The Birth of Psychoanalysis from the Spirit of the Pseudosciences

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Résumé: *Nous avons tenté d'examiner la psychanalyse de la perspective de sa réception dans les milieux médicaux et scientifiques à la fin du XIX^e^ siècle. Nous avons également suivi le cheminement de son incorporation dans les sciences humaines qui, dans les interprétations littéraires, étaient atteintes d'incertitude et indétermination. En outre, nous avons tenté une approche de la relation entre la psychanalyse et la pensée magique en liaison étroite avec les opinions médicales et scientifiques prévalant à la fin du XIX^e^ siècle et avec les discours de la légitimation qui sous-tendent la production littéraire aussi. De telles opinions sont des formes de connaissance non-agréées, illégitimes du moment que l'investigation des psychologues sur l'existence de la communication entre les esprits à distance, sur la télépathie ou la foi de Freud (et Breuer) dans la catharsis et, plus tard, dans l'existence des transferts et de la fantaisie primaire font partie d'une tendance générale qui implique un nombre de problèmes liés à l'inter-subjectivité et à l'esprit humain que se posent les penseurs et les écrivains au XIX^e^ siècle. Elles font partie de ce qui est déjà devenu un domaine d'étude et de recherche, à savoir la pensée magique.*

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Knowledges of the Psyché. The Siege of Intimacy and the Science of the Soul

In what follows, a discussion of the birth of the sciences of the psyché from a combined practice of testimonial and scientific drives will be the main focus. Magical thinking inhabits the corpus of pseudoscientific writings which are the subject of this paper. The said corpus displays a didactic dimension, whilst trying to offer an account of the marvelous and of the uncanny in the terms of a rational recuperation. It also evinces a prominent 'thetic' or 'theoretical' dimension because it aspires for the status of science, in a gesture which is itself symptomatic of a general 'will to knowledge' (one can also call it a drive, or a tendency) documented by Michel Foucault in his own work related to the history of the discursive construction of sexuality.

I will start from contemporary debates about the legitimacy of psychoanalysis, and subsequently move on to discuss the terminology that psychoanalysis made extensive use of in its early beginnings and which displayed affinities with *doxai* popularized by the English Society for psychical research and forgotten nowadays, precisely because of their unsuccessful attempt at establishing themselves as based on a scientific corpus. Several points are to be touched on:

the analogy between telecommunication and thought transference posited by the members of the Society for Psychical research, the conception of influence at a distance and of the intimacy of minds which is visible in the growth, decline and fall of Freud and Ferenczi's partnership in psychoanalysis, and the (at times) indiscernible superimposition between psychoanalytical doctrine and late-nineteenth century thaumaturgy which Freud sought to dispense with.

In what is incipient psychoanalysis a pseudoscience, and how has the 'fact' of its being a pseudoscience been asserted by theorists? This is one line of enquiry pursued in the present paper. Another one relates to the problematic of the progressive emergence of psychoanalysis versus the discovery of psychoanalysis. I interpret this arduous, embattled problematic as really a translation of another issue which Harold Bloom pinned down to the 'anxiety of influence' and which, more recently, Avital Ronell has read through the literary, philosophical, and psychoanalytic trope of 'dictation'. The question relates then more to who takes dictation from whom, and to what extent one's writing is inhabited by other voices, in other words it functions as the support to other presences which have a tendency to haunt (Ronell 1993). And it is inseparable from the problematic of originality, the way in which it is sanctioned by a community, and the affective investment placed on that imagined community.

In Freud's case, the particular community he sought attachment to was the scientific (medical) one, in which 'artistic' excrescences were nipped in the bud or severely criticized. Freud was referred to by his professor, Theodor Meynert, as 'only an artist', and was rallied for the way in which he had fallen for Charcot's teachings in Paris, as a hypnotised patient seduced by a charismatic enchanter (Jones 1953: 255). The authority of scientific terminology was unquestionably a defining feature of the fin-de-siècle quest for a general therapeutics of the mind. Such weaknesses as those displayed by the fascinated students of Charcot were held to indicate unreliability, especially considering the credibility a medical practitioner was supposed to embody during the therapeutic session. Instead of supplying positive knowledge about a newly-discovered malady, Charcot's spectacular entertainments organized in medical amphitheatres challenged the status of the mind doctor as a savvy detached observer who diligently and meticulously approaches his object and legislates as to how it works. As Didi-Hubermann emphasizes, the spectacles which Charcot presented his students with, made use of a paraphernalia of iconographic instruments destined both to enchant the eye and to record the indomitably theatrical dimension of a psychosomatic illness. Moreover, the theoretical eye of Charcot kept staring at phenomena until the necessity of an account and a nosology imposed themselves. Ironically, the 'omnipotence of thought' I will be discussing, in other words the passion for ideas and for the way in which they actualized themselves into theories or indeed, physiological responses was shared by doctors and their patients. The desire for possessing the truth, on the other hand, just like the desire for certainty, is itself a symptomatic phenomenon which enters a complex dynamic of affective resonance, influence, and intimacy.

Truth, Science, and the Anxiety of Knowledge

Before the turn of the century, psychology was inseparable from paranormal psychology (Ellenberger 1974, quoted in Lagrange & d'Andreia 2002: 37), the latter being condemned

to exclusion by the 'rhetoric of the proof' (ibid.) later on, around 1922. Persuasion by recourse to one's personal experience was the process whereby Freud would convince people of the truthfulness of psychoanalysis, but also the way in which the skeptical analyst could be talked into crediting the truthfulness of his female patients' stories: the doctor himself could be influenced by a sufficiently credible symptom. The narratives which the therapist lent his ear to were made sense of by emplotment in what Freud termed 'secondary processing'. Secondary processing is an interpretative demarche meant to uncover the figures and turns of speech whereby the hidden fantasies have been condensed and displaced, in short, disfigured (Weber 1982: xvii). It behooves the case historian to re-figure the gaps in the narrative by rendering it theoretically apprehensible as well as logically coherent. As has been shown by critics (for example, Auerbach 1981, Borch-Jacobsen 1995), the story which Freud used to fill in the interpretative gaps hardly squared with the patient's own account, a reality which eventually triggered the sad ending in Dora's case, with the young patient walking out on Freud, and leaving him to his speculations about the oedipal nature of Dora's desire.

