). Jay Geller remarks that although, in the early pages of his case study, Freud admonishes his readers to make themselves acquainted with Schreber's text *before* reading his analysis, this has not happened: "Despite this advice, virtually all subsequent interpretations of Schreber's dementia have been based upon Freud's selective citations in his 'Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia'. Displaced by Freud's case study, Schreber's text became thereby the 'most-quoted unread book of the twentieth century'" (1994: 180) [3].

Ironically, however, if the "interpretive force" of Freud's case study (rather than the intrinsic interest of Schreber's *Memoirs* themselves) can be held responsible for initiating, and ultimately establishing, the field of Schreber studies, this same interpretive force has *also*, in my view, become hopelessly diluted – indeed, virtually written out of existence – as the field itself has blossomed and grown. This is because, more often than not, wherever the above-mentioned "dialogue" with Freud's case history exists, if it has not been focussed on Freud's transferential problems in the case, it has been both limited to, and dominated by, one narrow and over-riding question: Was Freud right or wrong? [4] In the rush to out-think Freud, and supercede his theoretical conclusions in the case, in other words, little attention has been paid to understanding precisely that which gave his case study its canonical force in the first place - its value, precisely, as a work of *interpretation*, and a seminal text in the development of the critical tradition.

In this chapter, then, I would like to return to Freud's study, not, for once, to speculate about Freud's own homosexual leanings, or to quibble about whether or not he got it right in the case of Schreber, but to try and establish exactly why and how – in spite of its obvious shortcomings – Freud's study of Schreber's paranoia has nevertheless become the founding text of what could feasibly be called an entire new field of study. I shall begin, in the first section, with a brief look at the critical tradition to date, and move on to a discussion of the Case Study itself in the second.

I
THE CRITICAL TRADITION

The store of fantasies which together form the product of Schreber's unleashed imagination has, as already mentioned, elicited a wide variety of interpretations from diverse commentators over the years. Changing the emphasis from Freud's concern with questions of sexuality, many of these have focussed on Schreber's apparent obsession with power. Here, for example, is the dominating image from Elias Canetti's reading of Schreber's memoirs in the final two chapters of *Crowds and Power*, a lengthy treatise on mass psychology first published in 1960:

> Schreber ... wants to be the only man left alive, standing in an immense field of corpses; and he wants this field of corpses to contain all men but himself. It is not only as paranoiac that he reveals himself here. To be the last man to remain alive is the deepest urge of every seeker after power... Once he feels himself threatened his passionate desire to see everyone lying dead before him can scarcely be mastered by his reason (1978[1960]: 447).

In this study, Canetti draws a direct parallel between Schreber's *Memoirs* and Adolf Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf*. In Canetti's view, what links the

psychic dispositions of Schreber and Hitler, of paranoid and dictator, is a pathological drive for power, involving a desire to be sole survivor and an accompanying need to sacrifice the rest of the world in the name of that survival.[5]

This reading of the *Memoirs* - as a storehouse of proto-fascist fantasies and fantasy structures - has helped initiate an ongoing critical tradition in which Schreber's extraordinary account has become widely regarded as a unique textual archive, particularly valuable in the study of German fascism. A powerful link has been established, in other words, between the *Memoirs* and some of the core features of the ideology of National Socialism. [6]

A parallel while somewhat different approach to the broader political implications of Schreber's *Memoirs* was initiated in the 1950's by the American psychoanalyst William Niederland, who focused on the part played by Schreber's father, Daniel Moritz Schreber, in the aetiology of his son's mental illness.[7] According to Niederland, Schreber's paranoia was best understood as a function of his severe traumatization at the hands of his father, an ambitious physician, author and promoter of exercise and physical fitness, who systematically abused his son by subjecting him, throughout his childhood, to a series of extreme and aggressive orthopaedic and pedagogical controls. Niederland's approach was expanded and popularised in the 1970's by Morton Schatzman, who proposed a direct link between the "micro-social despotism in the Schreber family and the macro-social despotism of Nazi Germany." Schatzman claimed that "Hitler and his peers were raised when Dr Schreber's books, preaching household totalitarianism, were popular," and added that "anyone who wishes to understand German 'character structure' in the Nazi era could profitably study Dr Schreber's books." [8]

A 'Secret History of Modernity':

Perhaps the most stimulating intervention into the critical tradition to have appeared in the last decade (and a good starting point for the present discussion) is Santner's *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of*

Modernity (1996). In a number of crucial ways, Santner's investigation departs from the two strands of criticism mentioned above, while nevertheless remaining indebted to the same insight upon which both are founded, namely that there existed deep connections between the Schreber material and the social and political fantasies at work in Nazism. Santner's study puts to the test his idea that the series of crises precipitating Schreber's breakdown were largely the same "crises of modernity" for which the Nazis would elaborate their own series of radical solutions. In Santner's eyes, Schreber's beakdown and efforts at self-healing undoubtedly introduced him to the deepest structural layers of the historical impasses and conflicts that would provisionally culminate in the Nazi catastrophe.

More interesting, however, than Santner's views on the exact nature of the relation between Schreber's delusions and totalitarianism is his analysis of precisely how those "historical impasses and conflicts" which, in his view, contributed both to the precipitation of Nazism and of Schreber's breakdown, were constituted. These relate to what Santner perceives as the effects of a "crisis of symbolic authority" at the time, or, more specifically, to what he describes as an historical moment marked by the "attenuation" of those "performatively effectuated social bonds" upon which society depends for its social and political stability, and the psychological well-being of its members:

> My hypothesis is that these impasses and conflicts pertain to shifts in the fundamental matrix of the individual's relation to social and institutional authority, to the ways he or she is addressed by and responds to the calls of 'official' power and authority. These calls are largely calls to order, rites and procedures of *symbolic investiture* whereby an individual is endowed with a new social status, is filled with a symbolic mandate that henceforth informs his or her identity in the community. The social and political stability of a society as well as the psychological health of its members would appear to be correlated to the efficacy of these symbolic operations - to what we might call their performative magic - whereby individuals "become who they are," assume the social essence assigned to

> them by way of names, titles, degrees, posts, honors and the like. We cross the threshold of modernity when the attenuation of these performatively effectuated social bonds becomes chronic, when they are no longer capable of seizing the subject in his or her self-understanding (1996: xii).

What the analysis of paranoia reveals, Santner proceeds, is that an "investiture crisis" of this kind has the potential to generate feelings of extreme alienation, anomie and profound emptiness in the individual, who may then experience it as "the collapse of social space and the rights of institution into the most intimate core of one's being." For Santner, it is crucially significant that Schreber's breakdown occurred at the moment he entered, by way of a symbolic investiture, one of the key centres of power and authority in Wilhelmine Germany, the Saxon Supreme Court. Indeed, Schreber himself expresses an intuition that his symptoms were a form of knowledge concerning profound malfunctions in those politico-theological procedures through which such centres of power and authority sustain themselves. In his study, Santner sets out to describe and "evaluate" this knowledge, along with the difficult pathways by which Schreber came to possess it.

Santner's study opens in direct dialogue with Freud's famous account, in a long response to Freud's reading focussed (all too predictably, it must be said) on the *transferential dimension* to Freud's obviously passionate involvement with the Schreber material. Basing their observations on a series of confessional remarks regarding his own homosexually charged relationship with Wilhelm Fliess (which appeared in Freud's correspondence around the time of his interest in the Schreber case), most critics have deduced this to be a crucial determining factor in Freud's response to Schreber's paranoia. [9] Peter Gay's conclusion is fairly typical:

> Freud's rather manic preoccupation with Schreber hints at some hidden interest driving him on: Fliess. But Freud was not just at the mercy of his memories; he was working well and derived much comic relief from

> Schreber... Still, Freud's work on Schreber was not untouched by anxiety. He was in the midst of his bruising battle with Adler, which, he told Jung, was taking such a toll "because it has torn open the wounds of the Fliess affair." ...He blamed his memories of Fliess for interfering with his work on Schreber, but they were also a reason for his intense concentration on the case. To study Schreber was to remember Fliess, but to remember Fliess was also to understand Schreber... Freud used the Schreber case to replay and work through what he called (in friendly deference to Jung, who had invented the term) his "complexes" (1988: 275).

While agreeing with the general understanding of Freud's analysis of Schreber as in some way connected with his attempts to work through his own homosexuality, Santner shifts the emphasis to a new transferential dimension to Freud's engagement with Schreber - his anxieties concerning the originality of the views presented in the case study. There is indeed a fair amount of evidence within Freud's narrative to suggest that he had such anxieties. At one point, for example, Freud remarks that certain details of Schreber's delusions "sound almost like endopsychic perceptions of the processes whose existence I have assumed in these pages as the basis of our explanation of paranoia." And he goes on to reassure the reader that he has at least one witness who can testify "that I had developed my theory of paranoia *before* I became acquainted with the contents of Schreber's book" (SE XII: 79, Santner's emphasis). Later, in a now famous ironic aside, he writes that it "remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe" (SE XII: 79).

Both Schreber and Freud, in other words - albeit in different ways and with different degrees of intensity - express concern that they may only be repeating thoughts, words and phrases originating elsewhere. Thus Santner concludes: "If there is indeed a transferential dimension to Freud's passionate involvement with the Schreber material, then it concerns not only matters of same-sex passion but also questions of originality and influence, questions pertaining to the transfer of

knowledge and authority in the very domain that Freud was staking out as his own" (1996: 21).

This, of course, brings Santner back to the notion of a "crisis of investiture" as the major point of identification between Freud and the Schreber memoirs. As he points out, Freud's obvious concern with issues of originality and influence around the composition of the Schreber essay had a particular historical context. These were crucial years in the consolidation of the psychoanalytic movement in the face of constantly growing internal divisions (the final break with Adler would come in 1911, that with Jung two years later) which intensified the ongoing struggle for recognition from the larger scientific and intellectual community. The institution was both in a state of emergence as well as one of crisis and endangerment. This was a period during which the basic language of psychoanalysis, and the boundaries that would determine the inside and outside of psychoanalytic thought, were being bitterly contested. What Santner is suggesting, in other words, is that Freud's attraction to and passion for the Schreber material was above all a function of his own deep involvement with the "rites of institution" at a moment of significant crisis within the institution of psychoanalysis. Thus he concludes:

> Freud's study of the Schreber material was conducted ... at a moment in the history of psychoanalysis when the symbolic authority of that new institution was being strongly contested from within the ranks as well as from without - at a moment of institutional stress that, I will argue, made Freud particularly sensitive to the nature of Schreber's investiture crisis even though Freud never explicitly addressed it (1996: 17).

With Freudian psychoanalysis as the starting point, then, Santner's study both broadens and to some extent re-defines the theoretical terrain within which Schreber's psychotic breakdown has traditionally been discussed. Within the general project of attempting to account for the "demonic" in human affairs in a post-Enlightenment framework, Freud had argued that Schreber's traumatization was essentially a product of a close encounter with intrapsychic demons (ie.

previously repressed libidinal desires). In the 1950's, the work of Niederland had shifted the focus from Schreber himself to his relationship with his father. More recent efforts to flesh out the "historical truth" behind Schreber's delusions of persecution have taken Schreber at his word that the real persecutory figure in his life was not his father, but rather his psychiatrist Paul Emil Flechsig.

From 'tradition of the soul' to 'reign of the brain':

A neuroanatomist of some considerable renown at the time, Flechsig was professor of psychiatry at Leipzig University, a position that in 1882 would include the directorship of the new Psychiatric Clinic of the University Hospital. As Lothane has noted, the appointment of a brain anatomist with no real psychiatric experience to the directorship of a psychiatric clinic signaled a historical shift of paradigms in the discipline of psychiatry toward extreme medicalization: "in one fell swoop, through Flechsig's nomination, the tradition of the soul ended and the reign of the brain began." [10]

Recent readers of Schreber, then, have tried to discern in the *Memoirs* specific references and allusions to Flechsig's theories and practices, to discover in the latter's approach to mental illness the key to his demonization by Schreber. Indeed, Friedrich Kittler, for one, has suggested that an overemphasis on Moritz Schreber's role in his son's psychosis amounts to a failure to appreciate the historical rupture signaled by Flechsig's "psychophysics", which along with Schreber's delusional text, is seen as the elaboration of a new paradigm of social and psychic organization - of nothing short of a second industrial revolution. For Kittler, Schreber's language, the language "spoken" by his over-excited nerves, is the language of the experimental neurologist Flechsig: "... Beyond the mechanical head bandages, Schreber's paranoia followed the lead of an insane neurologist" (1990: 71).

Flechsig's neuroanatomical paradigm, which, according to Kittler, ultimately figures the brain as a network of channels and relays in which personhood is dissolved into systems of information transfer, marks the advent of a far more

radical and efficient intervention of power into the body of its "object" than Moritz Schreber's merely mechanical manipulations of children's muscles and activities: "nothing allows us to equate the classical pedagogical power of Schreber senior with the incomparably more efficient disposition of power in 1900." In Kittler's view, the "second industrial revolution" is not only capable of producing soul murder, it is conceived from the start *as* soul murder - as the annihilation of the very horizon of intelligibility in which words like soul, psyche, or spirit would make any sense.

In effect, Kittler understands Schreber literally when, in the open letter to Flechsig published in the *Memoirs*, Schreber writes, "I have not the least doubt that the *first impetus* to what my doctors considered mere 'hallucinations' but which to me signified communication with supernatural powers, consisted of *influences on my nervous system emanating from your nervous system*" (Schreber, 1988[1903]: 34). Flechsig's "nervous system", understood here as the "radical medicalization of all disturbances of the soul", their ultimate reduction to "anomalies in the hard wiring of the brain", brings to its logical conclusion the subject already explored to excess at the end of the nineteenth century by the likes of Moritz Schreber. As Santner writes, "A clinical environment organized under the sign of Flechsig's psychophysical research paradigm would be, in this view, inherently traumatizing. Or to return to Niederland's formulation, in such an environmnet 'castration' would have been in the air" (1996: 74). [11]

What links Niederland's approach to Moritz Schreber and Kittler's approach to Paul Flechsig, in Santner's eyes, is an intuition that Schreber was traumatized not, as Freud had argued, by a close encounter with purely intrapsychic demons but rather by exposure to particular forms of intersubjective *power*, in the one case of a more paternal and pedagogical nature, in the other, of a more scientific and institutional kind. This leads Santner into an extended dialogue with the work of Michel Foucault, whose writings on institutional power and and the history of sexuality he uses to help situate the discussion of Moritz Schreber's role (as well as of the pathogenic influences of Schreber's psychiatrists) within a

larger history of post-Enlightenment transformations of symbolic power and authority. [12]

Drawing on the writings of Walter Benjamin and Pierre Bourdieu, Santner shifts the theoretical terrain further still from the intrapsychic domain where Freud locates his analysis to a concern with the operation of the law and of all rites of institution and their procedures of symbolic investiture. [13] This leads him to interpret Schreber's paranoia in light of Bourdieu's emphasis on the imperative and indeed coercive nature of acts of symbolic investiture, acts such as the call issued by the Ministry of Justice to Schreber in 1893 nominating him to the position of *Senatspräsident*.

According to Bourdieu, the repetitive demand to live in conformity with the social essence with which one has been invested, and thus to stay on the proper side of a socially consecrated boundary, is one that is addressed not only or even primarily to the mind or intellect, but to the body. The naturalization of a symbolic identity is, Bourdieu emphasizes, a process involving ascetic practices, training, even physical suffering: "All groups entrust the body, treated like a kind of memory, with their most precious possessions" (1991, 123). In light of this, it may then be in a more than metaphorical sense that, as Bourdieu puts it, "elites are destined to 'waste away' when they cease to believe in themselves, when they ... begin to cross the line in the wrong direction" (1991, 122). Similarly, it might be said that the crucial lesson of Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" is that this process of internal decomposition afflicting elites in crisis is, in fact, the *normal* state of things, which is then only more or less successfully disavowed, more or less successfully repressed into the unconscious. Santner's argument pivots on the idea that Schreber's *Memoirs* tells the story of a massive return of this repressed knowledge.

As psychoanalytic text, despite its real departures from Freud's ground-breaking analysis of the *Memoirs*, *My Own Private Germany* also marks a development on some of the most remarkable aspects of Freud's approach. In particular, it shows how informative "madness" can be; how much we can learn,

in other words, by reading madness and irrationality as *positive forms of knowledge*. As Samuel Weber points out in his Introduction to the most recent edition of the *Memoirs*, when Freud asks (in the famous remark referred to earlier) whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than many are yet prepared to believe, he means us to take the question seriously. This is not mere "coquetry" on his part, Weber writes: "rather, it indicates what is essentially new in a theory that, unlike traditional psychiatry, no longer unquestioningly presupposes a boundary between madness and truth, between the pathological and the normal, between irrationality and reason" (1988[1955]: xvii). [14] Thus Freud, in the early pages of his analysis, suggests that

> [Schreber] himself not infrequently presses the key into our hands, by adding a gloss, a quotation or an example to some delusional proposition in an apparently incidental manner, or even by expressly denying some parallel to it that has arisen in his mind. For when this happens, we have only to follow our usual psycho-analytic technique - to strip his sentence of its negative form, to take his example as being the actual thing, or his quotation or gloss as being the original source - and we find ourselves in possession of what we are looking for, namely a translation of the paranoic mode of expression into the normal one (SE XII:35).

Like Freud's, Santner's method of reading is to focus on what Weber calls the text's "stains" or "marks" - on that which has been added or appears incidental, that which would normally be considered unimportant or that which has been denied - as the carriers of meaning (and, in this case specifically, of "historical truth", the "truth" which is embodied in Schreber's "secret history of modernity"). However disguised and distorted these "truths" may be, their status as knowledge is taken seriously both by Freud, and, in a different light, by Santner. Like Freud, what Santner ends up with, once the process of reading is complete, could easily be described (in the terms Freud uses above) as a "translation of the paranoic mode of expression into the normal one."

