Introduction: Freud as Literature

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Introduction: Freud as Literature

By Perry Meisel

I

The writings of Sigmund Freud have become so decisive a factor in our culture, particularly in America, that it is more difficult than ever to attribute to them the stance of a dispassionate science that simply narrates those unconscious processes of mind discovered by its founder. It is probably more accurate to say that Freud's work has itself become an example of those unconscious determinations that influence us when we least suspect it. Surely the contemporary status of psychoanalytic thinking as ideological reflex or instinct of reason should alert us to the fact that psychoanalysis no longer speaks to us so much as for us, no longer answers or confirms our condition so much as it produces it from the start. Psychoanalysis looks so like the foregone truth about life that it is easy to forget that what truth it has belongs, in the final instance, to the written achievement of Sigmund Freud himself.

Eloquent testimony to Freud's success as a lawgiver in his own right, the unconscious sway of psychoanalysis as an arbiter of modern thought and a staple of therapeutic practice represents the consummate kind of success any mythological system or set of imaginative texts can have. If it is the highest art to conceal art, to make fiction masquerade as a simulacrum of revealed or

natural truth, then Freud succeeded more completely than most, more completely, probably, than any writers save Milton and those earlier lawgivers who wrote the Old Testament, and who are, as the late *Moses and Monotheism* attests, the only conceivable rivals so far as Freud himself is concerned.

The burden of the present volume, then, is not to present Freud as a doctrinal figure from the point of view of either science or philosophy, nor is it to present him as a system-maker whose theories can be useful to an applied literary criticism. Rather, it is to situate Freud's achievement as a properly literary one in its own right, and one that casts Freud as both a theoretician of literature and a practitioner of it in exact and specific ways.

As many of our essayists suggest, however, Freud's principal literary speculation is not to be found in the familiar psychosexual reductions that tend to characterize his own overt attempts at the psychoanalysis of art. They lie instead in his notion that the very mechanisms of the mental agencies he describes are themselves the mechanisms of language. Surely the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan in France has played a large part in the accommodation of Freud to literary theory from this point of view in recent years, accenting as Lacan does the linguistic complexion of both the analytic session and the Freudian unconscious. It is nonetheless clear as well from the historical record that the linguistic insights attributed to Freud by the French

are well anticipated —and far more plainly articulated —in the analysis of Freud by principal American critics such as Kenneth Burke and Lionel Trilling even before World War II.[1]

The essays included here are not only representative of literature's gradual incorporation of Freud into its own ranks from the early days of psychoanalysis to the present, but are themselves the principal building blocks in the process. What follows by w-ay of introduction is a narrative history that clarifies the unfolding of literature's incremental understanding of Freud's work as literary, too, as it moves, step by step, from Thomas Mann's early attempt to systematize Freud's affinities with Romanticism to the contemporary criticism of Jacques Derrida and Harold Bloom. If there is a central preoccupation that organizes this history and gives it a particular shape, it is to be found in literature's increasing understanding of why Freud's characteristic trope or figure, the unconscious, is itself a literary rather than a scientific or philosophical achievement. The movement that begins with Mann's notion of the Freudian unconscious as a reservoir of instinctual energy made available to consciousness through the symbols of myth is corrected and reversed by W.H. Auden, Burke, and Trilling, as they prepare us for the elaborate reading of the Freudian unconscious in Derrida and Bloom that transforms Freud's theory of the psyche into a theory of literary language, and that transforms Freud's own rhetoric into a demonstrably poetic one.

No essay is more direct than Alfred Kazin's "The Language of Pundits" in accounting for the tyranny of Freud's ideas by exclusive reference to Freud's prowess as a writer of visionary prose: "It was, of course, Freud's remarkable literary ability," writes Kazin, "that gave currency to his once difficult and 'bestial' ideas; it was the insight he showed into concrete human problems, the discoveries whose force is revealed to us in a language supple, dramatic, and charged with the excitement of Freud's mission as a 'conquistador' into realms hitherto closed to scientific inquiry, that excited and persuaded so many readers of his books." In the hands of Freud's immediate disciples, however, or as practiced by subsequent generations of intellectuals or by the culture at large, the Freudian method of explanation becomes, as Kazin puts it, sheer punditry. Freud's own writing, by contrast, enlists the devil's party as well as the dogmatist's, and so dramatizes not just a doctrinal clash between consciousness and the unconscious that the pundits simply ventriloquize as though it were fact, but also the struggle within Freud himself between an empirical and an imaginative rationale for the psychoanalytic project as a whole. Certain tendencies in contemporary literature such as the spontaneous aesthetic of the Beats may even be explained, Kazin suggests, as literal or reductive responses to Freud that share with the pundits a failure to distinguish literature from dogma whether in Freud himself or in the tendentious pronouncements of their own work. Virginia Woolf had already identified such a tendency in 1920 among practitioners of what she called

“Freudian fiction,” writers who treat psychoanalysis as though it were, in Woolf’s words, “a patent key that opens every door”;[2] who mistake, to borrow Trilling’s terms in “Freud and Literature,” the instrument of Freud’s thought —his language —for its transparent vehicle.

Freud himself offers the best and clearest caution about the status of the scientific language that is, of course, a central feature of his prose. Reflecting in the 1920 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* on the “bewildering and obscure processes” of instinct invoked by his habitual biological vocabulary,[3] Freud meditates overtly on the problem of representation in language, and so throws the focus of his enterprise away from its apparent objects in nature and onto the irreducibly literary or figurative medium in which his career as both practicing analyst and working writer really proceeds. We are “obliged,” says Freud, “to operate with the scientific terms, that is to say with the figurative language, peculiar to psychology. ...We could not otherwise describe the processes in question at all, and indeed we could not have become aware of them." And though “the deficiencies in our description would probably vanish,” says the empiricist in Freud, “if we were already in a position to replace the psychological terms by physiological or chemical ones,” “it is,” concludes the literary Freud, nonetheless “true that they too are only part of a figurative language.”[4]

Indeed, what had transformed Freud in the first place from a creature of

the physiology laboratory into a psychoanalyst whose sole materials were those of language was his growing realization, in the late summer of 1897, that his patients' endless stories of infantile seduction at the hands of servants and relatives were not factually true, but were retrospective fantasies installed by memory and desire after the fact.[5] It was at this moment, as Trilling suggests, that Freud may be said to have crossed the line that divides empiricism from fiction, at least if by fiction we mean that which proceeds entirely within language and without regard for the exigencies of fact. It was, says Trilling, nothing less than a willing suspension of disbelief that finally allowed Freud access to the unconscious mental life of his patients, and that established the terrain of psychoanalysis as a world of language and fantasy free, by definition, from the domain of objective verification.[6] So when Freud claimed, as he did again and again, that the poets, not the scientists, had been the real pioneers in the exploration of the unconscious, there was not only the presumption of a common shop between psychoanalysis and literature, but also a genuine invitation to treat psychoanalysis itself as a poetic achievement.

"I consider you the culmination of Austrian literature," wrote the Viennese man of letters Arnold Zweig to Freud in 1934.[7] Indeed, as early as 1896 the reviewer of *Studies on Hysteria* for the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse*, poet and critic Alfred von Berger, had prophetically concluded that Freud's work is "nothing but the kind of psychology used by poets."[8] Freud himself

had strategically apologized for the extent to which the case histories in *Studies on Hysteria* sounded like tales of the imagination—"it 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"—even though it is finally to literature that Freud appeals without embarrassment as the passage concludes: "Local diagnosis and electrical reaction 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."[9]

But if Freud's literary contemporaries took his suggestion to heart, it was not always by the benign route of homage. In addition to studied and almost unbroken public silence—Joyce,[10] for example, or Proust —defensive attacks were often the rule, as Virginia Woolf's judgment attests, and remind us that Freud early inspired the greatest tribute of all, the tribute of anxiety on the part of his literary generation's first rank. Even Clive Bell and Roger Fry lambasted Freud when the opportunities arose, while, beyond Bloomsbury and as early as 1921, D.H. Lawrence had already assessed Freud's shortcomings in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, taking his revenge not so much by dismissing Freud as by claiming he had not gone far enough. By 1931, Gide was declaring Freud simply superfluous, and for undeniably self-protective reasons: "How embarrassing Freud is. And how

readily we should have discovered his America without him."[11] Freud himself claims not to have read Nietzsche or Schopenhauer till late in life in order to keep from being influenced by their perilously accurate anticipations of psychoanalysis,[12] and surely it is the same kind of anxiety that disturbs Woolf, Lawrence, and Gide as well in their relation to Freud. "Had I not known Dostoevsky or Nietzsche or Freud," says a priority conscious Gide, "I should have thought just as I did."[13]

"It is shrewd and yet stupid," wrote an overtly scornful T.S. Eliot of Freud's *Future of an Illusion* in 1928, complaining in particular of Freud's "inability to reason."[14] In kindred outrage, Aldous Huxley found the "dangerous and disgusting mythology" of "psychoanalytic theory" so full of "inexact" and "unsupported" claims that reading about the unconscious "is," as he put it, "like reading a fairy story,"[15] and so echoed the sexologist Krafft-Ebing, one of Freud's teachers, who had greeted an early paper by his former student in 1896 with the celebrated remark, "It sounds like a scientific fairy tale."[16]

Literary reaction to psychoanalysis was not, however, always shrill or anxious. As one of Freud's earliest nonmedical champions in England and his future publisher there, Leonard Woolf savored psychoanalysis despite his wife's reservations. Reviewing Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* in 1914 for *The New English Weekly*, the young journalist found even this largely

encyclopedic work "eminently readable," and for a particular reason. Although Freud is "a most difficult and elusive writer and thinker," says Woolf, what saves the day —indeed, what makes it —is that "whether one believes in his theories or not, one is forced to admit that he writes with great subtlety of mind," and, what is more, with "a broad and sweeping imagination more characteristic of the poet than the scientist or the medical practitioner."

For John Crowe Ransom in America ten years later, Freud's work crosses over into poetry by dint of its understanding of the symbolic practices that unify life and fill it with meaning. Knowledge of the "biological," of the "fundamental realities" of the "immitigable passions," as Ransom calls them, is always mediated for Freud by the tokens provided by myth, custom, religion. As a result, psychoanalysis apprehends the way the "passions" make us all alike in the same gesture by which it apprehends the bonds of community itself, and so avoids both a dry sociological determinism and a rampant vitalism even as it accommodates them both to its own generous perspective.