The question of desiring to have one's theory sanctioned as a science cannot slur over the problematic of the affective investment placed upon knowing which guides the analyst. In other words, what is it that informs the psychoanalyst's drive to knowledge? In Didi Hubermann's terms, it is anxiety that unleashes curiosity and a permanent desire for knowing. Childlike curiosity as the motor that actuates the pursuit of knowledge has recently been reconsidered as a common feature of the psychoanalytical quest for the psyche and of the irresistible passion for discovery in nineteenth century evolutionary theory (Small and Tate 2003). Alfred R. Wallace referred to Darwin as a scientist endowed with 'the restless curiosity of the child to know the 'what for?' and the 'why?' and the 'how?' of everything' which 'seems never to have abated its force' (Small and Tate 2003:1).

Beyond the rhetorical effect intended to appease the critics of evolutionary theory by picturing its proponent as an innocent child driven by something close to natural instinct (*op. cit.,* 2), Wallace's statement frames the child as an energetic seeker of knowledge, eager to dispense with acquired assumptions and prejudices about the world. But whereas science thrives on the curiosity to know the secret workings of the natural world and to understand its laws, psychoanalytical curiosity aims 'to understand something of the riddles of the world in which we live' (*Postscript to the Question of Lay Analysis*, *SE* 20: 253), which is the world of civilized sexual morality. To be sure, the portrayal of Nature as a womanly repository of 'riddles' to be solved and secrets in want of unveiling is not the only Romantic line traversing Freud's thinking system. The 'founding father' of psychoanalysis had benefited from a literary and philosophical education as well as a Jewish one, centered on the spiritual, before he turned 'scientific'. He joined the B'nai B'rith Masonic lodge in 1895 which held meetings every other week. He decided to study medicine after having heard a reading at a popular school of Goethe's essay on Nature (an essay written, in fact, by one of Freud's friends). The essay portrays Nature as a bounteous and generous Mother eager to let her favourite children explore her secrets. Later on, in his writings, Freud insisted on how the desire for knowledge is not 'natural' in the first place in children. Rather, curiosity – what arouses the desire for knowledge – constitutes the response of children to the initial sexual story which they are presented with by the parents.

However, for my purposes, this 'sexual story' is more to do with the excitement of the event of discovery and less with child sexuality.

As Didi-Hubermann aptly remarks, Freud compared Charcot, the 'inventor' of hysteria, to Cuvier's statue located in the Parisian Jardin des plantes, and that 'perhaps because Cuvier is petrified amidst the species to which he himself gave position and stature'. In addition, Freud went on to compare Charcot to Adam, 'before whom God paraded nosological entities for him to name'. Charcot became, in Didi-Hubermann's words, the doctor who 'isolated hysteria as a pure nosological object' (Didi-Hubermann 2003: 20.) with a distinct method which he set himself the task of following in order to attain a scientific theory of hysteria based on description, but also, and perhaps to a greater extent (ibid.), to the interpretation of facts, as Pierre Janet noted. Charcot's experimental method relied on 'provoked' observation, or in experimentation, which is essentially, observation 'put to work' (ibid.) Experiments being, in Claude Bernard's terms, 'beyond doctrine', they are the most reliable source of investigation, and are exempt from the demon of idées fixes, as well as from the burden of 'contradictory facts'. However, experiments, although aspiring for the absence of dogma, involve the *doxa* which is constituted by a set of more or less legitimate beliefs that make up the personal input derived from the *coupure épistemologique* which the scientist operates. As Didi-Hubermann makes clear, '[t]he fact that the experimental method is devised to defy such contradictions and, as an "art of putting facts to work", this method is as vested in an aesthetics as an ethics of the fact.' (2003: 20) Moreover, the stage-management that Charcot orchestrated was marked, in Didi Hubermann's words, by experimental intervention: 'Did not Charcot put something of himself into it?' (*op. cit.*, p. 23). That *something* was later termed transference by Freud.

Both Lacan and Freud compared the psychoanalytical cure to Oedipus's quest for, and discovery of, the truth about himself. Moreover, the source of the drive for scientific discovery within the medical profession is thought to lie in the scientist's anxiety. Curiosity, curing and caring as originating from this anxiety, are traced back to the pleasure of seeing. 'The fundamental instability of the pleasure of seeing, of *Schaulust*, between memory and threat' (Didi-Hubermann 2003: 27) calls for a questioning of the temporal structure of seeing which necessarily involves speculation. The ideal of this instability of the *Schaulust* is certainty, as Didi-Hubermann explains, 'which, in the always intersubjective moment of sight, emerges only as theft, and as anticipated; this is to say that it also denies the time that engenders it, denies memory and threat, inventing itself as a victory over time' (ibid.) In this reading, then, science is directly involved in the neurosis of certainty which uses sight as a means of self-saving as much as it does when 'saving' the image through a faithful reproduction of it. In this reading, therefore, the moment of sight presupposes a rapport between the observing and the recording doctor, on the one hand, and the ignorant or not directly knowing patient, which aims for certainty as a means of defying the body's mortality.

Possessing the Truth. Ideas, Visions, and The Question of Authority and Authorship

As I have briefly hinted on, the inhabitation of the body by ideas refers not just to a belief in the omnipotence of thought, as Freud examined with respect to superstitions, and

specifically, with the Wolf Man. Rather, it involves the likeliness to haunt inherent in the nature of ideas as spectres, phantoms, apparitions or fantasies. In the words of a late-Victorian writer, ideas are the ghosts 'of concrete experience' in that they are returning abstractions of experience. A signifier, or a chain of signifiers, may trigger the insistent presence of that which it signifies. Signifiers which are severed from their signified may appear like phantoms, and populate the psyche of a person afflicted with this distinct mode of inhabitation. Hysterics and obsessional neurotics were the likeliest victims to the haunting spectrality of ideas, the proof being the 'taking in' of language by the body ('somatization') during or after the traumatic event. What psychoanalysis set out to understand was a certain tendency of the body to fall a prey to 'ideas', that is, to mental representations or abstractions that mutilated, impeded, or held in abeyance the normal unfolding of the patient's psychic and bodily life. It tried to do so by positing (and this is a gesture that has been repeated for the past century) an elementary, archaic rapport between the patient and a fantasized mother or father, in short, a fantasized proximity between an imagined subject-and-object duality.

Psychoanalytical hermeneutics took up this metaphor of primitive attachment and used it in the *décryptage* of dead, hidden and revelatory meanings of literary texts. In doing so, it attempted to prove that dead figures were more alive than the living in that they were capable of taking possession of the patient's mind, and that lived temporality did not follow a straight line, but that instead, it was likely to form loops and curves of traumatic, disorderly and, at times, intractably insistent remembrance.

