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Significant Returns: Lacan, Masculinity, and Modernist Traditions

by

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores the grounding of Lacanian psychoanalysis in the intellectual and artistic movements of the modernist period, and reads masculine anxiety in the modernist novel in terms of Lacan’s work on psychosis, masochism, and narcissism. The thrust of my dissertation is twofold. The first half aims at a reinterpretation of Jacques Lacan’s work in light of his early intellectual engagements with Freud, G.G. de Clérambault, and Heidegger, and as such establishes the basis for Lacan’s early work in the traditions of Freudian dream analysis, experimental French psychiatry, and existential phenomenology. The second half, starting with a discussion of Lacan’s third seminar, *The Psychoses*, and D.P. Schreber’s *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, examines Henry James’s enigmatic 1901 novella *The Sacred Fount* as a meditation on the uniquely masculine anxiety over negotiating same-sex intellectual relationships, manifested as psychosis. The subsequent chapters on Proust, Sacher-Masoch, and Joyce, read with the later Lacan of Seminars XX and available sections of XXIII, explore and flesh out possible Lacanian readings of masochism and narcissism with regard to paternal (or pseudo-paternal) relationships.
The major theme of my dissertation is that of vexed intellectual relationships between men separated by generational difference. Situating Lacan's discourse in the context of the modernist period, I illustrate how Lacan's intellectual apprenticeships and encounters (real and imagined) play out in his mature work, beginning with the first seminars of the 1950s. With numerous polymathic allusions, jokes, and non sequiturs, Lacan attempts a "return" and a self-conscious rewriting of Freud from the perspective of a rank outsider. Pre-emptively exiled from the Freudian school for having been born too late, in the wrong country, and medically trained outside of the psychoanalytic tradition. By the same token, texts such as Memoirs of My Nervous Illness and Ulysses depict the psychic contortions of sidestepping Oedipal conflict through elaborate delusions and blunt disavowals of the father's potency. In sum, the trajectory of modernist intellectual life, especially psychoanalysis, turns on tendentious and broken relationships between teachers and students, as technical and artistic disciplines struggled to keep pace with cultural upheavals of the period.
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Introduction

Paternity, in contrast to maternity, does not fix a man with the burdens and moral responsibility, or the momentary frustrations of women, all experienced while milk joyously flows from her body for the baby, giving primordial nourishment. The insecurity of biological paternity is tempered, in general, by the certitude of his paternity, confirmed before society, if not before the bureaucracy of the state within which the child is declared. However, at least in the actual state of our mores, quick, triumphant coition with a young woman, glorifying the phallic, does not authorize him: it must suffer the rival, and officially, love the intruder.¹

—Françoise Dolto

This dissertation explores the modernist period through two major avenues, those of psychoanalysis and the novel. More specifically, it takes as its major theme the distinctive absence of the modernist father. This motif plays out in various ways in both analytic writings and novels such as *Ulysses*, where Stephen Dedalus, upon spying his dissolute father Simon lurching around town in the “Wandering Rocks” episode, feels relief that no one ever think that they are related: Stephen feels free to deny his father since paternity is a relationship that exists largely by virtue of family name, resemblances, responsibility, and trust, as opposed to the maternal relationship, which is built on blood, the breast, and the umbilical cord. The moment is symbolic of modernism itself, in that Stephen makes (as did Joyce) a conscious, deliberate break with the past. At the same time, denial of the past is a deliberate invitation to repression, and as Joyce pointedly illustrates in the novel, the revenants of one’s personal history never seem to disappear. In the final analysis, the narrative of modernist intellectual and artistic movements is built on a series of decisive breaks with tradition, often between mentors and protégés, and almost always with manifestly traumatic results. To be sure, a hidden
history of conflict and repression has defined the psychoanalytic tradition from its very beginning, and marks it as being a quintessentially modernist intellectual movement.

In all of the texts that shall be treated in the following pages, the common thread of relations between men often centers around the question of insulating oneself from trauma, potential trauma, or sexual anxiety by indulging in various forms of fantasy, which often involve the attempt to recoup a prelapsarian past. It is for this reason that I have chosen as a main topic the intellectual path of Lacan, whose reinterpretations of Freud and others are tinctured by his position in the pupil master dyad, and the psychoanalytic reading of paranoia, masochism, and narcissism. Particularly in the case of the aforementioned analytic pathologies, the material I shall discuss here relates to a stripe of distinctly masculine anxiety over the absence, not presence, of a father figure, and the reactions (delusion, rationalization, self-historicization, hagiography) of the male subject when confronted with this anxiety-making situation. This dissertation also explores the grounding of Lacanian psychoanalysis in the intellectual and artistic movements of the modernist period, and reads masculine anxiety in the modernist novel related to Lacanian themes associated with psychosis, masochism, and narcissism.

Focusing on his roots in the French intellectual milieu of the 20s and 30s, I reinterpret Lacan’s early work by examining the shadow cast by his intellectual fore-bears, Freud, Clérambault, and Heidegger. In turn, Lacan’s psychoanalytic work casts a new light on these delusional masculine anxieties as depicted in the novels of Henry James, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce.
The first chapter considers the Lacanian imperative to “return” to Freud. This is not a simple proposition as one might expect. Far from being hollow sloganeering, Lacan’s lecture “La Chose Freudienne” is a strange meditation on the discourse of Freud comprising the animated corpse from Freud himself. The text itself focuses on Freud’s turn towards the death drive, and posits this as the ultimate limit of Freud’s work: the mystery of death. The principal problem that Lacan sets himself is that of how to make Freud speak in his physical, analytical absence. In other words, how does one deal with transference when one’s analyst is a ghost? This chapter examines the later sections of the “Dream-Work” section of Interpretation of Dreams, in which Freud betrays his anxieties about his intellectual forbears and his following of their work, and examines Lacan’s discussion of Plato’s Symposium in Seminar VIII. Le Transfert, where Lacan casts pedagogical relationships in terms of analytic transference and partial drives. I wish to stake out a position removed from either an unmediated biographical or historical orientation, and focus on the ways in which Freud, Lacan, and Plato in the Symposium couch the operation of teaching and learning in an intellectual discipline as one in which the student must, in finding dissatisfaction with his mentor, come to terms with his abandonment in thought, and must struggle with the fallout in primarily intellectual terms. More to the point, the arc of intellectual inheritance often passes through betrayal, confusion, disavowal and finally recovery, where the erstwhile disciple overcomes initial frustration to survive and overcome.

The second chapter is a study of Lacan’s intellectual roots in Clèrambault and Heidegger, who contribute most to the first mature work Lacan produces in the mid-1950s. I examine how Lacan’s explicit engagement with Heidegger constitutes a
transgression in his departure from the Cartesian French tradition. This move mimics the
incursion of Freud into French psychiatry. Just as Freud provided a new analytic model
for the ego, psyche, and neuroses. Heidegger provides Lacan with a placement of the
subject “in” language. Heidegger’s conception of subject as conceived in Being and
Time fits hand in glove with Lacan’s concept of the ego-as-object, first advanced in the
mirror stage. However, as Lacan remarks in “De Nos Antécédents,” it is Clérambault
whom he credits as being the master of psychiatry, primarily for his insistence on rigor in
analyses and his discovery of the split ego. Clérambault’s insistence on the “seisson du
moi” and the symbolic misreading of this split which is the root of psychosis, led to
Lacan’s initial positing of the decentered subject, the symbolic register, and the
imaginary in “Au-delà du <<Principe de réalité>>,” and refined in “Le stade du miroir”
three years later. As such, I argue that Lacan’s psychoanalytic thought, which grounds
itself in language and not the libido, centers on the psychoses, rather than the “neuroses,”
frequently characterized as belonging to traumas related to sexual development.

The third chapter deals with primarily with paranoia, and offers a reading of Henry
James’s The Sacred Fount alongside Lacan’s Seminar III. Les Psychoses, and Memoirs of
My Nervous Illness, by D.P. Schreber, an already famous book of its period immortalized
by Freud’s 1911 study. Each of these texts centers on the play of “fort da,” one of
Lacan’s Freudian touchstones, as a way of abating the invasion of the real by walling
oneself within a symbolic world of one’s own making. As such, the body (particularly
Schreber’s) undergoes some fantastic metaphorical contortions as a reaction against the
libido and the trauma of encountering the real.
In the fourth chapter I examine of the problem of masochism, something that Lacan touches on significantly in *Écrits* and Seminar III. Seen from Freud’s point of view in “A Child is Being Beaten” and “The Economic Problem of Masochism,” masochistic behavior is impossible to explain from a libidinal-economic point of view. Yet, a Lacanian reading of masochism, which circumvents the Oedipus complex (something Lacan toys with from time to time), provides an artistic justification for masochism that skirts around the problem of the libido and places it firmly in the realm of the imaginary. This chapter also features a discussion of Sacher-Masoch’s *Venus in Furs*, Deleuze’s “Coldness and Cruelty” (an essay on Masoch’s work), and the second half of Proust’s *Du côté de chez Swann*, “Swann in Love.”

The final chapter deals with narcissism and James Joyce, the prime example of which is the fifth chapter of *Ulysses*, “Lotus-Eaters.” The problem of Joyce and narcissism exemplifies Lacan’s late thought, which turned towards a disavowal of the more fleshed-out work of the 50s in favor of a heavily stylized, enigmatic vein that stripped the Lacanian field of practically everything but the symbolic order. I conclude this chapter with a biographically-based discussion of Joyce’s relationship to psychoanalysis during the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, and how his encounter with Jung in the treatment of his daughter Lucia reflects Joyce’s conflicted views about both fatherhood and the artistic process.

The conclusion of this dissertation, “The Stele,” explores the modernist problem of dealing with the past, often present as an irresolvable, implacable symbol of one’s heritage, either communal or personal.

2 For compelling cases of vexed intellectual influence, Harold Bloom’s *The Anxiety Of Influence* (Oxford. 1973) examines the building of poetic sensibility by the “misreading” of “strong” poets. However, only a Romanticist would confuse poetry for philosophy, and Bloom’s reductive model, although interesting, presumes a directly Oedipal confrontation between one long-dead poet and a younger one struggling with the former’s foreboding presence. This requires a wholly imaginary relationship of tutelage, legacy, and mantle-inheritance: the present dissertation rejects this vague and fantastical conceit in favor of constructing a reading of explicit intellectual inheritance, where the principals involved have quite a close proximity in time, professional affiliation, and personal acquaintance.
Chapter 1

Transference, Pedagogical Conversation and Psychoanalytic Traditions: Freud, Lacan, and The Symposium

And thus it is that psychoanalysis, my creation, is doomed. I had always known this, but I had misunderstood why. I’ve always said that I, the discoverer of psychoanalysis, the first man to have analyzed himself — and being the first and only man who could know what the discovery of analysis is all about — am the ultimate judge of what is and what is not analysis. For there is a big difference between discovering and studying what has already been discovered.... In fact, after I had successfully analyzed myself it became an unrepeatable act, a unique act of history, that could be studied, but that could only be imitated. That was why it became important to train analysts. Patients needed guidance, or they would have come to the conclusions too quickly and failed to have understood what the process of self-discovery was all about. And, of course, the analysts, men and women who I had trained, were themselves but shadows of myself.¹

In his recent novel Freud’s Megalomania, Israel Rosenfeld depicts a wistful Freud at the end of his life, namely engaging himself in the writing of one last monograph entitled simply Megalomania. Centering on Rosenfeld’s fabricated monograph (which is cut-and-dried in a most un-Freudian manner), the narrative as a whole depicts a disarmingly candid Freud fully cognizant of his role as the august father of psychoanalysis, musing on his disinheritation of those who broke with his teaching (Jung, Adler, and others), and mercilessly critiquing psychoanalysis itself as an intellectual sham stoked by his delusions of grandeur. As Rosenfeld has it, psychoanalysis is especially vulnerable to claims of intellectual dishonesty, as it is not a science, but rather a monument to Freud’s own legacy and body of idiosyncratic writings: it is doubtless that some of Freud’s followers departed more quickly from the fold after feeling Freud’s personal wrath over disagreements about some elements of Freud’s work. As such, the story of psychoanalysis’s development is largely one of conflict. Differences of opinion erupt into
insurmountable disagreements (as did Freud’s conflict with Jung over the libido), which then harden into ideologies, upon which various psychoanalytic schools are founded.

It is significant, then, that as Jacques Lacan never knew Freud or studied with him, and his career was never defined by a break with the master. Situated in prewar France at the edges of such varied intellectual movements as Freudian psychoanalysis, Surrealism, German and French phenomenology, and French clinical psychology, Lacan established a strain of psychoanalysis that took all of these influences into account, and, like Freud, he spent his career moving through different phases and trying various approaches to the problems of language, the subject, the Other, lack, desire, and so on. What distinguishes Lacan’s work is its unique exegetical approach to Freudian texts, using the strategies of structuralism to extend the themes of Freud’s later work into an analytic vocabulary founded on Freud’s doctrine of the ego and its object relations. In addition, Lacan’s proclamation that the unconscious is structured like a language is derived from Freud’s great early work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In everything that Lacan did, there is a remarkable openness to different avenues of thought both within the Freudian canon and outside of it. As if by virtue of the fact he did not explicitly rebel against any particular psychoanalytic doctrine, Lacan attempted to embrace and encompass as much intellectual territory as he possibly could. However, in “The Freudian Thing, or the meaning of the return to Freud in psychoanalysis,” an address delivered in Vienna in November 1955, Lacan makes the uncompromising statement that psychoanalysis, having gotten too far away from its roots, must “return” to Freud in order to ensure its survival. At first glance, this topic would seem to be reactionary and uncontroversial, particularly to a Viennese audience. But underneath the surface, Lacan’s fleshing out of this directive outlines what
he feels is a full-blown crisis in psychoanalytic thought. In the course of the lecture, Lacan identifies a number of seemingly impossible hermeneutic hurdles detailing the treacherous implications of the return to Freud, and the difficulties and burdens of taking on Freud as an intellectual forebear.

In this chapter, I shall examine “The Freudian Thing,” and the self-consciousness of the debt Lacan feels he owes to Freud in his psychoanalytic work. It also will be seen that Freud had similar problems in trying to overcome the presence of his intellectual forebears: Freud’s bizarre and confounding dreams detailed in chapter six of The Interpretation of Dreams reveal his hidden anxieties over his relationships with his past teachers. In order to examine the Lacanian conception of transference with one’s mentor, I shall then look at the interaction of Socrates and Alcibiades in Plato’s Symposium, and Lacan’s treatment of the same topic in Seminar VIII, Le Transfert. It will be seen that the process of learning analysis through psychoanalytic dialogue (which in turn takes its cue from Socratic dialogue) is nevertheless fraught with difficulties, which stem from the persistent problems of influence, paternal and erotic attachment, and, in some instances, filial betrayal.

“The Freudian thing” and the spectre(s) of Freud

As Lacan sets forth his 1955 lecture “The Freudian Thing, or the meaning of the return to Freud in psychoanalysis.” Freud’s death poses both a historical and a clinical problem to the psychoanalytic movement. The historical calamity of Freud’s absence is seen by Lacan as a paradoxical consequence of psychoanalysis’s success, particularly in
the United States, where all manner of analytic schools and treatments flourished as
Freud’s ideas passed into the mainstream of American culture. Lacan sees the wholesale
assimilation of Freudian ideas into American analysis as a product of the “categorical
will the gives the industrial corporations their style, a cultural ahistoricism peculiar to the
United States of America.” Even more to the point, Lacan sees the fragmentation of the
psychoanalytic movement (or at least its wandering afield from the roots of Freud’s
work) as a personal betrayal of Freud:

Such a failure [to recognize Freud’s achievements] is symptomatic, for it reveals a
betrayal that comes not from the land in which Freud, by virtue of his tradition,
was merely a temporary guest, but from the very field that he has left in our care,
and from those in whom that care was entrusted, from the psychoanalytical
movement itself, where things have not reached the point when a return to Freud is
seen as a reversal. (E 115 S 402)

Such quasi-religious language, where Freud is depicted as an accursed figure, forsaking
the bonds of country only to have his followers consign him to the ash-heap of historical
obscurity, cannily sets up the second aspect of Lacan’s “return” to Freud. That the
rejection and subsequent forgetting of Freud would come “from those in whom that care
was trusted” alludes to the range of necessary relationships that presided over the
founding of psychoanalysis and determined its development. From its origins, the field
of psychoanalysis has been constituted by a network of collegial and pedagogical
encounters, as analysts can only begin to practice after undergoing an extensive training
period that concludes with being fully analyzed by a trained analyst. In this sense, all
psychoanalysts are direct intellectual descendants of Freud, and are beneficiaries of his
legacy. For Lacan, the forgetting of Freud is tantamount to a forgetting of
psychoanalysis’s identity, as Freud’s analytic experience and clinical tutelage is the
ground, basis, and justification for psychoanalysis itself. In “The Freudian Thing,”
Lacan’s gesture of the return to Freud serves to dramatize this intellectual crisis in general way, but it also seriously raises the issue of Freud’s death as major problem for the training of new clinicians. Lacan attempts in this lecture to awaken the psychoanalytic community, to confront it with the reality that the psychoanalytic discipline no longer has the living presence of Freud presiding over it. As this work was composed shortly after the 1953 lecture “Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis” (also known as the “Rome Discourse”). Lacan’s concept of “full speech,” and the primacy of speech in the operation of psychoanalysis, comes into play here. Only in the face-to-face (or mouth-to-ear) interaction between analyst and analysand can psychoanalytic truth be produced, and as Freud is no longer alive to train more analysts and to guide psychoanalysis, the source of the original psychoanalytic insight may only be found somewhere in his body of writings.¹

When Lacan talks about the question of the return to Freud as an attempt to recover Freud’s presence in the texts, he is also conscious of addressing the historical moment in which he speaks. The language Lacan uses to outline what he sees as the task of Freudian recovery carries with it a sense of Hegelian portentousness: ²

What such a return involves for me is not the return of the repressed, but rather the taking of the antithesis of the phase of the history of the psychoanalytic movement since the death of Freud, and seeking with you the means of revitalizing that which has continued to sustain it, even in deviation. namely, the primary meaning that Freud preserved in it by his very presence [par sa seule présence]. and which I should like to explicate here. (E 116: S 403)

Sheridan’s translation neatly elides the word “seule;” obscuring Lacan’s original point that Freud played a singular (and, in a sense, solitary) role in sustaining psychoanalysis. Without Freud, Lacan understands himself and his work to represent the negative movement of a dialectical relation. In this sense, Lacan writes as one who never met
Freud, let alone allowed himself to analyzed and trained by Freud, but he is speaking as one who is in the same situation as all the other analysts, namely. an analyst practicing and living in a world without Freud’s presence. Lacan’s feeling for the nature of the psychoanalytic insight precludes an imperative to begin again from first principles, the “scientific” impulse that derives from the French tradition of post-Cartesian philosophy. At the same time, his rejection of the Cartesian cogito (where the solitary, skeptical, “objective” mind separates false beliefs from the true) implicitly signals that any uncovering of truth must occur in the encounter with the Other, specifically in the analytic situation. Lacan proposes that analysts seek their truth in the Freudian embrace of the analytic couch, in spite of its un-scientific appearance:

If Freud had brought to man’s knowledge nothing more than the truth that there is such a thing as the true, there would be no Freudian discovery....Its objectivity, in fact, is strictly bound up with the analytic situation, which between the four walls that limit its field, can work perfectly well, without knowing where the north is since it lies along the axis of the couch, which is supposed to point in the direction of the analyst. Psychoanalysis is the science of the mirages that appear with this field. (E 119 S 406-407)

Lacan’s reassertion of the primacy of the analytic experience in understanding Freud reveals a deep dissatisfaction with the way that Freud has been represented by Freudians (perhaps paradoxically), and the way that Freud’s work has become accepted and commonplace. His ideas mollified into only so many pieces of popular intellectual furniture. Lacan wryly remarks that to distinguish these ideas from merely ordinary ones, they are often marked (marquer) with “the sign of the spirit” [du signe de l’esprit], “to regard them as coming from another world.” in essence, from the world of the Freudian text (E 120 S 408). This Lacanian exhortation reiterates the return to Freud as the sole source of renewal for the analytic project. The “truth” of psychoanalysis, as it must be
rediscovered again and again in the psychoanalytic encounter, is revived with each act of psychoanalysis, as it participates in the practice inaugurated by Freud. The theatricality of the expected turn of events in the process of analysis – the couch, the autobiographical investigation, discussing one’s familial relations with one’s analyst, and so forth, not only call up the ghost of Freud, but constitute the laboratory for psychoanalytic discovery and re-discovery. The return to Freud necessitates an investigation of the nature of psychoanalytic truth and psychoanalytic technique, for they go hand in hand.

Lacan’s mention of the “sign of the spirit” makes clear, however, that Freud’s aegis is an irreplaceable part of psychoanalysis. In the rest of the essay, when Lacan refers to the “Freudian thing” (and even ventriloquizes it [E 121-123 S 408-411]), he attempts to bring forth the voice of Freud from the poetics of Freud’s text. In this instance, Freud speaks as an “object,” existing in the same manner as desk or a rug: it is worth noting that Lacan’s rhetorical gesture here is a parody of the Descartes of the Meditations, who, in doubting the existence of the Other, concludes that other people exist by the same criteria he uses to verify the existence of a lump of wax. By explicitly going outside of the Cartesian tradition, Lacan attempts to reacquaint psychoanalysis with the German-language tradition in which it has its roots, with its necessary baggage of dialectic. destiny, and, of course, Geist. Lacan provides another elaborate dramatic figure to couch the act of analysis in terms of an evolutionary narrative of Freud’s thought:

The return to the shades, which we believe is to be expected at the moment, is the signal for “murder party” [English in original] initiated by the order forbidding anyone to leave, since anyone may now be hiding the truth, under her dress, for example, or even, as in the amorous fiction of the “indiscreet jewels,” in her belly. The general question is: Who is speaking? And the question is not an irrelevant one…first the libido is accused, which takes us the direction of the jewels, but we must realize that the ego itself, although it places fetters on the libido, which is so desperate for satisfaction, is sometimes the object of its activities. One feels, in
fact, that it is about to collapse from one minute to the next, when the sound of broken glass informs everyone that it is the large drawing-room mirror that has sustained the accident. the golem of narcissism, hastily called in to assist, having made his entrance through it. The ego is then generally regarded as the murderer, or, if not, the victim in which case the divine rays of the good Judge Schreber begin to spread their net of the world, and the Sabbath of the instincts really does become complicated. This comedy, which I shall interrupt here at the beginning of its second act, is gentler than is usually believed, since bringing to bear upon a drama of knowledge a buffoonery that belongs only to those who act this drama without understanding it, restores to such people the authenticity from which they were moving farther and farther away. (E 123-124/S 411-412)

This “Sabbath of the instincts,” with its suggestion of the act of Freudian analysis as a religious invocation, casts analysis as a mode of investigation, which necessarily includes an element of play and drama. Lacan refers to this as a “comedy,” and suggests the analysand recognize the absurdity of the situation: he asserts that although the analysand begins in ignorance, one shall gradually come into “authenticity” (a nod to the Heidegger of Being and Time) – this in turn implies that the act of psychoanalysis is uniquely individuating for the analyst as well as the analysand, and endows them both with an attunement to the truth. The path towards analytic truth necessarily follows the path Freud took through his work, and the continuing work of analysis, left to Freud’s successors. becomes a task of determining the latent content in the body of Freud’s work itself, with all its backtracking, contradictions, reevaluations, extensions, speculations, and lacunae. Freud’s writings form the ground of psychoanalytic truth, and in order that one become a true Freudian, the individual nature of that achievement has to be appreciated in the fullest sense of the word.

With “The Freudian Thing,” Lacan above all seeks to reintroduce Freud, sole author of Freudian discourse, to the psychoanalytic community in order to bring analysis back to its origins. Doing this, however, necessitates an imaginative leap, which puts oneself in a
potentially uncomfortable position, following in the unique footsteps of the now-vanished Freud. In Lacan’s imagination, Freud appears as a Actaeon, descending to the underworld to divine “the place in which the symbol is substituted for death in order to take possession of the first swelling of life.” (E 124 S 412). The stock-in-trade of psychoanalysis is the play of symbols and their relation to the unconscious, but Lacan’s source of worry here is about the inability to produce a way of talking about the ego that corresponds with the practice of analysis. The anxiety of going into analysis with the false expectation that one shall discover the ultimate source of Freud’s motivation informs every analytic relation after Freud, where the seeker after neatly-packaged scientific truth shall be repeatedly denied:

One began only to repeat after Freud the word of his discovery: it speaks, and, no doubt, where it is least expected, namely, where there is pain…however, since then, the meeting between the psychoanalyst and psychoanalysis have increased in the hope that the Athenian could be reached with Athena having emerged fully armed from the head of Freud. Shall I tell you of the jealous fate. ever the same, that thwarted these meetings: beneath the mask in which everyone was to meet his promised, alas! Thrice alas! And a cry at the horror at the thought of it, another having taken her place, he who was there was not he either. [celui qui était là, non plus n’était pas lui.] (E 125 S 413)

We are now no longer in the realm of merely speculative psychoanalytic theory regarding the hermeneutics of Freudian reading: at bottom. “The Freudian thing” is a powerful broadside indiciating the psychoanalytic community for its scientific pretensions to produce ultimately objective “truths” about the human mind. The act of reading Freud is something that cannot be abandoned so easily in the name of progress. As Freud was the first to be burdened with the psychoanalytic insight, and therefore charged with the responsibility to forever seek out the truth in his work, his stamp on the field can never be erased. Tellingly, Lacan expresses here an ambiguous desire to follow Freud down the
same path of inquiry. That path, however, led Freud into equally ambiguous territory as his work took on more ambitious and difficult subjects, to the eventual ruin of the libidinal theory in favor of the id-ego-superego model and the death instinct. Although his earlier libidinal work inspired division, spawning most notoriously the Kleinian school, Lacan sees in later Freud’s work on ego psychology as a key to understanding the origins of the psychoanalytic insight, and the process of analysis itself.

“The Freudian thing” represents Lacan’s upbraiding of and challenge to the psychoanalytic community of the 1950s and its institutions. Its message of the return to Freud stakes out a claim to the origin of psychoanalysis that transcends the proprietary presence of Anna Freud and the International Psychoanalytic Association, sidestepping the issue of the very real institutional legacy represented by the IPA. In the time-honored fashion that has marked the evolution of the psychoanalytic movement, Lacan would found his own school (in the form of L’École Freudiennne de Paris) in order to disseminate his ideas and teachings, and would also eventually dissolve it when he no longer thought it served its purpose. What the return to Freud signifies for Lacan is the importance of understanding intellectual tradition as a live entity, in much the same way as did Heidegger and the other modernists – necessarily a confrontation with the presence and burden of the past, the specter of mortality, and the problematics of identity in taking up someone else’s intellectual legacy.