Freud's distinction as a stylist was, of course, officially recognized in 1930 with the award of the annual Goethe Prize by the city of Frankfurt. Freud called it "the climax of my life as a citizen."[17] It was in fact to Goethe (himself a scientist-poet) that Freud ascribes his decision, fortunate for posterity, to become a doctor rather than a lawyer. "It was hearing Goethe's

beautiful essay on Nature read aloud," he writes in his *1925 Autobiographical Study*, "that decided me to become a medical student."[18] Here Freud reminds us, on the level of an organizing personal conceit, of that resolute strand of literary and otherwise learned allusion that not only furnishes his prose with a conceptual armory assembled at will from Greek tragedy, German Romanticism, or Shakespeare; but that also situates his work from the start within a nexus of overtly literary traditions that rival the scientific ones, and eventually overpower them, in their relative contribution to the texture of his writing.

II

There are, of course, abundant reasons for calling Freud's achievement literary in a strict formal and technical sense. Both Mann's "Freud and the Future" and Trilling's "Freud and Literature" are the crucial texts with which to begin, since they help us to plot the immediate literary resonances that arise from Freud's manifest thematic alliances with Romanticism, chief among them, says Trilling, a shared "devotion to a research into the self." Hence Freud emerges from, and refracts, virtually every principal line of literary history deriving from the tradition of Rousseau and of the *Bildungsroman*, the latter "fathered," says a psychoanalytic Trilling, by *Wilhelm Meister*. Mann is a trifle more exact in locating Freud's especially decisive precursors in Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and, before them, in the

"romantic-biologic fantasies" of Novalis, although the two lines converge in the common links Trilling and Mann alike draw between Freud and Ibsen.

The central tradition of the Romantic quest in both the prose and poetry of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is filiated, of course, to the tradition of quest narrative as a whole, and so roots Freud's project equally well in the wider mythic traditions within which Stanley Edgar Hyman places Freud in his reading of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in *The Tangled Bank*. Hyman points to the organizing conceit of the hike or climb through a wooded and "cavernous" landscape as the book's concrete emblem for its own quest for a solution to the legendary enigma of dreaming, and, moreover, as its principal style of imaginative organization. "Planned" as it is, says Hyman, Freud's orchestration of his guiding imagery functions as figurative theme and variation at crucial moments in the text (especially at or near the start of the third, fifth, and seventh chapters) as it proceeds from the thicket of past authorities on dreams through a "narrow defile" that leads Freud to a view of "the finest prospects," prospects that the book as hike or "imaginary walk" will subsequently explore and colonize.

The privileged figure of the journey in *The Interpretation of Dreams* joins the typology of the Romantic quest-poem as we know it in *The Prelude* or in Keats's *Hyperion* fragments to its earlier roots in the mythic quests of classical and Christian tradition. Hyman's reading casts Freud's questing

consciousness in the role of "the primeval hero" of myth and so leads him to the myth of Freud himself as the discoverer, the overcomer of his own resistances, the hero of an autobiographical as well as an analytic odyssey. For it is in *The Interpretation of Dreams* that Freud reports his discovery of the Oedipus complex, the result of his own monumental self-analysis that began in the wake of the death of his father, Jakob Freud, in 1896. Here it is Freud himself who is the proper referent of that citation from *The Aeneid* that he belatedly affixed to *The Interpretation of Dreams* ("If I cannot bend the Higher Powers, I will move the Infernal Regions").

The mythical Freud, the Freud of the classic quest, says Hyman, is not only the Sophoclean Freud, the internal hero of *The Interpretation of Dreams* who discovers Oedipus in himself in the tragic agon that functions as the play within Freud's play. He is also the epic Freud, Freud as Odysseus or Virgil, surviving the trials of the underworld or the unconscious and returning home, to consciousness, to narrate them in retrospect. Hence Hyman's reading of Freud's successful quest for the grail-object of unconscious laws suggests psychoanalysis itself to obey the moral shape of epic romance as it rehearses a return to domesticity and culture after trial, after subduing libido. And much as Joyce provides a contemporary version of Homeric epic in *Ulysses*, so Freud, at least in what Hyman hears in the tone of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, provides us with a contemporary version of the successful quester, too, and one which, at least according to Tzvetan Todorov,

[19] is the most efficient representative of the typology of the literary quest we have: the detective novel, with Freud the Sherlockian analyst in the role of "the Great Detective."

If Hyman wishes to dramatize a pre-Romantic Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Steven Marcus's "Freud and Dora" finds a late Romantic or modernist Freud at the helm in Freud's greatest case history, the "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905), the case of Dora. Here, like Conrad or Borges or Nabokov, Freud is a questing consciousness who keeps coming up against insuperable resistance. In this case, it is his patient's unwillingness to pursue the analysis far enough to reveal Freud's own conviction that Dora secretly desires—but must repress because of the incestuous identification —that friend of her father's with whose wife her father is himself having an affair. The resistance throws the focus of the project away from its manifest goal and onto the latent one of analytic and narrative procedure themselves. As in *Lord Jim*, the scaffolding of the tale is as much an object of study as the patient at its center. And as in *Lolita*, the quest and the problem of the quest are the same (the detective novel analogy again), with the narrative's desire for the clarity and closure of explanation analogous, at least in structure, with desire as such.

What is most interesting about Marcus's essay, though, is the ease with which it makes clear that Freud's world is a thoroughgoing world of language.

Above all, Marcus insists, the analytic scene enacts the same processes as its narration, subject and method becoming virtual doubles since, both as practice and as product, the very element of being in psychoanalysis is language and symbolization. Difficult as it is to achieve coherence amid the fragments of Dora's story that Freud receives at different times and in no particular order (Freud's own *Autobiographical Study* also scrambles such fragments in a Proustian puzzle of subjectivity), coherent narrative is not only a metaphor for mental health or stable selfhood. It is, within Freud's already metaphoric universe, health itself. "Everything," says Marcus, "is transformed into literature, into reading and writing." Freud's notion of the world as a text becomes the tenor rather than the vehicle in both the analytic scenario and its narrative representation. "The patient does not merely provide the text; she also *is* the text, the writing to be read, the language to be interpreted." The psyche itself, then, becomes a texture of language, a grid or honeycomb of representations, chief among them the pathways of memory which it is Freud's task to negotiate and map.[20] Hence Freud's texts insist on their place in modernist fiction by collapsing the distinction (as do Borges, Blanchot, and Barthelme) between fiction and criticism, art and interpretation, taking as the center of their own action the representation of representation, the criticism of criticism, the interpretation of interpretation. The 1909 case history of Freud's Rat Man ("Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis") suggests just how definitive the linguistic metaphor is, since the

case organizes itself around a precise verbal puzzle —the multiple German pun "*Ratten* "—whose overdeterminations must be unravelled in order for Freud to discover the lines of association by which repressed ideas are joined together. Like *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the case history, too, is, in Hyman's words, "a poem about a poem."

The models of Freud's text presented by Hyman and Marcus, then, are both literary in exact ways, even though they differ in the traditions and assumptions to which they appeal in their attempt to situate Freud's achievement as a writer. For Hyman, it is myth and psychosexuality that characterize Freud's imagination, every present psychoanalytic quest a repetition of earlier romance cycles whose archetypal scenes, especially those mediated by overtly symbolic myth, represent psychoanalysis as a truth about nature seized on the level of instinct or biology. For Marcus, on the other hand, Freud's world is characterized above all by language as such, and by the letter of the law of language, which Freud follows like an exegete or detective as he elucidates the radiating puns of *Ratten* or the uncanny chemical formula in the dream of Irma's injection in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Here even desire is to be represented as a linguistic conundrum in its unconscious structure, a text rather than a natural fact. So despite the equal literary authority of each mapping of Freud as literature, a symptomatic difference persists between them. It is in fact the very difference that separates Thomas Mann from Derrida and Bloom, and that organizes the

history of Freud's accommodation to letters as a movement from libido to language. We can begin to map the process from the moment Mann announces the first "formal encounter" between Freud and literature on the occasion of Freud's eightieth birthday in 1936.

III

Mann's birthday lecture, "Freud and the Future," shows his notion of Freud as Romantic to be more radical than Trilling's later one, since Freud and literature share not only Trilling's notion of a "research into the self," but, in Mann's bolder and apparently more solipsistic pronouncement, they also share a notion that "the mystery of reality" as a whole is "an operation of the psyche." Noting the connections between his own novelistic heroes and Freud's neurotics, Mann finds the sickly young artist Tonio Kroger or the bourgeois neurasthenic Hans Castorp in *The Magic Mountain* to share with Freud's patients a privileged route to the secrets of the unconscious. "Disease," in short, becomes "an instrument of knowledge."

Mann's grandest accents, then, are reserved for that Freud who, following Schopenhauer and Ibsen, asserts "the primacy of the instinct over mind and reason." Duly acknowledging the present political implications in Germany of a "worship of the unconscious" and the "moral devastation" it may imply in the world of action, Mann nonetheless identifies the Freudian unconscious with the "primitive and irrational," with "pure dynamic." The

ego, of course, is at the id's mercy, "its situation pathetic."[21] Territory won by culture from the "seething excitations" of the id, the ego in Mann's view fears and opposes the superego far less than it fears and resists those resolutely biological forces that make up the id's rugged complexion.

And yet instead of carrying to its solipsistic extreme the notion of the ego as an isolated and besieged entity, Mann swerves from his radical romanticism in order to embrace instead the collective vision that emerges through a mythical reading of Freud's biologism and psychosexuality. Freud's apparently brutal picture of the fiery instinctual depths is in fact "familiar," communal, downright pacifying: "can any line be sharply and unequivocally drawn," asks Mann, "between the typical and the individual?" The truth is "that life is a mingling of the individual elements and the formal stock-in-trade; a mingling in which the individual, as it were, only lifts his head above the formal and impersonal elements. Much that is extrapersonal, much unconscious identification, much that is conventional and schematic, is nonetheless decisive for the experience not only of the artist but of the human being in general."

Here the "psychological interest passes over into the mythical," says Mann, since Freud's notion of instinct is, in his reading, not tragic but romantic in the generic sense. It is, says Mann, "a smiling knowledge of the eternal, the ever-being and authentic," since the rhythms of myth, the

representative of instinct, of what is abiding in man, inflect and determine life in the present and give the individual, not the vertigo normally associated with a vision of the ego at the mercy of the id, but, rather, a "formula and repetition" that assure that man's "path is marked out for him by those who trod it before." Individual character itself becomes not a nightmare of isolation but "a mythical role which the actor just emerged from the depths to the light plays in the illusion that it is his own and unique, that he, as it were, has invented it all himself." In fact, says Mann, "he creates out of the deeper consciousness in order that something which was once founded and legitimized shall again be represented."