While thus remaining faithful, in one sense at least, to the hermeneutic tradition Freud might be said to have initiated, Santner's study at the same time extends and broadens the theoretical bounds of the existing critical tradition on Schreber. It also develops the work of recent critics such as Slavoj Zizek, whose application of psychoanalysis to the study of society has demonstrated how fruitfully psychoanalytic notions can be put to work in the analysis of ideological and political phenomena. [15] The book is thus valuable in the challenge it embodies to the standard critique of psychoanalysis as essentially a "bourgeois" science, potentially useful only in what it can tell us about a relatively narrow group of culturally specific individuals. [16]

At the same time, Santner's many lengthy forays into recent cultural and social theory (both in the text itself and in the extensive footnotes which follow), tend to distract from his central historical thesis, and in the end, little concrete historical evidence is provided to support the notion (on which Santner's argument as a whole rests) that Schreber's breakdown *exemplified* a chronic breakdown of symbolic power in the Wilhelmine era. The historical research undertaken is not substantial enough, in other words, to convince the reader that such a breakdown of symbolic power necessarily occurred, nor are we told of any historical figures other than Schreber himself who were driven insane by appointments to positions of power and authority at the time. For Schreber's breakdown to have stood as *representative*, or even symptomatic of the broader historical moment (as Santner obviously wishes to suggest it was), evidence of others having suffered in similar ways would have been essential. In Santner's reading, then, Schreber is less an historical figure than a metaphorical one, whose breakdown is used arbitrarily - even if at times persuasively - to illustrate Santner's theories concerning the crises of symbolic authority that, for him, mark the onset of modernity.

Whatever its limitations or otherwise, Santner's reading is nevertheless representative of what seems to me to be the most important shift, since the field of Schreber studies opened with Freud's 1911 case study, in critical attitudes to Schreber over the course of the century. This is perhaps best described as a shift

from Freud's narrow focus on the individual – on Schreber himself – to a deeper concern with the social and political context within which his series of breakdowns occurred. Since Freud, increasing recognition has been given to the *Memoirs* both as a product of the historical moment, and as a unique series of documents which, in turn, allows us greater insight into it. [17]

Within this trend towards a more sophisticated grasp of the significance of the historical and socio-political context which gave rise to Schreber's delusional imaginings, the actual content of Freud's original interpretations, and the theoretical conclusions he draws from these, appear simplistic and too narrow, if only because he bases them almost exclusively on Schreber's text itself. Where then does the enduring significance of Freud's reading lie? And why then, as Santner remarks, is Schreber always, at some level, still *Freud's* Schreber? The answer to these questions, I want to suggest, depends on how exactly one sees the status or value of the psychoanalytic case study, as a vehicle of knowledge.

In a brief but important essay ("Freud's Case Studies", 1982), Carl Pletsch focuses his discussion on the distinctive nature of psychoanalytic case studies (and Freud's in particular), without an understanding of which, he implies, we cannot read them in a useful way. Two notions taken from the discourse of the philosophy of science are used to assist him in his examination of Freud's case studies: "exemplars" and "personal knowledge". Pletsch's understanding of the way in which Freud's (and later psychoanalysts') case studies constitute exemplars in psychoanalysis diverges in one important respect from the meaning of the term given by Thomas Kuhn, who in his later essays (as Pletsch points out) used "exemplars" to mean "shared examples of successful practice, which students of these disciplines learn, and which then serve to maintain the coherence of their research community." [18] This is because, in Pletsch's view, "psychoanalytic case studies – and Freud's in particular – help all psychoanalysts to identify the problems posed by their patients, and to proceed in similar fashion, *even though the examples are not always successful.* The familiar case of Dora comes to mind: its practical failure does not detract from its value as an exemplar" (101/102, my emphasis).

Where then, despite its "practical failure" does the value of a case study such as that of Dora lie? In Pletsch's view, regardless of their success or otherwise, Freud's case studies still communicate essential knowledge to psychoanalysts today. Where the examination of Freud's case histories leads, however, rather than to any deepening of purely *theoretical* insight, is, inexorably, to "questions of psychoanalytic knowledge – its locus, character and epistemological status" (101). Significantly, Freud himself never claimed for the case studies the value of illustration of theory. What psychoanalysts seem to derive from their study of Freud's cases, Pletsch suggests, rather than any specifically *theoretical* knowledge, is

> a sense of how Freud thought, more particularly, how he thought with his patients. Even to the non-psychoanalytic reader, Freud's case studies seem to communicate how it feels to do psychoanalysis and to learn from patients. In contrast to his theoretical writings, Freud's case studies may be the locus of intersubjectivity in psychoanalysis. If this is true, it suggests, borrowing now from Michael Polanyi, that Freud's exemplary cases function as a kind of 'personal knowledge.' Studying them, psychoanalysts tacitly learn to think like Freud (101/102). [19]

The foremost question then, for Pletsch, is that of the status Freud accorded his case studies – an inquiry which is given greater significance by the fact that psychoanalysts have studied Freud's cases as exemplary solutions to problems and seem to have learned more from the case studies than from Freud's theoretical propositions. Indeed, the process of psychoanalytic education enshrined in the institutes of psychoanalysis suggests that it is largely the case studies – Freud's and those published subsequently in the same spirit by his followers – that have enabled psychoanalysis to maintain its methodological coherence for so long. This leads Pletsch to conclude that the nature of psychoanalytic knowledge as located in case studies is distinctive, requiring both an initial recognition of its distinctiveness and an appropriate critical approach to accompany this recognition:

> The location of psychoanalytic insight in case studies rather than in theory suggests that the knowledge peculiar to psychoanalysis is constituted differently than the knowledge of a more thoroughly theory-based science. If so, the great energy expended in trying to reformulate Freud's theoretical propositions to make them experimentally testable may not, despite the value such efforts may have for other purposes, contribute much to our understanding of what psychoanalytic knowledge really is. A fully descriptive account of psychoanalysis would have to pay more attention to case studies *as repositories and vehicle of this knowledge* than has been done thus far. Such an account would involve an extensive study of the periodical literature of psychoanalysis, its monographs, and of psychoanalytic education as practiced in the institutes. This essay is only an attempt to see how Freud came to the tentative conclusion that *case studies were the genre of psychoanalytic knowledge par excellence*, and how he came to direct his more theoretical statements to the extrapsychoanalytic reader. It is also an attempt to pose the question of psychoanalytic knowledge as a question of discourse (102/103, my emphasis).

By thus shifting the emphasis in traditional conceptions of the "exemplar", Pletsch offers a way beyond the terms of the usual debates on Freud's case histories, where the major concern lies with the accuracy or otherwise of his theoretical propositions and conclusions. In any case, since all of Freud's patients are now long dead, all such debates, however sophisticated the arguments, must ultimately remain confined to speculation. Was Dora in love with Herr K. or his wife? Was Schreber a repressed homosexual? Was Freud right or wrong? These are questions which can never finally be answered. What we *can* learn from the case histories, however – as Pletsch suggests – is how Freud thought, how psychoanalysis works as a new mode of knowledge. It is with this object in mind – to read the text as *repository and vehicle of psychoanalytic knowledge* – that I would now like to return to Freud's "*Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia*".

II

RE-READING "PSYCHO-ANALYTIC NOTES ON AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF A CASE OF PARANOIA"

Schreber was convinced that his was a distinctive and therefore notable case – one which he describes in his own words as "quite remarkable... unique in the field of psychiatric experience" (*Memoirs*, 292). His physician, *Geheimrat* (Privy Councillor) Dr. Weber, had his own views on the matter:

> But however varied and differently coloured the individual cases may be, however characteristic and singular an individual case may appear to careful observation, yet ... one cannot deny that ... certain groupings emerge, certain complexes of pathological manifestations, which in their development, course and outcome, in the involvement of single psychic functions are more or less demarcated from each other [and] ... have led to the delineation of a certain number of different disease forms. As colourful and inexhaustible the individual variations of cases of mental illness may be, as constant are the main outlines, and apart from the arabesques of the individual case the basic characteristics of the forms of illness are repeated with almost surprising, monotonous regularity (*Memoirs*, 317).

Later, Dr Weber goes on to suggest that "considered from this scientifically established point of view, [Dr Schreber's] mental illness and its peculiarities, far from not being known to psychiatry, clearly belong to a well-known and well-characterized form of mental illness, paranoia, and show all its important distinguishing features" (*Memoirs*, 317). As Samuel Weber points out, this exposition and these remarks clearly demonstrate what for traditional psychiatry an exemplar or case is: subsumption under the well-known "paranoia," by identifying "all its important distinguishing features." If psychiatrists celebrated

the Schreber case, then, they did so because they saw it not as something unique, but rather as a particular example, replete with "all [the] important distinguishing features", or symptoms, of paranoia. Thus, Weber concludes, we find that psychiatrists essentially knew Schreber long before they ever met him either in person or through his writing:

> They valued his writing but only as a particular case in which they thought they found what they had already always known: that cluster of characteristics which they termed "paranoia". As an individual case Schreber mirrored their knowledge, and the persons thus reflected were delighted. In this individual instance of the pathology of paranoia, psychiatry discovered its own image and thought it had thereby recognized Dr Schreber as well (*Memoirs*, xv).

It is the contrast between this attitude – the attitude, that is, of traditional psychiatry – and Freud's, that Samuel Weber finds particularly remarkable: "No doubt about it: the contrast apparent here between the traditional psychiatrist and the founder of psychoanalysis marks a change, from a concept of science characterized by a narcissistic self-satisfaction with the well-known, to an effort to bring these 'fixed points' into motion and to pose questions which might lead to new knowledge" (*Memoirs*, xvi).

This then, is the first dimension of Freud's case history which gives it its lasting historical significance: the extent to which it *represents a break with traditional psychiatry, thus opening the way for new knowledge.* In a certain sense, for Freud, just as for traditional psychiatry, Schreber's text remained a description of a particular instance or case, a medical record. And it cannot be denied that, through his interpretation of the case, not the least of Freud's preoccupations was to demonstrate the legitimacy of his own conceptual apparatus. As Samuel Weber remarks, the goal behind Freud's exploration of Schreber's "proliferating phantasms" was to draw them ever closer to a fixed point within his theory in order, effectively, to substantiate and confirm it. Thus Freud is finally able to assert, in an "unmistakably triumphant tone", that in the

case of Schreber, "we find ourselves once again on the familiar ground of the father-complex" (*Memoirs*, xvii).

Yet at the same time, even as Freud's translation of Schreber's "paranoic" mode of expression into a "normal" one (the psychoanalytic) provided him with the evidence he was looking for to confirm his hypotheses, it also raised a new set of anxieties. Indeed, it worked almost *too* well, so that Freud felt compelled to assert the independence of the theory, and to pose the now famous question, "whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe." And it is this question that leads Samuel Weber to the important earlier mentioned injunction, that we recognize within it, the extraordinary originality of Freud's new mode of psychoanalytic "translation". To repeat: This remark, writes Weber, is no mere coquetry on Freud's part;

> Rather, it indicates what is essentially new in a theory that, unlike traditional psychiatry, no longer unquestioningly presupposes a boundary between madness and truth, between the pathological and the normal, between irrationality and reason. Hence the special structure of psychoanalytic "translation": it is no longer merely a procedure of subsumption but now also a practice of reading and interpretation … (*Memoirs*, xvii).

Towards a New Concept of Science:

Let us dwell for a moment on the implications of Weber's remark. As in the other case histories, Freud's analysis of Schreber marked a break from an old to a new concept of science - from a procedure of subsumption (as Weber suggests) to a practice of reading and interpretation, from a traditional to an entirely innovative mode of scientific inquiry. Illustrative of this break, is the contradictory tension apparent throughout the case study, between Freud's almost poignant desire for recognition by the scientific establishment, and the in

fact far more telling *dis*respect he expresses, from beginning to end, for the same. That the long history of psychoanalysis' relation to science finds its origins in Freud's unrelenting attempts to persuade the scientific community to accept his efforts as "serious scientific work carried on at a high level" has of course been pointed out many times by now (see Forrester, 1998: 74). Nevertheless, it is always interesting, and indeed revealing, to note the diverse forms in which Freud invariably contradicts, in the course of his writing, his own neo-positivist claims for the scientificity of psychoanalysis.

To a significant degree, Freud's analysis of Schreber is conducted in dialogue with, and often in distinct opposition to, the psychiatric establishment of the day. Throughout the case study, Freud draws on reports from Schreber's physicians and psychiatrists to support his own assessment of Schreber's considerable intellectual powers. At the same time, however, when taken as a whole, Freud's references (to Dr. Weber's reports in particular) end simply by laying bare the discrepancy between Dr. Weber's repeated descriptions of Schreber as a man of "sound judgement" and considerable "common sense", and his final judgement of Schreber as irredeemably insane.

Far from appearing as a measure of his respect for Schreber's psychiatrists then, Freud's use of their reports simply shows up their shortcomings in Freud's eyes. The longest of Freud's quotations from Dr. Weber's 1899 report is perhaps the most damning of all. This effectively brings to an end the introductory section to the case history proper (pp. 141-148) and concerns Dr. Weber's description of Schreber's delusions as they appeared in their final shape – a description Freud reproduces at some length, only to dismiss it in a devastating final paragraph as essentially the product of its author's "marvelling", while devoid of all understanding.

For Freud, Dr. Weber's attempts at interpretation – for which his contempt is barely disguised – sum up the "interest felt by the practical psychiatrist" in delusional formations such as Schreber's – an interest barely worth the name which is, as a rule, "exhausted" as soon as he has ascertained the products of the

delusion and thus formed an estimate of their influence on the patient's general behaviour. "In his case," (the case, that is, of the "practical psychiatrist") Freud concludes disdainfully, "marvelling is not the beginning of understanding." There is no practice of reading and interpretation here, in other words. In the case of the *psychoanalyst*, however, a very different approach can be expected:

> The psychoanalyst, in the light of his knowledge of the psychoneuroses, approaches the subject with a suspicion that even thought structures so extraordinary as these and so remote from our common modes of thinking are nevertheless derived from the most general and comprehensible impulses of the human mind; and he would be glad to discover the motives of such a transformation as well as the manner in which it has been accomplished. With this aim in view, he will wish to go more deeply into the details of the delusion and into the history of its development (SE XII: 18).

With this dismissal of the superficiality of the efforts of "practical psychiatry", Freud effectively distinguishes his own discipline as the only one worthy of true scientific respect – not only in its implicit refusal to settle for what he characterizes as the "estimates" of the practical psychiatrist, but also in its promise to probe the deepest layers where the motivations behind the patient's symptoms, and the history of their development, lie hidden. At the same time, he also manages to slip in an allusion to what he clearly wishes his readers to accept as the "normality" at the heart of Schreber's delusions – a judgement Freud motivates with the injunction that, however bizarre and outlandish we might consider Schreber's fantasies (or "thought structures"), we should at least begin to entertain the possibility that these have their roots in the most general and comprehensible impulses of the human mind; that there is a Schreber at least potentially in the making, in other words, in every one of his readers.

With this remark, then, Freud both insists on the scientific respectability of his new discipline - its superior drive for truth and accuracy, and its capacity to supercede the limits of traditional psychiatry by promising to locate the

unconscious depths where the roots of every pathology can be found – and, at the same time, signals the conceptual shift initiated by psychoanalysis, within which the boundary between what constitutes the normal and the pathological begins to break down. In psychoanalysis, Freud suggests here, the question, Are we normal or abnormal? can no longer be answered – a point I will return to later.

Against Censorship:

Having dismissed the efforts of the traditional psychiatrist as essentially shallow and superficial, Freud will later be equally scathing – even if only implicitly – of traditional psychiatry's squeamishness in confronting the details of Schreber's delusional formations. Again, his criticism is directed at Dr. Weber. During the lawsuit, for example, in which Schreber went to such pains to challenge and overturn the decision to place him under tutelage for reasons of insanity, Dr. Weber had responded to several requests from the court for his professional opinion on the case by expressing the view that the proposed publication of the *Memoirs* only confirmed the author's irredeemable mental derangement. Though it may have been understandable, Weber had allowed, that Schreber might have wished to *describe* the "history of his latter years", that he should have wished to *make them public* was the surest evidence available of his insanity. This, according to Weber, was why:

> When one looks at the content of his writings, and takes into consideration the abundance of the indiscretions relating to himself and others contained in them, the unembarrassed detailing of the most doubtful and aesthetically impossible situations and events, the use of the most offensive vulgar words, etc., one finds it quite incomprehensible that a man otherwise tactful and of fine feeling could propose an action which would compromise him so severely in the eyes of the public, *were not his whole attitude to life pathological, and he unable to see things in their proper perspective*, and if the tremendous overvaluation of his own person caused by lack of insight into his illness had not clouded his

appreciation of the limitations imposed on man by society (cited in *Memoirs*, 282-283, my emphasis).

In a footnote responding to Weber's horror (in the extract quoted above) at the indiscretions of Schreber's document - the "vulgar", "offensive" and "aesthetically impossible" nature of many of its revelations - Freud retorts with evident disbelief: "Surely we can hardly expect that a case history which sets out to give a picture of deranged humanity and its struggles to rehabilitate itself should exhibit 'discretion' and 'aesthetic' charm" (SE XII: 37). In relation to the original censoring of Schreber's memoirs, occasioned by the opposition of the psychiatric establishment, Freud cannot disguise his irritation: "In working upon the case of Schreber I have had a policy of restraint forced on me by the circumstance that the opposition to his publishing the *Denkwürdigkeiten* was so far effective as to withhold a considerable portion of the material from our knowledge – the portion, too, which would in all probability have thrown the most important light upon the case" (SE XII: 37). On the subject of "soul murder", Freud feels himself further constrained by the gaps imposed by the censorship: "We should be glad to learn more of the meaning of this 'soul murder', Freud complains, but at this point "our sources relapse once more into a tendentious silence: 'As to what constitutes the true essence of soul murder, and as to its technique, if I may so describe it, I am able to say nothing beyond what has already been indicated. There is only this, perhaps, to be added... (The passage which follows is unsuitable for publication.)'" (SE XII: 38-39). As a result of this omission, he continues, "we are left in the dark on the question of what is meant by 'soul-murder'."

This attack on the numerous attempts on the part of traditional psychiatry to censor Schreber's writings is reinforced in the form of a defensive counter-attack Freud then delivers in the face of a number of objections he anticipates from within its ranks, as he makes his first strong statement of his theory - that the "exciting cause" of Schreber's illness was "an outburst of homosexual libido," and that the object of this libido was "probably from the very first his doctor, Flechsig." "I will pause here for a moment," Freud writes - with no small

measure of resignation - "to meet a storm of remonstrances and objections. Anyone acquainted with the present state of psychiatry must be prepared to face trouble" (SE XII: 43).

The first major objection he anticipates concerns the social standing of the subject of his case history. The psychiatric establishment, Freud feels sure, will recoil in horror against the charge he has made against Schreber, and will condemn Freud for "an act of irresponsible levity, an indiscretion and a calumny" for having levelled it against a man of such "high ethical standing" as the former *Senatspräsident* (SE XII: 43). The second major objection he anticipates relates to the nature of the charge itself – whoever it may have been levelled against. No-one, Freud fears, will take seriously the notion that Schreber's fantasy of being transformed into a woman was anything other than a "pathological idea" from the start – a consequence of his mental breakdown, rather than its motivating cause. Both anticipated objections, in other words, are borne of Freud's view of contemporary psychiatry as either too prudish, too hypocritical or simply too myopic to countenance the idea that a man of "high ethical standing" should have fallen into the grip of insanity as a result of repressed homosexual impulses.