It is these concerns that shall structure the investigation of Lacan’s intellectual development in this chapter and the one following it – questions of Lacan’s interactions and confrontations with three of his most important and defining influences: Freud, Gaëtan Gatian de Clèrambault and Martin Heidegger. Lacan’s relationships with each of
his most important mentors and influences are the key to keener understanding of the whole of Lacan’s intellectual career, which was defined by his efforts to incorporate their thought into his own work, and in some cases, his conscious disavowal of their ideas and legacies. In “De nos antécédents,” a piece written especially for the publication of Écrits, Lacan recalls his beginnings in psychiatry:

We shall write now: about the return of that which has past, those works of our entry into psychoanalysis, we recall where the entry itself made its entrance.
We had been introduced to medicine and psychiatry under the heading of paranoid consciousness, which resulted in a method of clinical exhaustion on which I did my thèse de médecine...
[This interest] fits into the trace of Clérambault, our sole [seul] master in psychiatry. (S 65)

Lacan explains somewhat cryptically that in Clérambault’s work, one finds the development of a stronger “structural analysis” than any other approach in the French tradition: although in his opinion Kraepelin had more of an impact on the development of the psychiatric clinic. Lacan slyly notes that “[s]ingularly, necessarily, we believe it was [created] by Freud” (S 65). This reference to Clérambault, then as now a largely forgotten figure in French medical history, provides a clue to Lacan’s prevailing interest in the psychoses throughout his career, despite his imprecation at the very end of the essay: “We hope that this note implies nothing biographical that, to our liking, enlightens the reader” (S 72). To the contrary, Lacan’s evocation of Clérambault in this context, a reminiscence included in the first high-profile publication of his life’s work, is a gaudily scripted invitation to investigate his work in the light of Clérambault’s ideas. Lacanian concepts such méconnaissance, desire and le objet petit a, have their figural roots in the split-ego model defined in the theory of l’automatisme mental. Clérambault’s doctrine of “anidéisme,” and Clérambault’s description of erotomania as a ego disorder inspired by
object fixation run amok. Despite Lacan's smug dismissals of Clérambault's ideas and their eventual falling-out, every important aspect of Lacan's pedagogical personality from his unorthodox theoretical vocabulary to his almost lifelong publishing silence, owes a significant debt to Clérambault. In investigating this lost Lacanian link, I shall uncover the presence of Clérambault in Lacan's work as a vestige of French psychiatry's turn away from physiology to analysis proper, aided by Clérambault's ground-breaking abstractions.

Considered alongside of the prewar Heidegger, whose impact on Lacan is felt primarily in his approach to language and predilection for errant thoughts, the picture of Lacan that I shall draw in this chapter and next is that of a thinker firmly enmeshed in the traditions of distinctively French clinical psychiatry and the phenomenology of the 1920s and 1930s. These are the influences that tincture Lacan's unique approach to Freudian exegesis, filtered through an existential rendering of the death instinct (found in the second half of Being and Time), and the delusional power of the image over the ego, as explored by Clérambault. It is significant that Lacan's famous declaration, "Le sens d'un retour à Freud, c'est un retour au sens de Freud" [The meaning of a return to Freud is a return to the meaning of Freud] (E 117 S 405) bears the chiasmatic mark of Heidegger as well as Clérambault; both were well known for defining concepts only in terms of others. and it therefore seems appropriate that Lacan himself should be examined not on his own terms, but within the context of his milieu and intellectual debts to his antecedents. All three thinkers, Freud, Clérambault, and Heidegger, cast long shadows over Lacan's work: the body of Lacan's discourse is a communing and coming to terms with these shades, their imposing monuments of thought, and their legacies.
Freud and His Forbears: The Interpretation of Dreams

The Freudian text with the most comprehensive impact on Lacan’s work overall is Interpretation of Dreams: its treatment of the dream-work as an assemblage of symbols that provide the keys to the unconscious forms the cornerstone of the Lacan’s view of language and its role in the analytic relation. Lacan’s classic mid-1950s writings such as the Rome Discourse and “The Meaning of the Phallus” present the reading of the symbolic order as the primary goal of psychoanalysis – not only in the analysis of dreams, but also in the events of one’s everyday experience. If one follows Lacan’s exhortation in the Rome Discourse to read the opening paragraphs the chapter entitled “Die Traumarbeit,” one finds Freud’s confident declaration of the power in interpreting dreams as one would a language:

...Suppose I have a picture-puzzle, a rebus, in front of me. It depicts a house with a boat on its roof, a single letter of the alphabet, the figure of a running man whose head has been conjured away, and so on. Now I might be misled into raising objections and declaring that the picture as a whole and its component parts are nonsensical. A boat has no business to be on the roof of a house, and a headless man cannot run. Moreover, the man is bigger than the house and if the whole picture is intended to represent a landscape, letters of the alphabet are out of place in it since such objects do not occur in nature. But obviously we can only form a proper judgment of the rebus if we put aside criticisms such as these of the whole composition and its parts. and if, instead, we try to replace each separate element by a syllable or word that can be represented by that element in some way or other. The words which are put together in this way are no longer nonsensical but may form a poetical phrase [Dichter-spruch] of the greatest beauty and significance. A dream is a picture-puzzle of this sort and our predecessors in the field of dream-interpretation have made the mistake of treating the rebus as a pictorial composition: and as such, it has seemed to them nonsensical [unsinnig] and worthless.

One striking element in this passage is Freud’s insistence that dream-interpretation is primarily a logical, rather than impressionistic, assessment of the manifest content of
dreams. As the dream echoes the unconscious wishes of the dreamer, one must not get the manifest content confused with a proper reading of the dream, and this reading must correspond meaningfully with the dreamer's life-experience. There are inevitably some dreams where interpretation is a stretch at best, and Freud takes care to address some points where his faith in the ability to read dreams intelligibly is sorely tested. Although some anchor in the dreamer's reality can be found, the nonsensical or disturbing manifest content of some dreams express the inability of the dreamer to cope with a difficult situation. Most of the examples Freud provides of these nonsensical dreams are, perhaps surprisingly, drawn from a record of his own dreams. As such, they provide an unusual insight into the origins of psychoanalysis, in much the same way as do his letters to Fliess and other early colleagues. In each of these dream readings, Freud appears to run into interpretive difficulties when trying to analyze dreams in which he encounters his deceased father or a late former professor. and his inability or unwillingness to read them speaks volumes about his unconscious feelings towards his erstwhile mentors. These dreams account for a substantial percentage of the section "Absurd Dreams" in the "Traumarbeit" chapter. Although it would be some time after The Interpretation of Dreams before the Oedipus complex received a definitive formulation in Freud's writing, it would seem that these "absurd dreams" are a symptom of Oedipal tension. a set of irreducible images that evade easy interpretation and confront Freud with a palpable sense of dread, provoking hidden feelings of anxiety about his intellectual endeavors. Just as Lacan sees his intellectual inheritance from Freud and Clérambault as fraught with pitfalls, so too does the young Freud of the Interpretation experience trepidation when confronting his past.
At the end of "Calculations in Dreams," Freud discusses one of these curious examples to illustrate reasoning within the context of a dream. After going to his professor’s laboratory at night, a knock at the door stirs Freud to open it to the late Professor Flieschl, arriving with a number of strangers (SE 4: 421). This dream caused him some puzzlement, until he recalled a dream that occurred the night before he dreamed of Flieschl: in this previous dream, Freud happens upon P., a now-deceased former professor of his, and Wilhelm Fliess having in a conversation in the street. The three then sit down at a table where Fliess describes the sad news that his sister is dying, as the men sit there talking. P. fails to understand what Fliess says, whereupon Freud, in trying to make this Fliess understood, has an epiphany concerning the appearance of the dead in dreams:

...overcome by strange emotions, I tried to explain to Fliess that P. [could not understand their conversation, because he] was not alive. But what I actually said - and I myself noticed the mistake - was, 'Non Vixit.' I then gave P. a piercing look. Under my gaze he turned pale: his form grew indistinct and his eyes a sickly blue - and finally he melted away. I was highly delighted at this and I now realized that Ernst Fleischl, too, had been no more than an apparition, a 'revenant'; and it seemed to me quite possible that people of that kind only existed as long as one liked and could be got rid of if someone wished it. (SE 4: 422 GW 2: 424)

Freud goes on to relate that he noticed a fault in his speaking to Fliess in the dream, saying "Non vixit," the past perfect form of "Non vivit," which is the present tense-form of the declarative statement "he does not live." Freud’s perturbation arises from his guilt at having wished P. not only dead, but also in having wished to erase him from his memory: "I am capable of doing so - of doing, that is to say, what I did in the dream, of sacrificing to my ambition people whom I greatly value" (SE 4: 422). Freud acknowledges, however, that the glance with which he destroys P. was his repetition of a similar gesture P. once made to him, glowering at Freud when he was once tardy to a lab session.
Freud relates that after some thought, it occurred to him that the occasion of these two dreams was the dedication for a memorial at the university to Flieschl. At the time, Freud remembers, he rued the fact that there was no memorial for P., as Freud felt that P. was an unjustly ignored scholar whose work was vastly underrated:

It then struck me as noticeable that in the scene in the dream there was a convergence of a hostile and an affectionate current of feeling towards my friend P., the former being on the surface and the latter concealed, but both of them being represented in the phrase Non vixit. As he had deserved well of science I built him a memorial but as he was guilty of an evil wish (which was expressed at the end of the dream) I annihilated him. (SE 2: 423) 10

What Freud expresses in this passage is not ambivalence, but a series of conflicting, distinct wishes and sentiments: I wish revenge on P. for having judged me, as his pupil, but at the same time, P. should be memorialized for his service to science and the university; yet, I harbor the feeling that P. should never have lived but regret that I killed his ghost in the dream: I wish that I were not to willing to forget those who have helped me, but it annoys me that Flieschl persists in disturbing me at my work, even in death.

This logjam of separate and distinct feelings Freud presents here adds up to an overpowering desire to bury his forebears once and for all, such that those who taught him are extinguished from his living memory, and leave him to work in peace without their interference. Freud’s feelings about his old teacher P. seem to epitomize Freud’s attitude towards his tutors – all in all, for Freud, P. is best remembered as a memorial: not entirely forgotten, but ossified into a bureaucratic memory. The fact that these figures even appear in his dreams is indicative of a buried wish to call them forth from his past, if only to destroy them.

Freud continues this line of thought in the next section of “Die Traumarbeit.” entitled “Absurd Dreams,” which finds him analyzing his own dream-thoughts with respect to his
own deceased father. The second dream Freud looks at in this section is one of his own, and it would seem at first to place his father in a flattering light:

After his death my father played a political part among the Magyars and brought them together politically. Here I saw a small and indistinct picture: a crowd of men as though they were in the Reichstag: someone standing on one or two chairs, with other people round him. I remembered how like Garibaldi he had looked on his death-bed, and felt glad that that promise had come true. (SE 4: 427-429)

"What could be more absurd than this?" Freud asks. His reading of the dream parses out this image of his father into two impressions: first, his memory of a small woodcut depicting an 18th century Austrian political crisis, and second, his linking of his father's death to feces. Freud remarks that a major symptom of his father's fatal illness, intestinal paralysis, and the autopsy of an old schoolmate's father having revealed that the man soiled himself upon death, links the specter of death to excrement. Freud even allows himself a pun on the word "Stuhl," as meaning both "chair" and "(a) stool specimen." and remarks that this homonym is of some significance in having produced this triumphal image of his father. This reading sets forth an explanation for the imagery of the dream, but falls short of an explanation for the meaning of the dream. The mental picture of his father in death, appearing as dignified as the famed Italian revolutionary, recasts his father as the progenitor of a nation, rather than that of simply Freud himself. In addition, Freud's seeming paternal pride at this prospect further distorts matters for this dream. The basic premise remains consistent, however, with the dream of P. and Flieschl: the dead paternal figure is once again disconnected from Freud's biographical narrative and transformed into symbolic entity that Freud may admire and respect, but whose authority Freud evades, because their aggrandized character is entirely due to Freud's imagination. Once raised to the status of a monument or totem, such figures are abstracted from
Freud’s life, and Freud may choose to pay homage to them, or ignore them altogether.\textsuperscript{11}

Another dream from the same section of the book succinctly describes another aspect of Freud’s dilemma concerning his relationship with his father figures, whether biological or pedagogical. Upon seeing Count Thun driving a cab in Vienna one day, Freud dreamt that same night that he was sitting in the passenger seat of a coach that was driving alongside some railroad tracks (SE 4: 432). Freud explains to the driver (who was not Count Thun), that he is afraid that he is not able to continue driving with him, and that soon he will have to get off, as if riding in a cab next to the railway were a regular occurrence for Freud. Freud’s analysis of this dream shows that this popular brace of riddles may have been a key in occasioning this dream-image:

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Der Herr betleht’s & Der Herr betleht’s \\
Der Kutcher tut’s & Der Kutcher tut’s \\
Ein jeder hat’s & Nicht jeder hat’s \\
Im Grabe ruht’s & In der Wiege ruht’s \\
\end{tabular}

[With the master’s request  
The driver complies.  
By all men possessed  
In the graveyard it lies.]

[With the master’s request  
The driver complies.  
Not by all men possessed  
In the cradle it lies.] (SE 4: 433) \textsuperscript{12}

The answer to the first riddle is “Vorfahren,” which this context is a pun – as a verb, it means “drive up,” as to a destination, but as a noun means “ancestry”: indicating those who have preceded one in life, and in the instance of the riddle, death. The second answer is “Nach-kommen,” meaning both “follow after” and “progeny.” Freud provides very little in the way of commentary on the dream except to say that the quatrain seems to have precipitated it, but there are several interesting elements to this brief dream. The first is Freud’s occupying of two different roles in the dream – initially acting the part of the master, ordering the driver along his route, and at the end, playing the part of the
apologetic underling, explaining to the driver that he is obligated to get off soon.

Freud's power fantasy soon gives way to a plea to be released from servitude. Underlying this is the threat of death, clearly spelled out in the riddle: the path to immortality as an ancestor necessarily, but paradoxically, stops in the cemetery. In this dream, Freud betrays a desire to depart from the set path before him, as such a journey requires an acknowledgement of the past and its mastery over him. Moreover, the overriding theme of this dream, fear of death, touches on the element common to all the dreams in this section of the Interpretation. One may agree with Freud's assessment that in the dream of the dead friend or father, one confronts one's own death. But the death Freud fears is the abstract death that awaits him as a forerunner to a future generation of medical minds, and represents the only true success he can ever have as a scientist and researcher. The legitimacy that death extends to one's deeds is not inconsiderable, as it provides an elusive validation of one's genius and works. In a sense, Freud's reputation depends on his eventual death, and after that, he can be memorialized and accorded his proper place in the pantheon of the then-nascent science of psychiatry.

Freud attempts to explain the phenomenon of the revenant in the following passage, which sheds some light on the tendentiousness of his dreams concerning his forbears.

Not surprisingly, Freud stresses that such dreams are not necessarily harbingers of disturbance or fear, but are reflective of the need for the dreamer to connect with the past and validate wishes or soothe anxieties:

The frequency with which dead people appear in dreams and act and associate with us as though they were alive has caused unnecessary surprise and has produced some remarkable explanations which throw our lack of understanding of dreams into strong relief. Yet the explanation of these dreams is a very obvious one. It often happens that we find ourselves thinking: "If my father were alive, what would he say to this?" Dreams are unable to express an 'if' of this kind except by
representing the person concerned as present in some particular situation. Thus, for instance, a young man who had been left a large legacy by his grandfather, dreamt, at a time when he was feeling self-reproaches for having spent a considerable sum of money, that his grandfather was alive again and calling him into account. And when, from our better knowledge, we protest that after all the person in question is dead, what we look upon as a criticism of the dream is in reality either consoling though that the dead person has not lived to witness the event, or a feeling of satisfaction that he can no longer interfere in it. (SE 4: 429-430)

"Concerned as present" are the key words in this account: the dead are "present" in such a way that they are being made to speak on demand, in a situation engineered (however unconsciously) by the dreamer. Freud relates the story of a patient who repressed his wish that his father should die mercifully during a long illness: the patient dreamed that his father, now dead, was speaking to him as if he were alive, without realizing that he himself was dead (SE 4: 430). Freud attributes this repression to a sort of Oedipal guilt, as the dreamer felt ashamed to have had what was, at bottom, a sympathetic wish. Freud puts down the vacillation between death and life of a particular person in a dream as a product of indifference, which in turn masks the violently contradictory feelings of the dreamer (SE 4: 430):

If there is no mention in the dream of the fact that the dead man is dead, the dreamer is equating himself with him: he is dreaming of his own death. If, in the course of the dream, the dreamer suddenly says to himself in astonishment, "why did he die ever so long ago," he is repudiating this question and is denying that the dream signifies his own death. —But I willingly confess to a feeling that dream-interpretation is far from having revealed all the secrets of dreams of this character. (SE 4: 431)

The ambivalence that Freud explicitly expresses in this passage is supposedly rooted in his inability to comprehend the nature of the dream. At the same time, one should question his steadfast belief that the manifest content of such a dream be taken with the utmost literalness. For Freud, there is no call from the grave, no willful projection of the dead into the land of the living: the dead appear as a unreachable apparition, unable to
speak or make themselves understood, or otherwise as a mere shadow of the dreamer’s anxiety over death. The figure of the dead father appears as a testament of death itself. grim, final, and unyielding as a tombstone. Yet a deeper reading of these dreams reveal that the dreamer’s unstated wish (in the case of our discussion here, that of Freud himself) is to reanimate the father figure, only to take over his apparition and recast it as a presence from the distant past, remote from living memory.

Freud’s dreams of the fatherly revenants, and the hermeneutic concerns of Lacan in relating to one’s predecessors are pertinent to any account of the history of psychoanalysis, for the simple reason that these issues of legitimacy and intellectual parentage are central to the life of intellectual inquiry. In light of the personal dreams that Freud recounts, Freud’s principal insight in this section of “Die Traumdeutung” is inevitably anticlimactic, considering the evident richness of Freud’s dream-life:

Dreams, then, are most often profound when they seem most crazy. In every epoch of history those who have had something to say but could not say it without peril have eagerly assumed a fool’s cap. The audience at whom their forbidden speech was aimed tolerated it more easily if they could at the same time laugh and flatter themselves with the reflection that the unwelcome words were clearly nonsensical... the dream-work produces absurd dreams if it is faced with the necessity of representing any criticism, ridicule or derision which may be present in the dream-thoughts. (SE 4: 444)

Yet Freud, when contemplating his dead colleagues, understands them only in the second context outlined above, that the absurd dream forms as a response to the criticism that one may encounter from a teacher or mentor. Freud’s initial unconscious reaction is to take such criticism personally, but this manifests itself as a tendency to situate the father or mentor as an icon, a figure with no real history other than a mythical one. This comes full circle when, in the subsection titled “Feelings in Dreams,” Freud recalls attending the funeral of his poor friend P., whose ghost he killed in the midst of conversation with
Fliess. At one point during the service, Freud’s companion remarked to him that the eulogist had taken an obsequious tack by inflating P. into this larger-than-life personage (SE 4: 485). Freud notes that, at the time, he felt it was an inappropriate thing to say at a funeral, but he also relates his thoughts during the eulogy: “It’s quite true that no one’s irreplaceable. How many people I’ve followed to the grave already! But I’m still alive. I’ve survived them all: I’m left in possession of the field.” Freud attempts in this passage to come to grips with these contentious dreams featuring the ghosts of those who had mentored him his medical studies:

One is bound to emerge as the only villain among the crowd of noble characters who share one’s life. Thus it seemed to me to be quite natural that the revenants should exist for just so long as one likes and should be removable at a wish… the revenants were a series of reincarnations of the friends of my childhood. It was therefore also a source of satisfaction to me that I had always been able to find successive substitutes for that figure: and I felt I should be able to find a substitute for the friend whom I was now on the point of losing: no one was irreplaceable.

(SE 4: 485)

The element of play in his own dreams is not lost on Freud. Rather than being a source of anxiety, the phantoms that drift in and out of his dreams are nothing more than symptoms of his feelings of being in complete command of himself and his fortune. Still, the figure of the revenant is representative of the rebirth that covers an irretrievable loss, and with that, Freud’s apprehension about reckoning with the past. This in itself may be, as Freud asserts in the above excerpt and elsewhere in The Interpretation of Dreams, a reflection of Freud’s own anxiety about death. But Freud’s conjecture that these figures compensate for the absence of childhood companions throws such a neat reading into disarray. The reoccurrence of figures from the past delineate a continuity from past to present that Freud finds himself within, and regardless of his power to populate his life with replacements for these primal attendant personae, it may be well argued that Freud
was compelled to do so: his need for companionship spurred him to call forth the revenants. to make good his losses from childhood. Thus the revenant-dreams for Freud reflect his struggle to take responsibility for his place in the world and the profession, to defend against his solitariness and at the same time assert his right to a claim on the psychiatric field. Irreplaceable or not, Freud’s acknowledgement of the presence (and absence) of those who have gone before him informs his inability to interpret these dreams in same manner as those of his patients, or those dreams of his that fall in line with the exemplars of mundane dreams (losing teeth, climbing stairs, flying, and the like). These aberrant dreams, dealing as they do with the figure of the father, put into question the authority of Freud himself as an analyst, and interpreter of his own dreams, the only man to have analyzed himself.

Séminaire VIII: Lacan, the *Symposium*, and Psychoanalytic Pedagogy

We have seen from the foregoing that the question of transference as it relates to the progress and training of analysts is, needless to say, crucial to analytic thought. Lacan’s approach to transference, couched in a reading of Plato’s *Symposium*, engages in a set of metaphors that lines up neatly with his concerns about the function of speech in analysis, its connection with the classical tradition, and explores the concept of analysis as “the erotic science of the body,” a notion assuredly rich with interpretive possibilities. I wish to interrogate Lacan’s views on transference and *Symposium* with reference to the original Platonic text in order to construct a Lacanian view of pedagogical transference with the Freudian corpus. Rather than simply hewing to the Lacanian party line
regarding Lacan's creative "structuralization" of Freud, my aim here is to develop a reading of Lacan with Freud that takes into account the full weight of Freud's classicism and the implications of the Socratic dialogic model for psychoanalysis: in so doing, I hope to distinguish Lacan's thought from the poststructuralist milieu in which it is commonly placed, and ground it in the older tradition of dialogue and self-examination characteristic of Western philosophy. 

Lacan's intention in his reading of the Symposium is to lay the groundwork for an investigation of transference. The significance that Lacan puts on transference in the psychoanalytic situation is often overlooked—often, the impression of Lacanian therapy is that of the gnomic analyst handing opaque announcements to the put-upon, hopelessly confused analysand. Although some of Lacan's behavior in the analytic session was designed to undercut the trust of the patient in the analyst (Lacan's famous "short sessions," which he favored near the end of his life, come to mind), and in lectures such as "Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," where the analyst's task is to annihilate the analysand's ego (E 90). The analyst transmits the meaning present in language, and specifically the language of the analysand, but cannot remain completely neutral. Lacan's discussion of transference attempts to draw a more complete picture of the analytic situation in accord with his linguistic and discursive concerns. Typical for Lacan, he rightly sees that transference is a less than benign phenomenon; in a foreshadowing of Seminar XI, he posits the analysand as, roughly speaking, an objet petit a for the analyst.

Indeed, Lacan's investment the spiritual and literally sexual import of transference is displayed up front, at the beginning of the seminar. The seminar year begins with the
portentous words “In the beginning there was the word.” and his stated intention to take on both Plato and Freud in the course of the seminar. Lacan foregrounds the question of transference to be one about love:

I intend to begin. I want to begin, I want to try to begin—in beginning, with all the necessary blundering—of beginning today with this. what meaning the term in the beginning has. assuredly. in another sense, that is. in analysis.

In the beginning of the analytic experience, as we recall, there was love.\textsuperscript{14}

It is important to point out here that analysis’s origins were not within the comfortable (and legitimized) confines of accepted medical practice. Lacan asserts that the spurious starting point of the discipline occurs with a one-to-one relationship based on trust and a certain level of intimacy, in broad sense of the word. Lacan recalls the first analytic relationship, in which psychoanalysis received its name: when Breuer described his patient Anna O.'s hysteria symptoms in the attempt to cure them, he called it “the talking cure,” and referred to it as “chimney sweeping.” (VIII 13) In this case, it seems that Breuer’s practice of inducing her to describe her hallucinations really did the trick. After speaking to him, she reported that her visions, once named and described in dialogue with him, seemed to melt away.\textsuperscript{16} The term chimney sweeping (which appears in English in the original text), fraught with sexual connotations, indicates nevertheless a habit that demands constant attention on the part of the analysand. As such, it would seem that psychoanalysis’s beginning, as a form of doctor-patient communication, provided the foundation for a cure that took into account the intimate and closely observed needs of the patient, along with the impartation of self-awareness to the analysand, to prevent such problems in the future. In this sense, every analysand becomes an amateur analyst.
However, Lacan's tone quickly changes in the introduction to a consideration of how the practice ossified into a set of precepts that could be wielded to the detriment of both analysand and analyst. In hindsight, Lacan seems to imply that such a thing was unavoidable, that the possibilities opened up by psychoanalysis, resting on the ideas and vision of a solitary individual who rapidly shed himself of friends and colleagues as his efforts to expand the practice met with resistance. As such, an initiate newly confronted with the rigors and concepts of analysis may find it not only intimidating, but also may realize that he or she is at the utter mercy of the analyst. Lacan remarks on the unique status of psychoanalysis and its hedge against the rest of the medical profession as an indefinable cure, subsisting on the confidence the analysand personally has in his or her analyst. The set of practices that came to be known as psychoanalysis filled the expectations from a sociological point of view, and these became part and parcel of the "operator's manual" of analysis itself (VIII 15). The problem is formulated here as if the analytic "operating manual" did indeed contain some kind of defensive rhetoric against the idea that such a relationship should be explained or sanctioned within the context of polite society – however, Lacan's point makes reference to the fact that although there is in psychoanalytic literature plenty of examples illustrating and dissecting the nature of familial, sexual, and societal interaction, there is no guide to define the relation between the teaching analyst an analyst-in-training, namely, the link between Freud and his successors. Seeing the relative speed with which Freud dispatched his closest collaborators, finally leaving his legacy with his daughter (portentously named Anna), that Freud left such a gap in his work, that of outlining the bond between mentor and tutor, is not a surprise. Lacan declares that the analytic relationship must conform to
some guidelines for societal interaction: "Isn’t intersubjectivity no more strange than the analytic encounter? The Freudian experience congeals as soon as it appears. It does not flourish in its absence" (VIII 20). Thus, the Freudian experience cannot "congeal." in Lacan’s words, unless one takes into account a form of intersubjectivity in which both analyst and analysand are treating each other as fellow interlocutors, eschewing the roles of oracle, mind-reader, and guinea pig. It would seem that the analytic relation in not privileged in this regard.