The claims psychoanalysis has raised to the status of science have been widely disputed ever since its inception. It has been observed that, although vehement against religion which was qualified by Freud as a form of obsessional neurosis, psychoanalysis had all the typical manifestations of religious dogma. Through its almost esoteric teachings and rituals of initiation, its trials and excommunication of heretical members, and its priestly gatherings (the Wednesday meetings) around the Freudian father figure, psychoanalysis strongly resembled just that widespread phenomenon which it wanted to overcome and, for all intents and purposes, supersede. Criticism was expressed on behalf of psychoanalytic science, where the latter is definable through a set of propositions having as an object the natural world and given to falsification (Popper 1963: 41). Karl Popper was above all concerned with demarcation as the methodological boundary that helps set up the opposition between science and pseudoscience. He took issue with the statements of Freud and Adler, refuting the theses that the two put forth as not good enough precisely because their 'verification' was encountered in an unlimited number of cases. Unlike the 'verification' that psychoanalytical theories were eventually entitled to lay claim to, scientific status demanded that the criterion of falsifiability, rather than verifiability or verification, should be introduced.

> I could not think of any human behaviour which could not be interpreted in terms of either [Freud's or Adler's] theory. It was precisely this fact – that they always fitted, that they were always confirmed – which in the eyes of their admirers constituted the strongest argument in favour of these theories. It began to dawn on me that this apparent strength was in fact their weakness.

The statement begs the question. Why should theory fit a human fact? One reply would be that paying customers are otherwise duped into believing that something is really 'the case', whereas in actual fact it is not, and therefore that a warped or downright false idea of truth is sold. Not being duped therefore amounts to not being robbed. However, patients with a weaker amount of 'will' were hoaxed because they took in Freud's early theories. Some of them were even cured, maybe by sheer 'belief'. However, what does the truth of the psychotherapeutic cure mean, when it is no longer a rational agency that decides for or against the sanctioning of a 'truth'? And what role do hypnosis and suggestibility play in this uncertain journey? Hypnosis was sold to suggestible patients as a therapeutic technique meant to rearticulate shattered subjectivities. Not having always stood the test of science in Popper's sense, it was abandoned by early psychoanalysis. Freud wrote about a case of successful use of hypnotism (Freud 1893) and subsequently gave up hypnosis precisely because it didn't always work. Here was one 'weakness' of this peculiar type of science, a flaw that Freud tried to circumvent.

In its late-nineteenth century version, psychoanalysis had truths to uncover and battles between the fictional and the scientific uses of metaphoric language to fight, mainly because of Freud's desire for collective recognition of the scientific truth of his practice and theory. Freud dreamed of a general decodability of all human gestures. After the break-up with Adler and Jung, while analysing side by side their respective theories, Freud berated the former for being 'radically false, […], marked by inconsistency and incoherence', but at least relying on 'a theory of drives', and the latter for being 'so obscure, unintelligible and confused so as to make it difficult to take up any position towards it.' (Weber 1982: 15). Whereas Adler's system had proven a total failure, Jung's was not even worth the name of a system, since its incoherent, fragmentary nature made it utterly unsystematic and therefore meaningless: Jung's work was more that of a visionary man and less that of a theorist. It had no story to tell, no one narrative to unfold, and therefore, it left no room for a discussion of its scientific value due to its lack of coherent scientific emplotment. The reason why I don't discuss Jung lies precisely in his defection of rational systematicity, and in his research based on what at times came close to mystical experience, unwelcomed in the circle of Enlightened researchers.

Freudian exegetes have attributed to him the much quoted yet nowhere to be found statement that 'If I had to live my life all over again, I would dedicate it to psychical research rather than to psychoanalysis'. It is important to underline the meaning of research for Freud, in this putatively real statement. Because psychoanalysis wanted itself to be a science based on research and experimentation, the framework within which live research was conducted was largely that of an almost exclusively discursive engagement (the talking cure, or rather, the narrative cure) which really presupposed very little interaction beyond words. It is in this sense that Ferenczi's active engagement with psychotic patients, while defying any logic of rational communication, opened a door (which was, perhaps symptomatically, immediately shut by the rest of the psychoanalytic movement) towards the possibility of exploring the porosity of intersubjectivity. The shift from the spectacular performances of subliminal phenomena such as hypnosis, somnambulism, impossible witnessing about events in which the witness had not participated, automatisms, and hysterically dramatic fits, to the quiet unfolding of the tête-à-tête encounter between acting patients and responsive doctors, did not leave out the uncanny

theatricality that characterized the *fin de siècle*. The séance, however private (Anna O. did speak about her 'private theatre'), included a dramatic and bodily dimension which psychoanalytic discourse was unable to suppress.

The question of truthfulness was inseparable from the existence of a narrative that stated things in a coherent, truthful, sustained manner. In so far as psychoanalysis lies right at the threshold between fiction and science, we can consider the whole of Freud's turn-of-the-century hermeneutic writings as part of a massive attempt to translate matters of fact into matters of interpretation. A brief account of Freud's personal trajectory within medical circles at the end of the nineteenth century can usefully sum up the politics involved in the question of truth, that is, both of the truth of the human body and the truth of the mind or psyche. Freud applied for a post as Privat Dozent in neuropathology and was granted the post in June 1885, after having worked as an ophthalmologist, and then as a dermatologist from March until June, when his paper on the acoustic nerve was published and well received (Ellenberger 1970: 435)

Being, as he was, in search of a method and of disciples, Freud sought confirmation of his theoretical insights with psychologists, physicians, writers (Anzieu 1986: 105). Janet criticised Freud at the International Congress of Medicine which took place in August, 1913, in London, for claiming he had discovered the cathartic method in the therapy of neuroses, and for interpreting dreams symbolically, as well as rooting the nature of neuroses in sexuality (Ellenberger 1970: 344). Freud's pursuit was of a kind different from the clinical practice of Janet. Freud was in search of a code that would be revealed during the narrative session. When, in 1878, he wrote in a letter to his friend, Wilhelm Knöpfmacher, 'I have moved to another laboratory and am preparing myself for a proper profession – mutilating animals or tormenting human beings – and I decide more and more in favour of the former alternative', he made a move that would in time be ironically replaced by a total change – from an abandonment of directly analyzable objects of study to the study of 'objects' he needed to dramatically engage with. Jones hastens to add, literalizing Freud's assertion, that 'he was the last man who could ever permit himself to be brutal or cruel, and he was extremely adverse to interfering with other people or striving to influence them.' But maybe what Freud had meant could be read as a statement about the necessary interference, on the part of the 'analyst', with potentially suffering minds, with archaic phantasms translating as symptoms that he would set about to expose by elucidating the nocturnal wish underlying them. (Jones vol 1: 58) 'Tormenting human beings', a tactic similar to that of 'shaking the Acheron' ('Acheronta movebo', I will shake Acheron, the exergue taken from Virgil, Freud's literary reference) would then read later as the operation he does on the body of the human being's psyche in order to treat bodily symptoms through 'ideas alone' (Jones 1953: 250). He later abandoned scientific work in the laboratory in favour of intersubjective engagement with the patients and writing. This further change was one from potential success and recognition within scientific circles which the analyses of animals would eventually secure, to the uncertainty of speculation about humans. Freud tried to account for the desire for recognition with reference to his own quest for disciples, status and influence. Ellenberger richly documents his attempts to acquire scientific acknowledgement and the controversial meanderings, including the debate about