Freud's objections to the "squeamishness" of his psychiatric predecessors could be seen to form part of a much broader attack, embedded in the very idea of a psychoanalytic mode of knowing, on the notion of censorship itself – an attack within which, I want to suggest, the Schreber case history forms a significant landmark. A brief look at the particular historical moment in which Freud was working with Schreber's Memoirs, and which gives his case history its context, will help explain why.

Historians of psychoanalysis have noted that the period from 1905 to the Great War was undoubtedly the "high point of Freud's liberal views, both in sexual morality and in the extension of the psychoanalytic ethos of honesty to all cultural life" (Forrester, 1997: 45). There are numerous remarks, through much of Freud's writing during this period, to substantiate the point. In his 1913 essay,

"On Beginning the Treatment", for example, Freud declared that the fundamental rule of psychoanalytic technique, which the patient has to observe from the beginning, and upon which the analyst must insist, is the requirement of absolute honesty. "Never forget that you have promised to be absolutely honest," should be the analyst's first instruction, he wrote, "and never leave anything out because, for some reason or other, it is unpleasant to tell it" (SE XII: 135). The whole task of psychoanalysis becomes impossible, Freud warns in an important footnote in the same essay, if a reservation is allowed at any single place: "I once treated a high official who was bound by his oath of office not to communicate certain things because they were state secrets, and the analysis came to grief as a consequence of this restriction. Psycho-analytic treatment must disregard all such considerations, because the neurosis and its resistances are themselves without any such regard" (SE XII: 135-36, fn. 1).

The important essay of 1908 (" 'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness", in SE IX) ruthlessly exposed the hypocrisies – the wholesale lack of honesty – underpinning sexual morality at the time. Here Freud condemned as an "obvious social injustice" that the "standard of civilization should demand from everyone the same conduct of sexual life – conduct which can be followed without any difficulty by some people ... but which imposes the heaviest psychical sacrifices on others..." (SE IX: 192). Too strenuous an attempt to adhere to the norms of "civilized" sexual morality was bound to lead to "nervous illness" in large numbers of people, Freud wrote, concluding that, in view of this, "we may well raise the question whether our 'civilized' sexual morality is worth the sacrifice which it imposes on us..." (SE IX: 204). Yet, as Forrester is careful to point out, one should not confuse Freud's "liberalism", as expressed in essays such as this, with that "enthusiastic proclaiming of utopia through sexual emancipation" associated with radical Freudians such as Wittels, and later, Reich:

> There is no doubt that the historical destiny of psychoanalysis was bound up with the early twentieth century debates about sexual morality and sexual freedom. Freud negotiated his way through those debates with

> customary circumspection – that characteristic reluctance to venture beyond his own ground onto the ground of others, a reluctance born of a mixture of apprehension and calculation that told him no good would come to him or his science from any such trusting open-handedness. The doctrines of psychoanalysis – of the sexual etiology of the neuroses, of the polymorphous perversity of children – pointed toward the toxic character of modern social arrangements. "It is one of the obvious social injustices that the standard of civilization should demand from everyone the same conduct of sexual life," Freud could write, putting the accent on the fundamental variety of men, women, and their sexual desires. But this diversity did not sanction sexual liberation and free-thinking licentiousness. Freud did not assent to that version of positivism which declares that what is natural is what is good. "If Freud takes sides against culture, it is only for therapeutic purposes. He believed no more in instinct than in culture," Rieff observes accurately. It was the radical Freudians – Wittels, later Reich – who saw in psychoanalysis the scientific wing of that enthusiastic proclaiming of utopia through sexual emancipation which has been a persistent current of twentieth-century social thought (1997: 46).

Interestingly enough, the man closest to Freud during the period in which he wrote his interpretations of the Schreber Memoirs, and in the company of whom Freud first began working on them, was himself an enthusiast for a society reformed on psychoanalytic principles, a "proselytizer who unabashedly attempted, in the name of psychoanalysis, to convert a reluctant Freud to his vision of a society transformed by a generalized ethic of honesty" (Forrester, 1997: 46). This was Sandor Ferenczi, Freud's foremost Hungarian disciple, who was 34 when he first wrote to Freud in January 1908. They became friends quickly (so evidence from the recently released voluminous correspondence [20] suggests), Ferenczi "always taking the position of the filial disciple whose privilege it was to be intimate with the master, while also exercising the privilege of the disciple to take his master's ideas to what were in his view their logical conclusions and then to upbraid the master for his faintheartedness" (Forrester,

1997: 47). Since Ferenczi believed that psychoanalysis as a world-view should disregard the boundaries between the private and the professional - should apply as much, that is, in private matters as in professional - he soon came to challenge Freud about what he saw as the limits (with regard to openness and honesty) that Freud imposed on their friendship.

In early 1910, Ferenczi's idealization of the relationship that he imagined psychoanalysis made possible between individuals, reached its peak. In a number of successive letters, Ferenczi lectured Freud on psychoanalytic honesty and its importance as a template for a transformation in human society:

> It is my unshakeable conviction ... that these adherents [of psychoanalysis] are but the predecessors of all humanity.[21] ... Once society has gone beyond the infantile, then hitherto completely unimagined possibilities for social and political life are opened up. Just think what it would mean if one *could tell everyone the truth*, one's father, teacher, neighbour, and even the king. All fabricated, imposed authority would go to the devil – what is *rightful* would remain natural. The eradication of lies from private and public life would necessarily *have to* bring about better conditions.[22]

Around much the same time as Ferenczi was pressurizing Freud into a more rigorous application of the psychoanalytic ethos of honesty, Jung had told Freud enthusiastically about the Memoirs (in April 1910). Later that year, Freud and Ferenczi decided to take off together on a tour of Italy, and Freud proposed that the two of them work on the Memoirs together, with Ferenczi writing down to Freud's dictation. Ferenczi refused, feeling that this would force him into an infantile position in relation to Freud, and complaining about Freud's automatic assumption of intellectual superiority in taking sole responsibility and control over the process of writing. Indeed, with this suggestion (and Freud's subsequent decision not to include Ferenczi at all in the work on Schreber), Freud had effectively destroyed Ferenczi's hopes of a completely open relationship with him. Ferenczi could not shake off his disappointment over the incident, referring

repeatedly to it over the next few months, and insisting that it had come about because of Freud's refusal to treat him as an equal, in a spirit of openness and absolute honesty – an objective he felt Freud should not have refused:

> My ideal of truth that strikes down all consideration is certainly nothing less than the most self-evident consequence of your teachings ... You once told me that psychoanalysis was only a science of facts, of indicatives that should not be translated into imperatives – the latter are paranoid. According to this conception there is no psychoanalytic worldview, no psychoanalytic ethics, no psychoanalytic rules of conduct ... I believe that you underestimate much too much the ennobling power of psychoanalysis if you don't believe that it makes people who have completely grasped its meaning absolutely worthy of trust. [23]

It was thus under the sway of Ferenczi's unrelenting attempts to persuade Freud to strengthen his allegiance to the psychoanalytic ideal of honesty, that he wrote his analysis of Schreber through the summer and autumn of 1910, announcing its completion in December that year. It comes as no surprise then, that in Freud's eyes, Schreber's determination to follow this imperative himself – to overcome the prudishness of his psychiatrists, to disregard the numerous and formidable difficulties lying in the path of publication (including that of "paying due regard to the susceptibilities of certain persons still living"), to "yield all feelings of a personal character to the advantage of science", and to press on with the memoirs regardless of all resistance - render him nothing short of heroic. Certainly the most striking feature of Freud's response to the Memoirs, is the attitude of deep respect he demonstrates towards their author – both in relation to his courageous refusal to yield to censorship, and to the "mental acumen" with which he argued against it. Freud is never in doubt of the strength of Schreber's intellect – despite the bizarre and often outlandish nature of his delusional imaginings.

A Man of Superior Mental Gifts:

Thus Freud begins his case study by describing Schreber as "a man of superior mental gifts and endowed with an unusual keenness alike of intellect and of observation", while simultaneously commending him for the calibre of the arguments with which he had countered the considerable efforts that were made to restrain him from publishing his memoirs. Indeed, Freud responds to Schreber not simply with a respectful tone, but with what appears at times as a spirit of celebration. In a letter to Jung in April 1910, Freud refers to the "wonderful Schreber, who ought to have been made a professor of psychiatry and director of a mental hospital." Jung, in turn, wrote later in the same year to Freud that he was "touched and overjoyed" by Freud's appreciation of "the greatness of Schreber's mind and the liberating *ιερoι λόγoι* of the basic language" – the *Grundsprache*, "a somewhat antiquated but nevertheless powerful German, characterized particularly by a wealth of euphemisms" that Schreber claimed was the language of God (See Crapanzano, 1998: 738).

The same respectful and celebratory tone pervades the case history as a whole. In the introductory paragraphs of his investigation, Freud's emphasis on Schreber's intellectual credibility – his status as an absolutely "reliable narrator" – is reinforced with a long list of carefully selected quotations from his psychiatrists' medical reports. Thus from Dr. Weber's lengthy report of 1899, Freud notes Weber's observation that apart from certain obvious "psychomotor symptoms" which must strike "even the most superficial observer as being pathological", *Herr Senatspräsident* Dr Schreber shows "no signs of confusion or psychical inhibition, nor is his intelligence notably impaired":

> His mind is collected, his memory is excellent, he has at his disposal a very considerable store of knowledge (not merely upon legal questions, but in many other fields), and he is able to reproduce it in a connected train of thought. He takes an interest in following events of the world of politics, science and art, etc., and is constantly occupied with such matters … and an observer who was uninstructed upon his general

condition would scarcely notice anything peculiar in these directions (SE XII: 15).

Later, Freud draws our attention to a further report dated 1900, in which, even as Weber sets about trying to prevent Schreber from regaining control over his own affairs and securing his discharge from the asylum, he simultaneously contradicts his own judgements with repeated reference to the soundness of Schreber's mind. During the daily meals taken by Schreber at his family board, Weber reports that whatever the subject was that came up for discussion, the patient gave evidence of "a lively interest, a well-informed mind, a good memory, and a sound judgement" (SE XII: 15). Schreber's "ethical outlook", moreover, according to Weber, was one which it was "impossible not to endorse" – he was both "courteous" and "affable"; he displayed "tact" and "decorum" when touching upon matters in a humorous vein, and on one occasion, he is reported to have shown considerable "technical knowledge" and indeed, "common sense" in helping to solve a business question which arose involving the interests of the entire Weber family. These extracts from contemporary psychiatric reports, clearly selected to emphasize Schreber's considerable mental powers, his fine memory and his credibility as an author, are crowned by Freud himself as he notes, with evident pride in Schreber's achievement, his eventual success both in securing publication of his memoirs, and restoring his civil rights:

> In the numerous applications to the courts, by which Dr Schreber endeavoured to regain his liberty, he did not in the least disavow his delusions or make any secret of his intention of publishing the *Denkwürdigkeiten*. On the contrary, he dwelt upon the importance of his ideas to religious thought, and upon their invulnerability to the attacks of modern science; but at the same time he laid stress upon the 'absolute harmlessness' (430) of all the actions which, as he was aware, his delusions obliged him to perform. Such, indeed, were his acumen and the cogency of his logic that finally, and in spite of his being an acknowledged paranoic, his efforts were crowned with success. In July

> 1902, Dr Schreber's civil rights were restored, and in the following year his *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* appeared, though in a censored form and with many valuable portions omitted (SE XII: 16).

This then, I want to suggest, is the next remarkable feature of the case, and an essential one to note in a proper assessment of its historical significance – the extent to which, within it, Freud demonstrates his willingness to *take Schreber at his word*, and, as part of the same impetus, the lengths he goes to to put before his readers a case for doing likewise. Do not dismiss, and above all, *do not censor* the words of the madman, Freud seems to want to say. Listen to them, subject them to the most serious procedures of reading and interpretation, and you will find that we have much to learn from them.

Science, Fiction and the Question of Evidence:

Clearly, Freud's respect for Schreber, both as recorder *and* as analyst of his own psychotic imaginings far outweighed his regard for the opinions of Schreber's physicians and psychiatrists. It is hardly surprising then, that Freud almost never turns to the psychiatric literature of the day when summoning up evidence to substantiate his interpretations in the case. Indeed, Freud seems more interested in the insights gained from works of *fiction* than in any of the scientific studies which may have been available to him at the time. At times Freud elaborates on Schreber's own allusions to literary and historical myth, while also invoking a variety of fictional works Schreber does not mention – from the classics of Goethe and Nietsche to the *Ghazals* of Muhammad ibu Muhammad, a thirteenth-century Persian mystical poet. The case history as a whole is littered with literary references, many of which are summoned at the most crucial stages of the interpretive process to substantiate Freud's most significant theoretical conclusions.

On the difficult question of "soul-murder", for example, it is to the legends embodied in two plays by Lord Byron, *Manfred* and *Cain* (the first of which is mentioned by Schreber himself), that Freud turns in search of answers. Though

he learns nothing from Byron's writing about soul-murder, it is in *Manfred* that Freud discovers a major piece of supporting evidence for his theory that Schreber's brother was one of the objects of his homosexual attraction: "It is plausible, by the way," suggests Freud in a lengthy footnote, "to connect the plot of *Manfred* with the incestuous relations which have repeatedly been asserted to exist between the poet and his half-sister. [Hence Schreber's preoccupation with it.] And it is not a little striking that the action of Byron's other play, his celebrated *Cain*, should be laid in the primal family, where no objections could exist to incest between brother and sister" (1911: 45).

In his elaborations on Schreber's imaginative conception of the "state of bliss" offered by "the life beyond", Freud finds it significant, and a key factor in his own interpretations of Schreber's fantasies in this regard, that here Schreber *departs* from literary myths and legends. This time, he turns to Mignon's song in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as evidence of the fact that the wish-fulfillment offered by the life beyond most often includes the desire to be "at last free from the difference between the sexes" (SE XII: 29, fn. 2). In Schreber's case, a distinction is drawn between the male and female "states of bliss" – a distinction whose departure from literary mythology Freud sees as crucial to our understanding of its meaning. To Schreber, the "male state of bliss was superior to the female, which seems to have consisted chiefly in an uninterrupted feeling of voluptuousness." Moreover, that element of the state of bliss which literary myth has conceived as consisting in the contemplation of God is virtually absent in Schreber's conception, so that for him, "heavenly bliss" was to be understood as being "in its essence an intensified continuation of sensual pleasure upon earth." Crucially, it is in these departures from literary mythology in Schreber's imaginative conception of life after death that Freud finds his major interpretive clues to the nature of Schreber's paranoia – in what he describes as this "surprising sexualization of the state of heavenly bliss" which will lead him, finally, to the theory that repressed homosexuality lay at the root of Schreber's breakdown.

In the case of Schreber's "Redeemer delusion," once again a crucial departure from historical myth offers Freud the key to understanding its significance. In his attempt to go beyond the "estimates" of the "practical psychiatrist," Freud focuses on two details of Schreber's delusionary scheme as being of prime importance. The first is the patient's asssumption of the role of the Redeemer, and the second is his transformation into a woman. As far as the first is concerned, Freud points out that the "Redeemer delusion" is a fantasy that is familiar through the frequency with which it forms the nucleus of religious paranoia. The additional factor, in Schreber's case however, "which makes the redemption dependent upon the man being previously transformed into a woman, is unusual and in itself bewildering, since it shows *such a wide divergence from the historical myth which the patient's phantasy is setting out to reproduce...*" (SE XII: 18, my emphasis). It is this divergence more than anything else that will eventually lead Freud to his most important insight at this point in the case history, namely that the idea of being transformed into a woman was the "salient feature" and the "earliest germ" in Schreber's delusional system (SE XII: 21). It also proves to be the one part of the system that persists after his cure, and the one part that was able to retain a place in his behaviour in real life after he had recovered. Thus Freud concludes that "[in] contrast to the way in which he put his emasculation phantasy into action, the patient never took any steps towards inducing people to recognize his mission as Redeemer, beyond the publication of his *Denkwürdigkeiten*" (SE XII: 21).

It is also in the wake of a long string of literary references that Freud is finally led to perhaps the most triumphant moment in the course of his interpretation, when he feels he can confidently declare that in the case of Schreber, "we find ourselves once again on the familiar ground of the father-complex" (SE XII: 55). This time Freud summons Goethe's *Faust* and Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, along with a series of cosmic myths, to help him explain the significance of the sun in the expression of Schreber's delusions.

Schreber, as Freud points out, has quite a peculiar relation to the sun: "It speaks to him in human language and thus reveals itself to him as a living being,

or as the organ of a yet higher being lying behind it. We learn from a medical report that at one time he 'used to shout threats and abuse at it and positively bellow at it' and used to call out to it that it must crawl away from him and hide. He himself tells us that the sun turns pale before him. The manner in which it is bound up with his fate is shown by the important alterations it undergoes as soon as changes begin to occur in him as, for instance, during his first weeks at Sonnenstein" (SE XII: 53-54). In the attempt at interpretation which follows this description of Schreber's "solar myth," Freud relies entirely on the evidence provided by literary and cosmic legends to lead him to the conclusion that the sun, in Schreber's delusional system, "is nothing but another sublimated symbol for the father..." (SE XII: 54). For all his declared reverence for science, then, it is invariably to works of *fiction* that Freud turns when in search of crucial evidential support for his major theoretical conclusions in the case.

III
CONCLUSION

Knowledge of, and responsiveness to literature and the linguistic sciences was, from the start, an important dimension of psychoanalytic thinking. [24] That Freud believed this implicitly, is clear in the literary erudition demonstrated in all his great case studies. Yet Freud's conviction that analytic training should include instruction in branches of knowledge remote from medicine (including, most significantly, "mythology" and "the science of literature"), would find its fullest expression only very much later, in a pamphlet he published in July 1926 called "The Question of Lay Analysis". In the late spring of that year, proceedings had been begun in Vienna against Theodor Reik, a prominent non-medical member of the Vienna Psycho-Analytic Society, following a charge, on information laid by someone he had been treating analytically, with a breach of an old Austrian law against "quackery" – a law which made it illegal for a person without a medical degree to treat patients. Strachey reports that Freud

> at once intervened energetically. He argued the position privately with an official of high standing, and went on to compose the present pamphlet ['A Question of Lay Analysis'] for immediate publication. He began writing it at the end of June; it was in print before the end of July, and was published in September. Partly, perhaps, as a result of his intervention, but partly because the evidence was unsatisfactory, the Public Prosecutor stopped the proceedings after a preliminary investigation (SE 20: 180).