In spite of this, Lacan provides something of an opposing view in discussing the psycho-analytic tradition itself. The closest description of this phenomenon is found in this passage, which attempts to treat psychoanalysis as a body of work which, like that of Plato, offers untold treasures and insights at the expense of accepting a foreign and idiosyncratic set of metaphors to explain one’s inner life. At the same time, Lacan suggests that the originary Freudian figures of psychoanalysis shall dictate the direction of the field, in the same way as Plato’s philosophy was meant as a corrective to the purgative drama of Sophocles, constituting an intellectual justification for ethical behavior:

I shall recall only that which is expedient, in order to reference properly the ethic that constitutes the brutal reflection of Sade, which comes under the insulting methods of Sadean jouissance, that I have shown to you in the possible paths to the properly tragic frontier, where it’s situated in the Freudian landscape. It’s in the breast of those certainties where one is baptized between the two deaths—a phrase very apt for designating the field where it articulates itself, like all of those who populate the universe designed by Sophocles, and not just only in the narrative of Oedipus Rex, which places this phenomenon. I think, where we’ve been talking about it—a marking in the ethical tradition, in a reflection on the motifs and motivations of the Good. This marking, which I’ve designated properly like the Beautiful, as long as it is decorated with, or rather, that it has a mortal function, exactly where the Freudian meditation has arrived to make its last confession under the sentence of the death drive. (VIII 15)
Elsewhere Plato is referred as "Sade plus drôle (VIII 104)." Lacan speaks of the "repérage," the marking which is Freud's entry into the analysis of the death drive, latent in Freud's work until the composition of Beyond the Pleasure Principle. The whole of Freud's work can be understood as playing both sides of the Oedipus narrative, first form the point of view of sexual development (which analyses the patient's early experiences), and secondly from the power of the images of death and fate represented in the tale. In the former, the content of the Oedipus story gives the unfolding of sexual development its shape: in this latter instance, it is the context surrounding the story. that of Oedipus' blindness to the meaning of his actions, that spurs the approach to the death drive, which is characterized the opposite of the libidinal drive, namely a desire to regress to a inert state. Numerous impulses come under the heading of the death drive, all exemplified by the desire to return to the nihilation of the womb. The fixation on the death drive reveals the impetus behind psychoanalysis itself to probe the initial wound reflecting the insight's emergence:

One says - who sees that Freud has misunderstood that there is nothing of the other in the steadfast sado-masochist? Narcissism explains everything. And one addresses oneself to me—you can't get close to supporting that? It must be said that, right now. I am already recalcitrant about the function of this wound, that of narcissism, but of what import. And I tell myself that also we shall very well have to revisit my untimely Socrates, also, and this intersubjectivity. (VIII 20)

Although the parallel that Lacan draws between Freud and Plato is a rather mystifying one (the ascent to the Good and the trauma of the Oedipus complex could hardly be more dissimilar). Lacan's intent is to reflect on the construction of one scene of dialogue with another: the student speaks to the master, but the aim in the discourse is not communication — underlying it is a third thing to be gained through it, supposedly truth.
The obvious challenge that Alcibiades presents is that as an interlocutor, he refuses to agree or conform with Socrates’ explanation of the ascent to the Good, or indeed engage in conversation with him. The presence of Alcibiades disrupts the proceedings, in Lacan’s words: “Alcibiades comes along here, in flesh and bone, has more narrowly broached the question of love” (VIII 37). Such opposition forces Socrates to consider the value of whatever the amorous relationship between him and Alcibiades meant.  

Similarly, if the comparison between Socratic and Freudian dialogue is to be drawn, the physical features of the discursive object (in this case, the pupil/analysand) are specifically at issue: in Alcibiades, he encounters someone ready to spar over the inspirational conception of erotic love in the service of the Good, spoken out of the corner of Socrates’ double-dealing mouth. The unasked question that Alcibiades nevertheless is asking is, where is the value of the sexual relation, not to mention the palpable intersubjective proof of it? The problem here is brought up again in reference to the speech of Eryximachus:

We find soon enough a formula which I cannot make stick to the page. It’s not that it’s not much of a big deal to us, but it must be, all the same, for us analysts, the object of interest. There is something rustling [bruissement] here for us to grab hold of. Eryximachus tell us, in translation, that medicine is the erotic science of the body, ἐπιστημήν τοῦ σωμάτος ἐρωτικόν [episteme tou somatos erotikon]. One can’t, it seems to me, give a better definition of psychoanalysis. (VIII 89)

Lacan casts the Socratic method as a form of diagnosis, feeling out the depth and seriousness of an illness. This erotic science of the body, of which Lacan speaks, fits the bill as a definition of analysis, which takes into the account the vagaries of sexuality.

Although Lacan may be satisfied this is definition, the translation of “episteme” as “science” is somewhat overdetermined for the meaning implied. Rather, the unstated erotic component of analysis comes to the forefront: Lacan’s use of the word
“bruissment,” here “rustling,” is an etymological relation of the verb “bruire,” and by extension the noun “bruit.” words which carry a complex of meanings such as “murmur,” “noise,” and “hearsay” or “rumor.” Indeed, Lacan makes clear that although most people associated with psychoanalysis, including and particularly Freud himself, referred to analysis as science, its aims and methods steadfastly not commensurate with science:

“Well, there, they obey, or they rather acquit themselves ironically face to face those whom they need to? Indeed, we don’t feel any such need here — we meet with supremacy of the internal necessity of the deployment of the true, that is to say, science” (VIII103). Regardless, the Socratic persona provides the stamp of truth on the dialogical enterprise:

This which surprises us, it’s the seduction which is exercised in a severe discourse, and which is attested to us by the conduit of the one to the other in the dialogue. The discourse of Socrates, it’s the same if repeated by the children or by the women, exercises a sideways charm, it’s best to say: Then Socrates speaks: a force transmitting itself which erupts as one approaches it, speaking throughout in the platonic text, simply rustling there in the language, and certainly speaking from the first instant. (VIII 103)

This picture of Socratic locution was, of course, famously appropriated by Derrida in Plato’s Pharmacy, where Socrates appears to validate speech over writing. Here again, Lacan slyly makes his distrust of Socrates known.

Although Lacan initially characterizes truth as a function of Socrates’ presence, the situation is not all that one-sided. As the seminar progresses, Lacan develops the idea of truth in the transferential relation as being produced by both interlocutors. Lacan’s reading of the Symposium then takes a turn familiar to readers of Seminar XI, with the emphasis on the objet petit a as the anamorphic “blot,” encapsulating the elusive object of desire. In Lacan’s estimation, the imaginary golden idols Alcibiades sees within
Socrates, which he takes to be literal representations of the Forms, echoes throughout their master-slave dialectic. Lacan’s evocation of the Greek tradition of religious idolatry here puts a spiritual spin on the decidedly strained relationship between Alcibiades and Socrates, in essence trumping the Diotimean narrative of the loving, singular god of truth rather than might. Lacan’s appeal to the hermeticism of Greek life places the Alcibiades-Socrates axis at the center of the dialogue:

The gods of antiquity didn’t come by the four winds. They knew that they couldn’t reveal themselves to men in the stone of scandal, in the agalma of something which violated all the rules. Like a manifestation of a pure essence which, being completely covered, was an enigma that was entirely behind them: the demonic incarnation of their scandalous exploits. And it’s in this sense that I say that Alcibiades is the demon of Socrates.

Alcibiades gives a true representation, without knowing it, that is implied in the asceticism of Socrates. (VIII 193)

Lacan goes on to develop this idea of the relationship between the two men by positing Alcibiades, once spurned by Socrates, as his “moi ideal,” a necessary component to having been enamored in the first place: as Socrates himself is led on by the vision of the good, inspired by (and moderated through) the person of Alcibiades. In eschewing the privileged place of the superego in Freud’s model of the subject, Lacan asserts that ideal “Other” is grounded in the narcissism of the ego of the subject, and the projection of the ego through the image of the other, aggrandized: “Namely, this recognition is the basis of the narcissistic image, so that it makes up the raw material of the moi ideal... precisely that is meant by the term Socratic dialectic” (VIII 190). The specificity of his encounter with Alcibiades shows that this interest in the young man is not an object that can simply be wished away:

But he [Socrates] admits that he [Alcibiades] doesn’t misrecognize it, justly, because he knows he’s substituting one thing for the other. It’s not beauty, nor asceticism, nor the identification with God that Alcibiades desires, but this unique
object, that something he has seen in Socrates, and from which Socrates turns away, because Socrates knows that he doesn’t have it.

But Alcibiades, himself, steadfastly desires this very thing. It’s that which he seeks in Agathon, without a doubt. It’s this very supreme point where the subject abolishes itself in the phantasm, this agalmata. (VIII 190)

Earlier in the seminar, Lacan remarks that the great discovery of psychoanalysis has been the discovery of the “partial object.” In other words, that which spurs desire in the subject: “partial” in that the subject is deluded into thinking that the object can be possessed completely, and therefore is something of an illusion (VIII 179). Socrates embodying the agalmata, makes himself available to Alcibiades, and in so doing, Alcibiades is fooled into believing that he can possess them, and therefore perhaps Socrates: “And it’s justly because he knows it, that he is destined to fool himself; namely, to misrecognize the essential function of the visual object constituted by agalma” (VIII 190). This complicated situation is more completely limned by Lacan himself, by the statement that the eroticism put forth by Diotima is hardly eroticism at all, and cannot possibly address the specificity of the Alicibidean encounter:

It is Alcibiades, exactly, in the sense that where he is saying to us in the Diotima that love is not a god, but a demon, that is, which sends to mortals the message that the gods have given him.

And this is why we could not avoid, in regarding this dialogue, evoking the nature of the gods. (VIII 190-191)

Lacan makes sure to note that the foregoing illusion, being entirely an object of discourse, corresponds to the concept of the partial object the illusion of the vase in the spherical mirror (from the very first Lacanian Seminar), which Lacan depicts as project the image of a vase atop a pedestal, to illustrate the operation of the imaginary.

In Lacan’s discussion of the Symposium, the transferential relation is seen to be crucial in the production of Platonic truth, and, by extension, the truth of psychoanalysis. This is
to be expected from an analyst who prizes the dialogic interaction between analyst and analysand so highly. Yet, Lacan’s discussion of the *Symposium* is interesting in that the mutual desire between Socrates and Alcibiades is grounded in object relations: each seeks the other for a certain kind of fulfillment, which Socrates realizes, and leaves Alcibiades unexpectedly wanting. The language which Lacan uses to characterize the relationship between Alcibiades and Socrates touches on some of his favorite concerns: the death drive and its place in Freud, the effects of obsession and the illusions they produce, and the importance of full speech in the analytic relation. The overarching problem that Lacan seeks to address in this seminar is the status of analytic truth, and how it is adumbrated in the analytic relation. With both analyst and analysand active participant in dialogue, what truth passes between them, and what is learned? Is analysis simply a cure, or can it be expected to produce something approaching moral truth or instruction? And how does it work between analytic teacher and analytic pupil?

A closer look at the *Symposium* reveals that Plato himself provides no simple answers, and indeed the dialogue precludes any simple interpretation in light of this theme. Socrates’ conception of philosophical teaching is variously characterized in the Platonic dialogues: indeed, the origin of the word “philosophy” is found in Plato, as he appears to have been the first to use the term. I shall not attempt in this brief a space to give a Platonic account of philosophical knowledge, as every Platonic dialogue is, more or less, devoted to the question of valid arguments and the ethical value of such knowledge. However, one finds with Alcibiades’ candid description of Socrates in the latter sections of *Symposium* an extended exchange on the nature of amorous philosophical discussion between teacher and pupil: the earlier sections of the dialogue foreground the argument
between Socrates and his admirer by exploring the erotic elements of intellectual exchange, a feature common throughout all of Plato. The context of the Socratic encounter, and the wisdom passed between both parties in dialogue (and, to a certain extent, in love) centers around the question of possession: it is found most notably in Alcibiades’ bitter complaints about Socrates’ supposed indifference, but the dialogue as a whole trades in a set of metaphors concerning knowledge as a precious commodity to be exchanged, bought, and traded.

In the opening pages of the Symposium, Socrates greets Agathon, recent victor in a poetry contest and the reason for the feast, with the customary tongue-in-cheek contempt he usually reserves for rhapsodes, rhetors, and other discursive men:

Socrates sat down next to him and said, “How wonderful it would be, dear Agathon, if the foolish were filled with the wisdom simply by touching the wise. If only wisdom were like water, which always flows from a full cup into an empty one when we connect them with a piece of yarn—well, then I would consider it the greatest prize to have the chance to lie down next to you. I would soon be overflowing with your wonderful wisdom. My own wisdom is of no account—a shadow in a dream—while yours is bright and radiant and has a splendid future. Why, as young as you are, you’re so brilliant I could call more than thirty thousand Greeks as witnesses.

“Now you’ve gone too far, Socrates,” Agathon replied. “Well, eat your dinner. Dionysus will soon enough be the judge of our claims to wisdom!”

Socrates’ comment wryly poses knowledge as a kind of zero-sum game: no doubt that as the level of Socrates’ wisdom rose, Agathon’s would be depleted just as quickly. The sexual imagery of this rhetorical figure fits, no doubt, into the primary topic of the evening’s discussion, the probity of intertwining love with knowledge. In his praising of Agathon’s beauty (in speech, as well as the physical) Socrates hits a note that will sound throughout the Symposium as the primary image for the quickening of love in the desiring soul, and the first step on the path to love of wisdom, and the Good. Socrates’ choice of a
visual impression of the Good (that which is “bright and radiant”) asserts the link
between knowledge and sight, another favorite theme of Plato’s, and which is more often
than not used to ironic effect. Before the night is over, it will be shown, unsurprisingly,
that Agathon’s closed-minded view of love as temporary infatuation with beauty shall be
seen as morally bankrupt in light of the theory outlined by Socrates, with the aid of the
Diotima narrative. Despite Socrates’ dismissal of Agathon, the very real question of the
limits of intergenerational pedagogy shall return to the fore, found in Socrates’ acknowledg-
ment of the transactional nature of such relationships, as opposed to the strain of
inquiry he explores with Diotima as his guide.

The theory of the ascent to the Good that Socrates puts forward in the Symposium
centers around the dialogic progression of the inquiry into love, culminating in the
famous image of the ladder ascending to the vision of the Good, or the One. Such an
genderment of knowledge in the individual occurs in a greatly different fashion from
the homoerotic model purportedly excoriated by Socrates in this dialogue. Diotima’s
explanation for the purpose and motivation for the teaching of wisdom lies in the
individual’s desire to evade the inevitable mortification of the flesh:

And in that way [memory] everything mortal is preserved, not, like the divine, by
always being the same in every way, but because what is departing and again
leaves behind something new, something such as it had been. By this a device,
Socrates,” she said, “what is mortal shares in immortality whether it is a body or
anything else, while the immortal has another way. So don’t be surprised if
everything naturally values its own offspring, because it is for the sake of
immortality that everything shows this zeal, which is Love.” (208a-c)

The figure that Plato uses to describe the origin of this desire for knowledge is that of
pregnancy, and indeed Diotima’s explanation of this counters the suggestion that beauty.
like knowledge, is a thing that can be possessed: “It is giving birth in beauty, whether in
body or soul "(206b)" Diotima remarks that once we get to a certain age, "we naturally desire to give birth" (206d). Love wants not beauty but "reproduction and birth in beauty" (206e). Owing to the Platonic imperative to orient oneself towards the eternal and incorruptible, that which longs for the beautiful must not in itself be beautiful or perfectly good (Eros is often portrayed, in antiquity, as being the ugliest of the gods), and this search for the beautiful also entails the bringing of others to a realization of it. As such, the passing of such philosophical knowledge engenders the desire for the beautiful within the pupil. As Diotima elaborates: "For among animals the principle is the same as with us, and mortal nature seeks so far as possible to live forever and be immortal. And this is possible in one way only: by reproduction, because it always leaves behind a new young one place of the old "(207c)? Although this conversation has taken a tack towards the implication that Socrates, by fostering relationships with younger in the hopes that they will turn towards his brand of philosophical inquiry, the link between Socrates and his students, even if is a bond of affection, is one fraught with complexity. The emotion most often invoked with Socrates when his students talk about him in the dialogues is admiration, and also that far from being a lover. Socrates is the one above all other who provided his followers with a moral example and model of how to conduct right inquiry into things. However, Diotima assigns Socrates the role of Eros in this scenario, as one who desires love's beautiful effects, rather than being an abiding parent. Diotima's further exploration of this metaphor provides Socrates with an erotic role to play in the fostering of the philosophical interest within young men:

Now, some people are pregnant in body, and for this reason turn more to women and pursue love in that way, providing themselves through childbirth with immortality and remembrance and happiness, as they think, for all time to come, while others are pregnant in soul—because there surely are those who are even
more pregnant in their souls than in their bodies, and these are pregnant with what is fitting for a soul to bear and bring to birth. And what is fitting? Wisdom and the rest of virtue, which all poets beget, as well as all the craftsmen who are said to be creative. But by far the greatest and most beautiful part of wisdom deals with the proper ordering of cities and households, and that is called moderation and justice. (208c-209a)

Diotima’s description of love’s operation, process, and proper object allows Socrates a parallel role as one sowing the seeds of philosophy and procreating in spirit rather than body. Further textual parallels with this impression of Socrates arrive in Diotima’s depiction of Love as being “homeless” and “a lover of wisdom [πηλοσοφηνον, philosophon]” (203c-d) – described as being in much the same trappings as the pauperish Soerates. The vision of the ascent to the Good Diotima presents is, most significantly, one of high moral purpose occasioned by the presence of another: rather than the single-minded lust of Phaedrus, where the soul leaps into the aether without intellectualizing, in the same fashion. the approach to the good.

Nevertheless, Plato sees fit to give a voice to the status quo of pedagogical relationships. Pausanias’ speech is the only one of the Symposium that takes the pedagogy between men and boys somewhat seriously, for much the same reason that Diotima seems to value the heterosexual one between men and women: the lover develops the beloved in an intellectual sense, so that after the affair is over, he leaves something permanent with the younger one. Here, Pausanias outlines the lover’s commitment to a potential love interest:

I am convinced that a man who falls in love with a young man of his own age is generally prepared to share everything with the one he loves—he is eager, in fact, to spend the rest of his own life with him. He certainly does not aim to deceive him—to take advantage of him while he is still young and inexperienced and then, after exposing him to ridicule, to move quickly on to someone else. (181d)
Pausanias' lines are echoed by the bitter Alcibiades later on in his belief that Socrates genuinely cared about him and felt wronged when he realized he could not possess Socrates. Pausinias remarks that the ideal situation should be that in the adult lover two laws should be combined – one for the love of boys, the other for love of wisdom (184d). Because it is impossible to legislate behavior in a truly loving relationship, both parties are in such an excited state that neither has any externalized view of their behavior, which resolutely ignores one’s instincts for self-interest: “And, what is the most extraordinary thing of all, it is popularly supposed that the lover is the one man whom the gods will pardon for breaking his vows, for lovers’ promises, they say, are made to be forsworn” (183a-c). In this sense, pedagogical love regardless of the age difference takes on a kind of phantom status, not possible to be measured in the number of children, or outward symbols of possession and domain. For the lover of knowledge, his object being higher ethical discernment, shall instead retain qualities of mind and soul independent of his former lover, thus having been instructed in morality and truth, shall reap the benefits in perpetuity (183a). In sum, the moral education of the Greek youth, existing as it does outside the realm of a heterosexual economy, is a positive boon in the life of a young man; having been taken in hand by an older citizen, the younger benefits from the wisdom of old age, and takes these lessons, literally, in Pausanias’ estimation, to heart. The question of whether this counts as “real love” is, in a very pointed way, taken up by Alcibiades when he seizes his turn to speak.

The principal conflict for Alcibiades in the Symposium, which Alcibiades airs in the opening moments of his speech, centers on the question raised by Pausinias: what are the boundaries of affection and knowledge in the pedagogical relationship, and what claims
does the beloved have on the older lover? The fundamental problem for Alcibiades, rejected, embittered, arises from his misapprehension of his role, just as Pausinias delineates. Indeed, the presence of Alcibiades serves as the obverse of Diotima's inspirational ode to philosophical love. Socrates engages neither in any substantial argument, and each is allowed to speak their piece. Still smarting from the sage's rebuff of his amorous entreaties, Alcibiades elaborates on his theatrical, spluttering response to the presence of Socrates claiming that his seductive voice will surely overtake him:

"He always traps me, you see, and he makes me admit that my political career is a waste of time, while all that matters is just what I most neglect: my personal shortcomings, which cry out for the closet attention. So I refuse to listen to him: I stop my ears and tear myself away from him, for, like the Sirens, he could make me stay by his side until I die" (215d-216a). The difference between Alcibiades' view of his relationship to Socrates, and Socrates' own view, is that of the teacher's pet to the doting master. Alcibiades' reflection that he has been unfaithful to Socratic moral teaching forces him to feel embarrassed in the presence of the great man:

Socrates is the only man in the world who has made me feel ashamed—ah, you didn't think I had it in me, did you? Yes, he makes me feel ashamed: I know perfectly well that I can't prove he's wrong when he tells me what I should do; yet, the moment I leave his side, I go back to my old ways: I cave in to my desire to please the crowd. (216b)

Alcibiades' adherence to moral rectitude, no doubt, is bound up in his feelings of attachment to Socrates, despite his initial consideration of Socrates as a momentary fling.

In a rare show of candor for Plato, Alcibiades goes on in his tale of failed seduction to describe his ardor for Socrates and impossibility of letting him go:

To begin with, he's crazy about beautiful boys; he constantly follows them around in a perpetual daze. Also, he likes to say he's ignorant and knows nothing. Isn't
this just like Silenus? Of course it is! And all this is just on the surface, like the outsides of those statues of Silenus. I wonder, my fellow drinkers, if you have any idea what a sober and temperate man he proves to be once you have looked inside. Believe me, it couldn’t matter less to him whether a boy is beautiful. You can’t imagine how little he cares whether a person is beautiful, or rich, or famous in any other way that most people admire. He considers all these possessions beneath contempt, and that’s exactly how he considers all of us as well. In public, I tell you, his whole life is one big game—a game of irony. I don’t know if any of you have seen him open [ανοιξθεσστοσ] like Silenus’ statues, and I had a glimpse of the figures he keeps hidden within: they were so godlike [θεία] — so bright [ϕως] and beautiful [παγκάλα], so utterly amazing — that I no longer had a choice — I just had to do whatever he told me. (216d-217a)

Alcibiades makes the mistake of identifying the figure of Socrates exclusively with the truth he dispenses. *Eidos* (idea) derives from *oida*, the Attic verb which has the double meaning of *to see* and *to know*: the method of revelation which Alcibiades refers is described here in as being in the third person accusative as *ανοιξθεσστοσ*, most precisely meaning “stand open.” as one lets a door remain ajar; in Sophoclean usage, “to lay open.” Those things to which Alcibiades refers, here rendered as “images,” are *αγάλματα*, since Homeric times, meaning the honorific symbols of a god, as Lacan points out, the luster of the golden idols is transmitted by the word *θαυμαστα*. In this case, such idols would put the lie to Socrates’ disavowal of his store of knowledge. Alcibiades himself, however, does not think for a moment that the images themselves are real: they are a fantastical delusion that holds sway over him, and overwhelmed by Socrates’ intellectual wealth. Alcibiades sees nothing for it but to put himself in Socrates’ hands. The prophecy of Socrates’ flip remark at the beginning of the dialogue has come true — rather than philosophy being something external to the self. Alcibiades has deluded himself into believing that Socrates possess a store of knowledge, which he hoards jealously.

As such, not only is the love Alcibiades feels for Socrates imaginary, but the possibility of any relationship with Socrates is precluded by his unwillingness to open
himself up for an amorous exchange. Alcibiades reflects after spending the night sleeping next to Socrates: "...believe it, gentlemen, or believe it not, when I got up the next morning I had no more slept with Socrates, within the meaning of the act, that if he’d been my father or an elder brother" (219c-219d). The disappointment Alcibiades feels relates primarily to his inability to seduce Socrates successfully. After pursuing him for more than a day or so (Socrates cannot take the hint no matter what he does), Alcibiades finally confronts Socrates with the fact that he wishes to sleep with him, revealing to Socrates' imagined or projected chagrin that his desires are basely sexual.

Alcibiades here relates Socrates' dismissive reply to his suit:

"...You seem to me to want more than your proper share: you offer me the merest appearance of beauty, and in return you want the thing itself; ‘gold in exchange for bronze.’

Still, my dear boy, you should think twice, because you could be wrong, and I may be of no use to you. The mind’s sight becomes sharp only when the body’s eyes go past their prime—and you are still a good long time away from that."

(218e-219a)

This is more of Socrates’ play on the difference between appearance and reality:

Socrates’ implication is that Alcibiades (naturally) has given up too much of himself in his pursuit of Socrates, that the pleasures of the flesh, being really what he seeks as opposed to philosophical knowledge, are in short supply with him. In essence, because his aim is entirely hedonic, that he is simply wasting his time. The education that Alcibiades undergoes under Socrates may be morally instructive and all that, but cannot fill the lack that Alcibiades feels: in psychoanalytic parlance, Alcibiades has projected the power of Socrates’ images onto the man himself, such that he does merely transmit the idea of the good, it is authorized by his presence, real or imagined. This sense of betrayal that Alcibiades feels certainly does not invalidate what he (or the tradition) learned from
Socrates: however, in the case of Alcibiades, it leaves them a savage example to follow.

Socratic pedagogy installs a set of metaphors in the student to uncover what he has forgotten, but although it works for mathematical demonstrations and the like, ethical decisions – the ability to seek the Good in everything – are thought processes locked up in the mind of one who constantly holds mental vigil in front of the images of the Good. Platonic love is nothing less than intellectual seduction and abandonment, with the bereft student left to reassemble the lessons after master’s permanent physical departure, the master’s voice constantly in his ears. The rejection by Socrates of his possible pupil seems to have fired his philosophical imagination, however, as Alcibiades’ declaration seems to betray:

And, furthermore, you know what people say about snakebite—that you’ll only talk about it with your fellow victims: only they will understand the pain and forgive you for all the things it made you do. Well, something much more painful than a snake has bitten me in my most sensitive part—I mean my heart, or my soul, or whatever you want to call it, which has been struck and bitten by philosophy, whose grip on young and eager souls is much more vicious than a viper’s and makes them do the most amazing things. (217e-218a)

The previous use of the phrase in the dialogue occurs in the description of the ideal Greek tutor-lover: here, Alcibiades utters this formula to mocking effect. Alcibiades inverts the imperative suggested by Pausinias: that the education of a young man could not be legislated, and that the older man should simply proceed as he sees fit. Alcibiades puts the responsibility on the teacher rather than the pupil, and suggests that relationship can be nothing but destructive: the teacher as predator, the pupil as prey. Ultimately, the narrative of the Symposium establishes a philosophical justification of love as a noble feeling which induces one to act in accordance with a morality that is congruent with aesthetics: that which is beautiful (kalos) is but a physical reflection of the good. Where
Alcibiades, and perhaps Plato's readership, go astray is in being attracted to the images
themselves rather than what they represent. In a sense, the analogic relationships upon
which so many of Plato's arguments depends melt into thin air if one does not adduce
truth to them, in the words of Socrates, taking bronze for gold.

Conclusion

An important question that Lacan seeks to answer in his meta-analytic early work is
that of the origin of the psychoanalytic insight. Lacan not only asks what psychoanalysis
consists in, and how to proceed with psychoanalytic inquiry—depending as it does on a
theorization of analytic dialogue. It is only fitting that Lacan should turn his attention
towards the historical grounding of analysis, and interrogate them as to their relevance for
analytic practice: from the foregoing, it has been seen that this is a mightily vexed issue.
The very thing that gives that psychoanalysis its value, dialogue between the analyst and
analysand, is, in the end, impossible to codify or regulate. The conflation of love and
philosophical dialectic is not an accident: the two-term Socratic dialectic removes all
semblance of objectivity, and the manufacture of philosophical truth becomes a contest
between the teacher and student, negotiated through the treacherous waters of expecta-
tion, miscommunication and desire. All the trappings of the analytic/pedagogical relation
are subject to shift, including the roles of teacher and student, doctor and patient, seducer
and seduced.