whether or not he used bribery as well as his patients' money and influence, which led to his accession to the title of Extraordinary Professor in 1902 (Ellenberger 1970: 452–54).

Abandonment and relegation to the status of an insane outcast or quirky 'artist' (as Meynert once called him), which for all intents and purposes only spelled alienation in late-Victorian England, was what Freud shrank back from. Freud abandoned the effort aimed at explaining the workings of the mental apparatus in terms of functions, and took up the notion of tendency, as 'operating in the service of a function whose business it is to free excitation or to keep the amount of excitation in it constant or to keep it as low as possible' (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE xviii: 62). In that sense, 'binding' is considered to be 'a preliminary function that prepares the excitation for its final elimination in the pleasure of discharge' (Brooks 1984: 107). It is therefore no longer a question of functions, but rather, of tendencies, of 'drives', as Freud termed them, which have an 'end' or a 'goal' and which, on their way to the final 'discharge', are seized in various 'vicissitudes' (as the English translation reads). The positing of a 'goal', 'end' or 'destiny' (*Schicksal*) for the drives (*Triebe*, drives, rather than instincts) aligns Freud with speculative philosophy and with a certain type of narratology, rather than with the biology-ridden scientific discourse he had practiced in his first writings on the 'psychic apparatus'. In addition, it aligns him with a certain conception of narrative aiming at a final cathartic denouement, as Brooks makes clear (Brooks 2006: 332).

Therefore, we can regard Freud's theory of drives as intimately connected to a theory of emplotment in which the plot, therefore the substance of argumentation, relies on the unfolding of a narrative aiming at credibility, persuasion, cogency, and especially that unique capacity for 'selling' which resides in the inexplicable appeal which fiction exerts upon a reader that 'buys' the story. Simultaneously, the shift from function to tendency involves a shift from the possibility of truthfulness (and for a scientific theory Popper referred to when he qualified psychoanalysis as pseudoscientific because non-falsifiable) to the hope for discursive coherence in thought which creates meaning, instead of discovering it.

Theory was therefore a site of investment and dispute, and around it there emerged an erotics occasioned by the technologies of fantasized distant communication invented at the fin-de-siècle. We could regard the battles taking place between the various proponents of psychoanalytical theories as testifying to an appeal of truthfulness which included a struggle for authority and a craving for a community that would share this veracity. Psychoanalysis was 'born' out of the spirit of the pseudosciences in order to contest the aliveness of living figures and the still deadness of the dead, and the difference between reality and fantasy. It was 'generated' by a long history of dynamic psychiatry which itself originated from Mesmer, in Henri Ellenberger's reading. Its love-and-hate relationship with psychology was delimited by the scope and ambitions of the human sciences which sought to handle the singularity of individual cases ('individuum est ineffabile') in a credible and creditable manner. This singularity required more than a detached science of the psyche, however analytical. Dilthey's attempt to delimit the *Geisteswissenschaften* from the *Naturwissenschaften* served the purpose of illustrating, as Sonu Shamdasani comments, 'this division and this strife', i.e. the irreconciliable nature of their respective objects of study.

> While natural sciences analyzed causal connections in the processes of nature, human sciences attempted to lay hold of the singular and individual, and the uniformities which shaped it. The most basic discipline of the human sciences was psychology, and its special subject was the individual. Until now, the problem was that this central position "has been occupied only by the vague generalizations of experience of life, creations of poets, descriptions of character and destinies by men of the world, and by indefinite truths which the historian weaves into his narrative" (1883, 95). Psychology was to replace these, and hence provide a firm basis for the human sciences in general. (Shamdasani 2003: 38)

The specific way in which the human sciences attempted to 'lay hold of the singular and individual' had something in common with the attempt to understand the scandal of these singularities in a language of normalcy. Freud's psychoanalysis itself developed out of this diffuse attempt at understanding the powers of the mind, but it broke up with it out of a desire to institute psychoanalysis as a science in its own right. Being, as it was, tributary to a nineteenth century conception of the mind as some positive entity that can be grasped as one grasps inert matter, because it lends itself to description by obeying certain physical laws, psychoanalysis failed to give an accurate, comprehensive pattern of understanding consciousness, and this took place in spite of that unique psychoanalytical contrivance which the unconscious represented. The desire for the discovery of patterns was the constant theme of psychoanalytical inquiry which relates it with the human sciences and with literary studies in which intuition and speculation are indispensible working tools. Freud was in search of principles which should lead to original research and, more importantly, to the discovery of a code secretly underpinning the mechanism of the human mind.

Freud's choice of no longer 'dissecting' cadavers, but of turning instead to human suffering heard out through their stories, posed a complex question which is itself in need of analysis, and which involves the quest for form, desire, and narrative, and the fear of fragmentation. In choosing to replace hypnosis with verbal therapy *http://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=27a3cea14b&view=lg&msg=11a72ca96abe5767/11a72ca96abe5767__ftn23#11a72ca96abe5767__ftn23*, Freud claimed he was 'following an obscure intuition' (Jones 1953: 270) which made him listen, silently and, as Jones remarks, rather 'passively' (269) to the flow of speech, until the narrative meaningfully reached a point of 'resistance' which would lead to the source of repression of certain drives, and to their replacement (or to the replacement of their painful memories) by symptoms.