We are, then, the "theatre-manager of our own dreams," not their authors, and the public scripts we are called upon to play as particular actors in our drama are the scripts of myth. These mythical constellations are, of course, not cultural or linguistic at all, but grandly naturalistic, eternal signatures of eternal human rhythms. Although Trilling rightly points out in "Freud and Literature" that Mann here corrects the far more radically irrationalist assessment of Freud in his 1929 "Freud's Position in the History of Modern Thought," Mann has in fact simply exchanged the vocabulary of what he calls the night side of life in the earlier essay—the underworld of instinct and biology —for the vocabulary of myth. Myth for Mann is a cultural representative of instinct, but it apparently admits of no historical or linguistic variation in its handling or reception from age to age, and so speaks

directly for man’s unchanging biological core as though language and the other products of culture were mere windows on a world of nature and truth that culture simply apprehends.

For Mann, then, “mythical identification,” that mode of past power in antiquity, can and should be called upon again for a “reanimation of life” in the present late Romantic crisis of modernity. Hence Mann’s own career moves from the neurotic inwardness of *Death in Venice* or *The Magic Mountain* to the mythical re-enactments of the *Joseph* novels, doubling the movement of the careers of Joyce and Eliot, for example, in an equal shift from Romantic individualism to classical community. Mann’s alignment here with Joyce and Eliot pivots on the category of myth as a resolver of late Romantic solipsism, a way of tying the self’s vanities and agonies to the larger rhythms of history and community on the level of a human nature that is static and enduring.

We should bear in mind, however, that Romanticism fashions its own mythology of belatedness by means of an anxious nostalgia for classical antiquity, the locus of a lost golden age, and so a privileged version of the grail-object itself (“O for a beaker full of the warm South,” says Keats). The classical, the mythical, the South become the locus, in short, of a wish for the warmth and immediacy of an earliness, a closeness to beginnings, to instinct, that Mann’s salutary notion of myth wishes to embody both as an assurance

that modernity, too, is in touch with the same original springs of humanity as the Greeks and Hebrews, and, moreover, that the language of myth allows us to bypass the mediation of history by giving us direct access to man's natural core. Like Winckelmann, and like Mann himself, Freud, too, shared the especially acute desire for the South that is the pointed German version of this Romantic mythology (Freud's first trip to Rome in 1901 was the fulfillment of a lifetime wish), although it is Mann who teases out this strand in Freud and allows us to situate it in relation to that classicizing Eliotic modernism that seeks in myth an end to Romantic solipsism, too. For Mann, after all, appeals to myth as an exact representative or static symbol for man's biological center. Mediterranean myth here functions, in other words, as access to the immediacy of the South on the new level of psychoanalytic science, the level of enduring and unchanging instinct that modernity shares with antiquity.

Opposing Mann's claims for instinct and the fashion in which its representative or delegate, myth, shapes things for us, W.H. Auden's "Psychology and Art To-day," published just a year after Mann's lecture, in 1937, insists instead on the difference between the symbolic labor of the neurotic and that of the poet. Although Auden mentions in passing the use by criticism of certain Freudian notions and the use by the Surrealists of an "associational" writing "resembling the procedure in the analyst's consulting-room," he throws up his hands at the possibility of tracing Freud's influence

on modern art, and wishes instead to designate Freud simply as "representative of a certain attitude" within modern art itself, an attitude probably best summed up in his terse remark that identifies artist and scientist in terms just the reverse of Mann's: "To understand the mechanism of the trap: The scientist and the artist."

What this "trap" may be remains to some extent unclear (it is rhetorical, though we shall have to wait for Derrida and Bloom to spell it out), since Auden's tone, like Ransom's, dances between a moving appreciation of Freud and a kind of humorous, if largely implicit, parody of the reductive side of Freud's familiar argument about the similarities between the poet, the dreamer, and the madman. By 1937, those similarities have, it appears, already been popularized, and Auden's reservations about the ease with which art and neurosis, poetry and untrammeled spontaneity, have been joined in the public imagination already anticipate Trilling's definitive account of the problem in "Art and Neurosis."[22]

Auden is willing, however, to accept Freud's notion of the artist as someone immersed in fantasy, as his citation from the *Introductory Lectures* attests, although, with Freud, he asserts, too, that what separates the artist from the neurotic is that the artist "finds a way back to reality," thanks, above all, Auden argues, to his "mysterious ability to mould his particular material." Even in dreams, there is already a touch of poetry beyond the simple exercise

of wish-fulfillment, since in the dream there is “something which resembles art much more closely”: it is “constructive, and, if you like, moral.” It is a “picture,” says Auden of his sample dream —that of a potential morphine addict whose dreaming suggests a flirtation with addiction rather than a capitulation to it —“of the balance of interest.” Insisting as he does, contra Mann, on the “constructive” side of dream and art alike, Auden takes “the automatic element” of fantasy and its link to a notion of poetry as “inspiration” as only part of the process, as what is simply “given.” Against it he counterposes both the rhetorical exactitudes of the dream and the conscious technical labor of poetry. “Misappropriated” as Freud has been “by irrationalists eager to escape their conscience” —Lawrence and Gide are his prime examples —Auden insists on the fact that the artist, like the individual, must fashion and transform what is “given”—“instinctive need” on the level of life, the “racial property” of myth and symbol on the level of artistic “medium.” The neurotic, like the poor artist, succumbs to fantasy in a parody of Mann’s late Romantic notion of inspiration, while the successful artist, like the healthy man, recognizes his obligation to shape, construct, fashion, with craft and consciousness, what has been bequeathed to him by history and instinct. Reversing Mann’s attitude of virtual surrender to primary process, Auden accents the secondary-process prerogatives of craft and reason instead. Much as Mann veers toward Jung, Auden veers toward the ego psychologists in his notion that conscious craftsmanship informs both poetry

and personality, and so disavows the dependence of both on inspiration or daemonization. As a corrective to Mann's mythical instinctualism, then, Auden rights the balance in the ongoing interpretation of Freud, and adumbrates in the process the antithetical schismatic traditions to which he and Mann may each be assigned within psychoanalytic tradition proper.

The reaction to Mann is especially clear in Auden's paramount insistence on "words" rather than "symbols" as the poet's fundamental materials, an insistence that translates into an assertion that art and psychoanalysis are not mythical re-enactments of eternal instinctual patterns, but are "particular stories of particular people and experiences." If Mann's notion of psychoanalysis as a discourse about myth aligns him with the classical modernism of Eliot, Pound, or Joyce, Auden's notion of psychoanalysis as a discourse about language and particularity aligns him instead with that strand of modernism in Conrad, Virginia Woolf, and Joyce, too, that celebrates and sanctifies the quotidian.[23] It also aligns Auden with a view of Freud's language exceedingly different from Mann's, although it is a difference that will become manifest only with Kenneth Burke.

IV

Kenneth Burke's 1939 essay on Freud and the analysis of poetry makes clear what is at stake in Mann and Auden, and serves as the conceptual centerpiece in the history of Freud's interpretation by literature. Like Mann

and Auden, Burke wishes to consider “the analogous features” in psychoanalysis and aesthetics, and that “margin of overlap” between them: “the acts of the neurotic,” says Burke in a summary of earlier opinion, “are symbolic acts.” But rather than choose or decide, at least at the start, between the alternative views of the symbolic or imaginative act given by Mann and Auden (and by Hyman and Marcus), he will instead simply situate them in relation to one another.

Noting Freud’s work to be “full,” as it is, “of paradoxes,” Burke goes to the heart of the interpretative rift within Freud himself: “a distinction between...an essentializing mode of interpretation and a mode that stresses proportion of ingredients.” At the start of his argument, Burke assigns Freud, as a scientist, to the first of these positions:

> . . .if one found a complex of, let us say, seven ingredients in a man’s motivation, the Freudian tendency would be to take one of these as the essence of the motivation and to consider the other six as sublimated variants. We could imagine, for instance, manifestations of sexual incompetence accompanying a conflict in one’s relations with his familiars and one’s relations at the office. The proportional strategy would involve the study of these three as a cluster. The motivation would be synonymous with the interrelationships among them. But the essentializing strategy would, in Freud’s case, place the emphasis upon the sexual manifestation, as causal ancestor of the other two.
>
> This essentializing strategy is linked with a normal ideal of science: to “explain the complex in terms of the simple.” This ideal almost vows one to select one or another motive from a cluster and interpret the others in terms of it.

And in Freud, says Burke, “the sexual wish, or libido, is the basic

category," the motive that psychoanalysis selects from the cluster and endows with exclusive explanatory power. Or does it?

In an impromptu examination of "bodily posture," it becomes clear, says Burke, that the same posture in two individuals, for example, may express two entirely different experiences of "dejection"—"the details of experience behind A's dejection may be vastly different from the details of experience behind B's dejection, yet both A and B may fall into the same bodily posture in expressing their dejection." The same "posture" or symbol, in other words, may have vastly different determinations, hence vastly different meanings, depending on the context in which it emerges. And psychoanalysis, implies Burke, can hardly be immune to this critique.

As it turns out, of course, this is precisely Freud's own argument against symbolism or "absolute content" in the interpretation of dreams, although it coexists uneasily with his use, too, of the symbolic method and its system of fixed meanings.[24] Hence when Burke turns to this crucial interpretative topos in Freud himself, he finds him no longer simply the reductive, essentializing scientist, but a proportionalist, too:

> Freud explicitly resisted the study of motivation by way of symbols. He distinguished his own mode of analysis from the symbolic by laying stress upon free association. That is, he would begin the analysis of a neurosis without any preconceived notion as to the absolute meaning of any image that the patient might reveal in the account of a dream. His procedure involved the breaking-down of the dream into a set of fragments, with the analyst then inducing the patient to improvise associations on each of these fragments in turn. And afterward, by charting recurrent themes, he

would arrive at the crux of the patient's conflict.

> Others (particularly Stekel), however, proposed a great short cut here. They offered an absolute content for various items of imagery.