From early on, Freud had held strongly to the opinion that psychoanalysis was not to be regarded as purely a concern of the medical profession. His first published expression on the subject seems to have been in his preface contributed in 1913 to a book by Pfister; and in a letter written at the very end of his life in 1938, he declared that 'I have never repudiated these views and I insist on them even more intensely than before.' But it was in "A Question of Lay Analysis" that Freud argued the matter most closely and fully. Analytic training, Freud insisted, "cuts across the field of medical education, but neither includes the other." If one had to found a "college of psycho-analysis", he went on, much would have to be taught in it which is also taught by the medical faculty, but this would not be all:

> ...alongside of depth-psychology, which would always remain the principal subject, there would be an introduction to biology, as much as possible of the science of sexual life, and familiarity with the symptomatology of psychiatry. On the other hand, analytic instruction would include branches of knowledge which are remote from medicine and which the doctor does not come across in his practice: the history of civilization, mythology, the psychology of religion and the science of literature. Unless he is well at home in these subjects, an analyst can make nothing of a large amount of his material. By way of compensation, the great mass of what is taught in medical schools is of no use to him for his purposes ... *the experience of an analyst lies in another world, with*

> *other phenomena and other laws.* However much philosophy may ignore the gulf between the physical and the mental, it still exists for our immediate experience and still more for our practical endeavours (SE 20: 246-47, my emphasis).

In his analysis of Schreber, as in all his great case studies, Freud was in the process of defining the boundaries of this "other world", its distinctive phenomena and its particular set of laws. And it is this attempt - to convey the specific dimensions of a psychoanalytic mode of knowing - beyond the details of the theoretical conclusions he drew from the case studies, that, in my view, gives them their significance. His own extensive knowledge of mythology, literature and the arts in general proved indispensable to him in this task, in a way that would end essentially by extending the idea of what it meant to be scientific, or to engage in scientific inquiry. Ironically, however, it was also partly due to Freud's literary knowledge and leanings – and to the use he made of these in the process of writing – that the case histories turned out to read (as Freud himself complained) more "like short stories" than anything else, and that (in his own words) they "lacked the serious stamp of science" (See *Studies on Hysteria*, SE II: 160).

Freud rightly feared that the literary character of his case histories would simply contribute to that long-standing theme in the overall critique of psychoanalysis – its lack of scientific authority – which dates back to the very beginnings of the discipline, and has been its constant companion since then. Yet what the Schreber study – and indeed, all the others – suggest, is the futility of any debate about psychoanalysis which insists on couching itself in the form, Is it an art or a science? Freud's notes on Schreber suggest that it may be much more instructive (as Forrester has recently pointed out) to pose the question: "what changes in our general categories are required by recognizing that psychoanalysis is both an art and a science? Not just the old-fashioned sense of art, as when we say that medicine is an art and a science ... But also the recognition that psychoanalysis has produced in the analyst a figure whose work is aesthetic as much as it is investigative..." (1997: 5). A change of emphasis is needed in other

words, within which Freud should not only be considered alongside Darwin or Einstein (Forrester concludes), but also as "a combination of Darwin with Proust, Pasteur with Picasso, or even Weber with HG Wells" (1997: 5).

Much of the voluminous critical response to Freud's "Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" has ignored all these issues, focussing squarely and simply on the confirmation or otherwise of Freud's theoretical conclusions in the case – on determining the extent to which Freud either failed or succeeded, within the case study, in getting to the bottom of Schreber's paranoia. Yet if we recognize the case study that gradually emerges in Freud's work as the "locus of the most specifically psychoanalytic knowledge," as Carl Pletsch advises, then it becomes clear that criticism that supposes psychoanalysis to be located in theories, and approaches its writings with this idea principally in mind, is surely misplaced. "[B]ehind the specific difference between the genres of Freud's writing intended for different audiences," Pletsch writes, "lay a tension between the positivistic notions of science that Freud had imbibed with his medical education, in which theory predominated, and another notion of knowledge that arose from or was produced by the psychoanalytic mode of knowing itself. The view of knowledge implied in Freud's increasing reliance upon case studies never fully triumphed over Freud's commitment to theory, but it represents the more radical departure from the tradition of positivistic scientific discourse in Freud's oeuvre, and must thus be regarded as a distinguishing feature of psychoanalysis" (117).

Just such a radical departure is, to my mind, the distinguishing feature of Freud's case study on Schreber. In its definitive break with the conservatism of traditional psychiatry, in its opposition to the prevailing culture of censorship and in its championing of greater freedom of expression, in its challenge to a too rigid definition of science and scientific inquiry, and in its liberating attempt to allow the "madman" his say, Freud's analysis of Schreber goes far beyond the reaches of a purely theoretical, to a new form of discourse - one which ultimately helps define the boundaries of a new and distinctive form of

knowledge. And it is in this effort to break new epistemological ground, I want to suggest, that its enduring significance lies.

Notes:

1. All references to the text will be to the following edition: Schreber, Daniel Paul. 1988[1903]. *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, trans. and ed. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). I will also be referring extensively to Samuel Weber's lengthy introduction to this edition – an essay which I consider to be one of the more interesting discussions to have appeared to date, both in its commentary on Schreber's writing, and in its references to, and understanding of, the historical significance of Freud's case history.

2. See Robertson, 1996 for a precise and useful summary of some of the most striking elements of Schreber's complex structure of fantasies.

3. Similarly, in the introduction to his celebrated reading of the Wolf Man case history (in *Reading for the Plot*, 1984) Peter Brooks suggests that the Wolf Man's public identity remains to this day that effectively assigned to him by Freud - that the Wolf Man himself has become "fixed as a literary figure, a textual creation, evoked to represent a certain psychological configuration, an exemplary biography" (264). Even though he did in fact have the opportunity to tell his own story long after the publication of Freud's case history (in his memoirs published in 1971), he signed his own version (*The Wolf-man by the Wolf-Man*, ed. Muriel Gardiner) with the name he had been given by Freud in the case history. Thus his identity "remained to the end of his life inextricably bound up with his role as the most famous 'case' of psychoanalysis, with a biography written by Freud that was essential to a certain conceptual moment and theoretical construction in Freud's thought" (264-65).

   At this point, it may also be worth noting Lacan's insistence that his students read the complete text of Schreber's memoirs during his 1955/56 seminar on psychosis (See Lacan, 1981).

4. Of course there are some notable exceptions to this reductive response. These include, amongst others, Samuel Weber's introduction to Macalpine and Hunter's 1988 edition of the *Memoirs* (which I will discuss later in the chapter), in which he offers a brief but useful discussion of Jacques Lacan's reading of the case (in *Ecrits: A Selection*, 1977), itself a predictably eccentric response, which in turn informs Weber's own interpretation. (For a succinct summary of the way Lacan differed from Freud in his interpretation of the case, see Roudinesco, 1997: 288.) Recent commentaries (notably Santner, 1996) have also extended and broadened the theoretical bounds of the existing critical tradition, by emphasizing the historical and socio-political context which gave rise to Schreber's delusional imaginings.

5. In relation to the political references and allusions in Schreber's text, Canetti suggests that "his political system had within a few decades

been accorded high honor: though in a rather cruder and less literate form it became the creed of a great nation, leading... to the conquest of Europe and coming within a hair's breadth of the conquest of the world" (cited in Santner, 1996: ix).

6. See, for example, Deleuze and Guatarri, 1983. Although more sympathetic to the ambiguously transgressive dimensions of Schreber's delusions, Deleuze and Guattari ultimately second Canetti's reading of Schreber's text as a storehouse of proto-fascist fantasies and fantasy structures. Curiously, the Schreber case does not figure in Klaus Thewelheit's recent study of fascism, *Male Fantasies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).

7. See Niederland, 1984. Earlier discussions by William Niederland focussing on the same issue include "Schreber: Father and Son", *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 28, 1959: 151-169; "The Miracled-up World of Schreber's Childhood", *Psycho-analytc Study of the Child* 14, 1959: 383-413; and "Schreber's Father", *Journal of the American Psycho-analytic Association* 8, 1960: 492-499. For an interesting critique of Niederland's position, see Israëls, Han, 1989. Israëls focuses on Niederland's considerable influence anxiety vis-a-vis Freud, which prevents Niederland from appreciating the extent of his own critical distance from Freud's purely intrapsychic reading of Schreber.

8. See Schatzman, 1973. Morton Schatzman's contribution to the debates on Moritz Schreber's role is largely a radicalization and popularization of Niederland's work.

9. See, for example Lothane, 1992. Lothane suggests that Freud's focus on homosexuality in his reading of Schreber was entirely a product of a transferential dynamic on Freud's part and without a counterpart in Schreber's life or text: "scientific formulations about paranoia aside, latent homosexuality played a role in Freud and in the relations among the pioneers [of psychoanalysis] themselves: it was both an overt and a covert current in the early days of the history of the psychoanalytic movement, when it was an exclusively male club and a mutual admiration - and interpretation - society. The earliest personal linkage between paranoia and homosexuality was made by Freud himself in relation to Fliess... In addition, homosexual concerns repeatedly came up as countertransference in the psychotherapy of male patients. Thus, Freud's attribution of homosexuality to Schreber is, among other motives, a projection onto Schreber of his own sexual conflicts and emotions" (338-9).

10. Eric Santner suggests that the most significant contribution of Lothane's work has been to "profile the role played by the new discipline of forensic psychiatry, embodied in the persons of Flechsig and Guido Weber, in Schreber's symptomatology..." Lothane has noted that Flechsig showed special preference for sufferers from paresis, since such cases were most easily explained in terms of somatic

anomalies. Once patients were admitted, Flechsig's therapeutic procedures included surgical interventions, but also a variety of less aggressive procedures, such as bed rest, tepid baths, and so on. As far as the use of drugs was concerned, Lothane describes Flechsig's preferred treatment of epilepsy with opium and bromides as a kind of "chemical shock, which helped some patients but caused death in others." He concludes: "The striking fact in all this is that there is neither awareness nor interest on the part of Flechsig in anything remotely related to psychotherapy, that is, treatment of mental disorders by psychological means. In this regard, Flechsig remained an organicist to the very end" (212-13).

11. Niederland argues that, although Schreber's symptoms at times resemble the manifestations of the "influencing machines" found in the persecutory delusions of many shizophrenics, "there is a realistic core in this [Schreber's] delusionary material," the historical truth of which is to be found in the father's medical, orthopaedic and pedagogical theories and practices. Thus Niederland writes, "With respect to the father, one might reason he was the type of 'symbiotic father', whose all-pervasive presence, usurpation of the maternal role, and other domineering features (overtly sadistic as well as paternalistically benevolent, punitive as well as seductive) lent themselves to their fusion with the bizarre God heirarchy characteristic of the son's delusional system" (74). In Niederland's view, the overproximity of such a father to a son created an environment in which, as he puts it, "there was always castration in the air": "The father's aggressive and coercive actions; the orthopedic contraptions; the disrupted, dismembered, and dissected aspects of the human body; the violence and authoritarian impetus of the injunctions; the sequence masturbation-plague-sterility-insanity (castration) – all belong in this setting" (82).

12. In this connection, see Foucault, 1965, 1976, and particularly, 1979.

13. See, in particular, Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence", in *Reflections, Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, trans. Edmond Jephcott, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken, 1986); and Pierre Bourdieu's *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

14. I will return to this point, and discuss its implications more fully, later on in this chapter.

15. See, for instance, the following works by Zizek: *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989); *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (1991); *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel,and the Critique of Ideology* (1993); "Cyberspace, or, the Unbearable Closure of Being" (*Pretexts*, 1997), and for an excellent general

selection, *The Zizek Reader* (ed. Elizabeth Wright and Edmond Wright, 1999).

16. For a classic statement of this critique, see Steiner, 1998.

17. Representative is Le Rider, 1993. In this recent study of crises of gender, national and ethnic identity in fin-de-siècle Austrian literature, Le Rider characterizes Schreber's *Memoirs* as a "disturbing parody of the literary presentations of depersonalization and mystic or narcissistic reconstruction of the deeper self", which he analyzes in the works of Hofmannsthal, Rilke and Lou Andreas-Salome.

18. Cited in Pletsch, 1982: 101/102.

19. See particularly *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). In the early fifties, Polanyi was invited to give the Gifford Lectures (1951-1952), and from 1952 until 1958, he worked to transform his lectures into *Personal Knowledge*, the publication which best represents Polanyi's mature philosophy. As a contribution to the philosophy of science, this book criticizes the ideal of objectivity and is part of the mid-century shift in philosophy of science toward interest in scientific practice (like Thomas Kuhn's more famous *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), which makes some use of Polanyi's thought). But *Personal Knowledge* is more than an effort in philosophy of science narrowly construed. The critical component of the work is an attack upon the ideal of objectivity as it was presented in science and philosophy at mid-century. The constructive (as opposed to critical) philosophy in this book, however, represents Polanyi's developing interest in epistemology; he carefully works out his own epistemological model and sets forth a broad framework within which to think about knowledge as personal. Especially if one considers the fourth part of *Personal Knowledge*, it is clear that this book is also Polanyi's effort to articulate a philosophical cosmology (or a broad metaphysical scheme) and a *lebensphilosophie*.

20. This appears in two volumes, namely, *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sandor Ferenczi, Volume 1, 1908-1939*, ed. Eva Brabant, Ernst Falzeder, and Patrizia Giampieri-Deutsch, trans. Peter T. Hoffer, with an introduction by Andre Haynal (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); and *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sandor Ferenczi, Volume 2, 1914-1919*, ed. Eva Brabant and Ernst Falzeder, with the collaboration of Patrizia Giampieri-Deutsch, under the supervision of Andre Haynal, transcribed by Ingeborg Meyer-Palmedo, trans. Peter T. Hoffer, with an introduction by Axel Hoffer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). Abbreviated in the text as *Ffer 1* and *Ffer 2*.

21. *Ffer 1*, Ferenczi to Freud, 2nd January 1910, p. 119.

22. *Ffer 1*, Ferenczi to Freud, 5th February 1910, p. 130.

23. *Ffer 1*, Ferenczi to Freud, 3rd October 1910, pp. 219-220.

24. See Bowie, 1987: 120. As Bowie points out, the psychoanalyst who brings a broad reach of knowledge, both scientific and artistic, to bear upon his work is not departing from tradition, but "returning to the fertile sources of psychoanalytic thinking. For Freud and his early followers had an exemplary knowledge of, and responsiveness to, literature and the linguistic sciences" (120).

CHAPTER FOUR

POWER, MEANING AND PERSUASION IN THE CASE OF THE "WOLF MAN"

Like all Freud's major case histories, that on Serge Pankejeff (the "Wolf Man") in "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (in SE XVII, pp. 3-122) continues to generate a wide variety of responses from readers with diverse interests. For psychoanalysts, philosophers and literary theorists, for example, the concept of *Nachträglichkeit* (*deferred action*), which Freud introduced in this case, and on which his entire analysis hinged, has been a source of debate and discussion for decades.[1] Linguists, narratologists and literary critics have long been fascinated by the complexity of the case history's narrative structures, while others have noted its significance in shaping contemporary approaches to the study of sexuality and gender. In an unusual new reading by art historian Whitney Davis (*Drawing the Dream of the Wolves*, 1995), for example, the Wolf Man case history becomes "an exemplary instance of the production of sexuality through representation." [2] "From medical clinics or psychiatric hospitals to law courts and military institutions to kindergarten classrooms and academic disciplines such as history or literary criticism," Davis writes in the opening pages of his study, "Freud's conception of latent homosexuality presented in *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* has had a tremendous influence on all twentieth-century approaches to human sexuality and gender" (1995: xv). [3]

Other readers have found the case history illuminating for what it tells us about Freud's interpretative procedures. For Donald M. Kartiganer, for instance,

its primary value lies in its "detailed demonstration of Freud as a reader." For him, the case constitutes "an implicit hermeneutics and a practical criticism, a theory of how to read and a detailed demonstration of how reading proceeds" (1985: 3). For Peter Brooks, on the other hand, in his celebrated *Reading for the Plot* (1984), the case represents far more than just a simple theory of reading. "We have here," he writes, "one of the most daring moments of Freud's thought, and one of his most heroic gestures as a writer." In Brooks' reading, Freud's "heroism" here is a product of the bold modernist vision he displays in the case, his willingness to embrace in it a "structure of indeterminacy" – one which "perilously destabilises belief in ... exhaustive accounts whose authority derives from the force of closure" (277). Drawing on Freud's own characterization of his labours in the case (in *The Freudian Reading*, 1991), Lis Möller describes it as Freud's "most ambitious attempt to descend 'into the deepest and most primitive strata of mental development'" (58). And for Ned Lukacher (in *Primal Scenes: Literature, Philosophy, Psychoanalysis*, 1986), the case history is Freud's "most daring theoretical and clinical work," representing nothing less than a "challenge to the history of Western metaphysics" itself (41).

But it is this very "heroism" - embodied for writers like Brooks, Möller and Lukacher in the "challenge" the case presents to Western metaphysics - which has also elicited its most aggressively critical opposition, particularly in recent decades. Since the 1970's at least, Freud's account of his analysis of the Wolf Man has become what John Forrester calls a "test case for the truth of psychoanalysis" (1997: 209), often with negative results. Representative is Frank Sulloway's 1991 "reappraisal" of all the major case histories ("Reassessing Freud's Case Histories: The Social Construction of Psychoanalysis"), in which, in the derisory tones characteristic of much of this recent opposition, the case is described not only as a therapeutic failure, but a "tacitly recognized embarrassment [for psychoanalysis], whose true nature needed to be hidden by the arm-twisting and the financial resources of the Sigmund Freud archives" (1991: 261).[4] Earlier, at the "Linguistics of Writing" colloquium held at the University of Strathclyde in July 1986, Stanley Fish gave a paper on the Wolf Man case history since described as a "tour de force of sustained reasoning

against the legitimacy of psychoanalysis" (Forrester, 1997: 209). An abbreviated version of the same paper appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* of August 29, prefaced by the following introductory remarks:

> I have two epigraphs for this essay. The first is from James Strachey's preface to his translation of Freud's *Introductory Lectures.* Freud, he says, was "never rhetorical," and was entirely opposed to laying down his view in the authoritarian fashion. The second is a report by the Wolf-Man of what he thought to himself shortly after he met Freud for the first time: this man is a Jewish swindler, he wants to use me from behind, and shit on my head. This paper is dedicated to the proposition that the Wolf-Man got it right (1986: 935). [5]

By the end of his paper, Fish claimed to have demonstrated that, in this case history, Freud employed *nothing but* rhetoric, both where his treatment of his patient was concerned, and in his relation to the reader of the case history. As for the Wolf Man himself, in Fish's reading he becomes nothing more than a product of the analyst's self-serving imagination and technique - a "piece of language," "the perfect rhetorical artifact." Re-published as it was in numerous different versions (most recently in 1998), Fish's paper set a new model for literary critical approaches both to the case history itself and to Freud's writing in general. [6]

In this chapter, I want to respond at some length to Stanley Fish's essay, in a discussion prompted by two striking features of his paper: first, by the confrontation it represents between one specialist trained in the art of literary interpretation, and another who was discovering a method for the interpretation of dreams. Is the dream text fully interchangeable with the fictional text (as Fish's paper implies), and to what extent do the two interpretative operations (literary and psychoanalytic) really coincide? Second, my response was prompted by a sense of *déja-vu* as I read his paper, as if everything he was saying had been said before, perhaps only in a different way. What is the fundamental objection underlying most attacks on Freud's work, how is it manifested in Fish's critique, and, most significant of all, is it a valid one? This essay, then, is directed

not only at Fish's paper, but at the long critical tradition it both reflects and perpetuates.