Originality, and Science's Anxiety of Being Inhabited by Pseudoscience

The origin of that obscure intuition can be traced back to Freud's belief that the free flow of speech, as the free flow of thoughts, expressed on paper or recorded in the analyst's mind, would eventually make new and original sense. Freud had read in an essay written by Ludwig Börne in 1823 and entitled *The Art of becoming an Original Writer in Three Days* that there was a practical prescription of how to write originally. One started by simply writing down

whatever came to mind on a few sheets of paper, and, after three days of successive writing stages, the unexpected outcome of one's originality would make itself shown. 'Write what you think of yourself, of your women, of the Turkish war, of Goethe, of the Fonk criminal case, of the Last Judgement, of those senior to you in authority – and when the three days are over you will be amazed at what novel and startling thoughts have welled up in you. That is the art of becoming an original writer in three days' (quoted in Jones 1953: 270). The question of originality and creativity in relation to the fantasised presence of another will be expanded on in what follows.

Freud's decision to abandon the technique of hypnosis was part of a rationalist attempt to make separations between science, conducive to truth and progress, and entertainment:

> One reason Freud gave up hypnosis was not that it worked too well, but rather that he couldn't get it to work well enough, and that he risked losing his credibility and authority by his failure. If certain suggestions (for instance, the Oedipus complex) have successfully accrued to the collective and individual psyches of our culture, then simply pointing out that these suggestions were based on the mistaken impositions of one turn-of-the-century Viennese nerve specialist who hated his father and loved his mother, will not necessarily undo their effects. Nor will it explain why this particular suggestive fantasy 'took' – had the far-reaching consequences it did, while another (Fliess's belief in male cyclicality, for instance) did not. (Thurschwell 2001: 6)

Scientific recognition, itself analysable as a quest for the certainty of knowing, was sanctioned by the particular authorities of the times, therefore by the way in which the historically-situated discourse of the scientific community approved or disapproved of the tentative truth advanced by the scientist. This tradition of thinking is psychoanalysis's heritage which can be situated between romanticism (including romantic medicine) and the philosophy of suspicion. Dualism, for instance, and dialectical thinking which led Freud to posit two arch-principles governing the human psyche (Eros and Thanatos, as organizing and, respectively, disorganizing principles), constituted important thinking reflexes passed on to Freud by the German philosophical vocabulary he was exposed to.

It has been argued by English psychoanalyst Charles Rycroft that the probable reason for which Freud assumed there were two groups of instincts, rather than a plurality of them, and that they were opposed, rather than complementary, was his conceptual tribute to the dialectical ancestry of German thinkers such as Hegel and Marx, which shaped his 'linguistic habits of thought' and made him incomprehensible to a reader educated in the English tradition of empiricist leanings (Rycroft 1985: 5). It is also what renders him more interesting as a gothic theorist of the conflict between the ego and the id. His dyadic terminology (Eros and Thanatos, a 'binary opposition' which he shared with Nietzsche , the ego and the id, the conscious and the unconscious, to which a third *topos* was added, namely that of the preconscious) allows for a reading of his narratives of the psyche in parallel with fin-de-siècle gothic scenarios of mental conflict in which potential causes for the neurotic disposition of characters were sought

that in some but not all cases could be traced back to genealogical disturbances and aberrations, therefore to hereditary degeneration.

Freud was held to be a genuine proponent of 'the influence of mental conflict on the disposition of neurotic illness', against contemporary theories of 'hereditary degeneracy' (Cioffi 1973: 22). But he was indebted to a theoretical collusion between evolutionary theories (Lamarck and Darwin) and 'romantic medicine', with its conception of 'inward form pressing for realization' (Iago Galdston, in Cioffi 1973: 112).

The hypothesis that it was not external causes, but rather internal 'order' that dictated biological evolution, was inherent in early psychoanalytical thought, with its polarization of external and internal disposition. This internal order, however, was hardly assessable by mathematical formulae, and the lack of precision when using a mixture of terms borrowed from a variety of registers ultimately led to collective mistrust about the tenet(s) of psychoanalysis, which was a discipline seeking to name its newly-discovered illnesses using a vocabulary derived from mythology as well as from an obligatory positivist jargon. While the mythological, poetic and speculative vocabulary, along with his friends' theoretical companionship, fuelled his production of narratives of the psyche, his forensic background provided a positive basis on which a systematic approach of the *mystery* of brain functioning was possible.

It would then matter less whether Freud's accounts of the 'real' origin of the symptom are true or not according to a definition of truth as equivalent to provable certainty, and it would matter considerably more that the assistance which the psychoanalytical séance provides in order for the patient to enhance his or her experiential capacities is more in tune with the indeterminacy of definitions and concepts in the sphere of the humanities, among which those of literature and culture are far from being the least problematic.

My own approach is eclectic. Samuel Weber's 1999 *Legend of Freud* offers an image of the 'father of psychoanalysis' which is much more illuminating, to my mind, than either the encomiastic accounts or the denigrations which Freud has been subject to on both sides of the Atlantic. By placing Freud in a tradition of philosophical thinking derived from Kant, Weber's own account opened up fresh ways of thinking that started from philosophy and included important questions of repression, repetition, and drives which psychoanalysis raised. Instead of situating this assimilation and acknowledgement of Freud as precious intellectual heritage within a discursively rational philosophical framework, as does Ricoeur, Weber chooses instead the alignment with literary theory, and reads Freud in the light of Kantian thinking as self-validated through coherence:

> To qualify as 'thinking', a thought must not necessarily have "a corresponding object" in reality, but rather only not contradict itself. On this basis Kant will argue that an idea such as 'freedom' can be thought, but not 'known' theoretically, in the sense of being identified with a determinable entity or action determinable in terms of space and time. Freedom can, however, he will conclude, be known 'practically', but not 'theoretically'.

This stance would then lead to an utter separation between thinking and science, in that thinking would only concern itself with its conditions of possibility, and not with the actual existence of its objects. The old dictum 'individuum est ineffabile', which Carlo Ginzburg commented on at some length in relation to science and pseudo-science from Galileo to the late-nineteenth century 'evidential paradigm', is apposite for my discussion of mediumship, hypnosis and testimonial, qua mesmeric effects occurring in fin-de-siècle fictional and 'pseudoscientific' writings.

The literary hermeneutics practised by Freud is a common point reuniting psychoanalysis with literary theory and reading based on interpretation, rather than on demonstration, or on understanding, rather than on explanation. The two, however, are not simply distinguishable. Before becoming philosophically reinterpreted (for instance, by Ricoeur, with the help of phenomenology and Hedeggerian hermeneutics), and then appropriated by the humanities as part of literary criticism, because of its hermeneutical aim, psychoanalysis shared with literary genres such as mystery and the gothic, a drive for evidence leading towards discovery that has been examined by Carlo Ginzburg. In fact, the methodological questioning which the close attention paid to literary and linguistic or verbal form entails has made cultural historians stress the predicament of the object of study in cultural history.