Freud himself, Burke concludes, "fluctuates in his search for essence." And to situate this fluctuation in relation to literature (and, implicitly, to countermand Mann far more rigorously than Auden does), Burke shows us exactly why the proportional mode of interpretation —nonscientific and nonmythic as it is —is both crucial to psychoanalysis (recall *Ratten*) and to the exactly distinguishing feature of poetic or literary language as well, especially when it is compared to other modes of language, particularly the language of science:

> The examination of a poetic work's internal organization would bring us nearer to a variant of the typically Freudian free-association method than to the purely symbolic method toward which he subsequently gravitated.
>
> The critic should adopt a variant of the free-association method. One obviously cannot invite an author, especially a dead author, to oblige him by telling what the author thinks of when the critic isolates some detail or other for improvisation. But what he can do is to note the context of imagery and ideas in which an image takes its place. He can also note, by such analysis, the kinds of evaluations surrounding the image of a crossing; for instance, is it an escape from or a return to an evil or a good, etc? Until finally, by noting the ways in which this crossing behaves, what subsidiary imagery accompanies it, what kind of event it grows out of, ...one grasps its significance as motivation. And there is no essential motive offered here. The motive of the work is equated with the structure of interrelationships within the work itself.

So it is at the "dream level" that the "Freudian coordinates come closest to the charting of the logic of poetic structure"—not on the rather imprecise level of myth or symbol, nor indeed on the level of what Auden calls "words,"

but on the exact level of technique, the level of trope. In a startling anticipation of the most prophetic accents of Trilling's "Freud and Literature" (Trilling's essay appeared in its original form only a year after Burke's), Burke finds the rhetoric of mind and poetry to be not just similar but virtually identical in the shared predominance of the two functions in the dreamwork that Freud calls "condensation" and "displacement," functions that are, as Trilling will tell us, no less than the rhetorical tropes metaphor and metonymy:

> Condensation...deals with the respects in which house in a dream may be more than house, or house plus. And displacement deals with the way in which house may be other than house, or house minus. ...One can understand the resistance to both of these emphases. It leaves no opportunity for a house to be purely and simply a house —and whatever we may feel about it as regards dreams, it is a very disturbing state of affairs when transferred to the realm of art.

Here, of course, the poem as dream is virtually the same as the poem as chart, since dream and poem alike are plotted within a common network or system —a chart or table of combinations —whose resources are deployed according to Freud's two ruling tropes, and whose structure, both psychic and semantic, is the structure of language itself. Moreover, the linguistic rather than grossly symbolic character of the analogous systems of psyche and text or poem precludes from the start anything but a proportional or variable notion of psychic and poetic meaning: "the Freudian emphasis on the pun." says Burke, "brings it about that something can only be in so far as it is something else." This "something else" is not, of course, a fixed and final end

to interpretation, like Mann's essentializing notion of myth as biology, as "the eternal, the ever-being and authentic," as the essentializing or literal language of science and scientific meaning. Rather, it is a notion of motive or cause in terms of a "cluster" of "structural interrelationships," each term gaining its meaning from its relation to other terms in the cluster rather than from its relation to a direct and self-sufficient ground of truth or nature. Between Mann and Burke, in other words, is a wholesale difference in literature's very notion of language, of what and how language, especially literary language, means. It is, moreover, a difference or dispute each side of which may be found in Freud himself, who thereby contains the critical alternatives available to the whole profession of letters. "Even the scientific essay," Burke concludes of Freud, "would have its measure of choreography."

V

If Burke is our conceptual centerpiece, Lionel Trilling is our dramatic one. Like no other writer here save Freud himself, his sympathies are so wide that they can admit both sides of the dispute almost coterminously. Trilling does, however, decide, and in both ways, even though the opposed celebrations of what is opposed in Freud himself are separated by almost fifteen years. It is to Trilling's later essay, the 1955 "Freud: Within and Beyond Culture," that we should turn first (originally published as a separate volume under the title *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture*, and included in the

1965 collection, *Beyond Culture*), since it stands in the line of Mann's argument just as surely as the 1940 "Freud and Literature" stands in the line of Burke's.[25] Moreover, each essay dramatizes within itself the historical split in the interpretation of Freud that they also represent as an opposed pair.

Although Trilling parts with Mann, in "Art and Neurosis" especially, on the question of a link between knowledge and disease, he is at the same time sympathetic to Mann's fascination with the night side of Freud's thought, and to the notion that it contains a secret affirmation, even if, as it turns out, Trilling is preparing an affirmation far more radical than Mann's own. For Trilling, Freud's biological notion of the id embodies the Freudian insistence that the Cartesian profile of man that identifies being with consciousness is a wishful myth. But even though this deepest layer of Freud's thought sees man or consciousness as the object of forces greater than himself and outside his control, the fact that Freud imagines these forces as natural or biological —as outside or beyond culture —is the pathway to the discovery of a genuinely reassuring idea. For the abyss, with all its horrors, is the site of man's moral salvation even if it also provides the ground of his suffering. To explain why, Trilling presents what is probably the most eloquent defense of Freud as Romantic modernist in the English language: "He needed to believe that there was some point at which it was possible to stand beyond the reach of culture.... It is our way of coming close to the idea of Providence." Reacting in

advance to the inevitable response (especially in the days of Neo-Freudianism and its sociological reductions of psychosexuality), Trilling adds: “It is so far from being a reactionary idea that it is actually a liberating idea. It proposes to us that culture is not all-powerful. It suggests that there is a residue of human quality beyond the reach of cultural control, and that this residue of human quality, elemental as it may be, serves to bring culture itself under criticism and keeps it from being absolute.” After all, the primacy of the biological abyss in Freud’s thinking means that man does not belong to culture alone. If culture represses, denies man his freedom, the biological or instinctual core of being that it represses still springs forward to speak for man even when man can no longer speak for himself.

Trilling’s Romantic valorization of the abyss, in short, is in the service of a notion of self or personality that exists apart from culture, that retains an essence of being that culture can never compromise. If “there is a hard, irreducible, stubborn core of biological urgency, and biological necessity, and biological *reason*, that culture cannot reach and that reserves the right, which sooner or later it will exercise, to judge the culture and resist and revise it,” then “there is,” says Trilling, “a sanction beyond the culture.” The great peroration follows: “This intense conviction of the existence of a self apart from culture is, as culture well knows, its noblest and most generous achievement.”[26] Trilling gives the game away, however, in that famous sentence. For the notion of a self beyond culture is, alas, itself an achievement

of culture, its "noblest" achievement and, therefore, like any cultural product, a trope or fiction.

In the earlier "Freud and Literature," the question, put simply, is whether there is indeed a self, a core of being, beyond culture. Is Freud's theory of the drive a biological theory of instinct, or is it a cultural theory of merely human indoctrination into the order of things? For the Trilling of "Freud and Literature," Mann's assertion of the instinctual basis of psychoanalysis is not only too close to the false popular notion of "art and neurosis," but also one that tries to meld Freud's admittedly double vision into an impossible single perspective. Indeed, Mann's thoroughgoing instinctualism (like Trilling's own saving belief in biology fifteen years later) is in fact to be identified with the "naive" positivism of the early Freud: "of claiming for his theories a perfect correspondence with an external reality." The same position is, after all, implicit in Mann's definition of the instinctual truth embodied in myth as "the external, the ever-being and authentic," for it presumes, as Freud the scientist does, a way out of language and history by an appeal to an unchanging biology viewed through the fixity or essence of symbols. Although Trilling distinguishes between the practical reality the working analyst must discern with "a certain firm crudeness" and a notion of "reality" evolved under conditions of "theoretical refinement," he places both kinds of reality, finally, in the service of what should be called a poetic and social rather than a scientific and universal real. For the reality to which

Freud really appeals —even at times despite himself, says Trilling —is "the reality of social life and of value, conceived and maintained by the human mind and will. Love, morality, honor, esteem — these are the components of a created reality. If we are to call art an illusion then we must call most of the activities and satisfactions of the ego illusions; Freud, of course, has no desire to call them that." What has occurred here, of course, is an implicit redefinition of the contents and mechanism of the Freudian unconscious. Although Trilling will, at the close of the essay, attempt a compromise vision in which man is "an inextricable tangle of culture and biology," here, at the start of the essay's genuinely radical moments, it is culture alone that is the decisive if silent term.

What follows is a Burkean corrective to the notion of a fixed, symbolically apprehended meaning, on the level of motive, in the psychoanalysis of a work of art like *Hamlet*: "We must rather object to the conclusions of Freud and Dr. Jones on the ground that their proponents do not have an adequate conception of what an artistic meaning is. There is no single meaning to any work of art; this is true not merely because it is better that it should be true, that is, because it makes art a richer thing, but because historical and personal experience show it to be true." Once again rejecting the notion that the truth of psychoanalysis, the truth of the unconscious, resides in an indwelling "reality to which the play," for example, "stands in the relation that a dream stands to the wish that generates it and from which it is

separable," Trilling suggests, again along the lines of Burke's argument, that both mind and poem acquire their meanings in some other way. Like the dream in relation to the dreamer, *Hamlet*, says Trilling, "is not merely the product of Shakespeare's thought, it is the very instrument of his thought." This returns us to Trilling's already implicit notion of the unconscious as the repository, not so much of an instinctual payload of raw nature —a "reality" or essence like that which motivates *Hamlet* in Freud's and Jones's celebrated reduction —as of the fictions, the "created reality," of the social order itself. When Trilling makes the famous claim that "of all mental systems, the Freudian psychology is the one which makes poetry indigenous to the very constitution of the mind," makes the mind "a poetry-making organ," he is less concerned with the factor of poetic craft than he is with something else: the identification of both the object of Freudian analysis —the unconscious mind —and the Freudian text with the necessary fiction of language itself. Even science, says Trilling in the later essay, "is organized improbability, or organized fantasy."

It is at this point that Trilling unleashes that boldest and most precise of interpretative announcements, the prophetic words that Bloom celebrates in "Freud and the Poetic Sublime," and that Burke, in his attentiveness to condensation and displacement, has brought us to the brink of just a year before:

> Freud has not merely naturalized poetry; he has discovered its status as a

> pioneer settler, and he sees it as a method of thought. Often enough he tries to show how, as a method of thought, it is unreliable and ineffective for conquering reality; yet he himself is forced to use it in the very shaping of his own science, as when he speaks of the topography of the mind and tells us with a kind of defiant apology that the metaphors of space relationship which he is using are really most inexact since the mind is not a thing of space at all, but that there is no other way of conceiving the difficult idea except by metaphor. In the eighteenth century Vico spoke of the metaphorical, imagistic language of the early stages of culture; it was left to Freud to discover how, in a scientific age, we still feel and think in figurative formations, and to create, what psychoanalysis is, a science of tropes, of metaphor and its variants, synecdoche and metonymy.