I
THE SCENE OF PERSUASION

Fish's "proposition" is based on the argument that Freud has used and manipulated the facts of the Wolf-Man's case to suit his own hypotheses, and, more specifically, to defend and justify the theoretical premises upon which the discipline of psychoanalysis is built. In Fish's analysis, Freud's account of the Wolf-Man's case history proceeds not according to the principles of rationality and objectivity, but is characterized by a rhetorical pattern in which repeated claims of "independence" - for the analysis itself, for the "materials" upon which it is built, and for the patient's share of the work - can be shown to be powerfully subverted by the narrative in which they are submerged: "The real story of the case," writes Fish, "is the story of persuasion, and we will be able to read it only when we tear our eyes away from the supposedly deeper story of the boy who had a dream" (1986: 937).

In the course of his critique, Fish will suggest that the greater part of the final interpretation of the dream which is the centrepiece of the analysis, is the product of "persuasion and force" on the part of Freud, the analyst, rather than the result of independent work on the part of the patient. Even where the patient does apparently speak for himself in the interpretation of the dream, the independence of his words is compromised, according to Fish, by the method in which they have been "induced" by Freud. Fish here refers to the way in which Freud attempts to overcome the patient's persistently apathetic attitude to the analysis by fixing a particular date on which the treatment would have to end, "no matter how far it had advanced."

In so doing, suggests Fish, "the coercion [on Freud's part] could not be more obvious..." By imposing a fixed limit on the duration of the analysis, Freud was effectively assuring its advancement, and, what is more, assuring it "in a form he [would] approve." As further grist for his mill, Fish goes on to point out that "Freud does not shrink from naming [this imposition] as an exercise of 'inexorable pressure'; yet in the very same sentence he contrives to detach the pressure from the result it produces: 'Under the inexorable pressure of the fixed limit the patient's resistance gave way, and now in a disproportionately short time, the analysis produced all the material which made it possible to clear up his inhibitions and remove his symptoms...'" (1986: 935). In Fish's interpretation, the analysis is here cunningly, and indeed falsely, presented "as if it were independent of the constraints that father it, and at the end of the sentence the clearing up of inhibitions and the removal of symptoms appear as effects without a cause, natural phenomena that simply emerge in the course of their own time..." (1986: 935).

It is in this "remarkable sequence ... repeated in a variety of ways in the paragraphs that follow" that Fish detects the "pattern" which he feels to be constitutive of the narrative structure of the case history as a whole: "Always the pattern is the same," writes Fish, "the claim of independence - for the analysis, for the patient's share, for the 'materials' - is made in the context of an account that powerfully subverts it, and then it is made again" (1986: 935).

As suggested earlier, the argument against the independence of the analysis, which Fish constructs in this way in the first section of his paper, and elaborates in those that follow, is buttressed by a critical tradition that attacks Freudian psychoanalysis on the grounds that it "acts by suggestion" - or, in Fish's terms, "that what the analyst claims to uncover (in the archaeological sense of which Freud was so fond) he actually creates by verbal and rhetorical means" (1986: 935) - its principal objection to psychoanalysis thus following Wittgenstein's refutation of Freud's claims to be "scientific," his suggestion, that is, that what Freud offers is nothing more than "*speculation* – something prior even to the formation of a hypothesis" (Cited in Barrett (ed.), 1972: 44). [7]

In Wittgenstein's view, the only reason these speculations have gained a certain popularity in the mind of the public is through their "appeal," or their "charm" as explanations: "The picture of people having unconscious thoughts has a charm. The idea of an underworld, a secret cellar. Something hidden, uncanny ... A lot of things one is ready to believe because they are uncanny" (Cioffi, 1969: 186). [8] Pursuing a similar line of thought, Fish attributes the "appeal" of Freudian propositions to the peculiar "discursive power" of and by which they have been constructed. The true content of Freudian explanations, according to Fish, is the story of their making, the story of "persuasion... practised on a massive scale," in which the reader only believes what he is told because he has "fallen totally under the control of the teller" (1986: 936).

But what of Fish's own formidable powers of persuasion? What of his own talent for verbal manipulation, his carefully cultivated discursive skills? Who now is the teller, and what, if subjected to closer scrutiny, are the "true contents" of his tale?

II

PRACTICES OF READING AND INTERPRETATION

We'll begin by examining Fish's investigation of the third paragraph of Chapter One of the Wolf-Man case history. In this paragraph, Freud weighs the virtues and defects of two possible methods in the analysis of infantile neuroses. The two possibilities, as Fish notes, are:

1. analysing a childhood disorder when it first manifests itself in infancy, or
2. waiting until the patient is an "intellectually mature adult"

"Since Freud is at this very moment engaged in the second practice," writes Fish, "it is not surprising that he decides in favour of it, but he must find a way to defend it against the objection (which he anticipates) that because of the passage of time what results will be the product of interpretation. He replies by asserting that interpretation will play an even greater part if the child is examined directly because 'too many words and thoughts have to be lent' to him. In contrast, when one analyses an adult, these 'limitations' do not obtain, although one must then 'take into account the distortion and refurbishing to which a patient's past is subjected when it is looked back upon...'" (1986: 935).

On examination, Fish finds this to be a "curious contrast" since, as he points out, "it is hard to tell the difference between 'lending words' and 'refurbishing.'" The only reason the contrast works, in Fish's eyes, lies in the way that "the sentence shifts the burden of 'refurbishing' onto the patient." This Fish interprets as a "brilliant move" on Freud's part, which allows him to "admit interpretation into the scene while identifying it as the work of another, leaving himself the (honorable) work of undoing its effects... In only a few sentences," concludes the critic, "[Freud] has managed to twice distance himself from the charge of suggestion, first by pushing it off onto the practitioners of a rival method, and second by making it into a property of the illness of which his now innocent labors are to be the cure" (1986: 935).

Embedded in this sequence are a number of accusations directed against the analyst:

1. that Freud's "defence" of his present method is based more on expedience than on an objective balancing of the pros and cons of both possible procedures;
2. that underlying this supposed "defence" is an attempt to justify any element of interpretation the analysis might entail, and falsely to identify it as the work of the patient, whereas in fact it is the work of the analyst himself, and

3. that disguised beneath the surface discussion on questions of method is a concealed attempt on the part of the analyst to "distance himself from the charge of suggestion."

Considering that the body of Fish's criticism is directed against the power of "suggestion," which he feels to be the greatest danger inherent in the practice of "interpretation" - one that must necessarily throw into question the results of any psychoanalytic session - it is curious to find that his own criticisms are based *exclusively* on the very practice he cannot countenance in Freud: in this case, his own efforts to "interpret" the Freudian text in question. [9] Indeed, a return to the original paragraph under examination (which Fish significantly does not quote in full) reveals the critic's own penchant for "lending words" and "refurbishing." In the end, it is tempting to suggest that what is at stake is not Freud's attempt to defend himself against the charge of suggestion by identifying his own interpretations as "the work of another," but Fish's attempt to deflect the reader's critical gaze from his own tendency to "act by suggestion" by attributing this tendency to Freud.

"Since Freud is at this very moment engaged in the second practice, it is not surprising that he decides in favor of it, but he must find a way to defend it against the objection... that because of the passage of time what results will be the product of interpretation," writes Fish, suggesting, first, a firm rejection on Freud's part of what Fish (rather than Freud) describes as the "rival method" in favour of that in which he is presently engaged, and secondly, the need to justify his decision.

In fact, no such rejection appears in the original text, which reads, in full, as follows:

> My description will therefore deal with an infantile neurosis which was analysed not while it actually existed, but only fifteen years after its termination. This state of things has its advantages as well as its disadvantages in comparison with the alternative. An analysis which is

> conducted upon a neurotic child itself must, as a matter of course, appear to be more trustworthy, but it cannot be very rich in material; too many words and thoughts have to be lent to the child, and even so the deepest strata may turn out to be impenetrable to consciousness. An analysis of a childhood disorder through the medium of recollection in an intellectually mature adult is free from these limitations; but it necessitates our taking into account the distortion and refurbishing to which a person's own past is subjected when it is looked back upon from a later period. The first alternative perhaps gives the more convincing results; the second is by far the most instructive (SE XVII: 8-9).

Rather than a firm rejection of one method in favour of the alternative (which Fish reads into the text to form the basis of his criticisms), the text itself reveals a careful balancing of the advantages and disadvantages of both. According to Freud, where the method he is not using is more "trustworthy" - a word Fish conveniently ignores - that presently in use is "richer in material"; where the alternative would "give the more convincing results," the method in use is "more instructive." The previously mentioned charge that Freud's "defense" of his technique is based on expedience begins to fall away when what is described by Fish as a "defensive strategy" turns out to be little more than a disinterested account of alternative methods.[10]

The validity of Fish's critical assertions is further weakened if one stops to question not only the strength of his interpretation of Freud's text, but the very logic of his assumptions. It is difficult to imagine why Freud, as Fish suggests, should feel the need to "defend [his present practice] against the objection... that because of the passage of time what results will be the product of interpretation," when the very "products" that interpretation provides themselves constitute the material upon which the analyst frames his hypotheses as to the patient's infantile sexuality, and through which he is then led to the motive forces of the neurotic symptoms of later life. According to Fish, Freud's choice of procedure is defended by an alleged "assertion" that "interpretation will play an even greater part if the child is examined directly because 'too many words and thoughts have

to be lent' to him." Once again, it is to Fish that the work of interpretation must be attributed. What Freud in fact asserts is that "an analysis which is conducted upon a neurotic child ... *cannot be very rich in material*; too many words and thoughts have to be lent to the child, and even so the deepest strata may turn out to be impenetrable to consciousness" (my emphasis). What Freud objects to is not the part necessarily played by interpretation, but the very sparseness of material *for* interpretation that such an analysis must provide.[11]

It is also Fish's claim that underlying Freud's "defensive strategies" is an underhanded attempt to shift the burden of "refurbishing" on to the *patient* (my emphasis), so as to "admit interpretation onto the scene while identifying it as the work of another..." Astonishingly, the very introduction of the "patient" into Freud's original text is the work of Fish, not of the author. The offending sentence - that which, according to Fish, "shifts the burden of refurbishing onto the patient..." - reads as follows in the original: "An analysis of a childhood disorder through the medium of recollection in an intellectually mature adult ... necessitates our taking into account the distortion and refurbishing to which *a person's* own past is subjected when it is looked back upon from a later period." When Fish renders the same sentence, he takes it upon himself to substitute the word "patient" for Freud's decidedly more neutral "person," thus introducing into Freud's original statement an element of specificity for which the author was never responsible, but which nicely supports Fish's central thesis. Indeed, the coercion could *not* be more obvious; but we soon begin to find that it is executed by Fish, not, as he would have us believe, by Freud.

Finally, the isolation of the paragraph in question, and its subsequent emphasis for the reader, is itself a coercive strategy employed by Fish to direct the reader's attention, in the interests of his own argument, away from what is actually at stake: namely, the "high theoretical interest" that *any* analysis of childhood neurosis, whatever the limitations of the method, must hold for psychoanalysis. As Freud makes clear in the paragraph immediately following the over-emphasised passage in question, *"In any case* it may be maintained that analysis of children's neuroses can claim to possess a specially high theoretical

interest" (SE XVII: 9, my emphasis). Later, in Chapter Two, Freud stresses that "analyses such as this are not published in order to produce conviction in the minds of those whose attitude has hitherto been recusant and sceptical. The intention is only to bring forward some new facts for investigators who have already been convinced by their own clinical experiences" (SE XVII: 13). Far more important than the necessity to confirm the accuracy of all interpretative details brought to light by the analysis, is the evidence the case history provides for the existence of infantile sexuality. This is the theoretical value of the case in Freud's view, and the reason for its publication, and it is this theoretical value that Fish evades by distracting the reader's attention to methodological questions of secondary significance. [12]

III

THE UNCONSCIOUS DENIAL OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

We have seen that Fish opens his paper by focusing on questions of method, while evading any serious confrontation with the theoretical issues underlying the Wolf-Man's case history. We have also seen the extent to which Fish relies on purely interpretative procedures to support his arguments, and that the accuracy of his interpretations can be questioned on a number of grounds if one returns to Freud's texts.[13] As such, Fish's paper both reflects and perpetuates the history of reduction and distortion that has characterised the development of psychoanalysis.[14] Further examination will reveal that in his criticisms Fish is also guilty of what Juliet Mitchell describes as the "unconscious denial of the unconscious." Mitchell suggests that no understanding of Freud's work is possible without some grasp of two fundamental theories: first , the nature of unconscious mental life and the laws that govern its behaviour; and secondly, the meaning of sexuality in human life:

> It is ... a characteristic of most attacks on Freud's work that, though the criticism *seems* to be over specific issues, what is really being rejected is [the] whole intellectual framework of psychoanalysis ... there is formal obeisance to Freud's theories, yet behind most criticism of details there lies an unacknowledged refusal of every major concept. Time and time again, one dissident after another has repudiated singly or wholesale all the main scientific tenets of psychoanalysis (1974: 5).

Narrative strategies and technique:

The first indication of his denial of the unconscious, among other major concepts of psychoanalysis, is Fish's evasion of it. At no stage, during the first section of his paper, does Fish attempt to confront or come to terms with any of the theoretical premises upon which the analysis is based. This pattern continues well into Section II, at which point Fish gives his fullest attention to another passage of secondary significance, this time dealing with questions of narrative technique: "I am unable," writes Freud, "to give either a purely historical or a purely thematic account of my patient's story; I can write a history neither of the treatment nor of the illness, but I shall find myself obliged to combine the two methods of presentation" (SE XVII: 13).

"A 'purely historical' account," responds Fish, "would be a narrative account tracing out relationships of cause and effect; and by declaring that he is unable to provide it, Freud releases himself from the requirement that in his explanations one thing be shown to follow another. A 'purely thematic' account would be one in which the coherence of events and details was a matter of their relationship to a single master theme; and by declaring that he is unable to provide it, Freud releases himself from the requirement that his explanations go together as a unified whole. In effect, he neutralizes criticism of his conclusions before they are offered and is in the enviable position of being at once the architect and judge of his own performance" (1986: 936).

Fish's response is revealing, for it provides us with evidence for what, in Fish's view, constitute narrative "requirements." First, there is the "requirement" (from which Freud has ostensibly "released himself") that "in [the author's] explanations one thing be shown to follow another." Second, there is the "requirement" (which Freud has once again managed to "evade") that "[the author's] explanations go together to form a unified whole." These, of course, are also the requirements of most forms of conscious perception, which tend to insist that it is in the nature of all "explanations" that they proceed according to clear relations of cause and effect. In fact, the question of causality is addressed directly by Freud, in the final chapter of the Wolf-Man case history, in a discussion which Fish ignores, but which other scholars (notably Ned Lukacher in *The Primal Scene*, 1986) have taken more seriously, with interesting results.

What Freud argues for, in this last chapter, is an understanding of the concept of the primal scene which cannot be assimilated by the scientific notion of causality. While it is the business of psychoanalysis to "explain the striking symptoms by revealing their genesis," he writes, "it is not its business to explain but merely to describe the psychical mechanisms and instinctual processes to which one is led by that means" (SE XVII: 105). In Lukacher's view, this distinction between "explanation" and "description" indicates Freud's effort here to "mediate" or "mollify" the explanatory causal power of the primal scene: "The primal scene is that without which the symptoms could not have developed; for all that it does not explain the causality of the symptoms." The discourse of the primal scene, he concludes, "cannot be considered apart from the notion of causality; at the same time, [it] cannot fully be assimilated by it" (1986: 33).

Thus, Lukacher goes on to suggest, in the Wolf Man case history Freud, like Nietzsche, tries to think differently about causality. "The supposed instinct for causality," Nietzsche wrote in his notebooks during the 1880's, "is only fear of the unfamiliar, and the attempt to discover something familiar in it – a search, not for causes, but for the familiar" (1967: 297). For Nietzsche, Lukacher writes, the history of metaphysics was an "apotropaic attempt to ward off the *Unheimliche*". Yet the metaphysical notions of causality and an intending subject continued to

cast their shadows over him: "Though Nietzsche entertained the idea of 'positive nihilism' – that is, a complete forgetfulness of the question of the origin and the subject – he found himself, after writing *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, in the despair of a 'negative nihilism' from which he never emerged." Nietszche's fate is exemplary, Lukacher goes on, because of the "boldness of his effort to forget the real." In another notebook entry from the 1880's, Lukacher finds two alternative notions of causality which he uses to situate the relation of Freud's "primal scene" to causal explanation:

> The explanation of an event can be sought firstly: through mental images of the events that precede it (aims); secondly, through mental images that succeed it (the mathematical-physical explanation).
>
> One should not confuse the two. Thus: the physical explanation, which is a symbolization of the world by means of sensation and thought, can in itself never account for the origin of sensation and thought; rather physics must construe the world of feeling consistently as lacking feeling and aim – right up to the highest human being. And teleology is only a history of purposes and never physical (Nietzsche, 1967: 303-4).

Against Nietzsche's interdiction, writes Lukacher, Freud's primal scene is a "carefully staged confusion of these two notions of causality," which Freud situates in the "differential space between teleology and the physical explanation": "If we regard the wolf dream as the event Freud seeks to describe/explain, it is clear that the primal scene is the set of images that precede the event." At the same time, however, the primal scene is not a teleological notion. The primal scene, Lukacher concludes, is a "deductive, circumstantial construction that is put together in the gaps between the mental images or symptoms that succeed the dream and those that precede it. Nietzsche's alternatives cannot in themselves account for the complexity of Freud's notion. Freud relates one set of images to the other, but without either claiming to have accounted 'for the origin of sensation and thought' or using those images to construe a world of 'feeling and aim.' Freud constructs a set of images that precede the event, but he resists giving them a teleological drift" (1986: 34/35).