Peter Burke's account is revelatory in that sense. His is a concern with the path which the cultural historian has to follow when undertaking a content-analysis (for instance, a marked occurrence of a historical phenomenon, such as a set of practices or a set of ideas, or both at once), and which borders on analysis based on the technique of close reading, advocated by literary theory and worth adopting when performing the hermeneutic leap from quantitative documenting to positing a theory (Burke 2004). Likewise, as stated, it takes up Carlo Ginzburg's contention that disciplines relying on 'evidential' and 'conjectural' premises, such as medicine, but also, the detective paradigm which includes Freud's quest for the symptom and Sherlock Holmes' quest for the clues leading to the murderer, are disciplines that focus on 'the individual cases, situations, and documents, precisely because they are individual' (Ginzburg 1992: 106).

Being qualitative, they do not meet the criteria that for Galileo made science be what it was, that is, the identity of a result over a series of repeated observations of a phenomenon, measuring, calculating and therefore, quantifying. 'Pseudosciences', as these 'disciplines' were otherwise called, can be seen as discursive strategies of passing off personal *Weltanschauungen* for generally-valid theories. Carlo Ginzburg's 'evidential paradigm' relies on historical research which foregrounds formal analysis in that it tackles, along Foucauldian lines, late-Victorian fictional and non-fictional (pseudoscientific) writing as a body of writings which shared the content of their questioning as a consequence of sharing the form; or rather, that the two feed into each other to the point of there being no longer any point in trying to neatly differentiate between them.

As we know from the embattled history of phrenology and phreno-mesmerism which vied for scientific recognition and were eventually denied this recognition, the only criterion for truth-testing in psychoanalysis is the patient's testimony. Borch-Jacobsen observes that equating the patient with Oedipus essentially comes down to equating analysis with accession to

self-knowledge. A successful analysis leads to knowledge, rather than to action or passion or affective communication (Borch-Jacobsen 1995: 104). The process of knowing follows an ascending curve that ultimately leads to identification of oneself or rather, recognition, rather than misrecognition, with the analyst acting as a mirror that reflects the dialectical process of eventual reconciliation. In Lacan's own words from the *Stade du mirroir comme formateur de la fonction du je*,

> Dans le recours que nous réservons du sujet au sujet, la psychanalyse peut accompagner le patient jusqu'à la limite extatique du 'Tu es cela', où se révèle à lui le chiffre de la destinée mortelle, mais il n'est pas en notre seul pouvoir de praticien de l'amener à ce moment où commence le véritable voyage.

The 'ecstatic limit' of recognition, Borch-Jacobsen comments, is not the ecstasy of the self (*le moi*) as (mis)recognised in the mirror-image, bur rather, an *ek-stasis* of Heideggerian resonance that throws the subject into nothingness and sends it straight to death (*ibid.*). Oedipus expiates his passion for knowledge with, as a result, his eyes falling off, rather like scales, except the scales fall from his eyes alongside the organs of sight themselves. The recognition moment coincides with the moment in which the mirror is broken and one comes to terms with the 'void of one's absence', thus progressing and moving over and forward, in a quasi-Hegelian scenario. In Freudian terms, this process translates as that which leads the patient to an overcoming of an initial passionate attachment (an oedipal one, as termed by Freud after the 1897 discovery of the Oedipus complex), and an attempt to find livable replacements for this loss.

The intimacy staged by the psychoanalytical séance stands for just this kind of transferential framework. Within it, the subject which, according to Lacan, is a consummate mime, rehearsing over and over again the same traditional role assigned to him by the family triangle, is supposed to act and reproduce the symptom, until she manages to remember it, act it out, and overcome it. Empathy in transference does not exclude, indeed it is destined to bring about, the sanity of separation as far as the fantasized psychic resonances are concerned, and the aim of the therapy is to reinstate the *ratio* of rational speech as the arch-medium of inter-individual experience. The analytical situation, Thomas Szasz complains, 'stimulates, and at the same time frustrates, the development of an intense human relationship. […] The analytic situation requires that each participant have strong experiences, and yet not act on them' (cited in Krämer 2008: 205). It is a relationship very much based on mastering one's feelings, in which the tension between the neutrality of the analyst and the lived intimacy of the rapport, between impersonal abstinence and personal engagement, as Sybille Krämer points out (p. 205), is kept and cultivated.

The purpose of the cultivation and of the refinement of this tension is the very enhancement of the quality of sensibility in general, and therefore a certain affirmation of orderly mental behaviour equivalent to an affirmation of a clarity and distinctness of taste and perception.

If knowledges (*savoirs*) are however regarded through the effects they generate as well as represent, rather than through the theoretical claims they make, a different account can be

formulated, which stands knowledge itself on its head. In so far as knowledges (the word is a translation of the French 'savoirs') can be regarded as 'effects of a drive for mastery, a visceral force or impulse to appropriate and subdue, a will to power' (Grosz 1995: 37), they don't represent, but rather distort, or 'misrecognize themselves as', 'interior, merely ideas, thoughts, and concepts, forgetting and repressing their corporeal genealogies and processes of production.' They are regarded, or regard themselves, as products of the mind, instead of what they 'really' are, which is emanations of forces, and bodily impulses or drives. (*ibid.*; also, Nietzsche's *Will to Power* 1968: 461).

It is along these lines that I pursue the problematic of truth in psychoanalysis as a complex notion that is not subsumable, in fact, under either the 'evidential paradigm', or the falsifiability of scientific statements and theories. Instead of pursuing the argument advanced by Carlo Ginzburg that links together Sherlock's and Freud's separate but similar demarches, I enquire into the psychoanalytical 'reorganization' of truth, and especially of truth as revealed in the intimacy of the narrative cure, where the term narrative is of utmost importance. The profile of the self which emerges out of the séance corresponds to the coherence of the narrative which is articulated in the encounter with a resonant mind.

The humanities, and the more recent tradition of literary and critical theory, are similarly involved in a process of creating meaning which is as uncertain as it is open-ended, which thrives on the momentary collapse of theory occasioned by its literary object, and which includes gaps in meaning of the kind which Leo Bersani sees as anticipated in Freud's positing of states of 'disabled consciousness' (Bersani 1983: 6). Freudian accounts of the body, of the 'phases' which human beings undergo during sexual growth, his dynamic interpretation of literary texts (Jensen's *Gradiva*, for instance), his literary and symptomatological readings of jokes and slips of tongue, of civilization and religion, can then be read and interpreted less from the point of view of their truth-value, where truth equals certainty, and more from the point of view of their internal coherence, qua narrative, philosophical inroads made upon the tradition of speculative philosophy in a language which claims to be positively scientific, subversive anticipations of feminist criticism.