"We still feel and think in figurative formations" because we think and feel through language and all the figures that culture has provided us in order to be human at all. It is, ironically but also suitably, a passage in support of this side of the dispute in "Freud: Within and Beyond Culture" that is the best gloss for Trilling's argument here. "The unconscious of society," writes Trilling, "may be said to have been imagined before the unconscious of the individual." Freud "made it apparent to us how entirely implicated in culture we all are...how the culture suffuses the remotest parts of the individual mind, being taken in almost literally," the argument concludes, "with the mother's milk."[27]

VI

Despite preconceptions, it is hardly a jump, then, from Trilling's "Freud and Literature" to the contemporary world of French Freud, premised as both are on the decisive function of culture and language in the very constitution of subjectivity, and on a notion of the unconscious as a web of ideological

determinations that fashions the self from the ground up.[28] Jacques Derrida, however, is not to be identified with the work of Lacan,[29] even though a sympathy for the notion of the Freudian unconscious as a language (or, to be more exactly Lacanian, to say that the unconscious is structured "like a language")[30] is surely Derrida's starting point, especially since he wishes to distinguish writing from language at large, and, in the process, formulate a precise definition of literary language as Freud himself conceives it, and, indeed, as Freud also practices it.

Derrida summarizes our historical dispute and brings it to a head by criticizing what, in Burke's vocabulary, we might call an "essentializing" notion of Freud —a notion of the unconscious in particular as what Burke himself might call a "God term" or what Ransom refers to as a "gospel truth." Instead, claims Derrida, Freud's real achievement lies precisely in the rupture or break his work enacts with all such metaphysical quests for essence or natural core. What Freud discovers, says Derrida, is just the reverse of Mann's notion of the unconscious as a plentitude of instinct represented by myth or symbol, and which is directly translatable, as a dream element may seem to be, back into its fixed natural or sexual meaning in a world beyond language. This view of the unconscious and of language as it appears in Mann's notion of myth and symbol is what Derrida calls "logocentrism" — a notion of meaning as a full measure or transcript of a truth in nature or things that language merely apprehends and conveys. Rather, says Derrida, neither

language nor the unconscious signify in that way.[31] It is Freud's particular achievement to have made such a discovery and to demonstrate instead the way language and the psyche really work.

To call the unconscious a language is to make a precise but occluded claim, says Derrida. By turning to Freud's earliest attempt at representing mental functioning in the 1895 *Project*, Derrida shows that Freud's linguistic metaphors are not only present in his work from the start and that they will eventually overthrow all naively biologistic, instinctual, even neurological metaphors in his later work. He also suggests that the metaphors Freud draws from language, both here and in *The Interpretation of Dreams* five years later, are drawn not so much from language generally as from one special—or apparently special —subdivision of it: writing, "nonphonetic writing" in particular, such as ideograms or hieroglyphs.

What is especially powerful about writing as a metaphor for representing the unconscious—for representing, if you will, the way it is inscribed by culture —is that it represents Freud's primary process as a writing that is cut off, from the start, from any connection to the kind of language that is customarily associated with the fullness of a natural breath, with the direct expression of immediate feelings that well up in the throat spontaneously, authentically, without art. Here Derrida argues against both Mann's notion of the unconscious as a repository of myths that simply

"transcribe" the "living, full speech" of instinct, and Freud's own neurological metaphors that function in the *Project* as his version of an ideal language capable of grasping the "living, full speech" of psychic energy in the mimetic discourse of a positivist science.

Instead, Derrida argues, Freud gives us a notion of the unconscious as a field of memory traces constituted by a kind of psychic writing. In the *Project*, Freud describes the origin or emergence of these memory traces or writings not as tokens of experience that are added to or engraved upon a self-sufficient natural core of unconscious instinct that grows progressively conscious over time. Rather, the origin of the first memory traces can only be accounted for by the hypothesis of a sudden catastrophic moment or jolt that sets the whole psyche into play at once. ("Life is already threatened by the memory which constitutes it.") The psyche seems to originate, in other words, at the moment it begins to resist stimuli (here Freud's allegory of the birth of the ego in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is Derrida's implicit allusion) at which point a difference emerges between such force or stimulation and the organism's resistance to it, thus separating self and world while constituting each in relation to the other. It is this difference alone that opens up what Freud calls, in Bass's translation, a "breaching," a fracturing that lays down paths or traces on the psyche's virgin surface, which comes into being only at the moment it begins the process of resistance.

The *Project*, however, has no satisfactory model with which to go on to represent how the psyche stores these traces or pathways as memory, given the simultaneous fact that the psyche continues to be able to receive new impressions without cease, and to which the mind stays fresh and open. It is at this point that the essay's manifest project comes into focus. Derrida's aim here is to trace Freud's thirty-year search (from the *Project* to the brief but, for Derrida, crucial essay of 1925, the "Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'") for a model or metaphor that can account for and represent the functioning of the mental apparatus in the two separate but linked registers of unconscious memory and conscious perception. The problem, as the *Project* lays it out, is to find a figure capable of representing both processes in a single stroke: the constant ability of consciousness to receive fresh impressions and the equal and constant ability of the unconscious to store the traces they leave. No single system can do both jobs at once, since a glut or saturation point is inevitable. Hence the search for a metaphor.

The metaphor, however, cannot be found until Freud clarifies his notion of that psychic writing known as memory. Memory is not a thing or a substance, says Derrida, but the very difference between one pathway or "breaching" and another, an apparently simple difference of intensity that distinguishes one trace from another, and so elaborates a field of memory even as it elucidates or differentiates one memory from another. Of course, this vision of memory as a set of differences or traces is precisely what Burke

means by a proportional rather than an essentialist view of how both language and the psyche operate —by means of the relations, the differences as well as the similarities, among the elements in a given cluster of language or (what amounts in certain ways to the same thing) of memory proper. Derrida simply draws out the epistemological implications of the proportional view of the "writing" that is the common medium of both literature and the psyche.

And yet one special problem bothers Derrida in addition to Freud's own problem of finding a suitable representation for the double and simultaneous psychic systems of memory and fresh reception. It is the problem of the psyche's origin, of the origin of primary process or unconscious thought that the *Project* can imagine only as having happened in a single moment. The notion of an origin requires, of course, such a notion of a single, originating moment, and yet the origin Freud describes in the *Project* is, as we have seen, a function of the relation "between two forces," as Derrida points out. "Resistance itself is possible only if the opposition of forces"—of stimulation and resistance —"lasts and is repeated at the beginning." But how can "the beginning" be a repetition?

This, alas, is a key Derridean paradox, the paradox Derrida calls "originary repetition," a notion that disallows, on Freud's own authority, the primariness of the primary process itself, and so disallows any notion of

unconscious functioning as one based in the primacy of nature, whether neurologically or mythically apprehended. “Primariness,” says Derrida, becomes for Freud a “theoretical fiction.”

As he moves from the *Project* to *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Derrida brings all this to bear on the central problem of dream interpretation, whose significance Burke has already alerted us to. Among Freud’s predominant metaphors for the dream-work, of course, are those metaphors of “non-linguistic writing,” of “a model of writing irreducible to speech” whose figures include “hieroglyphics, pictographic, ideogrammatic, and phonetic elements.” These figures are important, says Derrida, because they distinguish the genuinely Freudian method of interpretation from the merely secondary method borrowed from Stekel that simply decodes dream elements as though they were fixed universal symbols rather than the particular tokens of particular lives. Derrida calls upon Freud himself for the exact specifications of the case: “My procedure,” says Freud, “is not so convenient as the popular decoding which translates any given piece of a dream’s content by a fixed key. I, on the contrary, am prepared to find that the same piece of content may conceal a different meaning when it occurs in various people or in various contexts.” Freud even calls on “Chinese script,” says Derrida —ideogrammatic script, which has no bond with the mythology of natural speech that accompanies the spoken word —to illustrate and insure the connection between proportional or contextual interpretation and a notion of writing

that is not linked to oral speech: The dream symbols, says Freud, "frequently have more than one or even several meanings, and, as with Chinese script, the correct interpretation can only be arrived at on each occasion from the context." The reason universal symbol-translation will not do, as Burke has already suggested, is that it "presupposes," in Derrida's words, "a text which would be already there, immobile"—a text of truth behind the dream symbols to which they univocally refer, rather than meanings that are apprehended "on each occasion from the context," from their relationships with other elements in it.

Hence by the celebrated route of dream interpretation —the "royal road to the unconscious," as Freud himself describes it in *The Interpretation of Dreams* — Derrida radically criticizes a notion of the unconscious as a cauldron of seething natural energies or even as a locus of impulses that can be apprehended, measured, quantified by science as though they were really there: "There is then no unconscious truth to be discovered by virtue of [its] having been written elsewhere," says Derrida, whether by nature or any other determinable source. "The unconscious text is already a weave of pure traces...a text nowhere present, consisting of archives"—of memory traces —"which are *always already* transcriptions. ... Everything begins with reproduction." Here, of course, Derrida alludes to his notion of the origin of the psyche itself as a repetition, although what is crucial in both dream interpretation and any meditation on origins, says Derrida, is that in both

cases the object of the interpretative quest is always deferred. For if writing, whether psychic or literary, functions as a proportional system of differences —as a system of comparisons and contrasts among the elements of language that alone sets those elements apart from one another — then writing surely cannot refer to anything more than the phantom objects produced by its own rhetoric. So both the meaning of dreams and the origin of the psyche must be deferred, if by "meaning" and "origin" one means the grasp of an immanent, "eternal" or "authentic" essence in instinct, say, or sexuality, whether in Mann's version or in that of Freud the neurological quantifier.

Derrida's notion of deferral is linked not only to his Saussurean notion of language itself as a system of writing or differences (hence Derrida's neologism, "differance," a compound of "differ" and "defer"),[32] but also to Freud's term *Nachtraglichkeit*, usually translated as "deferred action."[33] By "deferred action," Freud himself means what Derrida means by "differance"— that the past or, indeed, any object of memory or language (the two are, of course, intimately associated in any case) comes into being only after the fact, as a function of the place language or memory requires it to hold. And not only is the past or the linguistic object always reconstituted belatedly by the rhetorical operations of memory and reading. The present, too, is always an effect of repetition, since the moment can be grasped, understood as such only in relation to something else as well. Freud's most elaborate discussion of "deferred action" comes in the 1918 case of the Wolf Man ("From the

History of an Infantile Neurosis"), who "remembers" the primal scene in his parents' bedroom, alluded to by his famous dream of wolves in a tree outside his window, only by means of the knowledge about sex that his subsequent experience bestows upon him. Whether the primal scene of parental coitus really took place remains for Freud an open and finally irrelevant question.