What enables Freud to circumvent Nietszche's alternatives is the concept of "deferred action" (*Nachträglichkeit*), which is prominent throughout Freud's work and particularly in *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*. At its most elementary level, Lukacher writes, deferred action is a mode of temporal spacing through which the randomness of a later event triggers the memory of an earlier event or image, which might never have come to consciousness had the later event never occurred. The most obvious and immediate effect of deferred action is to undermine and divide the notion of linear causality that works in one temporal direction. Deferred action demands that one recognize that while the earlier event is still to some extent the cause of the later event, the earlier event is also nevertheless the effect of the later event. One is forced to admit a double or "metaleptic" logic in which causes are both the causes of effects and the effects of effects: "Rather than offering a simple division between causes and effects, Freud confronts us with causes that are also effects and effects that are also causes. The random seriality of events that precede and follow the wolf dream leads Freud to posit a double logic of causality that repeatedly turns back upon itself" (Lukacher, 1986: 35).

Returning now to Fish's "narrative requirements" (that all explanations proceed according to clear relations of cause and effect), Fish is astute enough to realize that the explanation behind Freud's inability to meet those requirements lies precisely in "the nature of the *unconscious*, which, [Freud] tells us, is not a linear structure ruled by the law of contradiction, but a geological accumulation of forms that never completely disappear and live side by side in an uneasy and unpredictable vacillation." Fish is disturbed by this explanation, for he fears the freedom it allows the narrator, the altogether too "favorable" rhetorical situation it seems to provide - one which, according to Fish, "neutralizes criticism" of Freud's conclusions "even before they are offered."

But the real reason for Fish's discomfort is clearly his own underlying denial of the unconscious itself - a rejection barely disguised in Fish's allegation some lines later that "the unconscious is not a concept but a rhetorical device, a place

holder which can be given whatever shape the polemical moment requires" (1986: 936). Later still, we find out that, for Fish, "a rhetorical object... is entirely constructed and stands without external support; it is, we are accustomed to say, removed from reality..." (1986: 938). If the unconscious is, in Fish's view, just such a "rhetorical" object, then it can have nothing to do with "reality." Fish has recognised, as he tells us at the end of his paper, that "the thesis of psychoanalysis is that one cannot get to the side of the unconscious." Indeed, he is living proof of the fact - for he cannot get to the side of his own unconscious desire that all explanations proceed along the lines of conscious perception, or that "one thing be shown to follow another" in the formation of a coherent and "unified whole."

Fish requires no less than a definitive understanding of all psychical processes from the point of view of consciousness, a requirement, as Mitchell observes, characteristic of most traditional opposition to Freud's theories: "It is no accident that, for all their differences, Reich's, Laing's and the feminists' theories come to resemble one another in so many ways. All these writers deny the unconscious - Reich by finding it to be nothing other than a pool of biological energy, Laing by treating its constructs as though they were identical to those of consciousness, the feminist critics by believing above all in social actuality and conscious choice" (1974: 356).

Literary Interpretation vs. Dream Analysis:

Ironically, Fish objects to Freud's interpretation of the Wolf-Man's dream on the grounds that it is too "authoritative," too "finished" and "enclosed" - the same grounds on which he objects to the narrative as a whole, and to Peter Brooks' reading of it (in R*eading for the Plot)* as a "radically modernist" text, a "structure of indeterminacy" and "undecidability" that "perilously destabilizes belief in... exhaustive accounts whose authority derives from the force of closure." On the contrary, suggests Fish, "... we can note that Freud's own characterization of his narrative insists precisely on those qualities Brooks would

deny to it: completeness, exhaustiveness, authority, and above all, closure" (1986: 936).

Freud's "own characterization" of his narrative, according to Fish, is to be found in a footnote: "it is always a strict law of dream interpretation that an explanation must be found for every detail" (SE XVII: 42, fn. 1). Fish's objection is based on a misunderstanding of - or at least on too simplistic an approach to - what Freud means when he uses the word "explanation." Because he approaches all explanations from the point of view of consciousness, Fish, like Wittgenstein, sees explanation as an end-point in interpretation rather than a starting-point. In fact, the importance for Freud of finding "explanations" for every detail of a dream lies not in the revelation of ultimate meanings they provide - in their "completeness... exhaustiveness" or their "force of closure" - but in the link they set up between the latent dream-thoughts and the manifest dream-content. Finding this link is paramount in the operation of dream interpretation because it is only once this link has been brought to light that *the process of interpretation can truly begin*:

> The transformation of the latent dream-thoughts into the manifest dream content deserves all our attention, since it is the first instance known to us of psychical material being changed over from one mode of expression which is immediately intelligible to us to another which we can only come to understand with the help of guidance and effort, though it too must be recognized as a function of our mental activity (SE V: 642).

In relation to this passage, Habermas suggests that "the technique of dream interpretation goes beyond the art of hermeneutics insofar as it must grasp not only the meaning of a distorted text, but the *meaning of the text distortion itself,* that is, the transformation of a latent dream thought into the manifest dream. In other words, it must reconstruct what Freud calls the 'dream-work.' The interpretation of dreams leads to a process of reflection that takes the same course as the genesis of the dream text, only in reverse. It is complementary to the dream-work. In this process the analyst can call on free association to

individual elements of the dream as well as on subsequent spontaneous additions to the dream text as it was first communicated" (Habermas, 1968: 221).

Far from leading to "completeness" and closure, the explanations Freud refers to in his footnote may be seen to *open up* the dream to a process whereby the uppermost dream layer, the "dream facade," can be identified and removed. What follows is a complex interpretive operation obstructed by strong forces of resistance that may protract the process of interpretation over a number of years and may well prevent a point of "closure" from ever being reached.

This brings us to what is perhaps the most significant feature of Fish's essay - its failure to distinguish between the operations of literary analysis and dream interpretation. In "Meaning and Dream Interpretation," Fredric Weiss tackles a number of questions relating to this distinction that are blatantly ignored by Fish: What type of meaning is Freud establishing for a dream-report? What are the relationships between a dream-report, the subject's "associations," and the meaning assigned to the report? (1974: 55) Weiss suggests that Freud's dream interpretation bears similarities to the interpretation of aesthetic objects, such as poems or films. But as soon as the view of dream interpretation as an activity analogous to art interpretation is expanded, it runs into difficulties. For example, as Weiss points out,

> Freud does not apply to 'associations' the criterion of consistency with context which is used to judge an interpretation of a poem as correct or incorrect. Moreover, he makes no attempt to measure a person's 'associations' against *any* criterion, to judge them right or wrong, allowable or not allowable... 'Right,' 'wrong,' 'allowable,' 'not allowable,' 'plausible,' 'far-fetched,' 'relevant,' 'extraneous,' and any other such characterizations do not apply to 'associations.' If the subject's associations do lead to a meaning, that is the meaning which the psychoanalyst assigns to the dream-report: it cannot be rejected on any such grounds as incompatibility with the dream-report, and the analyst makes no attempt to reject it on any ground (1974: 57).

In psychoanalysis, trains of associations are pursued not simply to discover the meaning that may be inherent in a dream-report, but "for the sake of whatever they may be leading to, providing that what they are leading to is or reveals something about the subject... There may be no attempt to assign everything to which the "associations" lead, to the dream-report as its meaning. All reference to the dream-report may be dropped; the question of what meaning is to be assigned to it tends to fade out of consideration" (1974: 58). Freud establishes during the interpretation of a dream what Weiss calls a "meaning-for the subject": "It is a meaning for him in the respect that *he gives it:* the meaning-for him of something is what it means to him, not what anyone else might or would have to make of it" (1974: 64).

Recollection vs. Construction:

Fish's earliest objection to the Wolf-Man's interpretation of his dream is to the "act of construction" that leads the patient to the "explanation" for one particularly significant detail: "Freud tells us that although the patient recalled the dream at a 'very early stage in the analysis,' its 'interpretation was a task that dragged on over several years' without notable success. The breakthrough, as it is reported, came in an instant and apparently without preparation: 'One day the patient began to continue with the interpretation of the dream. He thought that the part of the dream which said... "suddenly the window opened of its own accord" was not completely explained.' Immediately and without explanation, the explanation came forth: 'it must mean: "my eyes suddenly opened." I was asleep... and suddenly woke up, and as I woke up 1 saw something: the tree with the wolves." It is important to note that the patient does not say, 'Now I remember,' but rather, 'It *must* mean.' His is not an act of recollection, but of construction..." (1986: 935).

Fish objects to this interpretation on two counts:

1. that it is constructed rather than remembered, thereby leaving room to question its consistency with the "true" meaning of the dream-report; and
2. that the patient is "compelled" to this particular interpretation (among all those he might have hit on) not through his own efforts, but through the persuasive techniques of the analyst.

Freud's theory of dreams itself renders the first objection invalid since the criterion of "consistency with context" used to judge the interpretation of a poem as correct or incorrect does not apply to the subject's associations in dream analysis. Indeed, such acts of "construction" may be essential if the process of interpretation is going to lead to the source of the neuroses underlying the dream itself. Further, they may issue either from the patient or *from the physician,* in the first stage towards, rather than as substitutes for, the patient's recollection. Thus the physician *"reconstructs* what has been forgotten from the faulty texts of the [patient], from his dreams, associations, and repetitions, while the [patient], animated by the constructions suggested by the physician as hypotheses, *remembers...*" (Habermas, 1974: 230) Most significant of all, as Habermas makes clear, "only the patient's recollection decides the accuracy of the construction." Fish fails to grasp either the hypothetical nature of these constructions, or their role in the ongoing rather than static process of recollection.

Fish *also* misses the significance of what Lukacher calls the "ontological undecidability" of the Freudian constructed event, both in the interpretation of dreams and in the "recovery" of the "forgotten" traumatic events of early childhood. The most contentious construction in the Wolf-Man case is of course the "event" to which the interpretation of the Wolf-Man's dream leads, the "primal scene" (Lukacher, 1986: 21). Freud makes it clear from the outset of his case study that the construction of the primal scene is a "supposition": "If it was to be assumed [*anzunehmen*] that behind the content of the dream there lay some

such unknown scene – one, that is, which had already been forgotten at the time of the dream – then it must have taken place very early." The task of analysis is that of "remembering that the relation of the object of interpretation to the real has been forgotten. The primal scene is always a scene that is 'unknown' (*unbekannte*) and 'forgotten' (*vergessene*)" (SE XVII: 33).

For Lukacher, then, the "ontological undecidability" that Freud attains in the Wolf-Man case history places his theoretical effort here in close conjunction with the thought of Nietszche, Heidegger, Lacan and Derrida. For in constructing the primal scene, Lukacher writes, Freud constitutes an "event" that remains "outside the grasp of metaphysics"; and by insisting on its therapeutic power, Freud in effect reverses the conventional wisdom that valued the recollected event over the constructed event. Here, then, is Lukacher on the "primal scene":

> Metaphysics is the science of presence. The Freudian *Begebenheit*, however, can be grasped in the mode of neither presence nor absence. At the same time, the primal scene is the pre-existent trace underlying the possibility of the distinction between presence and absence, and between subject and object. It is the enabling mechanism that explains and describes, rather than determining or causing, the structure of the Wolf-Man's experience. The primal scene explains the wolf dream but has not caused it and is not present in it (1986: 27).

Lukacher's reading of the Freudian "primal scene" thus calls the event's relation to the Real into question in an entirely new way. He does not restrict "primal scene" to the conventional psychoanalytic understanding of the term: the child's witnessing of a sexual act that subsequently plays a traumatic role in his or her psycho-sexual life. In Lukacher's understanding, the "primal scene" becomes an "intertextual event that displaces the notion of the event from the ground of ontology... Rather than signifying the child's observation of sexual intercourse, the primal scene comes to signify an ontologically undecidable intertextual event that is situated in the differential space between historical memory and imaginative construction, between archival verification and

interpretive free play" (1986: 24). Unlike Freud and Lukacher, however (and like the Wolf-Man himself), Stanley Fish remains uncomfortable with the "ontological undecidability" of the constructed event, the primal scene - in effect (and ironically enough), remaining firmly rooted, both here and in every facet of his reading of the case, in a metaphysics of pure presence.

As far as Fish's second objection (against Freud's persuasive strategies) is concerned, Freud would hardly have stressed the method by which he "induced" the patient to speak had he considered it to be inconsistent with his theoretical aims. Neither can his reference to this exercise of "inexorable pressure" be shrugged off as an unfortunate but revealing verbal slip on the part of the author. On the contrary, Freud's reference to his analytical practice in this case would have been included precisely to emphasize the *necessity* for strong forces of persuasion to counteract the patient's unconscious forces of resistance to the analysis. Certainly Freud would have encouraged, perhaps even "compelled" or "persuaded" the patient to *speak,* for his task as an analyst, as he says in his 1915 paper on "The Unconscious," is to help the patient "overcome certain resistances ... those which, earlier, made the material concerned into something repressed by rejecting it from the conscious" (SE XIV: 166).

But it is an "act of construction" *par excellence* on the part of Fish to suggest that Freud's persuasive methods were *the content* of the interpretation they produced. Nowhere in the Wolf Man case history (or for that matter in Fish's response to it) is there any concrete evidence to suggest that the analogy between the window opening and the young boy awakening should have been attributed to the analyst rather than to the patient. As we know, Fish's objective is to prove that the Wolf Man is nothing but a "piece of language," the "perfect rhetorical artifact" - and it is in pursuit of this objective that here, and elsewhere, he effectively ignores the Wolf Man's share in the construction of Freud's interpretation of him. In the process, he reduces the relation between them to the construction of one subject, the "Wolf Man," by another, Freud.

Certainly, as Whitney Davis recently suggested, we should see the "Wolf Man," the subject of Freud's case history, as a figure in Freud's narrative construction of him. Even his most intimate manifestations, such as his report of his childhood dream, come to us through Freud's transcription of them. But this does not eliminate the Wolf Man's share in the production of that transcription. In Davis' terms, the Wolf Man – Serge Pankejeff himself – "made something Freud needed to complete – himself as a subject at that point. And although that object necessarily became Freud's subjective object, it was distinguished from Freud's representation, the 'Wolf Man' presented by the case history; it was a representation not written *by* Freud but rather by the Wolf Man himself. It was written *into* Freud. More exactly, these very terms – representation 'by' Freud or 'by' the Wolf Man – break down completely in certain domains; and it is this effective intersubjectivity which is of interest" (1995: 185).

Fish is right, of course, Davis concludes, that the "Wolf Man" is a "piece of language." But that language is not wholly Freud's – and it speaks of *both* subjects as "wolf men" in terms partly absorbed from the other: "It is a language forged between two subjects seeing and speaking with one another. They jointly created a new, intersubjective image out of their separate histories – a partial but nonetheless usable palimpsest of all the separate images from Freud's childhood picture book, family portrait, scientific education, and creative notation to the Wolf Man's childhood picture book, family portrait, artistic education, and creative notation, all of which had been brought to, were evoked in, and were substantially reorganized in the history of their address, interpretation and response itself" (1995: 204/205).

On Resistances and Fantasies:

We now see that at the same time that Fish rejects the hypothesis of the unconscious, he betrays his underlying scepticism with regard to another major conception in psychoanalysis: namely, that of resistance. Fish is apparently unable to accept that "persuasion" is a necessary counterforce to the patient's unconscious resistances; that, in Lukacher's words, "because the transference is a

dialectical process, the patient's resistance tends to force the analyst into an authoritarian metaphysical position" (1986: 30). As Lukacher goes on to point out, Freud succumbs to this fate not only in the Wolf-Man analysis, but, to one degree or another, in each of his well-known case histories. Unlike Fish, however, Lukacher is sensitive to the fact that the problem is an "analytic one in the largest sense of the term" – one that cannot be easily avoided, in other words, by anyone engaged in the process of psychoanalysis. In the case of Lacan, writes Lukacher, he suggested that it was

> all a question of timing or rhythm, of knowing or guessing when the patient is willing to acknowledge that even though the primal or childhood scene cannot be reproduced as recollection, it nevertheless has a 'truth' of its own. But if the patient is unwilling to depart from the notion of recollection as self-presence, and if the analyst either mistimes the construction or proposes it with an inappropriate degree of certainty, the analysis is bound to run into difficulties. The problem is an analytic one in the largest sense of the term, for it applies to the 'time of understanding' that one allows for any interpretation whatever. Psychoanalysis thus presents in very vivid terms the dilemma into which the modern critic is invariably coerced. The task of accounting for a textual event demands that the critic venture, whether intentionally or not, into a zone where 'truth' has become a differential notion that is constituted somewhere between pure construction and historicity" (1986: 31).

Indeed, in Habermas's view, the experience of "resistance" (and, by implication, the analytical difficulties that arise from it) constitute no less than the "starting point of psychoanalytic theory" (1968: 229) - a claim substantiated by Freud himself in a number of passages in which he draws attention to its theoretical importance, and to the way in which the patient's resistance determines and delineates the nature of the analyst's task. Here, for example, is an extract from "'Wild' Psychoanalysis," one of the early papers on analytic technique:

> It is a long superseded idea, and one derived from superficial appearances, that the patient suffers from a sort of ignorance, and that if one removes this ignorance by giving him information (about the causal connection of his illness with his life, about his experiences in childhood, and so on) he is bound to recover. The pathological factor is not his ignorance in itself, but the root of this ignorance in his *inner resistances*; it was they that first called this ignorance into being, and they still maintain it now. The task of the treatment lies in combating these resistances. Informing the patient of what he does not know because he has repressed it is only one of the necessary preliminaries of the treatment. If knowledge about the unconscious were as important for the patient as people inexperienced in psychoanalysis imagine, listening to lectures or reading books would be enough to cure him. Such measures, however, have as much influence on the symptoms of nervous illness as a distribution of menu cards in a time of famine has upon hunger. The analogy goes even further than its immediate application; for informing the patient of his unconscious regularly results in an intensification of the conflict in him and an exacerbation of his troubles (SE XI: 225). [15]

Freud was acutely aware of the contradictions that his project - to discover and explain the mechanisms and effects of the unconscious - entailed. For he had to discover how to register unconscious mental processes without this registration being distorted by the effects of consciousness. Time and again throughout his professional career, Freud would return to the same fundamental problem with which he opens his paper on the unconscious in the "metapsychological papers" of 1915: "How are we to arrive at a knowledge of the unconscious? It is of course only as something conscious that we know it, after it has undergone transformation or translation into something conscious..." (SE XIV: 166). And later, in "The Ego and the Id": "Now all our knowledge is invariably bound up with consciousness. We can come to know even the *Ucs.* only by making it conscious. But stop, how is that possible? What does it mean

when we say 'making something conscious'? How can that come about?" (SE XIX: 19).