Perhaps most importantly for Lacan, interested in the return to Freud and the origins
of this "erotic science," if one expects to uncover the "real" Freud, one will always
uncover an individual mind at the center of it, and ventriloquize it in the name of making it speak. This is the purpose of psychoanalysis, not unlike the action described in the Symposium of the opening the hermae. This is the instrumental reason for Freud to have chosen Oedipus as the central figure of psychoanalysis. With his guilt so obvious, the motivations and import of his crimes remain hidden until revealed through some thorough detective work, placing his identity and birth within a larger narrative of destiny of Laius’ killer. Leaving questions of sexual development aside, Lacan’s implied reinterpretation of the Oedipus story for the post-war Freud has most to do with the explicit concerns of analysis. The perspective taken on Oedipus looks at him as the first analysand:

But it’s not for this reason [Oedipus’ crime] that Freud has chosen Oedipus. Other protagonists, more than Oedipus, are in this fundamental conjunction. That’s why Freud rediscovers this fundamental figure in the tragedy of Oedipus, it’s in the he didn’t know, that he had killed his father and slept with his mother. (VII 122)

The drama of Oedipus is one of revelation rather than action. The exposition of layers of the Oedipus narrative, each more damning than the last, dooms Oedipus to his ultimate fate. As Lacan points out, the audience witness the tragedy of Oedipus coming to light, as opposed to occurring before their eyes; the outcome is already set, and Oedipus can do nothing to change his fate. Most of all, the Oedipal tragedy is one of identity—it is the truth that wounds.

The full consequences of transference for analytic pedagogy, as described in this chapter, are difficult to assess, as to their meaning within the context of analysis itself. At best, training in analysis offers an education in analytic technique. As for the truth of psychoanalysis, it remains exclusively in the province of the subject, not responsive to any possible “scientific” interpretation. The maladies psychoanalysis aims to cure, and
the remedies it prescribes, are products of the necessarily tendentious relationship between analyst and analysand; rather than deriving from some philosophical ideal (a concept undermined by the presence of Alcibiades in the Symposium), they are a result of the friction between the subject-other relation, in reading the unconscious. The reckoning with Freud that Lacan calls for is an imperative to continually rediscover the orientation and identity of analysis in the works of Freud, whose corpus constitutes the substrate of analytic meaning. Any analytic hermeneutic must take into account the act of analytic reading as dialogue, but also with the caution that one must not pretend to a conception of scientific progress in psychoanalysis, as the roles of master and pupil analyst are continually, and almost by definition necessarily, up for grabs.


3 Lacan’s discussion of the speech in the analytic situation, and the “poetics” of Freud’s work, may be found in the second half of the Rome Discourse, *Écrits* 77-107.

4 Although much of Lacan’s language throughout his work echoes Hegel (the French Hegel that Lacan doubtlessly picked up in the seminars of Kojève), Lacan’s willingness to explore the “negative” term of the dialectic of psychoanalytic thought recalls the Heidegger of the late 20s and early 30s, who called for an investigation into the “unthoughts” of philosophy in such essays as “What is Metaphysics?,” “The Essence of Truth,” and others.
Lacan famously rejects the *cogito* in the opening paragraph of “The Mirror Stage” (E 1/S 93).

The bulk of Clérambault’s clinical work, as collected in *Oeuvre Psychiatrique* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France 1942) deals not only with psychoses (echoalia, hallucinations and the like) but perceptual distortions caused by ether, alcohol, or inflammation of brain tissue; the last section of the work, “In Memoriam,” consists of a first-person account of his failed cataract surgery rendering him unable to perceive depth. This incident led up to his depression, and subsequent theatrical suicide, an excellent account of which may be found in Elisabeth Rudinesco. *Jacques Lacan & Co.*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago, University of Chicago Press. 1990): 107-109.


Although Freud does not deal with overtly comic dreams as a “type,” his remark here that dreams can fill a comic role by playing with the raw material of the dreamer’s life opens up the possibility that some dreams can fall under the definition of “tendentious” jokes, as Freud describes in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (SE 8: 102-115).

The word is the same in Freud’s original German text, taken entirely from the French, the present participle form of “revenir,” to return or revisit.

Freud concludes his account of this sequence of dreams with a very interesting and rich discussion of *Julius Caesar*, comparing himself to the figure of Brutus. Caesar’s treacherous confidant. He ends the section with the admission that he played the role of Brutus in a scene performed as a fourteen-year-old at school, with a visiting nephew of his, about the same age as he, playing the part of Caesar. Freud briefly mentions his troubled childhood relations with this nephew, and curtails it all too soon.

For a contrast with the material Freud describes in *Interpretation of Dreams*, this letter to Fliess on the occasion of his father’s death, dating from November 1896, offers a glimpse into Freud’s view of his filial relationship. Although this letter does fit within the context of my discussion about Freud’s tendentious dreams, it provides resonant insight into the dependence of Freud’s psyche on the figure of his father. Source: *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey

Dear Wilhelm,

I find it so difficult to write just now that I have put off for a long time thanking you for the moving words in your letter. By one of those dark pathways behind the official consciousness the old man's death has affected me deeply. I valued him highly, understood him very well, and with his peculiar mixture of deep wisdom and fantastic light-heartedness he had a significant effect on my life. By the time he died, his life had long been over, but in (my) inner self the whole past has been reawakened by this event.

I now feel quite uprooted [Ich habe nun ein recht entwurzeltes Gefühl]....

I must tell you about a nice dream I had the night after the funeral. I was in a place where I read a sign:

You are requested
to close the eyes. [Es wird gebeten die Augen zuzuüdrücken.]

I immediately recognized the location as the barbershop I visit every day. On the day of the funeral I was kept waiting and therefore arrived a little late at the house of mourning. At that time the family was displeased with me because I had arranged for the funeral to be quiet and simple, which they later agreed was quite justified. They were also somewhat offended by my lateness. The sentence on the sign has a double meaning: one should do one's duty to the dead (an apology as though I had not done it and were in need of leniency), and the actual duty itself. The dream thus stems from the inclination to self-reproach that regularly sets in among the survivors.

12. Freud fails to note a possible pun in the second riddle, that “der wiege” (cradle) could be possible taken for “der weg” (way, road, or path), implying that one's progeny could be lying in the middle of the road as one drives up, or unceremoniously dumped behind one's carriage.

13. My aim in doing this is not to place psychoanalysis, particularly of the Lacanian variety, on a par with philosophy. As in Ricoeur's *Freud and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) I take psychoanalysis as one of the interpretive possibilities for a hermeneutic layer of the subject's experience.


17. Martha Nussbaum’s “The Speech of Alcibiades” covers similar territory in its reading, which seeks to dethrone the centrality of the Diotima narrative in the *Symposium:* in
Nussbaum’s view. Alcibiades reintroduces the concreteness of the lover’s flesh to the story of the ascent. The other side of the equation, which she does not emphasize as strongly, is that beyond Alcibiades’ need to claim Socrates’ body. Socrates also needs Alcibiades, despite his outward asceticism.

18 Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Symposium has been more often than not translated as a proto-Christian text, with its apparent criticism of “pagan” values, fleeting homosexual love, and notions of a spiritual presence (for lack of a better word) motivated by compassion, intelligence, and the reconciliation of opposites (the flesh in service and support of the body, and so forth). Recent translations are skewed towards various topics in the dialogue, somewhat fittingly, as it is the richest of the Platonic dialogues in practically all senses: narratively, stylistically, comically, and philosophically. For it is one of the few dialogues where Socrates does not have the last word throughout, and the only one in which Socrates gets his comeuppance from both a woman and an ex-lover. In addition, it is the only Platonic dialogue that answers the question of where other philosophers receive their motivation to question after the truth, an often painful process of initiation.

Chapter 2

Clérambault and Heidegger: Of Our Antecedents

From experience, it must be said, that we are opposed to all philosophy issuing directly from the Cogito.

- "Le stade du miroir." Écrits (Seuil 1966)

It is an often-obsced aspect of Lacan’s work that he wished to found an alternate basis for psychoanalysis in then-current work being done in the arenas of experimental psychology and psychological phenomenology, particularly the work of Henri Ey, Eugène Minkowski, and the group Évolution Psychiatrique, whose eponymous journal still thrives to the present day. Lacan’s intention in doing this was undoubtedly informed by his exposure to the work of Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault. Although not explicitly affiliated with the burgeoning field of French phenomenology, Clérambault established a structural model for examining the mental life of the subject, one that approached the Freudian model in *The Ego and the Id*, although Clérambault himself professed no interest in psychoanalysis. Through his association with Clérambault, Lacan was able to formulate his primitive ideas of the split subject, *le objet petit a*, and reconcile theoretical approaches with clinical observation: Clérambault’s discussion of erotomania prefigured Lacan’s medical thesis on the relation of psychosis, which drew its case study, that of Aimée, from his time with Clérambault in the psychiatric clinic of the prefecture of the Parisian police. The personal conflicts Lacan endured with Clérambault were neither unusual in any teacher-student relationship nor specific to Lacan, but they nevertheless help to explain some of the more quirky pedagogical and clinical aspects of Lacan’s personality.
Lacan’s relationship to Heidegger has also been difficult to explain. Later on his career, Lacan sought out the friendship of Heidegger out of interest in his work, possibly influenced by his earlier association with heavily phenomenological Évolution Psychiatrique. Heidegger’s amused and somewhat flattered responses to Lacan’s offers of collaboration, intellectual exchange, and friendship may have spoken more about Heidegger postwar need for acceptance rather than an intellectual interest in translating his thought into the practice of psychoanalysis. Estimating the impact of Heidegger on Lacan’s thought has, in the past, focused attention on the later phases of Heidegger’s work, primarily with regard to Lacan’s approach to language as the medium and justification for psychoanalysis. Heidegger’s earlier, more formally phenomenological and Husserlian work, has been overlooked with regard to its influence on Lacan, and it is this aspect of the Heidegger-Lacan confrontation that I wish to elucidate.

In this chapter, I shall examine the relationship of both of these thinkers on Lacan’s early work, up to and including Seminar II. Unlike Freud, who hovers over all of Lacan’s work as an abiding presence, Lacan’s appropriations of Cléricambault and Heidegger’s work have been largely unacknowledged in the Lacanian literature. In exposing the roots of Lacanian thought in the work of Cléricambault and Heidegger, I also offer a kind of biographical appreciation of the aim of Lacan’s work to bring a kind of scientific rigor to psychoanalysis, only to have the powerful Structuralist wave that washed over the French intellectual scene in the 1960s invalidate his struggle to incorporate elements of phenomenology and psychology into psychoanalysis, in favor of the gnomic utterances of the post Seminar XI-period that so many identify as Lacan’s true psychoanalytic voice. At the same time, my purpose here is not to preclude Lacan
from being read with reference to his later work, but to establish Lacan’s ties to the paradigmatically modernist movements of transcendental phenomenology and scientific clinical psychology. The core of Lacan’s earlier work with its investments in “ego psychology” are often obscured by the later seminars, and it is here that Lacan’s continuity with the psychoanalytic tradition dovetails with the past. The intellectual obsession of modernist intellectual movements with the ego is never truly abandoned in the postmodern era, with the emphasis on the “decentered” subject – rather, this assuredly anti-Cartesian view of the subject is present everywhere in Freud, Heidegger, and particularly, Clérambault, whose view of the split subject formed the basis for Lacan’s mature work of the 1950s.

Clérambault: Maître de Lacan

In a statement at the beginning of Écrits, “De nos antecedents.” Lacan declares that he must “recall where the origin of this interest” in psychiatry made its entry into his life. At the auspicious occasion of the publication of his life’s work, one might expect a summary statement of his life in thought (coming as it did in 1966, at the age of 65). and Lacan delivers it—although perhaps in a very unexpected way. After making references to both Évolution Psychiatrique and those Surrealists who shared his points of view, Lacan remarks that the birth of the clinic (“naissance de la clinique.” an unsubtle reference to the Foucault work of the same name) was. “[the analytic community] believe[s]. singularly. necessarily. done by Freud.” although the trappings of modern psychiatric practices were established primarily through Kraepelin, German master of the
empirical, formally neurophysiological approach. Yet, writes Lacan, his career, and by extension the drift of French analysis, "fits into the trace of Clérambault, our sole master in psychiatry." Lacan goes on to say that it is largely due to Clérambault's structural rigor that Lacan and his colleagues, whether they were aware of Clérambault's influence or not, were able to advance the practice of French psychiatry. At the time of Lacan's statement, Clérambault's work had been out of print since the mid-1940s, and all but forgotten in the wake of the emergence of French psychoanalysis.

Even at the time, Clérambault's fame rested, much the same as it does now, on his theory of erotomania, itself a form of hysteria in which the female sufferer (invariably female, it might be said) believes that a man of wealth, importance or prominence is desperately in love with her. "Clérambault syndrome" is a near-universal term for this concept, and is uniformly used to describe sexual obsessions that transcend social class.⁴ Although this idea has a great deal of currency in the psychological landscape (particularly from the Anglo-American perspective), Clérambault's work has, then as now, remained completely uninvestigated, save for two brief collections outlining, respectively, his concept of L'automatisme mentale and his writings on the topic of fabric fetishism among women of Arabic descent, with excerpts from his massive, two-volume, posthumous Oeuvres Psychiatriques. This work itself, published in 1942 by Clérambault's students several years after his death, is a chronologically organized collection of case studies and clinical writings, divided into topical chapters, and ending with an account of Clérambault's suicide, the circumstances leading up to it, and the controversy surrounding it. As Gabbard notes in his introduction to L'automatisme mentale, the size and whimsical, somewhat arbitrary presentation of the Oeuvres Psychiatriques certainly
prefigures Œuvres: indeed, the appearance of the Lacanian text and such a late point in life
might be construed as a succumbing to the demands of the intellectual marketplace on
Lacan’s behalf, out of the realization that he had exhausted his best ideas and they could
finally be yielded to public scrutiny, a kind of monument to his intellectual legacy.

The intellectual debt that Lacan owes to Clérambault is a concrete one. Lacan’s
concept of the split self, partitioned into the je and the moi is grounded in the scission du
moi formulated by Clérambault, with the delusion of psychosis forming a large part of the
Clérambault’s theory of personality. In a primitive sense, the delusion of desire is the
reflected unconscious of the subject, superadded to the immutability of the symbolic
order. As such, the dividend of the self effaces the ratiocinative side of subject.

Clérambault’s description of the deluded subject, found in writings on “the delusional
passions,” provides the basis for the Lacan of Les Psychoses and also Seminar XI, with
its presentation of the Lacanian concepts of gaze, the blot, and anamorphism.

Clérambault, L’Automatisme Mentale, and the Split Self

Around the first half of the 1920s, Clérambault, working in the psychiatric clinic of the
prefecture of the Parisian police, developed a theory that he termed l’automatisme
mentale. In Freudian terms, “mental automatism” is Clérambault’s description of the
relation of the ego to the unconscious – the “automated” portion of the subject’s
consciousness is that which organizes the data of perception and forms the substrate of
conscious existence. In essence, this layer is that which most closely comprises the self,
with distortions occurring to the subjectivity in form of delusional passions. Clérambault
took pains to differentiate these "passions" from hallucinatory psychoses, which were the cause of real mental illness. At once, the Clérambaldian theory of personality is formed. more or less wholly; the personality of the subject, superimposed on the automatisme mentale, is dictated by the feelings that external stimuli and interest invoke in the subject. From this, one may see the eventual development of the Lacanian picture of the moi-je dyad, one in which the image of the self from the point of view of society (the moi) is the effect of the intersubjective relation of the subject with others in a societal context, and the subjective perception of experience, je, is the irreducible dividend of self and personality. The formation of the concept of l'automatisme mentale is itself worthy of examination.

The central idea supporting A.M. (as Clérambault often refers to it in shorthand) is that of "anidéisme" or "anidéation." which for Clérambault constituted the organic mental process that lay outside the conscious processes of the brain." The initial concept of the A.M. is arrived at in Clérambault’s pre-1926 clinical work. The unconscious is, in a sense, the cause of mental instability, in that the subject’s unnatural attention to it evokes: the unconscious processes bubbling under the veneer of the conscious give rise to the misinterpretation of them by the subject, possibly causing in this event, known as paranoia. The symptoms of such a “disorder” are, for example, according to Clérambault, the echoing of one’s thoughts, internal narrations and arguments about one’s acts, thoughts, and motives, possibly including an exaggerated view of such motives (be they divinely inspired, or for some other reason). Clérambault explains thus:

The orientation of the subject through the endogenous or exogenous explication (that is to say, possession or persecution) depends also on the various nuances of his perceptions, of sensation that associate themselves (genitality for example) and the reciprocal proportion of intuitive, psycho-motor and auditory elements. (AM
Hyper-awareness of the operations of l’A.M. leads one into a kind of psychotic state.

The operations that are normally invisible to the subject’s consciousness are rather too present, thus leading the subject to exaggerate their significance. Clérambault remarks elsewhere that l’A.M. is a “primordial phenomenon,” which falls under the same category: “secondary delusions,” as do feelings of persecution, megalomania, erotism, and mysticism: Clérambault also refers to l’A.M. as a “primitive process,” existent in a more or less “pure state.” Again, the psychological maladies aggravated by the subject with reference to the A.M. are important in that they are delusions, products of the misinterpretation of mental cues and processes with reference to the outside world. As Clérambault elucidates:

The interpretive work’s systematic agency of conception is not of epiphenomena: they result from conscious work, and in itself not morbid or hardly morbid, on the matter which is imposed by the Unconscious. One can that at the moment where delirium appears, the psychosis is already old. Delirium is not a superstructure. (AM 36)

Therefore the A.M., according to Clérambault, is a “syndrome” fundamental to all kinds of psychoses (AM 38).” However, it must be noted that delusionary hallucinations with persecutions are necessarily of mixed form. Phenomenologically speaking, the experience of persecution and paranoia has a great many layers, the nosology of which takes into account a great many factors in the production of full-blown paranoia.

Clérambault, in this account, describes the A.M.’s role in psychosis as the most basic layer of any mental disorder: “The phenomenon present themselves always as such… in the onset of the psychoses, if the subject is conveniently questioned and is capable of introspection “(39).
The original conception of the A.M. simply put, is as a basic, universal structure for mental functioning. As a feature of the mental landscape, it provides for the processing of stimuli and the staging of thoughts. When used as a sounding board in conscious life, it becomes a spur for delirium to emerge. As delirium is a composite state with many causes and factors, the problem is to determine that one course of treatment will not do:

The systematization...exists with the polymorphs: each system is prorated according to its intelligence and according to the form of its intelligence. A rigorous systematization doesn't stop polymorphism...None of this changes the causal process, or the consequences of the prognosis. ...they are the common nucleus of the A.M. ...The nucleus is of a histological order: ideation is of a psychological order, nothing more. (57)

Ultimately, the cause of psychosis is irreducibly somatic, albeit in a metaphorical sense relating to the structure and theory of nervous organization. At the root of the concept of the A.M. (although developed much later in the sequence of things) is Clérambault's doctrine of anidéisme, a concept similar to that of the Freudian unconscious, along with various descriptions of the A.M. under the rubric of 'Automatisme ideo-verbal.' By this point, Clérambault has become even more bold in his theorizing of the subject, opting for an almost Cartesian method of talking about the unconscious. In the clinical writings of 1926, Clérambault discusses the various forms of psychosis previously covered in his work, and allows that all of the psychoses, from perceptual distortions either chemically induced or pathological, or repetitive patterns of thought, are "mechanical" in origin:

The purely mechanical origin is evident in the case of olfactory and visceral hallucinations, in the case of musical hallucinations, and finally visual ones. Proof of anidéation for visual hallucinations: suffering from images surging about, without relation with the thoughts of the subject, without reciprocal congruence, without affective force, often fragmentary, often phantasmagorical: sometimes serial visual and serial auditory simultaneously, but not concordant...keeping up -to-date and also false memories, in sum, total autonomy and total visual flux: truly free images... Other proofs are of a mechanical genesis: the absolute specificity of
images for each toxin, and completely unique non-objectivation and non-appropriation.

The more Visual Ideorhea is incoherent, the less each image is constructed... The discrete excitement of one so afflicted cannot give organized results. (63)

Owing to the neutral aspect of this mode of mental functioning, Clérambault maintains that the categories of mental activity that he describes as an effect of A.M. are themselves neither necessarily positive or negative, but merely different effects of the same structure (64-65). 8

Where Freud theorizes that the cause of slips or parapraxes come from the unconscious, erupting into the conscious, Clérambault’s picture of psychosis is such that each symptom of delusion violates the Cartesian picture of consciousness, as that which disrupts the evenness of logical thought. Rather ascribing to the Cartesian model of the “theatre” of consciousness, which entertains or rejects ideas. Clérambault’s version is that of the mind as collection of systems that in some instances automatically organize and judge experience. Clérambault realizes that his insistence on the presence of “anidéisme” opens up the view of the subject as essentially boundary-less, victim to the whims of influence and the stimuli of everyday life. Clérambault’s conception of the subject not only mirrors that of Freud; Clérambault, by 1926, allows that “anidéisme” opens one up to “inconscients directives,” the spitting image of the Freudian idea of the conscious mind holding the unconscious at bay. However, in this passage, Clérambault uncannily prefigures the postmodern vision of the subject as the nexus of an interrelated web of influence, drive, and connection, incorporating at all under the heading of subjectivity:

The gradual extension of the network (that is to say the zones of influence of each area of irritation) meets a road of aggregate all constituted (memories and tendencies) which it encompasses, exalts, and annexes. These memories and tendencies, well away from being at the source of the psychoses, are passive; they are figured there only under the rubric of inclusion in the neurological process.
So then arbitrary effects of the following types appear: the awakening of forgotten notions (hallucinatory demonstration), baroque assemblages of concepts (sensational revelations), the arousal of abolished affective aggregates (old loves). (76)

Here, the idea of the "subject" is an effect of the neurological system: perhaps not merely the ghost hovering over a set of unrelated experiences. It appears that the psychotic subject is, quite rightly, the center of a vortex of stimuli, and desires to project itself outward into them. If the everyday life of the subject is that of following an integrated path of remembrance, longing, goals, loves, and aims, the psychotic hurl himself in a thousand directions at once, each object announcing itself as equally important, and the integrity of subjectivity is threatened. The trick of subjectivity is seen to be merely the effect of the total neurological impulses in subjective experience. Here again, the neurological impulse (no pun intended) is shown to be alive and well concerning the matter of subjectivity and psychosis: the payoff of French clinical practice is such that this move towards for the structuration of consciousness falls into step with the abstractions of Freudian analysis.

The distortion resulting in the psychotic personality, then, is aggravated through two tendencies: first, the exaggeration of the operations of the mind to balloon into the irritation of psychosis: the second, the intrusion of external stimuli in order that the personality expand to include the same. Through these two causes working in concert, the psychotic personality is comprised. Clérambault perhaps ominously foreshadows this in this excerpt from his clinical writings:

The process is brought on by the toxin in certain cases: in others, by obsessional tendencies, mania, organic causes. The obvious identity of the quality and the quantity between the aptitudes of the subject and the elements of its delirium are an error of interpretation. (90)
Speaking of this error in interpretation (which strikingly resembles Lacanian méconnaissance), the impossibility of distortion-free perception, in addition to the problem of analyzing such, appears here for the first time as a topic in French psychiatry: not only does Lacan carry its implications to their logical extreme in his idea of méconnaissance, but the fact of méconnaissance itself is replicated in practically all relations between the subject and other, or subject and analyst. The relationship between psychiatrist and patient, even, rather than being subject to legible transference and counter-transference, is necessarily viewed through the warped lens of subjectivity.

Lacan's thèse de médécine, De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité, in addition to incorporating a Clérambaldian view of the complexity of psychosis, bears the unmistakable mark of having incorporated a good deal of phenomenological thought into his work. Lacan first of all justifies his scientific interest in the question of the psychoses by remarking on the need for a taxonomy of the forms of madness and the structure as they are integrated into the conception of the subject:

It is because, without a sufficient conception of the play of this synthesis, psychosis will always remain an enigma: it is what is expressed successively by the word folly, vesanie, paranoia, delirium, partial, discordance, schizophrenia. 9

This leads Lacan into a discussion of the relationship of the personality to that of the psychoses as important, for the personality is name for an intentional phenomenological construction, referred to by Lacan as an "intentional reality" (32). The vicissitudes of personality are only understood in the societal context in which they are lived:

The notion of responsibility probably plays a primordial role in our investigation of the existence of personality with others.

Synthesis, intentionality, responsibility: such are the three attributes with which we recognize personality in communal belief. (33)
Lacan includes also a footnote at this point to phenomenologist Max Scheler’s work, deeply invested in the exploration of the phenomenological aspects of social life. Lacan’s interest in developing a more structured account of personality stems from his distaste for overly theoretical ruminations, resulting in dogmatic conclusion that inaccurately represent the subject: “…such [biases] reveal themselves in extreme theories of scientific psychology, where the subject is no longer nothing but a place for a succession of sensation, desires, and images (37).”

The ideal “image” of the “mi” despite its hardening later on into the monolithic construction of Lacan’s later work, is at this early stage, merely the rubric under which the experiences of the “I” are composed in “personality”: “The ideal image of the moi which makes up a part of our interior experience is reducible to the affective complexes which have an ontologensis in psychosis” (39). Lacan then makes this gesture towards the abstractions of pure phenomenology:

All systems of personality must be structural, we wish to say that personality must be composed from elements, which are primitive in relation to its development, can be from relatively simple organic relations, which according to individual variances, register, and quality, and understood, in the opening of direction, in intensity, etc. (49)

The above excerpt is Lacan’s first hint of his later direction, which focuses on the self as being at the center of series of external forces, all impinging on the subject in one way or another. The problem of “knowing” the subject, which is essentially unknowable (and as we shall see later, is the fount of desire), is found in examining the objects of desire for the subject, and pursuing the question of how that desire operates.

This selective overview of Clérambault’s impact on Lacan’s work reveals it to be one element (albeit a formative one) in the intellectual milieu of the period between the wars
that decisively shaped Lacan's outlook on psychoanalysis. Although Lacan maintained
silence on the topic of Clérambault for the better part of thirty-five years,\textsuperscript{11} his remarks in
“De nos antécédents” make clear Lacan’s heavy debt to him, both in terms of intellectual
content and style. We shall return to this topic at the end of the chapter in order to treat
Lacan’s personal investment in the figure of Clérambault.

Heidegger: Society, Death, Desire

Lacan’s engagement with Heidegger began in earnest only after the Second World
War. Sartre and Lévinas had already brought German-language thought into France
before the war by means of Husserl’s phenomenology, but the intermediary presence of
Jean Beaufret facilitated Heidegger’s entry into the intellectual life of postwar France,
essentially delivering Heidegger’s “Letter on Humanism” to the French intelligentsia.\textsuperscript{12}
Lacan was the respected figure that Beaufret chose to aid him in this task. Rudinesco’s
interpretation of the first meeting that took place between Lacan and Heidegger as a ploy
engineered by Beaufret, manipulating Lacan into legitimating Heidegger as an
intellectual figure by means of transference (224). The concept of transference is
Rudinesco’s guiding principle in her (highly analytic) investigation of Lacan, declaring
that the initial meeting between the two during Easter 1955 in Freiburg was a meditation
on that very topic. When asking what transference was (and which analyst to choose),
Lacan reputedly said to Heidegger that analysis begins at the very moment one chooses
one’s analyst, and Beaufret explaining that transference is the apriori manifold for
analytic investigation (225). Rudinesco’s other theme in this investigation of the
relationship between Lacan and Heidegger is that of a missed opportunity to connect:
Lacan’s translation of a piece of Heidegger’s, entitled “Logos,” a commentary on Herakleitos’ fragment 50, was based principally on the burgeoning Lacanian obsession with language and Levi-Strauss, as opposed to Heidegger’s mystical and mystifying discourse. At the same time as she faults Lacan for this, she remarks that the poststructural triad of Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan habitually bastardized Heidegger’s thought in order to make it simply readable (229). Although her reading of Lacan asserts that the importance of truth as an “uncovering” in Lacan’s thought is derived from Heidegger, she opines that Lacan missed the truly important element of Heidegger’s work, namely, “the ability to find in the other that which is in oneself.” The upshot of this is that through a transferent-ial relation to Heidegger (albeit one-sided), Lacan in turn discovered his intellectual identity (229). Nevertheless, Heidegger famously wrote to Swiss psychologist Medard Boss, on receiving a newly printed copy of Lacan’s Écrits, “It seems to me the psychiatrist needs a psychiatrist” (230).