Freud's search for a proper way of representing the double system of the psyche, then, is also a search for a proper way of representing reference in language itself. For language, like the psyche, functions on two levels simultaneously —the level of perpetually fresh speech or writing and the level of memory, each one dependent on the other. No wonder, then, that Derrida claims that Freud's search for such a model remains waylaid until he can find one that will not simply use the metaphor of writing, but one that will also be a "writing machine," as Derrida puts it, in its own right — until, that is, Freud can describe his notion of writing in a way that also demonstrates it. The mystic writing-pad is just such a machine, the self-erasing pad with two surfaces that is still a children's toy even today. Here the "contradictory requirement" of the *Project* is at last met: "a double system contained," says Derrida, "in a single differentiated apparatus: a perpetually available innocence and an infinite reserve of traces have at last been reconciled."

Once again, too, the strains of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* are implicit as Derrida suggests the precision of the writing-pad as a metaphor for the

psyche in its full Freudian profile: “There is no writing which does not devise some means of protection, to *protect against itself*, against the writing by which the ‘subject’ is himself threatened as he lets himself be written: as *he exposes himself*.” This is, surely, a description of consciousness (of the Cartesian “subject”) in its peculiar relation to the unconscious, the latter always closing up—by definition — not letting itself be known by consciousness, which is an unknowing function of its own hidden or repressed writing, that record of its journey into and through the world that determines what it knows by making its perceptions repetitions of what is already written beneath it.

This is also, of course, a description of writing itself, especially literary language as it distinguishes itself from the language of a positivist science. Here, in fact, Freud requires the supposedly literal language of science to acknowledge, says Derrida, what “we never dreamed of taking seriously”: its real status as metaphor, as literary language in its own right. And in order to demonstrate the purely figurative status of the whole field of psychoanalytic inquiry, Freud does not just describe the scene of writing as a phenomenon of the psyche. “Freud’s language is *caught up* in it,” says Derrida; “Freud performs for us the scene of writing,” reduplicates the structure of the psyche in the structure of his own text. Why? Because his writing, like the psychic text it describes, can only try, endlessly and without success, to designate a genuine beginning, an authentic essence or real immediacy—nature, instinct,

biology, sexuality—just as the psyche itself is always unable to recover its own beginnings before repression. And yet here Derrida goes even further, as he introduces a late Freudian concept that clears up the problem of "originary repetition" by asserting that, in the beginning, there can only have been repression itself, even before the emergence of the drive. This Freud calls "primal repression,"[34] and for Derrida it is the only concept that can account for the birth of writing itself, whether psychic or literary. For we can only presume or deduce, without verification, a first barrage of stimuli from the outside world as the event that sets repression or protection from stimuli into motion in the first place, and that, in the difference between them, begins the process of path-breaking known alternately as memory and writing. What we do know for certain, however, by dint of the logical requirements of rhetoric itself, is that there can't be one without the other —no force without resistance, no stimuli without repression —since each term requires the other in order to be coherent, each notion coming into being, rhetorically at any rate, by means of its difference from the other. It is only repression that can, in the final analysis, account for drive or even stimuli, since the tokens of repression are the only (and ironic) evidence we have for what is unconscious.

Repression, then, comes first, before drive or instinct, much as the Wolf Man's later knowledge of sex actually precedes his earlier knowledge of parental coitus. So for Derrida, what Freud the apparent scientist dramatizes

is not something that is also literary, but something that is literary from the start and that dramatizes Freud's very notion of literary language: "A becoming-literary of the literal." Freud's once-literal attempts to break through to a natural truth of libido through the quantifications of chemistry and neurology give way, says Derrida, to an elaborate and reflexive notion of the language of science and psyche themselves as literary languages, too.

VII

As we move from Derrida to Harold Bloom's "Freud and the Poetic Sublime," the definition of Freud as literary in his own right grows to an exact focus, especially if, as Derrida claims, Freud's language is itself implicated in the kind of psychic writing it describes. Despite the "antithetical modes" of science and poetry, says Bloom (Trilling's "Freud and Literature," he adds, is still the classic demonstration of the problem), Freud is, finally, a poet regardless of his scientific intentions, since "he cannot invoke the trope of the Unconscious" —for the unconscious is, as Freud himself never fails to remind us, a hypothesis, a fiction, a trope —"as though he were doing more (or less) than the poet or critic does by invoking the trope of the Imagination, or than the theologian does by invoking the trope of the Divine." And for Freud, the "most vital trope or fiction in his theory of the mind" is "the primary process," the original seat of the unconscious which, in Freud's later terminology, will be called the id.

But "to quarry" the poetic Freud for "theories-of-creativity," says Bloom, we need to study him, not in his reductive profile as psychoanalyst of art in the sense Trilling deplores, but "where he himself is most imaginative." For Bloom, this is principally the late phase of Freud's career that begins with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, moves to the 1925 essay "Negation" and the 1926 *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, and whose "climax," as Bloom puts it, is "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" in 1937.

The centrality of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (whose significance Derrida's essay has only hinted at)[35] lies in its formulation, decisive for this entire late phase of Freud's career, of "the priority," says Bloom, "of anxiety over stimuli." The notion of repetition-compulsion that Freud interrogates at the start of the book stymies him because it is a factor in dreams, fantasy, and neurotic symptoms that does not accord with the wish-fulfillment theory that otherwise explains all three phenomena. Why one repeats a painful or fearful event troubles Freud. His principal example here is the portrait of his grandson playing a game with a spool, which he makes disappear behind his bed only to make it reappear again by pulling it out. This, says Freud, is a repetition in fantasy of the daily comings and goings of the child's mother. Her departures can only be disturbing to the child, and yet it is these moments of loss which the child, despite his distinct lack of pleasure, willfully repeats in his symbolic play. Trilling points out in "Freud and Literature" that the episode represents a deliberate attempt to promote "fear" so as to gain

"active mastery" over it. Bloom takes it further still by remarking that such behavior, especially on the part of children, is an attempt "to master a stimulus retroactively by first developing the anxiety." What is shocking here, but also illuminating, is that this is "the creation of anxiety, and so cannot be considered a sublimation of any kind." This intentional development of fear or anxiety, in other words, is not a reaction or resistance to an actual threat (in the case of Freud's grandson, the game proceeds even when the mother is at home, when the real threat of departure is absent), but an anxiety that precedes all threats. In the biological allegory of the birth of the ego that follows Freud's portrait of the child, this original anxiety motivates what Freud has already named "primal repression," the "theoretical fiction" that sets the primary process in motion from the start.

What the portraits of Freud's grandson and the hypothetical birth of the ego share, then, is the exercise of repression —a primal repression —before there is anything to repress. If original anxiety creates primal repression, primal repression, as Derrida has already suggested, creates in turn the force that any repression requires so as to be what it is, a resistance to force. For Bloom, this force is the drive itself, which anxiety and primal repression install retroactively, belatedly (Bloom's way of translating *Nachtrüglichkeit*), as a scenario of origins by which consciousness can imagine its beginnings as jolt or catastrophe, as the moment at which drive surprised it. The drive, that is, is "propped," as Jean Laplanche puts it,[36] upon or against the repression

that brings it into being after the fact, the fiction the psyche invents in order to account for and represent its own birth or origin. Or, to put it in the terms of Freud's "Negation," it is by means of its negation that drive as such emerges, as the resistance to its erasure that the notion of resistance itself requires in order to be what it is. Bloom calls this rhetoric of the psyche a rhetoric of "contamination" or "crossing-over" in a later essay,[37] a graphic suggestion of the way drive and repression, drive and negation, each come into being by means of crossing or contaminating one another.

There is, then, ample reason for Bloom to assent to Trilling's contention —and Lacan's —that psychoanalysis is a "science of tropes," and that the rhetoric it studies is the rhetoric of the defense mechanisms by which the ego establishes and sustains itself. Indeed, in Bloom's reading, the rhetoric of psychic defense is a rhetoric precisely because, in its attempt to turn away from stimuli or influence —to "trope" them, for among the root meanings of "trope" is the meaning "turn" —the psyche in fact fashions the very thing it turns away from, acknowledging, in fact creating, the law of drive, for example, by fleeing from it as though it were there. For Bloom, then, "drives *are* fictions," fictions on the level of both the psyche Freud describes and the level of the Freudian rhetoric that describes it. Just as the drives are the psyche's originating fictions, they are also, says Bloom, Freud's own "enabling fictions" as a writer. Hence the first of a series of formulations of the literary status of Freud's text to emerge from Bloom's argument: the structure of the

psyche and the structure of Freud's language match one another exactly. They are in fact one and the same, for Freud's description of the psyche is really a description of his own text. Like the belated and inferred emergence of the drive in the rhetoric—the defensive "troping"—of psychic action proper, what Freud calls "the unconscious" also emerges as a deferred effect on the level of his own rhetoric, "a purely inferred division of the psyche," as Bloom reminds us, "an inference necessarily based only upon the supposed effects the unconscious has upon the way we think and act that can be *known*, and that are available to consciousness." Primal repression, then, is Freud's most literary trope, says Bloom, since it is the model, as Derrida has already implied, for the structure of literary reference itself: the retroactive installation of a referent, which languages situates, through rhetoric, outside of language, much as the defense or trope known as primal repression installs the drive, retroactively, as a catastrophic beginning to the individual's life.

If the psychic text and the literary text are, for Freud, one and the same, then the psyche as Freud represents it should also provide us with some account of what Bloom calls the will-to-creativity in poetry. Hence a second literary mapping of the late Freud. If, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the purpose of the repetition-compulsion is "to master a stimulus retroactively by first developing the anxiety," the will-to-creativity in poetry, says Bloom, is also conditioned by the threat of what he calls "anteriority," an earlier force that looms as a rearguard catastrophe for the poet just as the drive does on

the level of psyche itself. Bloom links this psychic structure in Freud to the literary notion of the Sublime, which Bloom defines as follows:

> As a literary idea, the Sublime originally meant a style of "loftiness," that is, of verbal power, of greatness or strength conceived agonistically, which is to say against all possible competition. But in the European Enlightenment, this literary idea was strangely transformed into a vision of the terror that could be perceived both in nature and in art, a terror uneasily allied with pleasurable sensations of augmented power, and even of narcissistic freedom, freedom in the shape of that wildness Freud dubbed "the omnipotence of thought," the greatest of all narcissistic illusions.

Hence "the creative or Sublime 'moment,'" at least in post-Enlightenment poetry, "is a negative moment," and it "tends to rise out of an encounter with someone else's prior moment of negation, which in turn goes back to an anterior moment, and so on."