It is this multi-focused direction linking psychoanalysis with the interpretation of literary texts that will guide the present study. The various stances I take are informed by readings in literary theory of the kind inspired by deconstruction, which can be shattering as a form of discourse serving both the affirmation of desire for truth as accuracy of an account, and the act of mourning and overcoming it. The outcome of the cure is 'rational insight' involving 'emotional, intersubjective, and unconscious (e.g. transferential) components' (Frosh 1998: 32). If the word 'rational' however seems to allude too much to the association between psychoanalysis and science, rather than to that between psychoanalysis and literary hermeneutics, it can be added that the understanding which this 'rational insight' brings about is not merely cognitive understanding, because it implies both intellectual understanding of the dynamics of the patient's psychological disposition, and an emotional change in the patient's state of mind. Therapists are affected by the affective resonance involved in the cure as much as patients, but the imperative of dominating one's feeling rather than acting on them is part

and parcel of the 'art' of psychoanalysis. An art or a 'technique' which early therapists sought to master, and that to not always felicitous effects.

Doxa, Dogma and Doctrine. The Politics of Psychoanalytical Teachings

Rumours, jealousies, and claims that colleagues have failed to grasp one's work, were occasioned by the very secretive nature of the talkative cure, where recoveries were not made public until the publication of the doctor's notes on the case. The spectacular dimension of the cure which Charcot used, and which mesmerists advertised, was replaced by the one-to-one analytical rapport based on transference. The 'results' of the transferential cure were made public in lectures. Teaching psychoanalysis was seen by Freud as an "impossible profession" (Freud 1937, 248), precisely because of the transferential rapport which was crucial to the séance. Pedagogy, on the other hand, was given to 'projective mastery', as David Wagenknecht comments (1977: 297–98). The problem is more complex than that, as it refers to the exhibitionistic element which the performance of teaching involves, as well as to the validity of the teachings.

Laplanche signalled this delicate issue in one of the introductions to his lectures, by announcing his partisanship in favour of teaching psychoanalysis at the University. This gesture would then contribute to the institutionalization of psychoanalysis as belonging to the University, but would simultaneously avoid that psychoanalysis should become an esoteric business or an instantiation of the 'secret society', the latter being itself a form of institutionalization. Freud's emphasis on the purity and disinterestedness of his teachings was a cautionary measure designed to 'unmaster the master' or disclose the claims laid to authority by the father-figure (in Lacan's punning statement therefore, 'Les non-dupes errent').

As Wagenknecht insists, since 'the acknowledgments [...] Freud is seeking are fundamentally not acknowledgments of [his] allegations so much as of the purity of [his] pedagogical involvements, it is worth being reminded that seeing in a pedagogical environment can never be walled off from the implication of being seen to see', therefore from a narcissistic and exhibitionistic component. In addition, this is an implication almost coextensive with the history of the Cartesian cogito, whose evidence points to a securing of the world. 'Je me voyais me voir', the line of Valery's Jeune Parque then, epitomizes the modern visual project centered on the subject as the object of sight. Here, Lacan's explanation from the Seminaire (S XI, 76) illustrates this point:

> [D]ans le je me vois me voir, il n'est point sensible que je sois … gagné par la vision. Bien plus, les phénoménologues ont pu articuler avec précision … que je vois au dehors, que la perception n'est pas en moi, qu'elle est sur les objets qu'elle appréhende. Et pourtant, je saisis le monde dans une perception qui semble relever de l'immanence du je me vois me voir. Le privilège du sujet paraît s'établir ici de cette relation réflexive bipolaire qui fait que, dès lors que je perçois, mes représentations m'appartiennent.

Yet there is more to it than just public showing-off, as the question of knowledge, as much as that of understanding, was itself affectively invested or 'cathected', and for present purposes, it is this erotics of knowledge, understanding, and recognition as mediated by the publicity of knowledge that counts.

As Jack J. Spector's review of the recently published exchange of letters between Freud and Ferenczi makes clear, Freud acted like a possessive and jealous star, who 'could accept disciples who split off only to the extent that they continued to orbit around him (as Rank and Ferenczi did for a while), but independent stars like Adler or Jung were not tolerated within the solar system.'(1996: 366) In fact, François Roustang has proved to what extent the story which Freud came up with to account for the primal horde and the killing of the father mirrors his own fears of being betrayed, divested of the originality of his discoveries, and theoretically murdered. (Thurschwell 1999:160) It is well known that Freud refused to read Nietzsche just because the latter anticipated his ideas (*ibid.*), just as he was writing to George Groddeck about 'the trivial ambition of claiming originality and priority'.

The need for recognition in scientific circles or rather, the need for a 'movement' or a community of researchers was covertly expressed by Freud's permanent quest for intellectual friendship of an intensely erotic kind. In Didier Anzieu's words, recognition passes through several stages, and one of them is the creation of a work and the 'immediacy of understanding' which is fantasized by two kindred spirits. According to Didier Anzieu, the road to creativity is barred by two successive resistances. The first one appears as inertia of the kind that determines the future creator to conform to acquired or inherited, or already existing knowledge about what is to be created. 'To invent is to contradict; it requires us to forget knowledge acquired relatively late in life and shared with many others, to delve, alone, into some early stratum of our psyche, to recall a personal image that is stored there, and to make that image blossom into a discovery of a work of art (Anzieu 1986: 111). The second kind of resistance relates to the fear of the creator that he or she will not be able to carry through the stages, one after another, and to his or her doubts as to the value of his/ her work. Isolation helps to overcome the first type of resistance, whereas the second presupposes the existence of another person, 'with whom the potential creator 'shares his secret'', as couples such as Conrad-Ford Maddox Ford, Montaigne – La Boetie, and Freud – Fliess or Freud – Ferenczi, demonstrated.