Lacan noted that in his translation of Heidegger, he wished that the words themselves retain their “supreme significance,” and this desire speaks to the self-conscious “mystical” aspect of Lacan’s work. In turn, although modern readers are impressed by concepts as “the phallus” and “the gaze,” they have induced a host of theorists, critics, and detractors of Lacan to take them in a completely literal fashion. At the risk of biting the hand that feeds, Lacan’s work benefits to a great degree from the influence of Heidegger in a decidedly non-totemistic fashion. As I shall argue, the Lacanian concept of intersubjectivity as expressed in Seminar II, the period where his initial ideas about Heidegger came to the fore, is crucial to an understanding of Lacan’s position regarding the operation of the subject in an intersubjective world, and the relationship of the subject
to the symbolic: namely, that the symbolic is the ontological understanding of being-in-the-world, and being-with others. Most readings of Lacan and Heidegger emphasize the mystical aspect of both, often to the point of obfuscation. But, as has been previously mentioned, Lacan’s knowledge of French and German-language phenomenology, having been borne out in his early writing, comes into play in the first phase of his mature work, and it throws a much-needed light on Lacanian concepts and tropes. By the same token, the Heideggerian poles of authenticity and inauthenticity offer a guide to the understanding of the Lacanian ego, and the enmeshing of the subject in the intersubjective world.

Those commentators on the Heidegger-Lacan connection who have made previous attempts to assess the relationship between the two thinkers quite rightly see Heidegger’s impact on Lacan as being on the subject of language as the medium and basis for the conduct of intellectual inquiry: coupled with this, language is the something that emerges, in a sense, unhidden, from the subject’s environment. The operation of language, and the interface with society and the natural world is of prime concern for both Heidegger and Lacan. In an important sense, Heidegger’s struggle to reformulate his philosophical vocabulary in his post-Keuze period (roughly speaking, after 1930) reflects this desire to let language speak for itself. In the same sense, all of Lacan’s work reflects this same imperative. Psychoanalysis, being at bottom a phenomenological, diagnostic discipline, cannot prescribe meanings for words. The impetus in Lacan’s early work is to attempt to uncover the structures of the unconscious, such as they emerge from the symbolic order, which is Lacan’s gloss for the norms of societal interaction. As we have seen from the Rome Discourse, this understanding of the social is crucial to the understanding of the
ego, as the ego of the analysand is that which receives healing in the process of analysis — and the condition of which is understood as healthy or aberrant by the analyst in contrast to his or her symbolically prescribed role.

The description of this intersubjectivity is the subject of the fourth chapter of Being and Time, which concerns “Being-With” (Mitsein). Although it is quite brief (it is a tiny fraction of the entire work), it forms the basis of Heidegger’s philosophy on the subject of the other by initially outlining the modes and structures of intersubjectivity. The primary fact of one’s existence is that, from the beginnings of the life of the subject, one first learns how to be in the world by first adopting the behaviors of others. That is to say, one’s initial life is determined by one’s enculturation into society by learning how to dress, eat, talk, and behave with regard to others (i.e., manners) in the same fashion as every one else. At bottom, being-with entails one’s identification with what Heidegger calls the they. Although this sounds rather mysterious and paranoia-inducing on the face of it, Heidegger’s aim is show that one’s behavior is determined by necessarily conforming to society’s mores and norms. and, philosophically, this is how the subject must first be understood.13

Heidegger acknowledges from the beginning that, in distinction against the Cartesian cogito, in philosophizing about the subject one must always begin with “I,” as one cannot ignore its “givenness” — in other words, the self is always with the subject, and cannot easily (if at all) be ignored.14 Nevertheless, in philosophizing about existence and behaviors of others (or “the other”), it must be foregrounded that the other, far from being alien, is necessarily present in the most ordinary of circumstances:

Theoretically concocted ‘explanations’ of the Being-present-at-hand of Others urge themselves upon us all too easily; but over against such explanations we must hold
fast to the phenomenal facts of the case which we have pointed out, namely, that
Others are encountered \textit{environmentally}. This elemental worldly kind of
encountering, which belongs to Dasein and is closest to it, goes so far that even
one’s own Dasein becomes something that it can itself proximally ‘come across’
only when it \textit{looks away} from ‘Experiences’ and the ‘centre of its actions’, or does
not as yet ‘see’ them at all. Dasein finds ‘itself’ proximally in \textit{what} it does, uses,
expects, avoids—in those things environmentally ready-to-hand with which it is
proximally concerned. (155)

In other words, the other is encountered in the everyday settings of social interaction.

However, the import of this passage is that one find oneself first and foremost in the
actions and behaviors of others, determined as they are by social normativity (for
example, the only acceptable answer to “How are you?” is “Fine! How are you?”). In
this sense, the subject identifies itself first as being just like everybody else, and indeed,
cannot escape living in the same manner as everyone else. In this way, Heidegger neatly
solves the problem of the existence of the other: rather than being a mysterious
doppelgänger to the self, the other is one whom we know most intimately, as their
behaviors are ours as well.

What concerns Heidegger the most is that the life of the subject not be exclusively
identified with the \textit{they}, a condition that Heidegger indicates by the word \textit{lostness}. As
nothing in the life of the subject in certain, and there is no having of “self-knowledge” in
any complete sense, the “authentic” life of the subject is something that remains obscured
in everyday life:15

In that case, the ‘not-I’ is by no means tantamount to an entity which essentially
lacks ‘I-Hood’ [“Ichheit”], but is rather a definite kind of Being which the ‘I’ itself
possesses, such as having lost itself [Selbstverlorenheit]. (152)

Losing “oneself” in the mundanity of daily life is not a catastrophic occurrence. Rather,
it is a necessary condition of daily life:
Just as the ontological obviousness of the Being-in-itself of entities within-the-world misleads us into the conviction that the meaning of this Being is obvious ontologically, and makes us overlook the phenomenon of the world, the ontical obviousness of the fact that Dasein is in each case mine, also hides the possibility that the ontological problematic which belongs to it has been led astray. *Proximately* the “who” of Dasein is not only a problem *ontologically*; even *ontically* it remains concealed. (152)

Leaving aside the ontological question for the moment, the question of the Cartesian subject’s selfhood is complicated by the “I”’s enmeshment in, as in Lacanian parlance, the network of relations between other subjects. The question of the identity of the subject is, therefore, bound up with distinguishing the subject (which Heidegger refers to as “individual Dasein”) from the *they*. Heidegger’s note that “ontically” Dasein remains concealed underscores the difficulty of subject’s disentanglement from the vagaries of learned behaviors, so that the question of self-identity remains perpetually complicated and compromised. Even when individualized Dasein physically separates itself from the world, it is still part of it, and the discussion of the absence of the Other is brought up within this context of individualized Dasein:

The phenomenological assertion that “Dasein is essentially Being-with” has an existential-ontological meaning:....

Even Dasein’s Being-alone is Being-with in the world. The Other can be missing only in and for a Being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of Being-with: its very possibility is the proof of this....Being-alone ‘among’ many does not mean that with regard to their Being they are merely present-at-hand there alongside us. Even in our Being ‘among them’ they are there with us: their Dasein-with is encountered in a mode in which they are indifferent and alien. (157)

The concept of Being-with is necessary for the contextualization of the subject within the world, and as an existential fact, it must be acknowledged that this is the primary fashion in the subject lives his or her life. The Other is an ever-present entity that, like objects and Being-in-the-world, can only begin to be understood through personal contact. As in
the structures devoted to Being-in-the-world, other people become known in terms of “use,” in other words, through the world of work:

The Being-with-one-another of those who are hired for the same affair often thrives only on mistrust. On the other hand, when they devote themselves to the same affair in common, their doing so is determined by the manner in which their Dasein. each in its own way, has been taken hold of. They thus become authentically bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity [die recht Sachlichkeit], which frees the Other in his freedom for himself. (159)

The foregoing sets the stage for Sartre’s exploration of the concept of freedom in Being and Nothingness, as ultimately the problem of the Other is bound up with the mystery of the Other, and this is true for all theories of alterity in the 20th century.

At the same time, the question of the Other and judgment naturally enters the picture: what are the structures in place that produce this kind of relation with the subject, such that the subject is under scrutiny? Recognizing that the presence of the Other implies a kind of threatening, ominous implication of impending doom – Heidegger acknowledges the network of the Others in this estimation and appreciation of the lostness of the they:

This Being-with-one-another dissolves one’s own Dasein completely into the kind of Being of “the Others”, in such a way, indeed, that the Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more. In this inconspicuousness and unascertainability, the real dictatorship of the “they” is unfolded. We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as they [das man] take pleasure; we read. see, and judge about literature and art as they see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the ‘great mass’ as they shrink back; we find ‘shocking’ what they find shocking. This “they”. which is nothing definite, and which all are, thought not as the sum. prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness. (164)

The network of others, in a concrete sense, forces themselves on the subject and not only offers judgment on various actions, and opinions, but also threatens the authenticity of the subject, in such as sense as the authenticity of one’s inner life can be said to be threatened:

...it is insensitive to every difference of level and of genuineness and thus never
gets to the ‘heart of the matter’ ["auf die Sachen"]. By publicness everything gets obscured, and what has thus been covered up gets passed off as something familiar and accessible to everyone.

The “they” is there alongside everywhere [ist überall dabei], but in such a manner that it has always stolen away whenever Dasein presses for a decision. Yet because the “they” presents every judgement and decision as its own, it deprives the particular Dasein of its answerability. The “they” can, as it were, manage to have ‘them’ constantly invoking it (165)

Yet the illusion of the they, offering judgment on individualized Dasein’s desire and action casts a shadow on the subject, regardless of their status as “merely” an illusion:

The Self of everyday Dasein is the they-self, which we distinguish from the authentic Self—that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way [eigens ergriffen]. As they-self, the particular Dasein has been dispersed into the “they”, and must first find itself. This dispersal characterizes the ‘subject’ of that kind of Being which we know as conscious absorption in the world we encounter as closest to us....Dasein is for the sake of the “they” in an everyday manner, and the “they” itself Articulates the referential context of significance. (167)

The they therefore provides the basis for knowing and analyzing the subject, in this fashion:

From the kind of Being which belongs to the “they”—the kind which is closest—everyday Dasein draws its pre-ontological way of interpreting its Being. In the first instance ontological Interpretation follows the tendency to interpret it this way: it understands Dasein in terms of the world and comes across it as an entity within-the-world...This very state of Being, in its everyday kind of Being, is what proximally misses itself and covers itself up....Authentic Being-one’s-Self does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the “they”; it is rather an existentiell modification of the “they”—of the “they” as an essential existentiell.

But in that case there is ontologically as gap separating the selfsameness of the authentically existing Self from the identity of that “I” which maintains itself throughout its manifold Experiences. (168)

The problem that Heidegger seeks to solve here is the understanding and distinguishing of the self from that which is necessarily authentic. Nevertheless, by his last comment, Heidegger’s necessary assertion is that the way in which the subject can understand himself or herself is radically distinctive from the ontological self that the subject
projects: the “I” is, necessarily, a reflection of how the subject understands itself, that is distinct from the place of lived experience. It is here that the concept of authenticity provides a bridge to a discussion of the self in second division of Heidegger’s work, where the subject is uniquely differentiated and validates its authenticity in death, and by nothing else.

The problem of the existential analysis of death is perhaps, in the words of Alfred Schutz, in its “phoniness”: the premise that behind everything else, one’s primordial ground of being is in death. Smacks of the Sartrean negativity that defines the later Being and Nothingness, in which question of absence comes to the fore. Yet, death provides a kind of horizon, outlining the finitude of life, and most importantly, singles out the individual definitively:

By pointing out that Dasein has an authentically potentiality-for-Being-a-whole, the existential analytic acquires assurance as to that constitution of Dasein’s primordial Being. But at the same time the authentic potentiality-for-Being-a-whole becomes visible as a mode of care. And therewith the phenomenally adequate ground for a primordial Interpretation of the meaning of Dasein’s Being has also been assured. (277)

It must be said that the characteristic of time with regard to the existential death analytic is the “not-yet.” The possibility of death, always “present-at-hand.” cannot be predicted, ameliorated, or stayed by the expectation of death, for its implicit rejection of narrative closure is what disallows any Dasein from shielding itself from the trauma of death by anticipating or expecting it:

As potentiality-for-Being, Dasein cannot outstrip the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein. Thus death reveals itself as that possibility which is one’s ownmost, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped [unuberholbare]. (294)
The possibility-for-death is the distinguishing characteristic for individualized Dasein is that it is ownmost (295), namely, that Dasein is removed from a cultural context ontically, and ontologically (294n4). Being inured to the idea of death is only another form of fallenness, and ignorance of this possibility or indifference to it is yet other form of this

(299) The concretion of this structure looks instead like this:

How are we to delimit this structure phenomenally? Manifestly, we must do so by determining those characteristics which must belong to an anticipatory disclosure so that it can become the pure understanding of that ownmost possibility which is non-relational and not to be outstripped—which is certain and, as such, indefinite. It must be noted that understanding does not primarily mean just gazing at a meaning, but rather understanding oneself in that potentiality-for-Being which reveals itself in projection. [dessen Seinart das Vorlaufen selbst ist.] (307)

This is what is needed for a concrete structure of the existential death analytic – one is confronted with the projectional possibility of death. This does not prevent death from being known and perhaps understood through the experience of events surrounding the deaths of others:

Indisputably, the fact the one Dasein can be represented by another belongs to its possibilities of Being in Being-with-one another in the world. In everyday concern, constant and manifold use is made of such representability. Whenever we go anywhere or have anything to contribute, we can be represented by someone within the range of that ‘environment’ with which we are most closely concerned. The great multiplicity of ways of Being-in-the-world in which one person can be represented by another, not only extends to more refined modes of publicly being with one another, but is likewise germane to those possibilities of concern which are restricted within definite ranges, and which are cut to the measure of one’s occupation, one’s social status, or one’s age. (283)

For Heidegger, we can see from this reading of these issues in Being and Time that there are two distinct ways of approaching the subject that correspond to authentic (having to do with the “ego”) and inauthentic (having to do with social interaction) modes being.

The subject understands itself initially, and an everyday fashion, within the context of the inauthentic everyday interaction with other people: in itself, the self understands itself
only as authentic in taking over and possessing those things that are closest to it.
distinguished against the varied possibilities fulfilled by others in the intersubjective
world. Although Lacan does not take up the early Heidegger’s vocabulary to describe
the subject’s interaction with the world. Heidegger’s influence on the Lacan of Seminar II
is evident in the latter’s discussion of the ego, the specter of death, and the social nexus
that defines certain identities taken up by the subject.

Heidegger and Lacan: Seminar II

J. Lacan: And, to be candid, being purely phenomenological doesn’t get us very far.
M. Hyppolite: I agree.

Séminaire II. p.38

The intellectual context of Seminar II is during the years of 1954-55, the period
where Lacan undertook his initial fascination with Heidegger. As such, the subject that
Lacan tackles throughout the seminar is one that is nevertheless close to traditional
phenomenology: the question the ego in Freud’s analytic work. However, the arc of
Lacan’s concerns in Seminar II, which are an extension of the topics pursued in Seminar
I, find the first formulation of the principal Lacanian concepts, such as the objet petit a,
revealed in the L-schema, which appears for the first time at the end of this seminar.16
Lacan’s examination of the ego depends, as I shall show, in the distinction of the ego
against the world of social engagements: Lacan’s discussion of the ego in Seminar II
winds up, at bottom, being a study of intersubjectivity, grounded in the negotiation of
desire with the Other.

Lacan allows at the outset of the seminar year that the question of the nature of the ego
could be bound up in narcissism (23). Lacan claims of finding some “contradictions” in
Freud that would complicate this issue. Lacan’s discussion of the machine, introduced in
the first seminar, and continued here in the second seminar, that communication between
subject and other is mediated by the concrete societal interactions that comprises
intersubjectivity. We all know that misrecognition is a feature of the ego’s relation to
itself, but in the world of recognition where all subjects find a common ground of
communication, desire finds a conduit of expression, if not comprehension:

Recognition obviously presupposes a third thing. For the first machine which is
jammed on the image of the second to be able to come to an agreement, for them
not to be forced to destroy themselves on account of the convergence of their
desire—which is in fact the same desire, since at this level they are one and the
same being—it would be necessary for the little machine to inform the other, to say
I—I desire that. That’s impossible. Admitting that there is an I would
immediately turn it into you desire that. I desire that means—You, the other, who
is my unity, you desire that. (57)

Desire is the desire of the other. However, inasmuch as desire is something that the
subject experiences, it is most directly understood by the subject alone. Lacan explains
this kind of rough codification of desire in an attempt to make inroads into the mystery of
consciousness, and following on this notion. Lacan asserts that one cannot cling to a mere
“existential” apprehension of the ego, lest one lose one’s moorings in reality: “The ego
only figures in it as a particular experience, tied to objectifiable conditions, within the
limits of the inspection that is believed simply enough to be this reflection of
consciousness on itself. And the phenomenon of consciousness has no privileged
character in such an apprehension” (56). It is a relatively brief jump from this topic to
that of the symbolic, and Lacan’s appraisal of it corresponds to the Heideggerian
conception of “lostness” fairly well:

Last time I told you that symbolism is essential to all the most basic manifestations
of the analytic domain, namely to repetition, and that we must think of it as a
circular process tied to the exchange of speech. There is a symbolic circuit
external to the subject, tied to a certain group of supports, of human agents, in which the subject, the small circle which is called his destiny, is indeterminately included. (98)

The enmeshment of the subject in the external world, and by extension the world of signification, is a guarantor of solid grounding for conducting the investigation of the ego.

However, the appearance of the ego on the scene quickly removes any pretense of objectivity. Lacan here reproduces his famous picture of the vase nearly midway through the seminar, repeated from Seminar 1, where a vase of flowers, reflected in a concave mirror, appears to be resting on top of a pedestal. This itself is a demonstration of the mirages that are apparent in psychoanalysis, and Lacan uses this as a jumping-off point to talk about the presence of the ego as a mediator of experience: “In other words, all stimuli tend to produce hallucinations. The principle of operation of the phi apparatus is hallucination. That is what primary process means.” (108) As such, Lacan declares later on that the ego is the regulatory apparatus for testing of the hallucinations that make up experience (145). The psi Freud refers to in the Ego and the Id system is that, and is the ego, and that which Freud calls the “nucleus.” Referring to Freud’s originary dream of Irma’s injection, Lacan remarks that the dream itself reflects this existence of the ego within an intersubjective world:

A traversal is accomplished. After the first part, the loaded, imaginary part, something comes into the dream at the end which we could call the crowd. But it is a structured crowd, like the Freudian crowd. That is why I would prefer to introduce another term, which I will leave to your reflection with all the double meanings it contains – the inmixing [immixition] of subjects.

The subject enters and mixes in with things – that may be the first meaning. The other one is this – an unconscious phenomenon which takes place on the symbolic level, as such decentred in relation to the ego, always takes place between two subjects. As soon as true speech emerges, mediating, it turns them into two very different subjects from what they were prior to speech. This means that they
only start being constituted as subject of speech once speech exists, and there is no before. (160)

Here Lacan’s reference is to the mythical prelapsarian pre-signification period featured in the “Le stade du miroir.” Referring to the temporal horizon of naming, Lacan remarks that the name is the “time” of the object: the act of naming therefore being a “pact.” that signified objects are not simply a narcissistic reflection of the subject (169): in Lacan’s words (also Heidegger’s): “The world of language is possible so far as we have our place in it anywhere” (272).

There is one more Heideggerian quirk in the slate of Lacan’s concerns for this seminar topic, and he makes use of it with explicit reference to the Freudian conception of the ego, which is, after all, the theme of the year’s seminar. With reference to the subject of the diminishing status of the Freudian ego in the face of Freud’s late moves towards “metapsychology,” Lacan remarks that: “...the further in Freud’s work, the more the ego is shown as a mirage, the sum of identifications” (209). In this case, the primary identification of the ego is with that of death, the link between the Freud of Beyond the Pleasure Principle and the Heidegger of Being and Time:

The relation of the ego to death is an extremely close one, for the ego is a point of intersection between the common discourse, in which the subject finds himself caught, alienated, and his psychological reality. (210)

Here we see the familiar territory of Being and Time returning with in this take on desire, that the ego is the null basis of a nullity, itself lack personified:

Desire is a relation of being to lack. This lack is the lack of being properly speaking. It isn’t the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby the being exists. (223)

As Lacan states in close proximity to this passage, “Desire is the desire for something not nameable.” Lacan continues further to explain the nature of the intersubjective world as
one being joined together in a vast network of death: "This life we're captive of, this essentially alienated life, ex-sisting, this life in the other, is as such joined to death, and is only drawn into increasingly large and more roundabout circuits by what Freud called the elements of the external world." (232). The desire of the other, that of mediating wants in the intersubjective world, is such that one cannot return to an "authentic" self: with the operation of méconnaissance, the ego can never apprehend object of desire as they are, nor possess them. For Lacan, the question of death, as it is a principal concern of Freud's in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, winds up defining the subject in terms of desire: thrown into this existence, the subject's desires is stirred by the need to fill the lack that is the self, and in so doing, to acquire an identity.

As we have seen with these readings of both Clérambault and Heidegger, Lacan's grounding the intellectual milieu of the 1920s and 1930s provided him with a sound basis in an ego-centered model of consciousness, and this is a notion that Lacan more or less stuck with for his entire career. As we shall see in Chapter 3, Lacan's effort to combine the phenomenological ego with a concept of the psychoses results in the mature Lacan of the L-schema, the moi-je split, and notion of Freudian libidinal cathexes that would come to embody the Lacanian theory of desire. That Lacan was able to make these influences his own is a testament to his genius and creativity: his cleverness has, for a long time, effectively kicked dust over the tracks of his intellectual forbears. Lacan's roots in modernist intellectual traditions are long and deep.
Dénouement: The Death of Clérambault

Aside from Clérambault’s widely influential clinical ideas, he was also known to be one of the great eccentric characters of Parisian intellectual life. He would, like Lacan, publish very little during his lifetime, and, like Lacan, he inspired a large cult of followers who imitated his theatrical manner of speaking, presentation, and diagnosis. He was paranoid about others stealing his work, and expressly forbade anyone to talk about his ideas to anyone outside of his clinic. A lifelong bachelor, he lived alone in Mediterranean-style townhouse full of mannequins, which he clothed in the African and Arabian fabrics he would import from overseas; often, he would take pictures of them dressed in this fashion, as well as making self-portraits, dressed in Moroccan women’s garb. Tellingly, he made, in his own clinical work, a careful distinction between psychoses on the one hand and “delusional passions” on the other: as one who traveled in Surrealist circles, Clérambault firmly believed that cultivating one’s passions was utterly necessary in living a fruitful life. It is even more telling that when he could no longer pursue them, he took his own life.

It is somewhat surprising that Clérambault, known for being so secretive, committed his ideas about his passion for fabric to paper. The works collected under the title of *Le passion des étoffes chez un neuro-psychiatre* look at the phenomenon of the highly aesthetic desire for beautiful fabrics as a transgressive sexual fetish. Clérambault’s rather idiosyncratic writing about the sexual psychology of fabric fetishists, nearly all of them women, and most of them were kleptomaniacs whom he encountered in the clinic of the Parisian Prefecture. In his view (and one can be sure that Clérambault felt this himself), that the presence of the fabric, being that of a fetish, replaced normal sexual functioning:
They do not seem to have to try to associate it with normal coitus. The palpation of the fabric is necessary here, its mental representation which the rustling itself cannot replace, the notion of possession of the fabric is ordinarily negligible; the epidermic sensations are necessary and decisive.17

Clérambault goes on to give his own analysis about what this fetishism betokens for the sexual psychology of the kleptomanical subject:

The fetishistic perversion which seems to have dreamt its fetish, or caresses it, remains a homage adverse to sex: the very rubbing of the fetish against the male organ represents less masturbation than it does sexual intercourse: it puts in play all the physical factors and morals of male love in the place of the rubbing of the clitoris by the silk. In our case, it is far away from putting in play all the elements of feminine sensibility. (34)

Clearly, Clérambault’s appreciation of the distinctions of the sex act from the male point of view is limited here, as he still seems to hold fast to the idea of the masculine libido.

But the following passage, in describing the fetish itself, anticipates the emergence of the objet petit a in Lacanian thought:

In their contact with the silk, they are passive: their personality is closed by the relation to the exterior world: denuded of vision, denuded of desire; the opposite sex no longer exists: their enjoyment (jouissance) is quite genital, but it suffices truly just as well that one could say that it’s asexual.

In sum, we believe we see in the erotic taste for silk a perversion well adapted to the feminine temperament. And, it follows, much more frequent with women than with men. (38)

Clérambault then adds that he believes that fetishism, in being a replacement for genital sexuality is the frigidity of the subject. Obviously, Clérambault is unaware that he has had a hand in demolishing the very concept of the biologically-driven libido with his discussion of his sustaining passion.

The story of Clérambault has an oddly portentous and tragic ending.18 Afflicted with cataracts, Clérambault sought relief in an experimental procedure conducted by a Spanish surgeon. After traveling to Barcelona to have the procedure done, he discovered during
his period of convalescence that his eyesight had been adversely affected by it. He could see, but could no longer perceive depth well, and, as such, could no longer appreciate the aesthetics of fabric-draping, as he had in the past. Despondent over the loss of his vision, Clérambault drifted into a deep depression. One evening in 1934, having had enough torment, Clérambault (in his full robes) went out into his garden, fired his pistol once to test it, then charged up the stairs to his bedroom, and shot himself in the mouth. He was discovered lying on the floor, having sat on a divan facing a chair with a full-length mirror perched on it, apparently so he could observe himself in the act of suicide. Clérambault’s friends and colleagues quickly rushed to counteract the terrible publicity that followed: in the Joseph Kessel obituary that appeared in Le Figaro, the author (and friend of Clérambault) depicts a gathering at a salon on the Left Bank, where Clérambault’s students and admirers have assembled to pay tribute to the man (Tisseron 113). Kessel is at pains to paint Clérambault as a man of wisdom, science, and understanding whose passions simply got the better of him. Around the same time, Lacan is known to have remarked that he thought highly of suicide, in that it was one of the few things in which the subject was guaranteed to succeed: being that it entails the death of the subject, it provides firm closure for the subject’s narrative, sealing a lasting image in the form of a tableau. In Clérambault’s case, this tableau consisted of the determination to extinguish oneself in the face of being cut off from one’s passions, the individuality of one’s interior life.

1 The difficult reception of Freud’s work in France was in some measure due to the bias against German-language thought, as well as the personalized nature of the psycho-
analytic movement. During the 20s and 30s in prewar France, psychiatry was still the province of biology and nascent neurology.

2 So far, there are have been a couple of critical studies concerning Clérambault, chief among them Clérambault. Maitre de Lacan. Ed. Pierre Moron (Paris: Le Plessis-Robinson, 1993).

3 An English translation of "De nos antécédents" appears as an appendix to the present work.

4 The typical erotomaniaical situation depicted by Clérambault, is that of a woman being in love with someone of a higher station, or perhaps cultural significance, like an artist, writer, or actor.