The fact of resistance is crucial in answering these questions, for it is only through the clarification and subsequent elimination of resistances that the effects of the unconscious can be brought to consciousness. Thus Freud goes on to say in the earlier paper that "psychoanalytic work shows us every day that translation of this kind [i.e., from unconscious to conscious] is possible. In order that this should come about, the person under analysis must overcome certain resistances - the same resistances as those which, earlier, made the material concerned into something repressed by rejecting it from the conscious" (SE XIV: 166). In "The Ego and the Id," Freud elaborates on this statement by suggesting that

> the reason why [unconscious] ideas cannot become conscious is that a certain force opposes them, that otherwise they could become conscious, and that it would then be apparent how little they differ from other elements which are admittedly psychical. The fact that in the technique of psychoanalysis a means has been found by which the opposing force can be removed and the ideas in question made conscious renders this theory irrefutable. The state in which the ideas existed before being made conscious is called *repression,* and maintaining it is perceived as *resistance* during the work of analysis (SE XIX: 14).

Fish's criticisms reveal his own subjection to powerful forces of resistance - resistance to what Freud has described as the "first shibboleth of psychoanalysis": the fact that the "essence" of the psychical cannot be situated in consciousness. His consequent denial of the unconscious entails his denial of the concept of resistance, and so the cycle perpetuates itself as, scattered through the remaining pages of his paper, we come up against a string of further associated rejections.

Of the theory of distortion in dreams, Fish goes one step further than the traditional complaint that it is too "arbitrary," suggesting that it constitutes yet

another purposive strategy to sway the course of the analysis in whatever direction the analyst chooses:

> One critic has objected to [Freud's interpretation of the Wolf-Man's succession of dreams concerned with aggressive actions against his sister and governess] as one of Freud's "apparently arbitrary inversions," but it is far from arbitrary for it is in effect a precise and concise direction to both the patient and the reader, providing them with a method for dealing with the material they will soon meet, and telling them in advance what will result when the method is applied: "if you want to know what something - a dream, a piece of neurotic behavior - means, simply reverse its apparent significance, and what you will find is an attempt to preserve masculine self-esteem against the threat of passivity and femininity." The real seduction in this chapter... is the seduction not of the patient by his sister, but of both the patient and the reader by Freud, who will now be able to produce interpretative conclusions in the confidence that they will be accepted as the conclusions of an inevitable and independent logic (1986: 936).

The content of Freud's alleged "precise and concise direction to the reader" is (as we are not altogether surprised to discover by this time) another of Fish's "acts of construction" - the result of his own work of interpretation neatly disguised as a quotation from Freud. What it constitutes is indeed a "precise and concise direction to the reader" - but to Fish's reader not Freud's - to attribute his own interpretative conclusions to Freud in the interests of strengthening the logic of his argument.

Fish's next rejection concerns the existence of fantasies. Fish objects to the uncertainty surrounding the evocation of the "primal scene" - the picture of copulation between the Wolf-Man's parents - since its status, as Freud himself admits, is that of an "assumption." At another point, Freud refers to the same "assumption" as an "unimpeachable fact," which prompts Fish to pronounce, in the belief that he has uncovered yet another error of logic with which to amplify

his case against Freud: "Everything happens so fast in this sequence that we may not notice that the 'unimpeachable fact' which anchors it is the *assumption* of the primal scene. In most arguments assumptions are what must be proved, but in this argument the assumption is offered as proof; and what supports it is not any independent fact, but the polemical fact that without the assumption the story Freud has so laboriously constructed falls apart" (1986: 938). Whether the "primal scene" ever actually took place or was simply a fantasy on the part of the patient is, as Freud stresses, of no significance. But it is significant for Fish, since his denial of the unconscious prevents his acknowledging that central to the very concept of the fantasy is the thesis that in the unconscious mind of the patient *it is indistinguishable from fact,* and must therefore be treated as such in the analytic situation.

Fish's final claim is that the thesis of psychoanalysis (that one cannot get to the side of the unconscious) is "one and the same" with the thesis of his essay (that one cannot get to the side of rhetoric). In effect, this is a claim that repeats his analogy between the unconscious and "rhetorical objects," both of which are, in Fish's definition, constructs, removed from reality, and standing entirely without external support. It is a final and conclusive restatement of his denial of the unconscious. In the end, we find that Mitchell's assertion – "time and time again, one dissident after another has repudiated singly or wholesale all the main scientific tenets of psychoanalysis" - holds good for Fish as well.

IV
FREUD BASHING

Fish's essay is characteristic of much recent criticism of Freud, the object of which is to discredit the institution and practice of psychoanalysis by attacking the figure of Freud himself, and his integrity as a man and a scientist. Representative of this continuing strand of anti-Freudian writing is Frederick Crews' essay, "The Unknown Freud," which appeared in the *New York Review of*

Books in 1993, and in which he reviews four recent "revisionist" studies on Freud: James Rice's *Freud's Russia: National Identity in the Evolution of Psychoanalysis*, Lakoff and Coyne's *Father Knows Best: The Use and Abuse of Power in Freud's Case of 'Dora'*, Allen Esterson's *Seductive Mirage: An Exploration of the Work of Sigmund Freud*, and John Kerr's *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein*. [16]

In this by now widely read and much quoted article, a deeply personal attack on Freud is used in an effort to prove (in the words of the author himself) that his "theories of personality and neurosis – derived as they were from misleading precedents, vacuous pseudophysical metaphors, and a long concatenation of mistaken inferences that couldn't be subjected to empirical review – amount to castles in the air" (55). To give a sense of how this new spate of criticism operates (and how it relates to the paper we've been discussing), let us dwell for a moment on Crews' article, before returning to Stanley Fish and the Wolf Man.

Crews opens his article with a description of the various different fronts upon which recent criticism of Freud has been operating. First, there is the critical school which, he says, has now "proved" that psychoanalysis is no good as a therapy – that it is little more than an "indifferently successful and vastly inefficient method of removing neurotic symptoms," a form of "extended meditation" which produces a good many more "converts" than "cures" (55). Then there is the school (the father of whom is Adolf Grünbaum in *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis*) which has effectively dismissed psychoanalysis as a scientifically reputable theory: "Without significant experimental or epidemiological support for any of its notions," Crews reports, "psychoanalysis has simply been left behind by mainstream psychological research" (55).

Taking for granted the reader's blind assent to these two views as already firmly established and "no longer in serious dispute," Crews devotes the rest of his discussion to a personal attack on the figure of Freud himself – and, principally, his "self-description" as a "fearless explorer, a solver of deep mysteries and an ethically scrupulous reporter of both clinical data and

therapeutic outcomes." According to Crews, the views of a "rapidly growing" band of independent scholars (the works of four of whom are under review in Crews' article), clearly establish that Freud was none of these things. Though he may have been "highly cultivated, sophisticated and endowed with extraordinary literary power, sardonic wit, and charm," Crews declares, he was also "quite lacking in the empirical and ethical scruples that we would hope to find in any responsible scientist, to say nothing of a major one" (55).

This, Crews claims, is the collective view of a whole new school of criticism, including the four authors under review in his article. But it is clear from the start that Crews is less concerned with the business of book reviewing, than with marshalling evidence to dismantle what he grudgingly describes at one point as the "Freud legend" – a demolition job he pursues with the same "blind, combative stubbornness" he attributes, in the course of his argument, to Freud. Indeed, so unrelenting is his adherence to this task, and so predictable its every outcome, that it is only with the help of liberal doses of his own brand of sardonic wit that Crews can keep the interest of his reader at all.

Thus Freud is described, in the course of Crews' essay, as "willful," "opportunistic," "blind," "stubborn" and "devious"; as "stooping to low tricks" in defence of his general vision - a "saturnine self-dramatizer" given to "grotesque" diagnoses and a "cavalier" approach to clinical sessions. "Indifferent" as he was to his patients' sufferings, Crews tells us, Freud's motivations were dictated entirely by his own "immediate self-interest." He was "guileful," "obtuse," and "lacking in equanimity," and it was characteristic of his conduct that "dishonesty" and "cowardice" would at all times play a larger role than "rationality."

One can only marvel at the number of derogatory epithets Crews manages to summon in the space of a single article. When it comes to the question of evidence for this thinly disguised exercise in character assassination, however, Crews resorts mainly to tabloid-style anecdotes, the most "shocking" of which (Crews' epithet again) concern two "love stories" – "one solidly documented and

the other quite speculative", both drawn from John Kerr's *A Most Dangerous Method*, and which Kerr regards as having crucially affected Freud's relations with Jung (64). As it turns out, the only story directly concerning Freud is the "speculative" one, in which it is alleged that Freud may have had a sexual relationship with his sister-in-law - a story which even Crews admits "should not affect our picture of Freud unless it is borne out by further research." Why then does he refer to it at all? And why does he dwell at such length on the other "shocking" tale in which Freud was not involved – the "better-established case of Sabina Spielrein's affair with Jung" - if not in the hope that, in a moment of inattention, the story of Jung's sexual "indiscretions" might somehow become associated in our minds with Freud. Indeed, both here, and elsewhere in Crews' article, we find ourselves in the presence of exactly the kind of "devious rhetorical maneuver" Crews accuses Freud of using in defence of his vision, and with which, he implies, Freud habitually discredited his arguments (55).

Like Stanley Fish, then, Crews is a sophisticated rhetorician, but like Fish again, in the end he finds little substantial material evidence for the "unknown," "darker" but "far more interesting than the canonical" Freud he promises to reveal. This is why he cannot disguise his disappointment when he finds that three of the four "revisionist" studies he chooses for his review turn out to be quite balanced in their view of Freud - complimentary, even, despite some critical views. Thus Crews complains that only Esterson's book (*Seductive Mirage*) takes Freud's "incompetence" as its central theme while, in varying degrees, the others all convey "mixed feelings" about Freud's stature and the legitimacy of psychoanalytic claims. Lakoff and Coyne's study of the Dora case history, *Father Knows Best*, for example, is judged "insufficiently skeptical" toward Freud himself. While, in Crews' opinion, the authors rightly criticize Freud for ignoring Dora's "real-life predicaments" in favour of a too narrow focus on her "internal conflicts," at the same time they "rashly concede" the accuracy of what he asserted about those conflicts: Thus they conclude that there is "no clear reason to dispute any of Freud's interpretations of the material." Furthermore, in their judgement, Freud is "precisely on target with every interpretation that reflects poorly on Dora's motives." Indeed, they go on, he

"often displays a remarkably subtle ear for language as his patients use it," presumably in this case as well as in others. Crews finds it "odd" that such complimentary views should be found in a book that is also at times critical, but what is even more odd is that he should have chosen such a book as part of the evidential base for his demolition job on Freud, and his recent conclusion (in a new collection of critical essays entitled *Unauthorized Freud*) that psychoanalysis was "built entirely of straw" (1998: ix).

Where John Kerr's *A Most Dangerous Method* is concerned, when he is critical of Freud, his book constitutes, for Crews, an "invaluable corrective to received ideas about the history of psychoanalysis," a "penetrating discussion" and a "powerful account" of psychoanalysis and its discontents. When Kerr balances these criticisms with more complimentary views, however – when, for example he refers to Freud as a "systematic thinker of the first rank," or when he characterizes the Rat Man case as "a stunning demonstration of the method and a matchless psychological study in its own right," - he becomes, in Crews' eyes, both "inconsistent" and "unhelpful."

In the same way, when Crews realizes that he has failed, by the end of his lengthy account of James L. Rice's study, *Freud's Russia* (a substantial portion of which is devoted to a discussion of the Wolf Man case history), to come up with any substantial condemnation within its pages, either of Freud or of psychoanalysis in general, he refers us instead to another writer, one who is not under review at the time, but whose point of view suits Crews' argument better. This is Frank Sulloway's "important" 1991 article ("Reassessing Freud's Case Histories: the Social Construction of Psychoanalysis"), which reviews not only one, but all of the major case histories, and which infers (so Crews informs us) that together they compose "a uniform picture of forced interpretation, indifferent or negative therapeutic results, and an opportunistic approach to truth" (57). Predictably, we are never referred to the many recent discussions – by writers such as Lisa Appignanesi, Ronald Clark, John Forrester, Sander Gilman, Ilse Gubrich-Simitis, Patrick Mahony, William J. McGrath, and Carl Schorske - which give a more sympathetic view.[17]

It is this consistent and even brazenly partisan nature of Crews' argument, both in this essay and elsewhere, which lends a particular irony to his levelling the same charge against Freud – when he declares, for example, that Freud was largely motivated by his own "immediate self-interest," or, in a different formulation, when he asks whether Freud's "powers of observation and analysis ever functioned with sufficient independence from his wishes" (56). Indeed, this turns out to be Crews' principal objection to psychoanalysis – in his words, the "paramount issue confronting Freud studies today" - and the source of the deep mistrust so representative of the school of critics he both supports and represents. His principal objection, in other words, is to the power of the psychoanalyst and the relationship of suggestion that he exerts over the patient. And it is this power, he suggests, that contaminates the so-called evidence of analytic sessions by rendering it the product of the analyst's rather than the patient's imagination. This, then, is the scenario Crews evokes in the earlier *Skeptical Engagements* (1986), when he writes that, so far as we can tell,

> the only mind [Freud] laid bare for us was his own. Once we have fully grasped that point, we can begin inquiring how such a mind – rich in perverse imaginings and in the multiplying of shadowy concepts, grandiose in its dynastic ambition, atavistic in its affinities with outmoded science, and fiercely stubborn in its resistance to rational criticism – could ever have commanded our blind assent (86).

And so we see that nothing has changed. We are back in the familiar terrain of Stanley Fish's paper, and the long critical tradition it supports.

The "only game in town"...

As for Fish himself, he of course is not a psychoanalyst. He is a literary critic, one so finely trained in the art of literary interpretation that he has been moved to declare that, where critical activity is concerned, "like it or not, interpretation is the only game in town" (1980: 355). By this he means to say that meanings are

not embedded in texts, but depend entirely on the interpretative activities of the reader; that texts are "unstable entities" whose meanings are determined by, and "develop in a dynamic relationship with the reader's expectations, projections, conclusions, judgments and assumptions..." (1980: 2). In this formulation, "the reader's response is not *to* the meaning, it *is* the meaning..."; or, in other words, "linguistic and textual facts, rather than being the objects of interpretation, are its products" (1980: 3).

According to Fish's theory, the reader's interpretations are shaped by the "interpretive community" of which he is a member. Members of the same "interpretive community" will, in Fish's view, share the same sets of assumptions, the same sets of "interpretive strategies" and, consequently, the same "ways of reading." "In other words, there is no single way of reading that is correct or natural, only 'ways of reading' that are extensions of community perspectives." It follows, for Fish, that "the business of criticism is not... to determine a correct way of reading but to determine from which of a number of possible perspectives reading will proceed" (1980: 16).

Nowhere in Fish's theory of reading does he account for the possibility that among those "possible perspectives" from which reading may proceed, there will be some that are appropriate to the text in question and some that are not. This weakness in his theoretical position shows up in practice in his reading of the Wolf Man case history, for he reads it from a perspective of consciousness, a perspective totally inappropriate to it.

Fish argues for a model of critical activity he describes as a model of "*persuasion,*" in which "prejudicial or perspectival perception is all there is, and the question is [simply] from which of a number of equally interested perspectives will the text be constituted" (1980: 366). The "whole of critical activity," argues Fish, "is an attempt on the part of one party to alter the beliefs of another so that the evidence cited by the first will be seen *as* evidence by the second." The model of critical activity Fish opposes in this argument is, as he points out, one in which the procedure is exactly the reverse: "Evidence available

apart from any particular belief is brought in to judge between competing beliefs, or, as we will call them in literary studies, interpretations. This is a model derived from an analogy to the procedures of logic and scientific inquiry, and basically it is a model *of demonstration* in which interpretations are either confirmed or dis-confirmed by the facts that are independently specified" (1980: 365).

The business of this essay is not to point out the serious limitations of Fish's idea of what constitutes "criticism" in the field of literary studies. [18] For the moment, the theoretical argument drawn up by Fish interests me only to the extent that his enthusiasm for the activity of interpretation and for its associated model of "persuasion" over that of "demonstration" has led him to superimpose the former model on the texts of Sigmund Freud, and to see the whole of psychoanalysis, quite unproblematically, as just another form of "interpretation."

Habermas makes the pertinent observation that although psychoanalysis gives the *appearance* of a special form of "interpretation," it is in fact something more:

> Initially, psychoanalysis appears only as a special form of interpretation. It provides theoretical perspectives and technical rules for the interpretation of symbolic structures. Freud always patterned the interpretation of dreams after the hermeneutic model of philological research. Occasionally he compares it to the translation of a foreign author: of a text by Livy, for example. But the interpretive effort of the analyst distinguishes itself from that of the philologist not only through the crystallization of a special object domain. It requires a specifically expanded hermeneutics, one that, in contrast to the usual method of interpretation in the cultural sciences, takes into account a *new dimension* (Habermas, 1968: 215).

What ultimately shapes this "new dimension" in the interpretative efforts of the analyst is the unconscious itself. Indeed, it must ultimately shape all interpretative operations, for as soon as it is perceived not as a "second consciousness" but as a particular "psychical locality" with its own contents, its

own mechanisms and specific "energy," eternally present and of which consciousness is simply an added "quality," then even the interpretative possibilities of the very language we speak must be expanded to take it into account. Thus Freud has remarked: "In our science as in the others the problem is the same: Behind the attributes (qualities) of the object under examination which are presented directly to our perception, we have to discover something else which is more independent of the particular receptive capacity of our sense organs and which approximates more closely to what may be supposed to be the real state of affairs" ("An Outline of Psycho-analysis", SE XXIII: 196). Stanley Fish would do well to take this "new dimension" into account in any further hermeneutic forays he may be contemplating into the work of Sigmund Freud.

Notes:

1. See, for instance, Jean Laplanche's essay, written in collaboration with J.-B. Pontalis, on "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 49 (1968) and the chapter on deferred action, "Sexuality and the Vital Order in Psychical Conflict," in his own *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*. See also Brooks' reading of the case in light of narrative theory in *Reading for the Plot*, pp. 264-85, and Jonathan Culler's comments on *Nachträglichkeit* in *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics Literature, Deconstruction*, pp. 179-81. On Strachey's English translation of the term itself ("deferred action"), note Lis Möller's suggestion that this is an insufficient and even misleading translation of the German term *Nachträglichkeit*. *Nachträglich*, as she points out, means "supplementary," "additional," "later," "subsequent." The German term thus emphasizes that something new – a "supplement" – is brought in, an important sense not conveyed in Strachey's translation (Möller, 1991: 149).