The role of the second person is vital. While the relationship which gets to be established between the two is 'always of an erotic nature', it may end in sexual intercourse or not. Essentially, it involves 'the immediacy of understanding', on the part of the one partner, of the idea which the other attempts to communicate. Didier Anzieu coined the term 'resonance of fantasies' to account for this particular type of relationship. This immediacy of understanding also relies on mutual trust and on the deferral of the capacity for 'reality-testing'. The task of reality-testing is deferred to the friend who plays the role of an affectionate mother. That role is present in the séance as well. The subject theoretically dissected and exposed for the practical purposes of the advancement of psychiatric learning is in psychoanalysis the one to be helped to attain subjecthood and rid herself of pathological symptoms by the therapist, rather than the one to be classified and prescribed treatment. In the psychoanalytical séance, affective bonds are enacted, and roles prescribed, which are largely dependent on the emotional

'investment' of both the analyst and the analysand. However, Freud aimed at practising the very opposite of reassurance of, or compliance with the sick patient. The work of the analyst is not, in Peter Gay's terms, 'the cool work of the surgeon', but rather, the well-balanced affective investment on the analysist's part, directed at making the patient strong enough to fight her symptoms and restore a fairly manageable state of (well)being (Gay 1985: 304).

Science, Pseudoscience, and Occult Knowledge

Freud seems to have been extremely reluctant to embrace occultism, considering it 'dangerous' and, in Jung's case, even intractable, because not amenable to systematic reasoning. Yet although occultism and psychical research have been considered an embarrassing side-interest that occupied serious, analytical thinkers such as Freud, James, and Bergson, the questions that psychical and spiritualist research tried to solve related to problems of the self, of intersubjective communication and of the possibility of there being alternative media of intersubjective communication within a rationalistic paradigm of thinking:

> Teletechnologies such as the telegraph and the telephone suggested that science could help annihilate distances that separate bodies and minds from each other. When these new technologies begin suffusing the public imagination from the mid-nineteenth century on they appear to support the claims of the spiritualist mediums; talking to the dead and talking on the phone both hold out the promise of previously unimaginable contact between people. Intimacy begins to take on new, distinctively modern forms.

This possibility was envisioned at the turn of the century as emerging from the proliferation of mediumistic practices, of automatic writing, and of occult beliefs seeking to ground themselves in rational principles in order to gain the credibility and coherence which science enlisted. Max Weber hypothesized that instrumental rationality is inseparable from the complex development of the modern social order (Weber 2003), triggering affective renunciations which were hard to overcome. Psychoanalysis emerges during a period of waning belief in the virtues of science as a key to happiness, or as a solution for the problems which the civilized individual faced. Freud was absorbed by the secrets of the human mind which the study of phenomena such as telepathy, mediumship, and sensitivity to hypnosis could uncover, while denying that they had an 'objective' existence. However, the question was more how a fantastic, non-objective existence is invested by the 'libido', rather than whether personal fantasies could be said to be objectively existent.

It is interesting to note how many definitions were produced, concepts invented, sides taken, and parties proclaimed, out of what has been seen as the scope for rivalry which the question of the 'subliminal' forms of 'consciousness', Frederic Myers's coinage, raised at the end of the nineteenth century within the intellectual circles adjacent to the Society for Psychical research. It has been noted that what made Freud decide to put forth his theory of the unconscious in 'A Note on the Unconscious in Psycho-Analysis', was, again, the awareness of a close affinity between his own system and Fredrick Myers' theorization of the

subliminal self. The struggle for ideas and the affective investments of ideas appear to reconfirm the intricate erotics at work in the turn-of-the-century theorists of alternative modes to consciousness. As James Keeley notes,

> [T]his recognition [...] reveal[s] surprisingly close textual relations between "A Note" and Myers's work, especially Myers's 1894 essay "The Mechanism of Hysteria." These close textual relations, once recognized, [...] in turn open up an entirely new dimension of significance for "A Note on the Unconscious in Psycho-Analysis." More than Freud's first systematic theorization of the unconscious, this essay turns out to be a crucial text in the history of psychology: the textual site of Freud's liberating himself from the influence of nineteenth-century psychology, as represented by the SPR's psychology of the subliminal self, and his orienting himself – and the discipline of psychology as well – toward future developments that are recognizable from today's perspective as the characteristics of twentieth-century psychology. (Keeley 2001: 772)

Although Freud's transference was based, as a concept, on the possibility of fantasies being shared due to substitute objects of thought and feeling which made the patient relate to the doctor, this hypothesis of though-transference proves extremely subversive to psychoanalytical thinking, especially if one takes into account Freud's theatrical rebuttal of occultism, as it emerges from Jung's transcription of their dialogue on this subject:

> I can still recall vividly how Freud said to me, "My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. This is the most essential thing of all. You see, we must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark." He said that to me with great emotion. . . . In some astonishment I asked him, "A bulwark – against what?" To which he replied "Against the black tide of mud" – and here he hesitated for a moment, then added – "of occultism."

Freud referred to occultism as a 'black tide of mud'. The meaning of that sentence is still to be explored, especially in light of the desire for coherence and explicitness which Freud sought to uphold in his writings. He felt dangerously close to occultist beliefs, as he felt in relation to philosophers such as Nietzsche, whom he avoided precisely because he feared his own ideas might have been *influenced* by Nietzsche. The first psychoanalytical murmurings are contemporaneous with the proliferation of spiritualist practices, occultist circles, and the Theosophical Society boasting Buddhist affiliation, yet disturbingly given to theatrical practices of the kind which problematise, in retrospect, the distinction between play-acting and seriousness, questioning the framing of the practice itself, and, by extension, the rules whereby rituals abide, as well as the structure of ritualistic regulations in late-Victorian occultist circles, as exemplified by the practice of spiritualist and theosophical mediumship.

James Keeley argues that, with the elaboration of 'A Note on the Unconscious', Freud situated himself at a radical distance from the hypnosis-based pursuit of the Society for Psychical research, and instituted both the science of psychoanalysis and the concept of the

unconscious as precise tools with which to operate on the human mind, with specific reference to hysteria. Thus the unconscious became a 'conception . . . of which we are not aware, but the existence of which we are nevertheless ready to admit on account of other proofs or signs.' If the Society for Psychical research offers 'a quotidian archive of occult experiences' (Luckhurst, in 2004: 197) for scholars of the fin-de-siècle to explore, Freud's conceptual incursion into this uncanny type of existence, whose signals still need to be described, offers a conceptual framework with which these occult-like experiences can be brought under a notion and analysed. Both rely on 'a set of *doxai*, a shadow-record of beliefs and semi-legitimate knowledges that circulated precisely because they dealt with material that failed to find sanction in orthodox channels of information' (Luckhurst 2004: 199). The 'naïve' character of these knowledges comes from the fact that they are all located 'beneath the required level of cognition and scientificity'

These 'knowledges of erudition' can be seen as forming up a virtual network, indeed a discursive network, in Friedrich Kittler's terminology, because they are, essentially, significant amounts of rumour signaling the blurring of borders between scientific knowledge and popular belief at the end of the positivist nineteenth century.

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