6 Rudinesco, Elisabeth. Lacan & Co.: One Hundred Years of French Psychoanalysis, 1925-1985. Trans. Jeffery Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). 23. Clérambault’s understanding of psychopathology rested on organic causes, in much the same way as did the work of Ey and Minkowski. The interpretation of these phenomena, extant only in abstraction, reflect the possibilities of organism, and the breakdowns to which it is susceptible. However, sympathetic as Clérambault aims may have been with the Évolution Psychiatrique, it must be said that Clérambault’s work contains nothing in it influenced directly or indirectly by the formally phenomenological offshoots of Husserlian philosophy at the time.

7 As such, the facts and environment of the mental process can serve to exaggerate and distort to mental functioning in much the same way as alcohol or other drugs that alter the functioning of the nervous system:

Alcohol organizes in each case from demonstrative experiences: it disengages, in the mechanisms so tangled with the Unconscious, certain mechanisms all ready to function separately in the Psychoses, which would be Toxic or Insanity.(38)

8 As he advanced his theory of anidéisme, Clérambault provided this taxonomy of psychological phenomena according to either their positive or negative valence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative (affected by mood)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Episodic</td>
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<tr>
<td>forgetfulness</td>
<td>confusion, doubt without object</td>
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<td>Chronic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misrecognition of people and</td>
<td>distraction, fatigue</td>
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<tr>
<td>objects</td>
<td>obsession (vide de la Pensée)</td>
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<td>emotions unoccasioned by an</td>
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<td>auditory hallucination</td>
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<td>Interior dialogue: repetition of</td>
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<td>Dogma</td>
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And a secondary group of phenomena that come under the heading “Processus Mixtes,” with, according to Clérambault, both positive and negative valences: the creative process, which stand in for psychosis but is really something more like brainstorming, the substitution of one thought for another (parapractical slip). (64-65)


10 And, some might aver, this remark anticipates and warns against the eventual, crude demolition of the idea of the subject in the postmodern era.

11 At the opening meeting of Seminar III, Lacan makes a passing mention of Clérambault, with reference to his thesis.


13 Heidegger’s work has often been misinterpreted by many (myself included) on this score, with view to the question of Heidegger’s involvement with Nazism. It is not my intention to address them here, yet I will say that I believe the concept of *Mitsein* and the *they* (das Man, an expression used to indicate an anonymous figure: an equivalent in English would be “John Doe”) is in constantly in danger of being overread as an some kind of expression of “power” in societal terms, and which survives most notably in the work of Foucault. This interpretation of Heidegger is, then, conducted in the most pedestrian of senses, namely, that of the interaction of the subject with others in an everyday fashion, in the way that everyone experiences the daily business of life. In all senses, this is how I think Lacan’s work must be read, in the same way as Freud’s, to be intellectually, if not philosophically, intelligible.

15 Parallels with the concept of the Freudian unconscious are well noted, and have been mentioned in comparisons of Freud and Heidegger.


19 It is mentioned in the *Les étoffes* collection that Clérambault's favorite book during his recovery was Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ,* a 15th century series of meditations on the living of a saintly life, emphasizing the denigration of the material world in favor of the spiritual one; its influence as a text in the history of Catholicism (regarding daily practice of the faith) has been estimated as second only to the New Testament.
Chapter 3

Paranoia: Schreber, Lacan, and The Sacred Fount

Schizophrenia is a disease that could have only emerged with the dawn of the 20th century and the modern era: with its vivid depictions of perceptual distortions, hallucinations, and fantasies, schizophrenia and dementia engage in a visual vocabulary closely associated with modernism. From the beginning, the inner experience of schizophrenia (as originally defined by Eugen Bleuler) has been characterized by a combination of exaggerated interpretation of external events and language taking on a life of its own within the subject, through the operations of paranoia. As a result, the investigation of schizophrenia has been uniquely opened to psychoanalytic forms of inquiry: contemporary work on schizophrenia prizes the psychologist’s ability to interview the patient and attempt to understand the illness by means of parsing out the schizophrenic’s internal dialogue. Although there is no possible analytic cure for schizophrenia, the impact of the figure of the schizophrenic on analysis has been unmistakably significant, beginning with Freud’s treatise on Schreber’s famous memoir as psychoanalysis is all about the dissolution of self-created delusions.

The impact of Schreber was no less profound on Lacan’s thought. After taking on the subject of the ego and psychoanalytic transference in Seminar II, Lacan turned his attention to the question of the psychoses in the next year’s seminar meetings. What followed was essentially an elaboration on the previous year’s theoretical advances: Lacan turned instead to questions of psychotic delusion, with constant reference to the case of Judge Schreber, as made famous by Freud’s “case study.” However, very little
has been written about this seminar, even though ten years have elapsed since its first appearance in English. As a whole, it contains little of the structuralism that informs Lacan's miscellaneous writings of this period, later collected in Écrits. Lacan's major accomplishment with his third Seminar is to provide a basis and justification for a psychoanalysis rooted wholly within the diagnosis of extra-biological drives, characterized by abstraction and rational processes gone awry. Just as Freud inaugurated a new analytic epoch in his work with Beyond The Pleasure Principle, Lacan sought to situate his analytic work outside of the biological models related to sexual development or trauma, and he had to choose a figure in order to dramatize and exemplify the paradigm of the Lacanian analysand. In effect, Schreber is Lacan's Oedipus.

In this exploration of Schreber with Lacan, I hope to bring out the reasons for Lacan's selection of Schreber as the foundational persona of his work. As Schreber's experience amounts to being what is in essence a lively and, in its way, fruitful internal dialogue, I shall examine the echo of the Schreberian persona in Henry James's short novel The Sacred Fount, itself a feast of repressed sexual content viewed with paranoid, highly visual thinking. Louis Sass observes in his odd monograph on Wittgenstein and Schreber that both men understood the knowledge as that which drained power away from the body: as we shall see with Schreber, Lacan, and James, the transposition of the body and its desires into academic abstraction is a bellwether of modernity.

Schreber: Memoirs of My Nervous Illness

Schreber's Memoirs of My Nervous Illness was a bestseller when it was first published in 1903, but much of its reputation is largely due to Freud's famous "case study" of
Schreber. "Psycho-analytic Notes upon a Biographical Account of a case of Paranoia." which first appeared in the *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* of 1911. Freud’s analysis of Schreber is remarkable in that it is one of the few instances where Freud attempted an analysis on a psychotic, aside from the fact of his having never met the "patient," thereby compromising the very idea of analysis as a face-to-face endeavor. Freud acknowledges in the introduction to the essay that his analysis may be of limited intellectual value, given that he himself had no interaction with Schreber; yet, he notes that the Schreber text affords him the rare opportunity to work with a psychotic, because as a privately practicing physician, he could not avail himself of the psychotic patients most frequently found in public institutions.\(^5\) Freud owns up to the somewhat fanciful conceit of analyzing a patient by means of a diary, and justifies his interests in the Schreber case (and any possible psychoanalytic insight into his illness) with the following disclaimer:

The psychoanalytic investigation of paranoia would be altogether impossible if the patients themselves did not possess the peculiarity of betraying (in a distorted form, it is true) precisely those things which other neurotics keep as a secret. Since paranoiacs cannot be compelled to overcome their internal resistances, and since in any case they only say what they choose to say, it follows that this is precisely a disorder in which a written report or a printed case history can take the place of a personal acquaintance with the patient. For this reason I think it is legitimate to base analytic interpretations upon the case history of a patient suffering from paranoia (or, more precisely, from dementia paranoïdes) whom I have never seen, but who has written his own case history and brought it before the public in print. (SE 12: 9)

It doubtless helped Freud and all other potential armchair analysts that *Senatpräsident* Schreber was an articulate man of formidable intellect with a distinguished career as a jurist, which culminated in his assumption of the Chair of the Appelate Court of Saxony.

Unfortunately, this prestigious appointment seems to have precipitated the first of his
relapses: between the time of his being notified of his new position and the taking over of his duties, the added anxiety likely triggered a recurrence of his dementia. Even as he moved in and out of a delusional state near the end of his life, Schreber remained lucid, although aspects of his daily life continually threatened him and encouraged his pantheistic (or, more accurately, pandiabolic) worldview in which God, all creation, and specifically the various directors of the asylums in which he was incarcerated align to destroy him.

The psychoanalytic reading Freud draws out of Schreber’s story is very familiar. As Freud was still focused on the treating the roots of neurosis — analysis by means of snags in the analysand’s sexual development — Freud determines that Schreber’s problems deal primarily with his persistent belief that God is slowly transforming him into a woman. This delusion was bolstered by Schreber’s dressing up as a woman, even tying ribbons his hair, putting on makeup, and admiring himself for hours on end in the mirror. In other words, Schreber engaged himself in an exaggerated performance of what he believed feminine behavior to be. Freud’s diagnosis of repressed homosexuality, therefore, is fairly well an open-and-shut case:

But in the severe psychosis which broke out soon afterwards the feminine phantasy carried everything before it: and it only requires a slight correction of the characteristic paranoid indefiniteness of Schreber’s mode of expression to enable us to divine the fact that the patient was in fear of sexual abuse at the hands of his doctor himself. The exciting cause of his illness, then, was an outburst of homosexual libido: the object of this libido was probably from the very first his doctor, Flechsig: and his struggles against this libidinal impulse produced the conflict which gave rise to the symptoms. (SE 12: 42-43)

One can interpret Freud’s attempt to analyze Schreber in libidinal terms as a reaction against the clinically informed work of Bleuler, which emerged just a few years before Freud’s own essay.⁴ There is no doubt that Schreber had tendentious feelings towards
Fleschig, who is depicted by Schreber in several instances to have penetrated his body and committed other forms of betrayal and mayhem against him. However, this rather literal reading of the *Memoirs* obscures the extraordinary perception on Schreber’s part of interpreting his own condition in a unique way, even absorbing the popular language of neurophysiology and incorporating it into his paranoid fantasy world: part and parcel of Schreber’s paranoia is a reaction against his having lost his way in the world around him.⁵ *Memoirs* is, I shall show, not only coolly logical in its rationalization for all sorts of miracles and menaces visited on Schreber, but is also highly modern document presenting a scientific reaction to the world as Schreber finds it. Just as many writers after Schreber have found him to be an exemplar for (post)modern subjectivity, I take up the question of Schreber’s madness with particular reference to the interplay between the degeneration of the body and its trauma at the hands of scientific discourse: in so doing, Lacan’s analysis of the Schreber case in Seminar III shall be cast in the proper light.

The content of Schreber’s *Memoirs* is difficult to summarize in even a few sentences, although most readers of the book are most familiar with Freud’s opinions concerning it. Most accounts of the *Memoirs* take issue with Freud’s characterization of Schreber as a repressed homosexual with a pronounced father complex, but this simplifies the conflicts and opinions Schreber expresses within a great deal. The text of the *Memoirs* itself is comprised of an Schreber’s first-person account of his schizophrenia, and detailed explanations of his visions, complete with theological and cosmological discussions supporting and rationalizing Schreber’s visionary particulars. Far from being the rant of a madman, the *Memoirs* presents a fully-fleshed out assessment of the inner experience of a mental illness, written by a momentarily sane person who had experienced the
delusions firsthand. The descriptions of Schreber’s body and the world it inhabits are a direct reflection of his efforts to assimilate and reconcile conflicting scientific and religious discourses surrounding his situation in life. On the one hand, Schreber is told that his nervous illness is a matter of the body; on the other, he struggles with the conception of his condition as being occasioned by what he perceives to be the source of his torment, namely the malevolent god Ormuzd, who appears in various guises to bully Schreber through various distortions of reality. The world is, in this guise, revealed to be, after Plato’s metaphor of the cave, a roiling panoply of shadows and apparitions, all manipulated by a host of minor deities under God’s malevolent thumb.

Since Schreber, the literature on psychosis has attempted, in one way or another, to describe and diagnose the purpose of the delusions experienced by the psychotic. In the main, psychosis is perceived as being non-narratable state, where language refers to nothing but itself and narrative is, by extension, out of the question. At the other extreme, Schreber’s madness and the story it has to tell can be said to be somehow enlightening or as a symptom of the modern condition. However, when viewed in primarily clinical terms, the Schreber case takes on more immediate dimensions. The root cause of psychotic delusion usually manifests itself such that one controlling figure in the psychotic’s world is attempting to consume him or her, and psychotic symptom arise as a defense against this. The presence of the analyst in such a situation is understood to be separate from the father figure, and, to reference Shengold’s slogan, “to see the parent is not to be the parent,” and the analytic dialogue is conducted with the tacit understanding that this is the way of mediating conflict with this figure (Shengold 315). The Schreberian narrative, extrapolating from the physical phenomena of
Kraepelinian psychiatry, poses a kind of disease to which only analysis could respond. Schreber's obsession with the biological explanation of his illness as a condition of nerves reduces physical explanations for his illness to absurdity, and as such, this thread of his story runs parallel to his theological explorations, as a peeling back of the curtain to expose any notions of inviolable selfhood as being merely fiction. Rather than being a validation of the dispersed self as a site for societal forces, *Memoirs* reveals Schreber as a desiring subject struggling with the strife of the mind, not the body, in an attempt to take his place as a figure of authority in his world, and to take over the role of analyst, after a fashion, in his own therapeutic dialogue with his madness.

Metaphors of the visual infiltrate Schreber's language at all points in his narrative, particularly with regard to his veracity as a witness to his predicament. From the beginning, Schreber feels the need to explain what he means by soul-murder (seelemord), and begins by explaining that the human soul is "contained in the nerves of the body... the total mental life of a human being rests on their excitability by external impressions... they are able to retain the memory of impressions received." Schreber goes even further to claim that sentient life can be reduced down to individual nerves, which vibrate with impressions:

> Circumstances seem to be such that *every single nerve of intellect represents the total mental individuality of a human being*, that the sum total of recollections is as if were inscribed on each single nerve of intellect, the greater or lesser number of nerves of intellect only influences the length of time for which recollections can be retained. While man is alive he is body and soul together; the nerves (the soul of man) are nourished and kept alive in living motion by the body whose function is essentially similar to that of the higher animals.

Schreber's understanding of the world shows that he does not discriminate between the living and non-living: the material world, reflecting the mind and deeds of its Creator.
subsumes all life in its carnival of sensation, expression, and imprinting of thought onto matter. Perhaps more importantly, Schreber understands that the registers of human sense (sight, taste, and so forth) are secondary to the instrument with which the human subject perceives the world, namely, the mind. Those things that are experienced, at least by him, are a direct result of God having projected them onto nerves, the operation of which is explained here:

I use here the expression “seeing with the mind’s eye,” which I used before (Chapter 8, p.109), because I cannot find a more suitable one in our human language. We are used to thinking all impressions we receive from the outer world are mediated through the five senses, particularly that all light and sound sensations are mediated through eye and ear. This may be correct in normal circumstances. However, in the case of a human being who like myself has entered into contact with rays and whose head is in consequence so to speak illuminated by rays, this is not all. I receive light and sound sensations which are projected directly onto my inner nervous system by the rays; for their reception the external organs of seeing and hearing are not necessary. (n61, p.120-121)

Schreber’s grasp of scientific concepts in order to express his sense of having been dehumanized are a constant feature of the Memoirs. The other side of this interpretive strategy opens up Schreber to a form of religious experience that sets God in opposition to Schreber with no person or thing remaining neutral. In the profoundest sense, Schreber’s metaphysical perspective is a curse of the highest order. The distinguishing feature of psychosis is the constant and interminable reference to the self, which cannot be escaped, subverted or thwarted. Indeed, Schreber’s memoir itself contains alarming examples of reflexivity, which in themselves appear to clinch the question of Schreber’s madness:

Writing this sentence, I am fully aware that other people may be tempted to think that I am pathologically conceited: I know very well that this very tendency relate everything to oneself, to bring everything that happens in connection to one’s own person, is a common phenomenon among mental patients. But in my case the very reverse obtains. Since God entered into nerve-contact with me exclusively, I
became in a way for God the only human being, or simply the human being around whom everything turns, to whom everything that happens must be related and who therefore, from his own point of view, must also relate all things to himself. (223)

A significant part of Schreber’s torture is that of the “writing-down-material,” the anticipatory echo of his thoughts as they are recorded by God, and set down, as it were, in the “book of life.” The difficulty then faced by Schreber is to say something that is not anticipated by the rays to assert thoughts and feelings from his limited perspective; Schreber’s feeling is that the voices advising him that everything he thinks and speaks has been “taken down” (128). Unable to contribute anything new, he is not able to speak for himself: “For instance, when read a book or a newspaper, one thinks that the ideas in them are my own; when I play a song or an opera arrangement for the piano, one thinks that the text of the song or opera expresses my own feelings” (234). This part of Schreber’s memoir uncannily anticipates the process of psychoanalysis, in that the thoughts are illuminated in the act of speech, by the conversation of the analyst and the analysand.

Schreber finds himself charged with a mission to redeem humanity in the light of a cruel and predatory God, and this directive causes him some to leap to some terrible post-religious reckonings. That Schreber sees himself as the only significant figure in the world is not unusual (given that he is suffering from paranoid schizophrenia), but the surprising thing is that his explanation of some of his more exotic tortures takes on superficially the language and concepts of Catholicism. Daunted, as he ventures into uncharted apocalyptic territory, he is filled with disgust and self-loathing at his perfidious condition, as in this passage where he describes himself as the “eternal Jew”:

Perhaps the legend of the founding of Rome belongs here also, according to which Rhea Sylvia conceived the later Kings Romulus and Remus directly of Mars the
God of War, and not of an earthly father. The Eternal Jew (in the sense described) had to be *unnamed* (transformed into a woman) to be able to bear children. This process of unmanning consisted in the (external) male genitals (scrotum and penis) being retracted into the body and the internal sexual organs being at the same time transformed into the corresponding female sexual organs, a process which might have been completed in a sleep lasting hundreds of years, because the skeleton (pelvis, etc.) had also to be changed. The Eternal Jew was maintained and provided with the necessary means of life by the "fleeting-improvised-men"...that is to say souls were for this purpose transitorily put into human shape by miracles, probably not only for the lifetime of the Eternal Jew himself but for many generations, until his offspring were sufficiently numerous to be able to maintain themselves. (60-61)

Schreber's description of this situation does not merely imply the changing of Schreber's sex (although this is true as well) - this originary myth, in its inclusion of Judaism, implies a sudden reversal of Christianity's having been built on the Hebraic tradition. In this sense, Schreber's story upends the Christian narrative in favor of avoiding the dominant discourse of the father, dictated through history. That Schreber no longer sees himself here as belonging to an earthly father (noted by his invocation of the Mars myth) indicates the strength of his delusion and repression of some father figure.

In Schreber's case, the father figure most in need of repression was his father. Moritz Schreber, author of *Medical Indoor Gymnastics*, and director of the Leipzig Orthopedic and Medico-Gymnastic Institute. This book, composed in 1853 and which survived regular printings in multiple languages into the 20th century, prescribed exercises for the regular health and maintenance of the body, complete with diagrams to aid the reader in their performance. The book also offers various rules governing the conduct of the exercises: not to wear constrictive clothing, to perform them at least a quarter hour before eating in order to "afford the muscles of the stomach a period of repose," and so forth. 11 In the introduction to the work, Moritz Schreber lays out this justification for the book and the necessity for exercise to aid human health. Schreber's claim that modern era has
ignored the physical aspect of human life in favoring the activity of the mental has led to
the development of medical exercises in order to correct this imbalance:

...it is our intention to treat here of gymnastics only in as far as they present a
welcome means of carrying out medical ends - as a remedy, curative gymnastics:
as prevention, hygienic or sanitary gymnastics - for certain cases of disease or
infirmity. Both of the above definitions are comprehended in the term medical
gymnastics. (6-7)

The first of his remarks asserts that "man is a double being," with mental and physical
sides. With the above explanation, Schreber puts the lie to his belief about the profound
effect of physical activity on the human body. Indeed, the elder Schreber maintains an
inescapably dynamic view of the human organism:

We see then that a continual renewal and revivifying of [the body's] parts is
necessary. All interruption of this process, if not soon remedied, causes sickness,
disease, and death. Thus it happens that an insufficient assimilation of matter, and
an insufficient throwing off of used-up and therefore useless matter (the remaining
of the same in the body) - in short the want of balance between the amount of
matter taken into the body and the amount of it which is consumed, is one of the
most general causes of irregularity in the development and working of the
mechanism of our nature (9)

As a whole, the book's exercises are designed merely to stretch the muscles of the upper
body, as Schreber believes that they are too often neglected in one's daily routine (15).

The effects of the book were such that Schreber was catapulted into the stratosphere of
the medical profession, and his two sons (one of whom committed suicide) struggled to
deal with this imposing legacy. At one point in the Memoirs, Senatpräsident Schreber
makes this surprising allusion to his father's work, when describing his transformation
into a woman, mandated by the rays of God:

Souls knew very well that a man lies on his side in bed, a woman on her back (as
the "succumbing part," considered from the point of view of sexual intercourse). I
myself, who in earlier life never gave it a thought, have only learned this from the
souls. From what I read in for instance MEDICAL INDOOR GYMNASTICS
(23rd Edition, p.102), physicians themselves do not seem to be informed about it.
Further, the souls knew that male voluptuousness is stimulated by the sight of female nudes, but on the contrary female voluptuousness to a very much lesser extent if at all by the sight of male nudes, while female nudes stimulate both sexes equally... I do not know whether these phenomena are generally known and considered correct. My own observations and the behavior of my own nerves of voluptuousness leave me in no doubt that the soul-conception is correct in this respect. (155)

The part of the book to which Schreber refers have to do with the position of the body in performing various exercises. Although the elder Schreber designed the exercises to be performed by both sexes, he expressly forbids certain ones that in his view stimulate blood flow to the abdomen, such that women should not have undue trouble with menstruating (37).

The strongly biographical content of Schreber’s delusions aside, it is nevertheless apparent that the rational scaffolding of Schreber’s fear enables him explain away his current wretched state. To this end, Schreber’s understanding that the basis of reality is ideas in the mind of God, the notion of representation – the impressions of Schreber concerning the world, and his own body – takes center stage in his private delusional mythology. Nevertheless, Schreber feels that the idea of his becoming a woman is slowly being impressed upon him from the inside out. For as Schreber notes at the bottom of the page, this is how God runs the universe, by managing the appearances and even fraudulently manipulating the appearances of action when it comes to human behavior and judgment: “The notion of ‘representing,’ that is to say of giving to a thing or a person a semblance different from its real nature (expressed in human terms ‘of’ falsifying’) played and still plays a great role generally in the ideas of souls. In this vein it was said innumerable times on later occasions: You are to be represented as a scoffer of God, or as somebody who has committed soul murder” (n62, p. 124). Here is a vivid
description of Schreber’s body being invaded by the souls, which collectively supervise
the process of his transformation:

Small parts of Fleischig’s soul which were distant, and therefore not in contact with
my nerves for quite some time, used repeatedly to exclaim as if astonished: “Is he
not unmanned yet?” God’s rays frequently mocked me about a supposedly
imminent unmanning as “Miss Schreber” [original in English]: an expression used
frequently and repeated ad nauseum was: “You are to be represented as being
given to voluptuous excesses.” etc. I myself felt the danger of unmanning for a
long time as a threatening ignominy, especially while there was the possibility of
my body being sexually abused by other people. (124)

Strangely enough. Schreber never explains the last comment: one can only extrapolate
from this remark that he felt ill at ease about being incarcerated in an asylum with other
men, seeing as he was about to be “unmanned.” as it were. This threatened point of view
can be seen more fully fleshed out in this passage where all objects in Schreber’s
experience take on a gendered valence: “... A very prominent part was played in the
“soul-conception” by ideas about the relation between the two sexes and their respective
mode of occupation, their tastes, etc. For instance, beds, handmirrors, and rakes were
considered feminine, basket-chairs and spades masculine; of games, chess as masculine,
checkers as feminine, etc” (155). From this passage and other like it, we see an uncanny
anticipation of Freud’s work in Interpretation of Dreams, where objects themselves have
definite genders and modes of being. Marooned in this sexualized world, Schreber
extends his conception of the universe even farther. The idea of soul-conception
impinges on the relation between the subject and its modes of interacting with the world:
“My change of will was facilitated by my not believing at that time that apart from
myself a real mankind existed; on the contrary I thought all the human shapes I saw were
only “fleeting and improvised,” so that there could be no question of my ignominy being
attached to unmanning” (164). His concept of communication is conflated with his
vision of the world, bound together by nerves, has sexual reproduction as its effect. In essence, this is an inward reflection of Schreber’s stake in sexualized language and concepts, which are being forced upon him.

Schreber’s rapid shift in sexual identification attends this discovery that his survival demands: his conforming to the idea that he shall become a woman, and that, being the only person in the universe, its significance increases immeasurably. This capability for reflection is that something that Schreber conceives of later in order to paper over this thought that he alone was alienated. The picture that Schreber provides of his confinement is one of one-sided confrontations, innuendos, and unimaginable torture – at the same time, he appears a model of docile inmatehood. From the legal notes attending the Schreber memoir, the court notes that Schreber’s behavior, however pathological, seems to have a large voluntary component:

For some time the physical behavior of the patient showed only little change, the peculiar very loud forced laughter and the monotonous uttering in endless repetition of incomprehensible abusive language (for instance “the sun is a whore.” and suchlike), which served apparently to a certain extent as counter-action against the hallucinations and disturbances of feeling (pain the back, etc.), continued as before. Sleep remained very deficient but nourishment was taken more adequately and he was gaining weight; even then there were early signs of a peculiar delusion which developed later: the patient was frequently found in his room half undressed, declared that he already had feminine breasts, liked to occupy himself by looking at pictures of naked women, even drew them and had his mustache removed. (331)

This doffing of the mustache seems in hindsight to be irrefutable proof of Schreber’s unmannining, the hirsute phallus.11 From the foregoing, it is obvious that Schreber’s delusions were not all encompassing, and that despite his protests to the contrary, he has a hand in the possibility of dealing with his madness. Other legal documents from the period suggest that although he was not considered to be sane by any measure. Schreber
was nevertheless allowed to partake in social life with asylum staff, who considered him their distinguished, well-behaved guest.\textsuperscript{12}

What does it mean to have Schreber as one's model analytic subject, as does Lacan? Why does Schreber seem to be so popular in the psychiatric tradition? For one thing, Schreber's canniness is what separates him from the rest of the Freudian case studies: witness the level of interpretation that Schreber brings to his own case. Schreber's status as a mascot of psychoanalysis rests on his unique distinction of having discovered the place of fantasy in psychic life. He arrives at the function of personal narrative as therapeutic working-out of the psychoses; in all phases, Schreber's use of narrative in explaining external stimuli (his immobility, which initiates his self-assigned gender reassignment) insulates his ego within the context of an intersubjective world, remade from the ego outward. In this, Schreber's story buffers the confrontation with the predatory father figure by placing himself as the victim and hero of the remade world. The dramatic arc of the Schreber story provides as alternate Freudian context for the metanarrative of sexual development, one in which the father is displaced and subverted via the "degenerate" fantasy of Schreber. It is in this sense that Schreber embodies the perfect picture of the core Lacanian ideal of \textit{méconnaissance}; Schreber's desirous expectations and dreams superadded to the phenomena observable in the world.