But how does Bloom manage to equate the catastrophic emergence of drive on the level of the psyche with the fear of a literary precursor on the level of Freud's own writing? By identifying the notion of drive itself as Freud's own earlier achievement, an achievement that rises behind him now as a threat (especially if we inflect *Trieb* as "instinct"), a threat Freud must defend against by revising his whole theory of the drives. Here the structure of Freud's mechanisms of mind match the structure of his own texts in another, more elaborate way. If, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the force of drive threatens the very emergence of the psyche at its origin, then drive itself must be associated with death. And yet how is such a situation possible if drive is also Eros, the drive in its customary, pleasure-seeking role of

instinct or libido? In order to explain this impasse, Freud invents the death drive, that realm of mental functioning “beyond the pleasure principle.” The sudden result is the alliance of Eros with repression itself in a common struggle against the death instincts. The sexuality that culture represses is, of course, bound to culture and repression for its very existence, since drive itself is only the effect of its contamination or crossing-over by a repression that presumes its force.

Bloom is therefore led to make two crucial identifications: the death instinct equals literal meaning and the life instinct equals figurative meaning. Why? Because the bond of Eros and repression that signifies their complicity in producing one another in a single rhetorical gesture represents the mature Freud’s “Sublime” moment of self-conscious achievement as a poet who knows unabashedly that his drives are fictions, rhetorical products of his own knowingly figurative language. Eros, then, stands for the notion of drive as fiction, as figure, bound to culture because it is a literary invention. The earlier Freud, by contrast —and in Freud’s own reading of himself— understands drive in a literal sense, in the sense that it is a real biological energy that science can hope to measure. Thanatos or the death drive, then, stands in turn for Freud’s notion of drive as a literally available store of libidinal energy or biological essence, the ideal of the early empiricist Freud that the later, poetic Freud wants to “wound,” as Bloom puts it, “un-name” or disavow. He does so, says Bloom, by making his own earlier notion of drive as

instinct “uncanny” or unfamiliar to himself, and so enters the Sublime in Bloom’s precise, and “negative,” sense that explains the “terror” that overtakes the tradition in post-Enlightenment culture: “that mode in which the poet, while expressing a previously repressed thought, desire, or emotion, is able to continue to defend himself against his own created image by disowning it.”

If the later Freud revises the early Freud by exchanging a notion of drive as quantifiable libido for a notion of drive as immeasurable fiction or trope, the process also includes a theory of literary language as distinct from the language of science, and one that justifies and sustains Freud’s status as poet of the Sublime. This is the third focus to emerge in Bloom’s essay, and it centers on the revision of the “economic” metaphor for psychic functioning that in the early Freud stands for that very attempt to measure or quantify libido that the late Freud rejects. Indeed, the late Freud, says Bloom, explicitly modifies his notion of the “economic” functioning of the psyche from one that presumes an energy available in nature that can actually be measured or fixed, to one that presumes no more than a set of relationships among forces that can be measured only proportionally, only in the relation of force to force.[38] If Freud’s late notion of economy is what Burke means by the proportional, Freud’s early notion of economy is what Burke means by the “essentializing” mode of inquiry already labelled scientific. Thus the late Freud becomes an overt poet by criticizing, as Derrida has already suggested,

his earlier assumptions about language as a scientist. By abandoning the literal or essentializing language of empiricism—or, as Bloom suggests, by "wounding" it by calling instinct death — Freud embraces instead the proportional or figurative language of literature, a style of language that presumes no stable referent in nature by which its figures may be verified.

This new notion of the economic, says Bloom, allies Freud once again with the Sublime, this time through an exact link with Milton, Freud's favorite poet:

> To estimate the magnitude of such excitation is to ask the classical, agonistic question that *is* the Sublime, because the Sublime is always a comparison of two forces or beings, in which the agon turns on the answer to three queries: more? equal to? or less than? Satan confronting hell, the abyss, the new world, is still seeking to answer the questions that he set for himself in heaven, all of which turn upon comparing God's force and his own.

Thus, *Paradise Lost* is "the most Freudian text ever written," says Bloom, not only because in it "temporality fully becomes identified with anxiety," but also because Freud's language shares with Milton's the same "economic" mechanism of signification, a purely relational one that relies only on the contrasts and comparisons among the elements of its own language to specify a world. For, as Stanley Fish has pointed out,[39] Milton's poem measures *only* by proportion, never by recourse to fixed "symbolic" codes that can translate the size, for example, of Satan's spear. The reasons, of course, are the same for Milton as they are for Freud: not only must prehistory, whether instinctual or

creationist, be narrated by the fallen language of consciousness or of history proper; what is being described are, in both cases, also “enabling fictions” to begin with, things, quite literally, out of this world.

VIII

The late Freud summarizes the movement of our essays, then, by taking it upon himself to derive the literary status of his work. The cost is the denial of his early phase as naively literal or empirical, a denial, more defensive than accurate, more literary than scientific (*The Interpretation of Dreams*, after all, is already a battleground between literal and figurative meaning in its dual interpretative schema), although an aspect of Freud’s imagination clear enough from the lifelong revisions of theory that crest in the 1890s, in 1914-15, and in the 1920s. Its only justification is strategic, since Freud takes himself as his own precursor only in order to misread his early work as literal or scientific; in order to appear, in the contrast so initiated, poetic or figurative by comparison. Freud wins poetry by misreading science.

Psychic defense and the creation of literature are in fact the same, converging as they do in the very figure of trope or rhetoric itself, the turning away that is also a figure or structure of language. Freud’s late notion of economy describes rhetoric as a defense and defense as a rhetoric by showing how the very trope of defense produces what it defends against by presuming it, just as repression turns away from the drive and so presumes it, too.

Economy is in this sense the master figure of Freud's combined theory of language and the psyche, since it is both the structure of literary language (at least as our essayists understand it) at the same time that it is the structure of power, of forces in contention, of the psychoanalytic agon revisited in rhetorical rather than instinctual terms.

Freud's particular power lies in his ability to persuade us of the pressure of the unconscious at the very horizon of life as we know it, and so reminds us that the center of his rhetoric lies in its efforts to produce the unconscious or the id as an intractable jungle that consciousness can struggle against. Here, too, Freud devalues consciousness as a category in order to make the unconscious loom even more powerfully against it, just as the fiction of a lack of conscious precedent for psychoanalysis assures Freud the role of hero and discoverer.

The daunting overdeterminations that threaten the originality of Freud's achievement from the point of view of external literary influence are well documented in our essays, much as Frank Sulloway's biography of Freud documents an equal external influence from the point of view of the history of science.[40] Freud defends himself against this double vortex of literary and scientific precedent in economic terms, too, since the radically double characteristics that make his language literary and scientific at once are also the ones that free him in turn from the determinations of both traditions.

Though Freud's language swerves, often wildly, from the regularities of literary and scientific discourse alike, each swerve is nonetheless lawful from the point of view of the other—what is literary is precisely that which cannot be vouchsafed in the name of science, and vice versa. After all, the trope of biology, for example, in a late visionary work like *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, stands out as a poetic figure only at the moment it transgresses what biology as a science is privileged to say, that among the instincts there is one that wishes for death. The boundaries of poetry and science, in other words, are in each case an effect of the violation of one by the other. Freud's double language of science and vision, then, is an apparatus or machine, to use Derrida's vocabulary, that allows Freud to employ the rhetoric of each tradition even as it simultaneously frees him from the obligation to stay bound by either one. Freud's language, then, is rhetoric and defense at once, a language that situates itself simultaneously within the contexts of science and poetry, and that in the same gesture insures its independence from both traditions alike. Nor should we forget that the same literary economy also sustains the early Freud as he invokes the traditions of dream interpretation, for example, only to deny them, placing himself among the authorities even as he frees himself from them. Nor should we forget either that Freud's early masterpiece, like the work of his late phase, also brings the unconscious into being as an effect of resistance to it, for example in the staged repression that Freud exercises over his dream-associations when he hesitates, overtly,

strategically, for fear of revealing too much.

Whether in relation to his own discoveries, then, or in relation to tradition, Freud establishes his priority as a writer by situating both his texts and the objects of his science in a realm of imagination that benefits from a wealth of influences while paying taxes to none. The imaginative priority to be had through economy is perhaps best represented by the mystic writing-pad, that compensatory machine whose surface remains fresh and original because it constantly erases influence or stimulation even as it absorbs and represses it as a series of traces inscribed on the layer beneath. Like the fiction of consciousness, the original poet like Freud shields himself from influence by admitting and forgetting it, and so becomes a locus of influences which his genius manages to erase despite the impossibility of doing so. Just as Shakespeare uses traditions at will in a mingled discourse that appeals to countless regimens while submitting, in the end, to none in particular, so Freud contaminates science with literature, literature with science, to produce a prose-poetry whose only real boundaries are those of his own imagination. And just as Milton chooses the most authoritative of anterior myths in a gamble to assert his priority over the past, so Freud chooses for his equivalent purposes the most authoritative of anterior nineteenth-century myths, the myth of science. Like Milton, too, Freud is poised between belief in his enabling myth and belief in himself; between the acknowledgment of his citizenship in a historical community and his desire to stand apart from it;

between an inevitable belatedness and an achieved earliness; between, finally, the epic of certainty and the lyric of anxiety.

Notes

[1] Although Lacan's career actually begins in the late 1920s (including a connection with Dada), his major phase is initiated with the 1953 *Discours de Rome* ("The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis"; see *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Norton, 1977], pp. 30-113); his impact, even in France, however, was not widespread until the 1960s. For a history of what has been called "French Freud," see Sherry Turkle, *Psychoanalytic Politics: Freud's French Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1978). For accounts of Lacan, see (especially) Louis Althusser, "Freud and Lacan," in *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Ben Brewster, rpt. (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp. 181-202; and Anthony Wilden, "Lacan and the Discourse of the Other," in Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Wilden, rpt. (New York: Delta, 1975), pp. 157-311.

[2] Virginia Woolf, "Freudian Fiction," in Contemporary Writers (London: The Hogarth Press, 1965), p. 154.

[3] Freud's apparent biologism is more evident in English than in the original German or in French, since Freud's *Trieb* is customarily rendered as "instinct" rather than "drive," unlike the French version, *pulsion*, which maintains the oscillation or ambiguity in *Trieb* between natural and cultural determinations. James Strachey, Freud's chief English translator and architect of the *Standard Edition* of Freud's writings, gives his reasons for choosing "instinct" in the "General Preface" to *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953-74), 1: xxiv-xxvi (all subsequent references and citations from Freud are from the *Standard Edition* and are indicated, as above, by volume and page number alone). On *Trieb* and "instinct," see also Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. 214-17.