   On the theoretical interest of the case for psychoanalysts, note too that it is from Freud's discussion, in this case, of the mechanism of *Verwerfung* (foreclosure, repudiation), as distinct from the mechanism of *Verdrängung* (repression) that Lacan derives his concept of *forclusion*, which is essential to his understanding of the structural differences between psychosis and neurosis. For Lacan's theory of *foreclosure*, see "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" (1957-58). See also his discussion of the case of the Wolf Man in "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis" (1953). Both papers are reprinted in Lacan, 1977.

2. See Leo Bersani's comment on the book as re-printed on the back cover: "Whitney Davis' emphasis on the visual dimension of the Wolf-Man case results in a strikingly original reading of a central Freudian work. In this important study, Freud becomes an exemplary instance of the production of sexuality through representation, its emergence from verbal and visual exchanges between human subjects."

3. Davis goes on to point out that the case history of the Wolf Man is, of course, not the only place in Freud's work and writing where this idea was developed: "Freud's 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', for example, presents the elements of a general sexology, tied in turn to the general psychology presented in *Die Traumdeuting* and elsewhere, which provided a basis for his work with and published discussion of the Wolf Man. Indeed, we sometimes associate the thesis of primordial human 'bisexuality,' or undifferentiated sexual potential, including 'homosexual' potential, with Freudianism as such. The emphasis should be placed here on the notion of erotic *potentiality*. Although other observers had identified 'bisexual' attitudes and practices in human emotional and social life, and specifically homoerotic attachments had long been acknowledged as one form of male and

female eroticism, Freud formulated the most complete account of the way in which the mind can be 'predisposed' or (to use one of the languages he deployed) of the way in which it must be 'statically charged' to become 'homosexual' without ever manifesting any overtly homoerotic attitude, practice, or attachment whatsoever. In addition, he provided an account of the actual realization of erotic potential – of the development or transfer, for example, from the primordial bisexual potentiality to an individual homoerotic (or any other sexually specific) practice" (1995: xviii-xix).

4. Similarly, Sulloway suggests that the Rat Man case history is "characterized by exaggerated assertions regarding its therapeutic outcome," and describes Freud's claim to have cured his patient in this case, and brought about the "complete restoration of his personality" as "highly implausible on several grounds" (257). Freud's "exaggerated claims" in this case, Sulloway concludes, were prompted not by any actual success he may have had with it, but by his desire to protect and promote the nascent psychoanalytic movement (258). Here again, in other words, Freud is represented as an opportunist and, in effect, a liar.

5. Note the complex publication history of this paper, which has received extensive exposure since the 1986 conference at which it was first delivered. After its initial publication in the *Times Literary Supplement* in August 1986, it was included in a collection of papers presented at the colloquium, and published under the title *The Linguistics of Writing - Arguments Between Language and Literature,* edited by Nigel Fabb, Derek Attridge, Alan Durant and Colin MacCabe (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1987). An expanded version was then published in a book version of a special issue of the journal *Critical Inquiry* as "Withholding the Missing Portion: Psychoanalysis and Rhetoric," in Francoise Meltzer, ed., *The Trials of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 183-210 – although Fish's paper did not appear in the special issue of *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 1987, vol. 13, no. 2). A further version, with the same title as the latter, but with some variations, appeared in Fish's own collection of papers in *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Most recently, an abridged version of the paper has appeared in Crews, 1999, under the title, "The Primal Scene of Persuasion" (pp. 186-199).

   All page references to Fish's article in this chapter will be to the TLS version, and will appear in the text.

6. See Crews, 1998, p. 186. Here he suggests the influential nature of Fish's 1986 paper, citing the following works as examples of literary critical "exercises" in which, like Fish, the authors have succeeded in tracing "just how brilliantly Freud manipulated his readers at every juncture": Wilcocks, Robert. *Maelzel's Chess Player: Sigmund Freud and the Rhetoric of Deceit* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield: 1994); Welsh, Alexander. *Freud's Wishful Dream Book* (Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 1994); Farrell, John. *Freud's Paranoid Quest: Psychoanalysis and Modern Suspicion* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

7. For further references to the "huge literature focusing on the issues of evidence and testability," see Fish's list in *The Linguistics of Writing – Arguments Between Language and Literature*: 171-2 n.

8. See Chapter One, "Versions of Freud", in which I point out the same fundamental objection in Sebastiano Timpanaro's reference to the "captious and sophistical method, resistant to any verification, quick to force interpretations to secure preordained proofs, employed by Freud and Freudians in their explanations of slips, dreams and neurotic symptoms," in *The Freudian Slip* (London: New Left Books, 1976), 14. I also mention that historically - and prior to the work of the French women's liberation group *Psychanalyse et Politique* - feminists have rooted their objections in similar ground. For a comprehensive survey of, and response to, this tradition, see Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London: Penguin, 1974). One of the objectives of Mitchell's text is to defend psychoanalysis against this claim, and to show that because those feminists in opposition to Freud try to discuss his concept of femininity *outside* the framework of psychoanalysis, their objections, and even their tributes, cannot be made to stand up. She also reveals that their rejection of the scientific status of psychoanalysis would be more accurately described as a rejection of its two most crucial discoveries: the unconscious and infantile sexuality.

9. I am not persuaded by Fish's attempts to dissolve this contradiction in the final section of his ~~paper~~ chapter by declaring that *no one* can get to the side of rhetoric, that "being persuasive, assuming the stance of a rhetorician, is not something you can choose to avoid" - a stance that in the end neither renders his interpretative efforts more convincing, nor vindicates his arguments. The rest of this paper will be dedicated to demonstrating why.

10. For further discussion of methodological approaches to the analysis of infantile neuroses, see Sigmund Freud, "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy," (SE X: 3-4).

11. On the question of the part played by interpretation in Freud's case histories, Lukacher makes an interesting point at no stage considered by Fish. This he does by locating any problems that may have arisen from the part played by interpretation in Freud's *methodology* – or his "mode of intervention" - rather than in his *constructions* themselves. While he notes what he describes as psychoanalysis's evident compulsion repeatedly to "proclaim its capacity to go beyond interpretation and beyond conviction," he also suggests that the virtue of Freud is that even though he makes such claims, the honesty with which he presents his case histories invariably undermines the very ground on which these claims rest: "With Dora, the Rat-Man and the Wolf-Man, it is not

so much [Freud's] constructions that are at fault as it is his mode of intervention and the alienation which that mode creates in his patients. It is Freud's timing rather than his technique of construction that brings the analysis to grief." (Lukacher, 1986: 30)

12. For an expansive and informed discussion of the case's theoretical interest in Freud's work as a whole, see "Construction in the Case of the Wolf Man" in Möller, 1991. Unlike Fish (and his followers), Möller takes a sympathetic view of what she sees as numerous "moments of crisis" in Freud's writing – moments, that is, where Freud pushes his inquiry to the point where he encounters something he cannot explain, or that he can only explain by potentially overturning previous conclusions, or calling into question the theoretical foundation of his argument. The dominant line of argument in Freud's writing is thus frequently punctuated with problems and questions. If we concentrate on these moments, Möller argues, we are forced to reconsider the traditional conception of a "Freudian reading" and reassess our received notions of just what kind of reader Freud was.

13. For further evidence of Fish's manipulative rhetorical maneuvering in this paper, see John Forrester's discussion of Fish's paper in Forrester, 1997, Ch. 6: 208-48. Here he establishes convincingly that Fish's source for the striking remark with which he both opens and concludes his paper ("This man is a Jewish swindler, he wants to use me from behind and shit on my head."), was Freud rather than the Wolf Man himself (as he leads us to believe). The remark in question is the Wolf Man's alleged "report" of what he thought to himself shortly after he met Freud for the first time. The absence of a footnote for it in Fish's text allows the reader to infer that, given the construction of Fish's sentences, he does have direct evidence from the Wolf Man that this is what he thought. Yet Forrester's painstaking investigation of all possible sources for this remark reveals that it must have come not from the Wolf Man, but from a letter dated 13 February 1910 from Freud to Sandor Ferenczi, in a paragraph which runs as follows:

> On the whole I am only a machine for making money and have been working up a sweat for the last few weeks. A rich young Russian, whom I took on because of compulsive tendencies, admitted the following transferences to me after the first session: Jewish swindler, he would like to use me from behind and shit on my head. At the age of six he experienced his first symptom cursing against God: pig, dog, etc. When he saw three piles of faeces on the street he became uncomfortable because of the Holy Trinity and anxiously sought a fourth in order to destroy the association.

What Fish represents as a patient's independent judgement of psychoanalysis thus turns out to be a negative transference, the source for which was Freud himself, and not the Wolf Man, as Fish implies throughout. Thus Forrester concludes: "It is important for Stanley

Fish's argument that he detach these words from Freud's pen and detach them from the Wolf Man's analysis altogether, so as to convert them into an independent judgement upon Freud and the analysis. To do so, Fish has to dissemble the source from which the remark comes – it comes from Freud, not direct from the Wolf Man – and detach the phrase concerning Freud from the anal and pious childhood material which immediately follows in the original letter and with which it is, for Freud, the reporter of these words, intimately connected. Let us leave to one side – for good – the question of whether Fish manages to extricate himself entirely, as he so wished the Wolf Man to have once been free, from the clutches of the Jewish swindler and his shit. The point is that Fish got it wrong: the judgement that Freud is a Jewish swindler who will cover his patients and his reader in shit is just as much a part of Freud's rhetoric as any other passage Fish quotes. If the Wolf Man got it right, it is courtesy of Freud. The accusation that Freud used nothing but rhetoric is, in the nature of such an accusation, bound to cut both ways" (1997: 218).

14. For an elaboration of this point, see Louis Althusser, "Freud and Lacan," in *Essays in Ideology* (London, Verso 1984). Althusser suggests that one of the difficulties facing any attempt to understand and assess Freud's work today is to cross the "vast space of ideological prejudice" that divides us from Freud through the reduction of his "revolutionary discovery" of the unconscious to disciplines essentially foreign to it - including that of psychology itself: "Western reason... will only agree to conclude a pact of peaceful existence with psychoanalysis after years of non-recognition, contempt and insults... on condition of annexing it to its own sciences and myths..." (186). This history of mythologization has had far-reaching effects on the reception of Freud's ideas. First, it has resulted in a displacement of the object of psychoanalysis from *what* analytical technique deals with (the unconscious) to analytical practice, or the "cure" itself. Second, it has prevented the successful transferral from a form of critical attention dominated by a problematic of consciousness to one that starts from a recognition of the primary role played by the unconscious. Hence, a form of criticism has arisen whose focus is misdirected, and is based on preconceptions inimical to an adequate response to Freud's ideas.

    For what amounts, in my view, to an outstanding recent corrective to this reductive critical tradition, once again see Forrester, 1997 – and particularly Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five, "A Whole Climate of Opinion", is devoted to a chronicling of the historiography of psychoanalysis in the twentieth century, in which Forrester sets out to show that what he calls "the many faces of Freud's offspring, sometimes working together, sometimes in tension or in conflict," require a "more subtle history" than we have yet been offered (9). Chapter Six, "Dispatches from the Freud Wars," confronts head on a range of offensives in the recent cultural interrogation of "the Freud question", exploring the terrain on which these critiques are played out. There is, in the history of psychoanalysis, Forrester suggests, a constant confusion between "Freuds" – as embodied in the "life," the "work,"

Freudiana, Freud's writings, Freud's theories, classical psychoanalytic theory, orthodox psychoanalytic practice, psychoanalysis as a cultural movement, therapy as a professional practice – which is made easy by a strange fact: everyone knows, from a very young age, what "Freud" said and what "Freud" stands for. Indeed, he goes on, there is a different piece of cultural history to be written in this domain, the domain of Freud as a "received idea" of the twentieth century: "Not only does everyone know what Freud wrote and what everything Freudian "really means," everyone also knows what all the fuss is really about." As such, Forrester concludes, the process of writing about Freud must always be a process of "uneducating" one's readers: "I stand on common ground with some of Freud's critics on this issue, since at least some of them believe in reading and thinking closely about his work and its historical context. But, unlike these critics, it is my wager that the more one knows about Freud – the more one has unlearned what one was culturally hard-wired to know about him – the more interesting and surprising and thought-provoking he becomes. The final answer to Freud's critics is that many intelligent men and women – and maybe even children – have recognized and continue to recognize this" (11/12).

15. See Habermas, 1974: "The starting point of psychoanalytic theory is the experience of resistance, that is the blocking force that stands in the way of the free and public communication of repressed contents. The analytic process of making conscious reveals itself as a *process of reflection* in that it is not only a process on the cognitive level but also dissolves resistances on the affective level. The dogmatic limitation of false consciousness consists not only in that lack of specific information but in its specific inaccessibility. It is not only a cognitive deficiency; for the deficiency is fixated by habitualized standards on the basis of affective attitudes. That is why the mere communication of information and the labelling of resistances have no therapeutic effect" (229, my emphasis). This thesis – that psychoanalysis belongs to the category of "self-reflection" - can be demonstrated on the basis of a number of Freud's papers on analytic technique, namely: "'Wild' Psychoanalysis" (SE XI), "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through" (SE XII), "Lines of Advance in Psychoanalytic Therapy" (SE XVII), "Constructions in Analysis" and "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (SE XXIII).

16. Ironically, Frederick Crews began as an adherent of Freud, one of those "old fashioned" psychoanalytic critics who, typically, treated the work of art as a window to the artist's tormented soul. In what Maud Ellmann describes as a "notorious" analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1994: 2), for example, he interprets Marlow's pilgrimage to central Africa as a "journey into the maternal body," citing as evidence the matted vegetation of the wilderness "'that seemed to draw [Kurtz] to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions'." Kurtz, the sinner at the heart of darkness, represents the father, while Marlow

is the son who interrupts the primal scene, the "unspeakable rites" of parental intercourse (Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: W.W Notron, 1963), pp. 67 and 51, cited in Frederick Crews, "Conrad's Uneasiness", in *Out of My System: Psychoanalysis, Ideology and Critical Method* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). In what seems to me an astute perception, Ellmann suggests that Crews has "talked himself out of psychoanalysis precisely by applying it too heavy-handedly" (since he now repudiates psychoanalytic criticism as a whole) (1994: 2).

17. This is the list invoked by Crews himself in (*Unauthorized Freud*, 1998) of writers who have "enriched our understanding of Freud without mounting a challenge to psychoanalysis itself" – the list whose contribution to our present understanding of Freud he once again denies by excluding any of their work from his collection.

18. For a characteristically trenchant analysis of some of these limitations, see Terry Eagleton's review of Fish's *Professional Correctness: Literary Studies and Political Change* in Eagleton, 1995.

EPILOGUE

Freud's critics have often suggested that his work would have been more successful had it embodied their notions of scientific discourse; but there is evidence to suggest that the enabling dynamic of Freud's thought was the result of a constant transgression of the boundaries of these notions as instituted by the scientific community during his lifetime. For all his desire that psychoanalysis be accorded the resonance and prestige of a true science along with all the others - "Psychoanalysis is a method of research, an impartial instrument, like the infinitesimal calculus..." ("Civilization and its Discontents", SE XXI: 36) - Freud never failed to respond to his material with the full resources of a supremely creative imagination. Indeed, there are many examples of this creative tension scattered throughout his work. In the earliest case histories of the *Studies on Hysteria* (1893-1895) he writes,

> I have not always been a psychotherapist. Like other neuro-pathologists, I was trained to employ local diagnoses and electro-prognosis, and it still strikes me myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science... (SE II: 160).

The problem, Freud believed - and in this he consoled himself - lay not in any preference of his own for the literary or fictional mode of writing so much as in the nature of his subject itself:

> The fact is that local diagnosis and electrical reactions lead nowhere in the study of hysteria, whereas a detailed description of mental processes such as we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enables me, with the use of a few psychological formulas, to obtain at least some kind of insight into the course of that affection (SE II: 160-161).

In the Dora case history, Freud was prepared to acknowledge that his narrative was such that many would find it possible, and would take it upon themselves, to read it as a *roman a cléf*, "designed for their private delectation", rather than a serious contribution to the psycho-pathology of the neuroses (SE VII: 9). Indeed, as Steven Marcus has shown, Freud's prophecy was not to go unfulfilled. In his reading of the memoirs of Dr. Daniel Paul Schreber, as we have already seen, Freud made a further confession of his convictions regarding the thin line dividing fact from fiction, truth from delusion (SE XII: 79); and in a letter to Hermann Struck in 1914, Freud acknowledged his essay on da Vinci to be "partly fiction" (Freud, E., 1961: 312). He also admitted, in the essay itself, that as a piece of writing it might easily be classified as a "psycho-analytic novel":

> In the preceding chapters I have shown what justification can be found for giving this picture of Leonardo's course of development - for proposing these subdivisions of his life and for explaining his vacillation between art and science in this way. If in making these statements I have provoked the criticism, even from friends of psycho-analysis and from those who are expert in it, that I have merely written a psycho-analytic novel, I shall reply that I am far from over-estimating the certainty of these results. Like others I have succumbed to the attraction of this great and mysterious man, in whose nature one seems to detect powerful instinctual passions which can nevertheless only express themselves in so remarkably subdued a manner ("Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood", SE XI: 134).

It is only fitting that the scientific investigator who chose for his objects of research the stuff of dreams, desires and fantasies - those very fictions by which we constitute ourselves as human subjects - should have been one of the first to refuse, however tentatively, the margins between literature and the more important territory of "truth" traditionally set aside as the domain of science. It was Barthes who said that "what the human sciences are discovering today, in whatever field it may be, sociological, psychological, psychiatric, linguistic, &c., literature has always known..." - but it might just as well have been Freud. "Science has only a few apodeictic propositions in its catechism: the rest are assertions promoted by it to some particular degree of probability," he wrote. "It is actually a sign of a scientific mode of thought to find satisfaction in these approximations to certainty and to be able to pursue constructive work further in spite of the absence of final confirmation" (SE XV: 51).

Pace his critics, Freud himself was well aware of the ambiguous textual status of much of his own writing, which hovered uneasily, he seemed to feel, on the borders between literature and science. Yet was it not precisely this uneasy position which enabled him to open up that "other place," that whole new dimension of intellectual inquiry, the unconscious? "Only the real, rare, true scientific minds can endure doubt, which is attached to all knowledge," he once said to Marie Bonaparte (cited in Mahony, 1987: 77). Freud's commitment finally was a commitment to scepticism - a scepticism which, in refusing the usual boundaries of science, made it possible to transcend them and explore a new continent of knowledge.

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