With Freud's original case study of Schreber as a clue in the turn toward the meta-psychological writing of the post-First World War period, particularly in \textit{Beyond the Pleasure Principle}, it may be seen how a line can be drawn between the later Freud (including the religious and anthropological writings) and beginnings of the Lacanian "structuralization" of the Freudian corpus. As interpretation, psychoanalysis turned back
on itself yields something more than a simple critique or invalidation. It clears the decks of the possible survival of the Oedipus myth or the abuse of power. Just as Schreber might perhaps understand his own delusions as being part of a fictive overlay superimposed on a world of inner experience proven to be itself a palimpsest:

And the paranoiac builds it [the world] up again, not more splendid, it is true, but at least so that he can once more live in it. He builds it up by the work of his delusions. The delusion-formation, which we take to be a pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery: a process of reconstruction. Such a reconstruction after the catastrophe is more or less successful, but never wholly so: in Schreber’s words, there has been a “profound internal change” in the world. (147)

That it is a recuperative gesture is something that one can take for granted: at the same time, this gesture is something that puts that fantasist at a disadvantage. The paranoiac wishes to put himself to the side of the narrative of sexual development: to experience the world as a god, a king, as the eunuch father – and to take interpretation one step further.

Lacan: Les Psychoses

“Since this level leaves you somewhat confused, I will put things to you dogmatically, which I detest doing – you know my style is dialectical.”

– Jacques Lacan

As noted in the second chapter. Lacan’s most significant period in his intellectual development occurred between 1953 to 1956. which saw the appearance of the Rome Discourse. “Seminar or the Purloined Letter.” “Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious.” “Signification of the Phallus.” and, of course, “The Freudian Thing.” After the explorations of Seminar II in Freud’s later work, Lacan turns his attention, as promised at the end of the previous seminar, to the topic of the psychoses, most pointedly exemplified in Schreber’s Memoirs. Although the text of Schreber’s memoir appears on the surface to
be quite exotic. Lacan’s point here near the close of Seminar II casts the emergence of psychosis as being a common problem, and simply a matter of degree:

... everything the obsessional says has got nothing to do with his experience. It is through verbal conformity, social language, that he maintains his precarious equilibrium – which is nonetheless very stable, for what could be harder to catch out than an obsessional? And if the obsessional does indeed resist and digs his heels in so vigorously, that’s because, according to what the author I’m referring to has to say, psychosis, the imaginary disintegration of the ego, is behind all this....

...Post-analytical paranoia is a long way from being a mythical problem. You don’t have to have pushed the treatment very far for it to give rise to a perfectly consistent paranoia.... You don’t need a very good psychoanalyst to get this to come about, it’s sufficient to believe very fervently in psychoanalysis. (242)

Lacan then remarks that fixation on “psychological facts” are enough to bring paranoia about, that given a “ready-made” language with which to obsess, the subject is all the more vulnerable to psychosis. The reason that Schreber is a prime candidate for discussion on this account is that, having a privileged perspective on his illness, his own reaction to his disease constitutes his attempt to contain it. Schreber’s interpretive identification with his illness becomes its fabric, as his lamentations inveighed against the asylum staff indicate.

In Schreber, Lacan finds an archetypal figure, one that crystallizes the modern condition of the subject, its relation to the Other, and the very foundation of psychological pathology — namely, that the basis of all disorders that can be unraveled by psychoanalysis are found in the psychoses, as opposed to “neurotic” behavior. Indeed, the Lacanian analytic situation, with its stated emphasis on those “mirages” that appear within the field of analytic relation, closely mirror the torments of Schreber. Throughout Lacan’s work, and particularly in this seminar, the question of the psychoses is tacitly considered against the concept of the neuroses, the definition of which is often variable, but may be characterized as the bodily aftereffects of sexual or developmental trauma.15
Schreber is the central figure of Lacan’s investigation into the character of the psychoses because his delusions neatly exemplify a complete paranoiac fantasy, one which provides an unstinting example of fully developed paranoia. With psychosis, the subject abandons all objective references concerning his dealings with the world; instead, everything that occurs is an expression of an univocal desire present in all objects external to the subject. This topsy-turvy dialectical relation with the world is exemplified by Schreber’s preface to the book, in which he accuses the asylum director for having ordered his torture at the hands of various lackeys and henchmen. In the subject’s everyday dealing with others, the interaction with the other adduces sense to the utterance (51). But in the case of the psychotic patient, this desire is represented in an exaggerated fashion. In Schreber’s case, the legions of “small others” (53) who haunt his consciousness are introjections of Fleschig and other personages from his life. Rather than being each a discrete entity, these are all shadows of the god Ormuzd, whose intention is to destroy Schreber.

It is the all-encompassing nature of this delusion that makes it unusually difficult to treat psychosis, as everything can be explained by the predatory intentions of the omnipotent, imagined persecutor. However, the effects of such a persecutory delusion can often appear to be entirely narcissistic, as Schreber himself points out above. Lacan notes this quote from the early Freud-Fliess correspondence to describe the difficulty in reasoning with the psychotic subject: “Psychotics love their delusion like they love themselves” (157). Although Freud would not write his principal work on narcissism until much later, here Freud demonstrates an understanding that the primary issue in dealing with the fallout of psychosis is that the necessary evil of subjectivity becomes the
venue of, and underlying reason for, the illness. Moreover, the subject’s self-understanding, only accessible through psychoanalysis, determined as it is to a large extent through traumas and the like, is guided by the signifying chain of the symbolic order, underwritten by the Oedipus complex, primal scenes, and so forth. Lacan notes here that the primal scene, dictating as it does the character of the subject, is of great importance to the narcissistic character of the subject:

In *The Wolf Man* the primitive impression of the famous primordial scene has remained over the years, serving no purpose though already signifying, before having its word to say in the subject’s history. The signifier is thus primitive given, but it remains nothing as long as the subject doesn’t cause it to enter into his history, which becomes important between the ages of one and half and four and a half. Sexual desire is effectively what a man uses to historicize himself, insofar as it’s at this level that the law is introduced for the first time. (156)

We see here the focus that Lacan puts on the intervention of the symbolic in the human: the importance of this issue is unpacked later in the discussion of the insertion of the subject into the symbolic order, and of course elsewhere in Lacan with the emphasis on the interdiction of the symbolic as the procedure for analysis. Certainly in the case of this primal scene, the symbolic is Lacan’s guide, as well as it is Freud’s:

The symbolic provides a form into which the subject is inserted at the level of his being. It’s on the basis of the signifier that the subject recognizes himself as being this or that. The chain of signifiers has a fundamental explanatory value, and the very notion of causality is nothing else. There is nevertheless one thing that evades the symbolic tapestry, it’s procreation in its essential root – that one being is born from another…. The entire symbolism declares that creatures don’t engender creatures, that a creature is unthinkable without a fundamental creation. In the symbolic nothing explains creation. (179)

The masculine valence of the symbolic is rarely expressed as clearly elsewhere in Lacan’s work: the intersection of the synchronic, metaphorical symbolic with the life of the diachronic, metonymic subject produced what is known as reflexivity, and also opens the door to the possibility of solipsism. In “The Signification of the Phallus,” Lacan
equates the power of the symbolic as being an effect of the phallus, and its ability to create significance seemingly at will. Only through the process of conversation will the analyst and the analysand be able to reach a viable reading of the subject’s complexes. through the selective reading of the symbolic life of the subject: “The continuity in everything a subject has lived through since birth tends never to emerge and doesn’t interest us in the slightest. What interests us are the decisive moments of the symbolic articulation, of history, but in the sense in which we say the History of France” (111). The history of the subject is never easy to outline at will. For attention must be paid to the sense in which the subject has self-understanding through the symbolic.

It is this doubleness in the life of the analysand that Lacan addresses in his discussion of psychosis. In the same sense that Lacan is careful to distinguish between the life of the subject and the history of the subject, so too there is a distinction to be made between the history-less subject and the one able to balance desire and subjectivity in worldly interaction. As Lacan sees it, the Verwerfung of the paranoid subject occurs when the “primordial signifier,” that of the father, perhaps, is rejected, and in doing so, the symbolic order is obscured from view (149), and it is this that Lacan considers to the fundamental mechanism of paranoia:

It’s inside this primordial body that Freud posits the constitution of a world of reality, which is already punctuated, already structured, in terms of signifiers....

The subject’s initial apprehension of reality is the judgment of existence, which consists in saying – This is not my dream or my hallucination or my representation but an object. (150)

The effect of this Verwerfung, results, as Lacan intimates, in confusion of signification with the object itself: thanks to the stamp of the primordial signifier, the subject can distinguish between objects and their interpretation via the symbolic. Following Lacan’s
discussion of Freud’s reflections on *Verwerfung* in the clinical setting, the subject wishes
to know nothing about castration because the subject wishes to know nothing about the
disjunction between language and the real. The psychotic subject deludes himself about
possessing the power of the phallus to signify: not being subject to the symbolic order.
the subject is free to attach meaning to objects at will. Lacan describes the psychotic
state as lacking an intersubjective context, such that the psychotic’s experience is guided
by orienting phrases and words (in Schreber’s case, “unmanning,” “fleetingly-
improvised-men.” and the like) that take on greater significance than they do for others.
Lacan wryly remarks that although this is to some extent true for everyone, “Obviously,
we don’t put them to the same use as the psychotic does” (111).

The upshot of this failure of the symbolic in the relationship to the subject feeds the
delusional persona of the psychotic. The dialectical relation between the subject and the
world, as expressed within the subject’s daily routine, is thrown off-balance by the lack
of context for the symbolic:

For want of being able in any way to re-establish his pact with the other, for want
of being able to make any symbolic mediation whatsoever between what is new
and himself, the subject moves into another mode of mediation, completely
different from the former, and substitutes for symbolic mediation a profusion, an
imaginary proliferation, into which the central signal of a possible mediation is
introduced in a deformed and profoundly symbolic fashion. (87)

The lack of self-historicization is the root of delusion. As such, the interaction with the
Other causes the obliteration of the *objet petit a*. Paranoiac delusions lead the subject to a
necessary confrontation with God, necessarily a narcissistic projection of the worst of
persecution fantasies: God is the ultimate excuse for the paranoiac’s misfortune, and as
this conception of the Almighty is a reflection of Schreber, God takes on his
characteristics (101).
One of the greatest abiding confusions in the poststructuralist milieu has to do with the question of surveillance, which Foucault cunningly explores in *Discipline and Punish*. Most criticism of Lacan dealing with the gaze often casts the Lacanian concept of the Other in the light of Foucault's work, and this is a highly inaccurate characterization. In this seminar, Lacan speaks lightly of having to identify with the big "O," the projection of the subject through the object of one's desire:

> For my part, within the generalized notion of communication, I state what speech as speaking to the other is. It's making the other speak as such. We shall, if you like, write that other with a big O. And why with a big O? No doubt for a delusional reason, as is the case whenever one is obliged to provide signs that are supplementary to what language offers. (37)

It is, asserts Lacan, the *unknown* in the equation that leads to uncertainty as to the fabric of reality, and perhaps projection on the part of the other. God is the sticking point in Schreiber's delusion (314), as the signifier that can be continually filled with more and more impressive characters. This "quilting point" is the moment at which the subject is gripped by the symbolic, and forced to interpret all of experience with regard to it. At the same time, the primordial signifier of which Lacan speaks is not the organizing principle of the symbolic, personified—rather, it is initiation of the subject into the symbolic order, and therefore socialization. This "big other" subsists, then, as a necessary delusion, derived from the Sartrean reading of the objectifying encounter with the other, in order to express this illusion symbolically, that the gaze of the other stands in for the corrosive glance (*le regard*) of infinite judgment.

Michel Arrivé singles out Jacques Lacan's remark in *The Psychoses* that the Lacanian style, like that of God, has nothing of the other in it. The ultimate reason for this is that, out of his famous alleged ignorance about transference, Lacan wished to have nothing to
do with the influence of the other on speech, as the analyst must tap directly into the
matter of the unconscious to translate the symbolic into discourse. Lacan’s lordly and
enigmatic style pretends to speak the language of the symbolic in order to produce the
illusion of its authoritativeness. In the relation between the analyst and the analysand, the
analyst necessarily is the stand-in and embodiment for the symbolic. Rather than being a
delusion of grandeur (in Lacan’s case, it probably would have been fitting), psycho-
analysis demands the necessary delusion that analysis be comprehensive and reflect the
analysand’s place in the symbolic. The subject’s inner experience, experiencing oneself
as both authentic and not, is taken as one experiencing the world, and the interpretation of
it one’s place in it. The “Other” of psychoanalysis, the analysand, is in danger of being
obliterated by the analyst, and the end result is that the analysand’s ego is always
aberrant. In the analytic relation, the analyst abnegates the ego in order to play the role,
and in a sense, the analyst’s role is entirely illusory. and so is the relation and assumption
of the role from other analysts. There is no conversation as such between them, no
dialectic: the role of analyst must be assumed by fiat, along with its interpretive
responsibilities.

It has been said (primarily by Rudinesco), that Lacan’s style is to “ignore
transference.” This is patently untrue. Lacan simply views transference as being an
inescapable condition of speech, and therefore cannot be analyzed separately from any
form of interaction with the analysand. On the other hand, Lacan strove to keep his
personal and professional commitments to the analysand utterly separate: the analysis
was conducted with view to the analysis itself, and personal interaction was conducted in
terms of social interaction.18 Within the smaller framework of analysis, Lacan saw the
whole of the social relation implied, and it is there that Lacan stages the presence of analytic truth: in the shared mirages of therapy, made altogether valid by putting two heads together, rather than one.

Henry James: *The Sacred Fount*

*The Sacred Fount* (1901) is a relatively little-read and commented-upon work: at the time of its publication, it was seen as a little more than a puzzling, and slight, shaggy-dog story foisted on a unsuspecting Jamesian reading public. It may be said, however, that *The Sacred Fount* codifies the stylistic agenda that James was to follow for the rest of his career, as the substance, characterization and plot of the novel yields to the ruminations of the implied narrator. This style reaches its logical endpoint in *The Golden Bowl*, where the action takes place almost entirely by means of the narrator’s discussion and dissection of the characters’ thoughts and feelings. *The Sacred Fount* is also James’s only extended work narrated by a single first-person narrator, who remains nameless throughout the action of the story. With this conceit, unusual in James’s oeuvre, the narrator proceeds to tell the story of an odd weekend at the country estate of Newmarch, where the narrator himself interprets the weekend’s events gossip as proving a larger point about human nature – namely, that love between age-mismatched couples fosters a vampiric effect. As the younger, more vital partner ages faster, the elder grows more youthful. Naturally, the intellectual momentum that carries James’s narrator through this book is predicated on his proving the theory, which brings the novel to its endpoint, in a confrontation with the party’s hostess, Mrs. Brissenden. This section alone takes up the
final quarter of the book, and it brings the work to a close, with the revelation that the narrator has indeed successfully found out the identity of those engaging in adulterous coupling, only to discover that this “secret” is known to all of the other guests, without all the effort of his cogitation.

Owing to the nature of this “narrative,” it seems quite a likely candidate for psychoanalytic reading: indeed, *The Sacred Fount* would seem to be a source of insights about the psyche in obsessional torment. Once the narrator reaches the house, his declaration appears to comically anticipate the chain of Lacanian signification: “The links, in fact, should I count them all, would make too long a chain. They formed, nevertheless, the happiest little chapter of accidents, though a series of which I can scarce give more than the general effect.” However, the set of concerns that James brings to the table in many of his novels — those of obsessional observation, paranoia, and sexual isolation — receive their most bracing and reductive formulation in *The Sacred Fount*, such that the narrative can be said to be a meditation on James’s narrative art itself. The narrator represents the Jamesian persona of the detached gaudly, engrossed in the fine analysis of social interaction and drama in high society, who finds that he is ultimately the butt of joke, and that all his cogitation has come to naught. As the story plays out, his sanity and judgement are openly called into question by the characters he so closely observes. Rather than wielding power over his hapless quarry, the narrator is blinkered by his near-fetishistic attachment to his own observations and theories. As the novel draws to a close, it is apparent that the payoff is not in doubt (or even a surprising revelation), but rather the story is all the narrator has: the delicious effects of his theory become the prize itself:
A part of the amusement came, I daresay, from my exaggerating them – grouping them into a larger mystery (and thereby a larger "law") than the facts, as observed, yet warranted; but that is the common fault of minds for which the vision of life is an obsession. The obsession pays, if one will; but to pay it has to borrow. (30)

It is this question of balance that James explores throughout the novel, between vitality and decrepitude, between darkness and light, that sets the dramatic agenda. In the narrator's obsession over the events of the country weekend, he exhibits some of the same qualities as Schreber in his predatory view of the world as a whole. The narrator's supposed peeling back of the veneer of human behavior presupposes a godlike access to the truth, and in loosing himself from the moorings of his predefined social role; he is removed from the sexual economy of the novel, and yet plays a sort of vampire himself, as he is perfectly content to theorize and gossip. As such, \textit{The Sacred Fount}, in addition to providing a picture of paranoiac delusion, does so in a self-aware fashion, complete with references to physiological ailments, metaphorical language, and the knowing abstraction of sexual intrigue. The “primitive” Lacanian reading offered here provides for both the aesthetic James of the finer grain and James the obsessive chronicler of social foibles: both are met in the persona of the narrator, at once formidable and embarrassing. At the same time, the interaction between the narrator and Ford Obert, homoerotic on the surface, produces the kind of shared insight reminiscent of psychoanalysis, while going through the motions of seduction.

The primal scene of the novel would appear to be early in the narrative, after the initial greetings and scene-settings of the opening chapters. Some members of the Newmarch party, including the narrator and Mrs. Server, happen upon a striking painting in the library. The question of the meaning of the portrait is put at first to Gilbert Long
by the narrator. and then to Mrs. Server. who are. not coincidentally, assumed by the
narrator to be one of his matched love sets:

“Do, my dear man, let us have it again. It’s the picture. of all pictures. that most
needs an interpreter. Don’t we want,” I asked of Mrs. Server. “to know what it
means?” The figure represented is a young man in black -- a quaint. tight black
dress, fashioned in years long past; with a pale, lean, livid face and a stare, from
eyes without eyebrows, like that of some whitened old-world clown. In his hand
he holds an object that strikes the spectator at first simply as some obscure, some
ambiguous work of art, but that on a second view becomes a representation of a
human face, modelled and coloured, in wax, in enameled metal, in some substance
not human. The object thus appears a complete mask, such as might have been
fantastically fitted and worn. (50-51)

The oddest phrase in this passage is easily “in some substance, not human,” as if in the
vampiric world of Newmarch, the narrator wishes to pre-empt the question as to whether
the mask is fashioned out of some fleshly substance. Here the reader is presented with a
set of stark ambiguities: the face of the figure itself seems not quite human, owing to the
pale skin and lack of eyebrows, which give the appearance of the clown persona. The
mask, on the other hand, which one would assume would at once conceal identity and
project a persona chosen by the wearer, instead appears here a mysterious blot, nebulous
in its appearance, purpose and intention. The language James chooses to describe instead
appears as a non-committal gesture to suggest what the object is. a “complete” mask that
“might have been fantastically fitted and worn.” Most readings of the novel interpret the
painting as representing the layers of social deception portrayed in the novel’s narrative.25
Rather, the painting foregrounds the enigma of the meaning of the Newmarch weekend: it
stands as a symbol that offers the gesture of interpretation, namely, the exposition of
human nature and behavior. At bottom, the mysterious figure in the painting stands for.
as in much of James, the misdirection of interpretational attention. The narrator’s remark
to Obert on finding the opposite end to the loving couple is yet another example of
misdirection. "The real man must be the one she doesn't markedly collar." (56) In a sense, it is a case of the narrator looking too hard in the wrong place and expecting the truth to be there, when it is in plain sight.

James's choice to place what may be described as his own narrative voice in the action of *The Sacred Fount* leads to some interesting contortions that work to undermine his and the narrator's authority. The tensions between the "seeing to the exclusion of almost everything else," and the narrator's own preoccupation with acting as a bon vivant, weighs on the narrator such that his own position is endlessly compromised. One of the often most often deployed takes in reference to the novel is that it constitutes nothing else that a giant joke played at the expense of James's readership, given the floridity of the style and slightness of the plot. Part of the narrator's anxiety must stem from the impossibility of seeing into the consciousness of the characters, as occurs in the best of James's work. At the same time, the narrator keenly feels that he his somehow endangered by all of his Jamesian cogitation:

Reflection was the real intensity: reflection, as to poor Mrs. Server in particular, was an indiscreet opening of doors. She became vivid in the light of the so limited vision of her that I already possessed – try positively as I would not further to extend it. It was something not to ask another question....it was something to talk as hard as possible with other persons and on other subjects. to mingle in groups much more superficial than they supposed themselves. to give ear to broader jokes. to discuss more tangible mysteries. (72)

In this passage, the simple act of analysis is shown to be the fabric of Newmarch life, as opposed to the content of relationships. This highly Jamesian statement becomes an assertion about the power of observation and the narrator’s discovery of it as the primary social gift, a ticket punched for entry into the cognoscenti:

Newmarch had always, in our time, carried itself as the great asylum of the finer wit, more or less expressly giving out that, as invoking hospitality or other
countenance, none of the stupid, none even of the votaries of the grossly obvious. need apply; but I could luckily at present reflect that its measurements in this direction had not always been my own, and that, moreover, whatever precision they possessed, human blandness, even in such happy halls, had not been abolished. There was a sound law in virtue of one which always – alike in privileged and unprivileged circles – rests more on people’s density than their penetrability. (77-78)

Because this “density” is at a premium to foster intrigue in social circles, the narrator immediately shows himself to be aware of the lures of gossip and innuendo. Over the course of the narrative, the narrator’s perception of what constitutes density and penetrability changes, and whether or not the riddle is worth pursuing – and at what cost to his prey. He harbors this “haunting principle,” that occurs to him on meeting with May Server, curiously demanding of himself that he determine the emotion he felt on upon greeting her: “Yet what was this feeling, really?—of which, at the point we had thus reached. I seemed to myself to have gathered from all things an invitation to render some account”(97). This invitation is as yet unclear, and the act the invitation itself is strange. The phrase “I seemed to myself” implies that the invitation issues from the “I,” and that to have “seemed” to oneself implies that another persona has done all the collecting for him, and is only now going through the process of surveying his treasures. It is this “render[ing of] some account” that James saves until the end the novel, in which the argument/discussion with Mrs. Brissenden will consume over a third of the text, and the narrator then forced to give up every last bit of his gossip, only to find that it all comes to nought.

Yet for each individual encounter, the narrator may weigh the ethical cost of the voyeuristic damage he inflicts. The encounter with Mrs. Server is the most pointed stretch in the book where James’s figural violence rears its head, a motif common in the
later, as in *The Wings of the Dove*, where James envisions characters’ necks being broken, violated, consumed, literally devoured, and so forth. Here, we see the narrator preying on an unsuspecting May Server, an insect-like creature assuredly to be pitied rather than helped:

She gave herself, in that minute, more than she doubtless knew – gave herself. I mean, to my intenser apprehension. She went through the form of expression, but what told me everything was the way the form of expression broke down. Her lovely grimace, the light of the previous hours, was as blurred as a bit of brushwork in water-colour spoiled by the upsetting of the artist’s glass. She fixed me with it as she had fixed during the day forty persons, but it fluttered like a bird with a broken wing. (97)

If May Server had been once a feared and treasured component to polite society, she no longer has any potency whatsoever. The ability to see, to express, to exist in the visual language of pleasantry and exchange of greeting, deserts her here. In the course of the conversation with May Server, the nameless narrator injects this pointed observation: “She was on my hands—it was she herself, poor creature, who was: this was the thing that just now loomed large, and the secret was a comparative detail” (100). The “secret” of the vampiric affair is on the back burner for the time being, and for the moment, May Server’s lifeless carcass is a burden he must bear: “She reminded me of a sponge wrung dry and with fine pores crushable….That was Mrs. Server’s tragedy. that her consciousness survived—survived with a force that made it struggle and dissemble. This consciousness was all her secret—it was at any rate all mine (101)”. Not only has May Server’s vibrancy has been sucked out of her by her paramour, but her bloodless dissection at the hands the narrator seals her fate.

The organizing principle of *The Sacred Fount* is compelling for the narrator because in addition to his paranoia about the guests, that he could be “found out.” Waiting for the
theatrical gesture of ultimate discovery that would bring the weekend to a close, the narrator reflects on the worth of his obsession: "Would the definite dramatic signal for ringing the curtain down be then only—as a grand climax and coup de théâtre—the due attestation that poor Briss had succumbed to inexorable time and Mrs. Server given way under a cerebral lesion?" (121). The puzzling allusion to the "cerebral lesion" suggests that May Server's debilitating condition is the result of something hidden—her disabled self-possession, related to sight, must be part of her malady, but his clinical reference to brain structure covers his scientific bases, and is at the same time aesthetic. The narrator comes through with the admission that his interest here in figuring out the situation is largely aesthetic:

"Things in the real had a way of not balancing: it was all an affair, this fine symmetry, of artificial proportion. Yet even while I kept my eyes away from Mrs. Briss and Long it was vivid to me that, "composing" there beautifully, they could scarce help playing a part in my exhibition. The mind of man, furthermore—and my generalization pressed hard, with a quick twist, on the supersubtlety as to which I had been privately complacent—the mind of man doubtless didn't know from one minute to the other, under the appeal of phantasmagoric life, what it would profitably be at. (130)"

The dichotomy played at by The Sacred Fount tilts wildly over this distinction between the "affair of symmetry" and seeing things as they are. The appeal of the so-called "phantasmagoric life," whatever James means by that, is this: without image and metaphor, there would be no delicious irony at which to poke. The profit, again, is the affair itself, but the problem of objectivity, if it exists, is the possibility that he could be wrong. Here is the same declaration, where "returns" has the double meaning: "It was on my way to the place, in fine, that my obsession had met me. and it was by retracing those steps that I should be able to get rid of it. Only I must break off sharp, must escape all
reminders by foreswearing all returns.” (142). This foreswearing signifies the narrator’s break with this reality.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the homoerotic prospects of this James novel arrive in the guise the narrator’s interactions with Ford Obert.25 Here, the only satisfying sexual relation that the narrator can forge is between himself and the artist, mediated by exchanging notes on the Newmarch scene. The scene is loaded with comical sexual innuendo, and needless to say, perhaps, is about everything else other than the plot. In the pre-coital glow of this talk, shows that Obert hasn’t a clue about how to dish with the narrator, without the narrator looking over his shoulder. The intrigue continues:

“You mean he contents himself with winking at her? My dear fellow, that wasn’t enough for you yesterday, and it wouldn’t have been enough for you this morning, among the impressions that led to our last talk. It was just the fact that you did wink, that you had—winked, at me that wound me up.”

“And what about the fact that you had winked at me? Your winks—come”—Obert laughed—“are portentous!”

“Oh, if we reerminate.” I cheerfully said after a moment. “we agree.” (149)

This exchange speaks well enough for itself, and most especially when followed by this remark: “I turned, on it, a little more to him, and at him so long that he had at last to look at me: with which, after holding his eyes another moment, I made my point. “Our hands are not clean.” “Ah, speak for your own!”—and as he moved back I might really have thought him uneasy” (149). The remark that the narrator might have thought Obert discomfited by the thought that they should feel guilty, indeed, much less share it, which might point to an even graver sin. Following on this, the further passage where the sexual intrigue deepens as the narrator: “You excite me too much. You don’t know what you do to me” (151). The seduction here, which the narrator has conducted throughout
his weekend at Newmarch, has overcome Obert to the point that neither man is sure what
exactly has occurred during the exchange.