Among Strachey's other notable choices in translating Freudian terms are "cathexis" for *Besetzung* (in French, investissement, or "*investment*," the latter increasingly favored in English, too); and "anaclisis" for *Anlehnung*, which Laplanche renders "propping" in *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 15ff. (see note 36 below). On both terms, see also Laplanche and Pontalis, p. 65n.; pp. 29-32.

[4] 18:60. Here Freud is referring to his early and persistent, but now abandoned, ideal of a quantitative, physical language for libido, the original goal of his "economic" perspective on the psyche, one of the three formal angles of vision (the other two are the "dynamic"

and the “topographical”) that organize his description of the mind. On the early, empiricist Freud, see Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols. (New York: Basic Books, 1953-57), I, 367ff.; II, 282-83, 290-91.

[5]See Jones, I, 263-67; and Freud’s letter to Wilhelm Fliess of September 21, 1897 (*The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts and Notes, 1887-1902*, trans. Eric Mosbacher and James Strachey [New York: Basic Books, 1954], pp. 215-18; an extract appears in the *Standard Edition*, 1: 259-60). See also Laplanche, Life and Death in Psychoanalysis, pp. 3Iff.

[6]Lionel Trilling, “Freud: Within and Beyond Culture," in *Beyond Culture: The Works of Lionel Trilling*, rpt. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), p. 82. “Freud,” writes Philip Rieff, “puts language before body” [*Freud: The Mind of the Moralist*, rpt. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979]), p. 134.

[7] *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig*, ed. Ernst L. Freud, rpt. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), p.61.

[8] Quoted in Jones, 1, 253; for correction of name and date of review, see Frank Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), p.522. The playwright Arthur Schnitzler had even reviewed a paper delivered by Freud on October 14, 1895 (see Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* [New York: Basic Books, 1970], p.471).

[9] 2: 160-61.

[10] “As for psychoanalysis,” said Joyce to Djuna Barnes, “It’s neither more nor less than blackmail''; quoted in Pound/Joyce, ed. Forrest Read [New York: New Directions, 1967], p. 214; for the few testy allusions to Freud that appear in Joyce's work, see Frederick J. Hoffman, *Freudianism and the Literary Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945), pp. 114ff.

[11] Andre Gide, *Pretexts*, trans. Justin O’Brien et al. (New York: Meridian, 1959), p. 304.

[12] See 20: 59-60.

[13] Gide, p. 306.

[14] T.S. Eliot, “Freud’s Illusions,” *Criterion*, 8:31 (December 1928), 350.

[15] Aldous Huxley, “Our Contemporary Hocus-Pocus,” *The Forum*, 73 (1925), 313-20.

[16] Quoted in Jones, I, 263.

[17]1935 “Postscript” to *An Autobiographical Study*, 20:73.

[18]20:8.

[19] See “The Typology of Detective Fiction,” in The Poetics of Prose, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 42-52. For similarities between the classical quest and psychoanalysis, see “The Quest of Narrative,” p. 127; see also “The Grammar of Narrative," p. 109.

[20] For a reading of the Wolf Man case history that teases out the links between “narrativity" and subjectivity, see Peter Brooks, “Fictions of the Wolfman: Freud and Narrative Understanding." *Diacritics*, 9:1 (Spring 1979). 72-81.

[21] It should be noted that Freud’s introduction of the new triad of psychic agencies in 1923 — ego, id, and superego —is intended to clarify, indeed to shift, his earlier division of the psyche (dating from the 1895 *Project for a Scientific Psychology*) into the systems of consciousness and the preconscious on the one hand and the unconscious proper on the other. In the later theory, much of the ego itself is seen as unconscious, thus making the earlier identification of ego with consciousness problematic, with consciousness proper becoming less and less decisive a factor as Freud’s career progresses. As Harold Bloom points out (see p. 218 below), Freud’s use of the term “unconscious” tends to move from noun to adjective as the theory proceeds through its various revisionary stages.

[22] See Lionel Trilling, "Art and Neurosis,” in *The Liberal Imagination* (New York: Scribner’s, 1950), pp. 160-80.

[23] See for example, David Thorburn, *Conrad’s Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); see also Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), especially pp. 24-28.

[24] See *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 4:105; 5:353. It should be noted, too, that Burke himself clarifies the confusion that may arise from the two distinct senses in which he uses the word “symbolic” (see p. 78 below, n.3).

[25] The text of “Freud and Literature” included here is the (only slightly) revised version that appears in the 1950 collection, *The Liberal Imagination* (New York: Scribner’s, 1950), reprinted as a volume in *The Works of Lionel Tril*ling (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978). For the original text of “Freud: Within and Beyond Culture,” see *Freud and the Crisis of Our Culture* (Boston: Beacon, 1955).

[26] Trilling, “Freud: Within and Beyond Culture,” pp. 99, 101, 102.

[27] Trilling, “Freud: Within and Beyond Culture,” pp. 90. 91.

[28]See Althusser, “Freud and Lacan.”

[29]For Derrida’s “deconstruction” of Lacan, see “The Purveyor of Truth,” trans. Domingo, Hulbert, et.

al,, *Yale French Studies*, 49 (1975), 31-113.

[30]At times, however, simile seems to give way to identity: “What the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of language” (Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, p. 147).

[31] For Derrida, the same is also true for spoken speech despite its misleading and only apparently privileged connection with voice and breath. See *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976).

[32] See “Differance," in Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and other essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 148ff.

[33] See Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 111-14.

[34] Although the term first appears in the 1911 Schreber case (“Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia," 12: 67-68), it is in the 1915 metapsychological essays “Repression” and “The Unconscious” that the notion’s conceptual necessity and far-reaching implications are made particularly apparent (see 14: 148-49, 180-81). Although much of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* may be seen as a gloss on it, the term itself does not appear there. In the 1926 *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, primal repression and the argument of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* are joined together (20:94). As with many of Freud’s later concepts, primal repression is already abumbrated in the *Project* under the name “primary defense” (1:370-71), and for reasons of theoretical coherence like those that require primal repression itself in the later phase.

[35] For Derrida on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, see “Coming into One's Own,” trans. James Hulbert, in *Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, 1976-77, ed. Geoffrey Hartman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 114-48; and “Speculations —on Freud,” trans. Ian McLeod, *Oxford Literary Review*, 3:2 (1978), 78-97.

[36] See Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, pp. 15ff.

[37] Harold Bloom, “Freud’s Concepts of Defense and the Poetic Will,” in *The Literary Freud: Mechanisms of Defense and the Poetic Will* (*Psychiatry and the Humanities*, vol. 4), ed. Joseph H. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 1-28.

[38] See “The Unconscious” (1915), 14:181.

[39] See Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in 'Paradise Lost*,' rpt. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971).

[40] See Frank Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

Chronology of Important Dates

1856	Freud born in Freiberg, Moravia (now Pribor, Czechoslovakia), on May 6.
1860	Freud family moves to Vienna.
1865	Enters Gymnasium.
1873	Enters University of Vienna as medical student.
1876-82	Works as assistant in Brucke's Institute of Physiology; meets Josef Breuer.
1877	First medical research articles published.
1880	Translates four essays by John Stuart Mill for a German edition of Mill's works.
1881	Takes medical degree.
1882	Engagement to Martha Bernays; begins work at Vienna General Hospital.
1885	Appointed *Privatdozent* (lecturer) in neuropathology at University of Vienna.
1885-86	Attends Charcot's lectures at the Salpetriere in Paris, October to February.

1886 Marries Martha Bernays; begins private medical practice as specialist in nervous diseases.

1887 Meets Berlin physician and medical theorist Wilhelm Fliess; begins use of hypnotism in private practice.

1889 Visits Bernheim in Nancy for further researches into hypnosis.

1893 "Preliminary Communication" (with Breuer).

1894 "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defense."

1895 *Studies on Hysteria* (with Breuer, although cases and discussions written and signed separately); writes *Project for a Scientific Psychology* and mails it to Fliess (first published in 1950).

1896 Death of Freud's father, Jakob Freud; first use of term "psychoanalysis."

1897 Abandons seduction theory; begins self-analysis.

1899 "Screen Memories."

1900 *The Interpretation of Dreams* (published in December 1899, but postdated for the new century).

1901 *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*.

1902 Appointed Professor Extraordinarius (associate professor) at University of Vienna; Wednesday evening meetings begin at Freud’s house of the group that will become the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society; end of friendship with Fliess.

1905 *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality; Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*; Case of Dora (“Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Flysteria”).

1906 Jung makes contact with Freud.

1907 *Jensen’s ‘Gradiva*.’

1908 First international meeting of psychoanalysts at Salzburg;
“Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming”; “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness.”

1909 Visits America with Jung and Sandor Ferenczi; receives honorary degree from Clark University and delivers *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*; A. A. Brill’s first English translations begin to appear; Case of Little Hans (“Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy”); Case of the Rat Man (“Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis”).

1910 *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*; “‘The Antithetical Sense of Primal Words.’ ”

1911 The Case of Schreber (“Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia”).

1911-15 Papers on psychoanalytic technique.

1913 *Totem and Taboo*; association with Jung terminated; Jung secedes from International

Psychoanalytic Association the following year.

1914 *The Moses of Michelangelo; On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*; "On Narcissism."

1915 Writes twelve papers on metapsychology, of which only five survive ("Instincts and their Vicissitudes," "Repression," "The Unconscious," "A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams," "Mourning and Melancholia").

1915-17 Gives *Introductory Lectures* at University of Vienna.

1918 Case of the Wolf Man ("From the History of an Infantile Neurosis").

1919 "The 'Uncanny.'"

1920 *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

1921 *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*.

1923 *The Ego and the Id*; first of thirty-three operations for cancer of the jaw and palate.

1925 "A Note on the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'"; "Negation"; *An Autobiographical Study*.

1926 *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety; The Question of Lay Analysis*.

1927 *The Future of an Illusion*.

1928 “Dostoyevsky and Parricide.”

1930 Goethe Prize; *Civilization and its Discontents*; death of Freud’s mother.

1933 Hitler comes to power; burning of Freud’s books in Berlin; *New Introductory Lectures.*

1936 Eightieth birthday; formal celebrations; elected Corresponding Member of the Royal Society.

1937 “Analysis Terminable and Interminable.”

1938 Nazis enter Austria; Freud leaves for England; *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (published posthumously)

1939 *Moses and Monotheism*; dies on September 23 in Hampstead, London.

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Works

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Selected Studies

Given the enormous scope of the literature on and about Freud, the following selected list of books and articles is limited to those studies that focus on the literary Freud. Of the increasingly large amount of material on the literary Freud available in French, selections have been made only from among those works translated into English.

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