If there is sexual frustration, it is certainly on the part of the narrator, who's attempting
to place Obert in the continuum of things: "'Oh, the torch of my analogy!' I had so
groaned it—as if for very ecstasy—that it pulled him up, and I could see his curiosity as
indeed reaffected (152). Despite the phallic symbology of this, the overall effect is that
the narrator continues the seduction of Obert by drawing him back in at various moments,
such as this one. We come now to the climax of the meeting, which ends, portentously
enough, with the appearance of Brissenden himself, depleted by his affair, no doubt, with
Mrs. Long:

'Oh,' said Obert, looking, luminous and straight, up at me from his seat. 'the man
now, the actual man—!' But he stopped short, with his eyes suddenly quitting me
and his words becoming a formless ejaculation. It was Brissenden himself who, to
my extreme surprise, stood there, with rapid inquiry in his attitude and face. (157)

The look of "rapid inquiry" on Brissenden's face is the subject of concern by the narrator:
he is perhaps suspicious about what they were doing, but the narrator's real concern is
that he is also a reading subject, steadily undermining his interpretation of the weekend's
events. But for the narrator, the initial shock is in the presence of one of the objects of
his obsession, intruding on this, the psychotic fantasy that he has so carefully constructed.

The dénouement of the story telescopes the intrusion of Brissenden into the traumatic
irruption that ends the paranoiac fantasy. The conversation with Mrs. Brissenden itself,
which takes up the remainder of the book, is itself a helix of confusion and
miscommunication. For nearly forty pages, the nameless narrator and the revitalized
doyenne talk over the events at Newmarch. The narrator leads her on to the conclusion
that he has reached, namely that she's sucked the life out of Brissenden, to her benefit.
However, the communication of this conceit is difficult, and her blunt denials are taken as dissembling by him, when in fact she cannot possibly understand him at all:

She had taken at last again the time she required. “Do you what I think?”
“It’s exactly what I’m pressing you to make intelligible.”
It naturally struck me. “Crazy.”
“Crazy.”
I turned it over. “But do you call that intelligible?”
She did it justice. “No: I don’t suppose it can be so for you if you are insane.” (192)

The repetition here in this passage that reverberates throughout the rest of the late James canon, where the characters repeat the last words of their interlocutors, especially if there is nothing left to say. Of course, he really is crazy, and in that, one’s paramount concern is that of the intelligibility of his conceit, and he resorts to figural violence to unpack their severity: “...” “No.” I quickly went on. “I daresay, to do you justice, the interpretation of my tropes and figures isn’t ever perfectly simple. You doubtless have driven me into a corner with my dangerous explosive, and my only fair course must be therefore to sit on it till you get out of the room...” (196). Once again, the narrator participates in the classically Jamesian conceit of rhetorical violence, taking the figural for the literal.

The narrator allows himself, even as his conceit is stripped away from him by Mrs. Brissenden, that he shall be revenged upon everyone who had a hand in pushing him into this untenable position, however much pleasure he derives from it:

I know not what heavy admonition of my responsibility had thus suddenly descended on me: but nothing, under it was indeed more sensible than that it practically paralysed me. And I could only say to myself that this was the price — the price of the secret success, the lonely liberty and the intellectual joy. There were things that for so private and splendid a revel — that of the exclusive king with his Wagner opera — I could only let go, and the special torment of my case was that the condition of light, of the satisfaction of curiosity and of the attestation of triumph, was in this direct way the sacrifice of feeling. (202)
As a private obsession, the enterprise of the gossipy detective work is conducted as a private perversion of the very public activity of social life. Even though gossip and scandal is to be expected under the circumstances, what the narrator is proposed, with the fetishism of the scene, is seen as a private pleasure, inexcusable because it is solitary. When the narrator says "...My system, where so much made for protection." I explained, "wasn't intended to have the effect of exposure" (209), he intends on the object of his obsession, not himself. Yet he has been exposed, and it is he who has done it to himself. When given the 'wrong' answer to the sexual intrigue at Newmarch, he himself must be made to be understood: "It was not the unnamed, in short, who were to be named. "Lady John is the woman" (208), and the phrase is repeated three times. His complaint that Mrs. Brissenden has no taste for the theory forces him to complain, namely: "But she had no ear for irony, and she made out still more of her story. "'He's simple—but he sees.'" (211). For the narrator, the inexcusable lack of irony is where the truth breaks upon the shore of consciousness. The undeniable facts undo all abstraction, which is where the real value lies:

I had taken her immediately up, and I held her by it and by something better still. "You, from your fortress of granite, can chuck them about as you will! All the more reason, however." I quickly added, "that, before my frail, but as I maintain, quite sublime structure, you honour me, for a few seconds, with an intelligent look at it. I seem myself to see it again, perfect in every part." I pursued, "even while I thus speak to you and feel afresh that, weren't the wretched accident of its weak foundation, it wouldn't have the shadow of a flaw. I've spoken of it in my conceivable regret." I conceded, "as already a mere heap of disconnected fragments; but that was the extravagance of my vexation, my despair. It's in point of fact so beautifully fitted that it comes apart piece by piece—which, so far as that goes, you've seen it do in the last quarter of an hour at your own touch, quite handing me the pieces, one by one, yourself and watching me stack them along the ground. They're not even in this state—see!" I wound up—"a pile of ruins!" I wound up, as I say, but only for long enough to have with vibration, the exaltation of my eloquence, my small triumph against her great one. "I should almost like, piece by piece, to hand them back to you." And this time I completed my figure.
The difficulty in the prospect of unmaking this edifice, which would be in fact as pleasurable to put it together – is that ultimately the crucial thing is completeness of the experience, not its permanence. The final answer to the puzzle, that indeed it is Long and Lady John, and May Server and then Brissenden who are having the affairs (218), throws the prospect of proportion off balance, as two vital people and two weakened ones carry on with each other in full view. Matching like with like – taking appearance for the thing that it is – violates the spirit of symptom-reading that any good member of the society register might wish to undertake. As such, the narrator cannot deal with the evidence, after all is said and done: the complicated business of undoing the theory would have to be recollected in private, in the guise of perhaps writing a memoir, such as The Sacred Fount. “I should certainly never again, on the spot, quite hang together, even though it wasn’t really that I hadn’t three times her method. What I too fatally lacked was her tone” (219). These words end the book, and the tone that Mrs. Briss has, in fine, is that of reality crashing in on the subject, and for all that she might as well be the voice of Jehovah speaking through the clouds. For the paranoiac, everything must all be equal, and the impingement of anomalous, factual truth ruins everything.

Conclusion

Schizophrenia itself, particularly in the postmodern era, has taken on a near-shamanistic cast in popular culture: madmen (almost always male) are portrayed as enlightened visionaries, political radicals (as with Madness and Civilization), or romantic victims in a heroic struggle with fate. Certainly for someone like R.D. Laing, whose
ideas have often been compared with Lacan’s, the schizophrenic represents the ultimate non-conformist, whose rebellion against lack of freedom manifests itself in a liberation from reality. That such outward impressions of madness have have gained such a currency in the culture at large is a testament to both the linguistic character of psychotic disorder (which manifests itself primarily through the effects of language on the subject), and the perception that such a disease limits its impact to that of its singular victim, that schizophrenia (unlike hysteria) does not manifest itself in a class, group, or family. In essence, the madman is alone, like the prophet or oracle, and in many cases where the subject’s external behavior is mostly benign (the mawkish sentimentalization of the recent film *A Beautiful Mind* or *Shine*, comes to mind), schizophrenia can be perceived as a superficial disorder of an exaggerated personality. As we have seen with Schreber and Freud, schizophrenia itself is diagnosed only through the lens of personality – there are no other symptoms to treat.

In the foregoing analysis, I have attempted to outline the psychoanalytic contours of paranoid thinking as it informs to Schreber, Lacan, and James, in order to provide a context for a reading all three from the metapsychological standpoint provided by Freud’s later work. Most importantly, this reading takes as its theme the propensity for paranoid thought to propagate and contest illusions of authority, whether they are present in the subject’s experience in the world, or on the analyst’s couch. We have already seen in our reading of Freud that the paranoid fantasy can best be “understood” as an attempt at “self-reparation.” The guiding principle that may be taken in each case is that the psychoanalytic assessment of paranoia is an *ex post facto* evaluation of some form of exclusionary trauma – in Schreber’s case, the struggle with his father’s legacy, in Lacan’s
case, the inability to sit in Freud's place, and with James's narrator, the foreclosure of his participation in the sexual intrigue of Newmarch. The most celebrated symptom of schizophrenia, that of delusions of personal grandeur, reflect the desperate desire on behalf of the subject not be dominated by the world crashing in around him.\(^{29}\) Thus the tension in psychoanalysis, and to some degree this is reflected in the history of the discipline, is between the necessity of a controlling authority (the analyst) and exertion of this authority over the wounded analysand, already traumatized by the situation of being on the outside of discourse. Psychoanalysis's final break with the rigors of anatomical development and early experimental neurology constituted a potentially liberating, and vertiginous, separation from the implacable judgments of science in favor of a method that responded to the need for the psychiatrist to interact with the patient on a more human level; yet, as Lacan's work on the psychoses indicates, such an arrangement courts a possibly steep personal cost in submitting to the illusion of the controlling Other.

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1 Boyle, Mary. *Schizophrenia: a scientific delusion?* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 183. The author proposes a kind of statistical test demonstrating the effects of belief on pattern-recognition, which seems at the root of most delusional thinking.


acknowledgement of Freud's work at the beginning of this, for many years the definitive work on schizophrenia. is interesting in that the work itself goes on to mine the metaphorical side of Freud's oeuvre regarding the nature of consciousness, disregarding the role of sexual trauma or other popularly perceived forms of "degeneration" in the emergence of psychotic behavior (337-347).

5 During his stay at Sonnenstein, Schreber was able to consult Kraepelin's textbook on psychiatry, (1899) which included Freud's article on hysteria. Lothane, Zvi. In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry. (Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, 1992), 380.

6 Irigaray, Luce. Le Langage Des Démêlés. (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), 257. For Irigaray, the language of the madman speaks "purely." Also see Kirmayer, Lawrence, and Ellen Corin. "Inside Knowledge: Cultural Constructions of Insight in Psychosis" In David Amador. Insight And Psychosis. (New York: OUP, 1998). Kirmayer and Corin see narrative as being impaired by psychosis, while at the same time providing analytic insight into the illness (198-199): necessarily, they believe the psychotic to be a species of bricolage, in the intellectual sense (203).

7 Sass, Louis A. Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Literature, and Thought. (New York: Basic, 1992). This is a rather primitive Foucauldian reading of Schreber's memoir, reading it within the context of Madness and Civilization.

8 Shengold, Leonard. Soul Murder. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 20. Shengold, who takes the title for his book directly from the Schreberian narrative, terms the psychotic break a "deal with the devil," in that it provides the psychotic subject insulation and a measure of comfort. Also, the striking post-Sartrean psychology of R.D. Laing's The Divided Self makes reference to the same phenomenon, in that the psychotic subject constantly feels engulfed by the always-predatory Other, and this manifests itself in feelings of drowning, burning, or being enveloped in foul odors.


10 Schreber, Daniel Moritz. Illustration Medical In-door Gymnastics or a system of medico hygienic exercises. Trans. Henry Skelton. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864) 37. All further references to this edition shall be noted parenthetically.

11 No doubt the latter detail pokes through in the early going of the memoir, where Schreber describes the quality of sexual excitement of the body belonging entirely to the female form: it leads one to wonder whether or not Schreber was attempting to rekindle his soul through this ultimately masturbatory gesture.

12 The different sides of Schreber's condition, considered apart the characterization of his illness upon his emergence from the asylum during one of his sane periods, is evident in
the following excerpt from the attendant material on the Schreber case, relating to his lawsuit against the Saxon government for his property rights, which were stripped upon his admittance to the Leipzig asylum (402). The split between Schreber's professional persona and his privately insane one is clear, at the very least, to the court. Implicit in this is the acknowledgement that Schreber's professional persona, well trained by his years of practicing law. Pursuant to this point, the respondent clarifies the extent of Schreber's illness:

Dr. Weber is now convinced that plaintiff's delusional ideas lead a relatively separate existence in his mental life and that outside the religious field which they normally dominate they affect other fields particularly of daily life hardly at all; and that hallucinations from which plaintiff continues to suffer, do not now influence his feeling and thinking to any significant degree....

For a few years apppellant has eaten daily as a guest at the family table of the Director of the Asylum without causing any annoyance to the others present. On the contrary Dr. Weber, who looks upon his relation to plaintiff as a friendly one, extols the patient's tact and forbearance which prevented him from molesting the company at table with his miraculous ideas. (430)

Ultimately, it is Schreber's habituated social self that prevents him from making any untoward moves, socially. The delusional side of him, firmly kept out of view, does not remake the world in which he lives: it's merely an exaggerated interpretation of the everyday phenomena Schreber experiences.

13 As typically found in *Anti-Oedipus*, which nevertheless derives a good deal of its strategies from the later Lacan.


15 The definition of the term "psychosis" is often determined by the definition of "neurosis," and throughout this century, the definitions of both have altered significantly depending on scientific developments of the period and experimental orientations with regard to psychopathology. Often the difference between them is one of degree rather than kind: neuroses are characterized by low-level anxieties hindering normal societal interaction (especially sexual or familial), while psychoses involve perceptual distortions and other hallucinations. With the former, irrational fears arise from bodily stimuli, and with the latter, one's senses cannot be trusted, but rationality rules behavior. extrapolating from false sense-data.

16 This topic will be covered at greater length in the fifth chapter: in his later work, Lacan's emphasis on the symbolic overshadows the other elements of his analytic outlook, such that analytic interpretation subsumes all aspects of experience.


See West, Rebecca. *Henry James*. (London: Nisbet & Co., 1916) for West's widely circulated remark that the narrator expends more intellectual energy than in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the pursuit of his pointless narrative. However, other of West’s comments are more revealing than this popular insult:

One takes it as significant that the unnamed host and hostess of the party never appear save to ‘give signals.’ The tiny, desperate figures this phrase shows the mind’s eye, semaphoring to each other across incredibly extended polished vistas to keep their courage under these looming, soaring vaults, may be taken as symbols of the heart and intellect which Mr James had now forgotten in his elaboration of their social envelope. (108)

See Bradbury, Nicola. *Henry James: The Later Novels*. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979). Her claim that James’s later novels deny one a sense of a community of individual readers (33) may be taken as a nod to the clausrophobic feel of James’s later prose.


The most significant treatment of this topic is found in Tintner, Adeline R. “A Gay Sacred Fount: The Reader As Detective.” Twentieth Century Literature 41.2 (1995) 224-40. However, Tinter’s interpretation completely ignores the narrator’s flirtations with
Ford Obert, which would seem to be the most obvious homoerotic writing that James has ever done.

26 See Glass, James L. *Delusion: Internal Dimensions of Political Life.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1985), 256. Glass’s thoroughgoing political description of madness casts schizophrenia as being, in essence, a private language that symbolizes the effective death of the subject to his community.

27 See Paul Ricoeur’s *Freud and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1970): Ricoeur’s definitive treatment of the hermeneutic status of psychoanalysis underscores this last point, that Freud’s path of inquiry can best be seen as a kind of search for the truth about human motives, questions, and proper behavior in the same vein as, perhaps, Platonic philosophy – the same type of orientation towards self-examination obtains.


29 R.D. Laing’s Sartrean description of schizophrenia in *The Divided Self* (London: Penguin, 1987) powerfully illustrates his patients’ fears of being “consumed” by the Other. Although Laing himself does not make the connection, the troped behavior of the mental patient who firmly believes himself to be Napoleon bears out Laing’s thoughts on this score. The schizophrenic subject must, to survive, become “bigger” than he actually is.
Chapter 4

Masochism: Reading Fantasy with Lacan, Sacher-Masoch, and Proust

The term “masochism” has, since being first diagnosed by Krafft-Ebing in the early 20th century, achieved a circulation well beyond its initial clinical description: it has come to describe a desire for suffering, rather than a discrete set of circumstances initiated by the sexual fantasies of a particular subject. In looking at the psychoanalytic evaluation of masochism, one can see that it presents serious problems for the libido theory of sexuality, first promulgated by Freud and later modified by Lacan. Rather than being something explicable by libidinal operation, masochism inhabits, as I shall show, the same abstract realm occupied by paranoia. As we shall see in the work of Sacher-Masoch and Proust, the masochistic fantasy is a function of nostalgia and the return a longed-for mythical past, as a result of the absence of paternal authority. In addition, as with Deleuze, the masochistic fantasy presents a distinctly post-libidinal form of sexuality that represents a kind of liberation of the subject into a realm of potentially rehabilitative fantasy.

In this chapter, I shall investigate how Lacan’s libidinally-oriented psychoanalytic structures fail him in his account of feminine sexuality by presenting a “masculinized” view the female psyche. In my treatment of this topic, I shall focus specifically on the problem of masochism, a subject Lacan does not cover in much detail. With “A Child is Being Beaten.” and “The Economic Problem of Masochism,” I shall show how Freud’s inability to deal with the female beating fantasy stems from his attachment to the Oedipus complex. Freud’s incapability of integrating a realistic picture of feminine sexuality into
his work foreshadows Lacan's difficulties on this issue. Like all theories of feminine sexuality, the masochistic fantasy, as imagined by women, is thought to be an ineffectual shadow of the "real" masculine beating fantasy, modeled on the Oedipus complex. Given Freud's hedgings on the issue of female sexuality, Lacan's discourse has little recourse other than to follow Freud in refusing to investigate the "dark continent." In discussing the psychoanalytic assessment of masochism, we shall first look at the Freudian attempts to solve the question of female masochism, which poses problems for Freud's theory of the libido. In following Freud, Lacan comes to somewhat tortured conclusions regarding female sexuality, which also attempt to resolve masochistic questions. In the end, it will be seen that masochism, uniquely male, responds only to a psychoanalytic model, rather than being about its everyday sense of self-sacrifice: the masochistic encounter, which turns on aesthetics and nostalgia, strives to create sexual tension, released by each individual act of violence.

In "A Child is Being Beaten." and "The Economic Problem of Masochism." Freud tries to account for what he sees as a disturbing phenomenon in the early genital phase of sexual development. The "beating fantasy," cultivated by children of both sexes, follows different scenarios according to the child's gender, but Freud's concerns in each case center around the notion of guilt as that which drives the subject to masochism. Freud asserts that the beating fantasy almost always involves masturbation. Upon completing the act, the subject invariably feels guilt and shame, feelings compounded by the fantasy's aberrant nature.¹ The source of this guilt, as in most of Freud's work, is that of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipal triangle neatly accounts for the movements of the male fantasy: the first phase, in which the boy feels he is loved by his father, gives way to the
second, in which he is beaten by his mother. Freud's substitution of "loving" for "beating," reveals the true structure of the fantasy and allows him to construct an intermediate stage where the father beats the son. The last stage of the fantasy, in which the mother beats the son, foregrounds the masochistic "perversion" later in life; however, the action of "beating" also represents sexual contact. Therefore, the proper reading of the fantasy is that the male subject has been turned away from an incestuous love of the father to a "proper" lust for the mother (235). However, Freud warns, attachment to this fantasy necessarily leads to a destructive obsessional neurosis (220).

The analysis of the male beating fantasy is fairly simple. Yet the larger part of Freud's group of subjects is comprised by young girls, and their version of the beating fantasy presents a serious challenge to Freud's tidy explanation. The stages for the female fantasy are quite different in structure and content:

1) My father is beating the child (whom I hate).
2) I am being beaten by my father.
3) An authority figure [a representative of the father's authority] is beating a number of anonymous children, typically boys (and I am probably watching). (223)

The initial problem in assessing this fantasy is, as Freud points out, that it violates the masochistic paradigm by the end of the narrative and turns sadistic in form (223). Moreover, it goes outside the familial bounds of the Oedipal relation by featuring a crowd of other children and, most notably, excludes the mother. Freud considers these omissions to be anomalies, but decides in the end that the fantasy is a kind of assurance against losing the affections of the father (224). The female beating fantasy, so far, represses this forbidden love of the father, just as it does in the male version. In addition, this fantasy masks the illicit sexual desire for the father by putting a group of boys in her place.
According to Freud, this gender substitution is an expression of her wish to retreat to the sadistic-anal phase and to become a sexually neutral, non-threatening boy, whom the father can easily dominate (236). Although the ending phase of the beating fantasy seems decidedly sadistic, Freud still classes the fantasy as a masochistic one. In Freud's reading, the girl's status as a spectator, removed from the "action" of the fantasy, precludes any desire on her part to enter into a sexual relation (236). But if this is true, then why does the masochistic female fantasist appear to feel guilt? Freud's apparent response, that the girl's fantasy is her wish for the denial of the father's carnal attentions, makes some sense when compared with his reading of the male beating fantasy; however, the appearance of the symptoms and his reading of the fantasy cannot be easily reconciled. The mere existence of the fantasy seems aberrant to Freud, but he cannot provide an explanation as to what the fantasy represses, if the sexual tension in the fantasy is resolved by the girl's "de-sexualization."

Freud works toward a more definitive answer to these questions in "The Economic Problem of Masochism." In this 1924 essay, Freud puts aside the question of childhood imaginings and offers a reading of masochistic behavior grounded in his structural theory of the ego, superego, and id. Of the three kinds of masochism Freud treats, the moral, the feminine, and the "erotogenic," he declares the erotogenic imperative to be present in all masochistic urges, because the pleasure of the body in pain supersedes all other libidinal goals. 2 Guilt, the necessary end result of beating fantasies for Freud, transforms sadism into masochism by turning the dynamics of punishment inward (287). Thus "erotogenic" masochism gives the subject's superego a sadistic kid of control over the ego, but Freud remarks that the sadistic goal of domination remains secondary to the pleasure gained by
inflicting pain on the body. Freud extends his consideration of masochism as the outcome of infantile regression to the anal phase by likening the pains of the subject, beaten and dominated like a child, to the agony of childbirth (286). This last comparison agrees with Freud’s theory that bodily violation (as in childbirth) is the thing most desired by women in erotogenic masochism (288). One may interpret this observation as an amplification of the stereotypical “passive” female role in copulation and also a reflection of the final satisfaction of penis envy, the gift-child.

Despite the foregoing, Freud doubts that such female masochistic fantasies are common, although they well exemplify the classic female traits of passivity and infantile organization of sexual structures. The existence of the beating fantasy represses little or nothing, because Freud suggests that masochism recalls a part of the subject’s life in which the relationship between the libido and death instinct had not separated fully (286). This inchoate mixture of urges results only in an indecisive libidinal direction: there is no trauma for the subject’s psyche to repress. Perhaps it is no accident that the effects of masochism are a faint imitation of sadism, an observation Freud whispers in parentheses:

Being castrated—or being blinded, which stands for it—often leaves a negative trace of itself in phantasies, in the condition that no injury is to occur precisely to the genitals or the eyes. (Masochistic tortures, incidentally, rarely make such a serious impression as do the cruelties of sadism, whether imagined or performed.) (286)

Masochism, then, would appear to repress little, because it arises only from an improperly structured libido. Later in the essay, Freud remarks that because masochistic guilt is so deeply hidden in the unconscious, subjects do not immediately connect their “symptoms” with remorse (290). But in general, Freud cannot see a solution to what he sees as masochism’s cause, the inadequate “mastering” of the death drive by the libido (286).
Freud's need to construct a context for masochism as a fulfilling sexual activity finds its best formulation in the superego's moral imperative to punish the naughty selfish ego (292-3). In this way, Freud sees sadistic superego and the masochistic ego as "complementary." As in "A Child is Being Beaten," the guilt induced by the masochistic fantasy reflects the subject's transgression against the Oedipus complex by not fixing on a proper sexual aim. Unfortunately, the masochistic subject is in danger of falling back into the Oedipus complex (292). Still, the erotogenic aspect of masochism avoids neat categorization, and Freud must simply abandon the analysis of this bodily pleasure that has no discernible libidinal goal.

If we follow Freud's judgment in "The Economic Problem of Masochism," that the masochistic disposition is rarely harmful and leaves indeterminate psychological scars, his aligning of the fantasy so effortlessly with passive, shadowy "feminine" sexuality makes sense. When considering the principal theme of Freud's views on female sexual development, the anatomical problems of making both genders responsive to the same developmental model impels Freud to construct ghostly psychoanalytic paradigms for which he can provide no concrete evidence, save readings of various symptoms. The distinguishing characteristic of feminine sexuality, in Freud's eyes, seems to be ambiguity: It is present everywhere for the Freudian woman in libidinal aims, genital organization, and relationships with other women. At least for men, psychoanalysis may provide a kind of cure that iron[s] out these problems. For women, whose sexual drive is controlled by penis envy, psychoanalysis provides a structure to explain their negation and lack, no matter how abstract it may seem. This penisneid that outlines the feminine sexual drive
may help explain the attraction of certain women to psychotherapy. as Freud writes in his 1932 lecture “Femininity”:

The wish to get the longed-for penis eventually in spite of everything may contribute to the motive that drive a mature woman to analysis, and what she reasonably expects from analysis—a capacity, for instance, to carry on an intellectual profession—may often be recognized as a sublimated modification of this repressed wish.\(^3\)

Feminine sexuality, “unfinished” and regressive, must learn to express itself in masculine psychoanalytic terms, in order to be analyzed.

The pathology of masochism as a form of masculine behavior is rather obvious and even plausibly explained in terms of the Oedipus complex. Yet masochism's manifestation in female subjects presents an even more worrisome problem for Freud's theories. How can one account for the operation of a fantasy that shifts in its libidinal aims (from sadism to masochism), is repressed even though it embodies a “proper” sexual attitude for women, and leaves, by Freud's account, no psychological scars or interesting symptoms? It would seem that part of Freud's difficulty in bringing women into the psychoanalytic fold is grounded in the application of his already strong theories to a subject whose symptoms can only be misread according to a masculine paradigm.

Female masochism, in fantasy or in practice, resists analysis here, because Freud puts such behavior outside of the contortions of the Oedipus complex. By treating the female beating fantasy as a narrative, the voyeuristic ending, that of the girl standing serenely next to the father figure and observing the beating, implies a kind of conscious independence from masculine sexual paradigms that Freud cannot openly acknowledge.

The same problem often occurs with Lacan's writings on female sexuality. Often, the reason for the difficulties Lacan encounters lies in his constant and necessary deferral to
Freud, as Lacan himself writes in "The Freudian Thing." Lacan's brief commentary on masochism in "Guiding Remarks for a Congress on Feminine Sexuality" speaks volumes about the difficulty of assessing female sexuality with traditional psychoanalytic tropes. Lacan suggests that although female masochism may simply be a male "fantasy" (every man, after all, should desire a submissive woman, right?), he questions the purpose of such a masochistic desire. He then remarks in seeming exasperation, "not everything sexual may be made accessible to analysis," and his final puzzling statement on the matter appears as both a warning and cryptic dismissal of the question: "Have we remembered Freud's often repeated warning not to reduce the supplement of feminine over masculine to the complement of passive to active?"(93) In coming to terms with Lacan's views, one must consider the position of the masculine analyst governing masculine-gendered concepts. Through them, the female body, the focus of the masochistic relation, is elided in psychoanalytic discourse for the sake of an elegant model, and often, the desire of the interpreter to dominate the female other.

Lacan's view of language as the principal tool of psychoanalysis allows him to translate Freud's mythic view of sexual and familial relations in well defined and structured terms. From the outset, Lacan models his psychoanalytic concepts on a distinctively masculine sexual organization, with his establishment of the phallus as a symbol for the object of desire and also the medium of linguistic expression. In "The Meaning of the Phallus." Lacan comments briefly on the difficulties in determining the woman's relationship to the phallus because women cannot, as such, participate in the castration complex as men do. However, because the castration complex exists as a "knot" in the libido, the subject, whatever its gender, cannot ignore the phallus's presence
(75-76). As the root cause of all the subject's desires, the phallus is “discovered” in and "speaks" through the Other (78). The “Demand” the subject puts on the Other is based on his expectations that the Other shall satisfy him with infinite love and possibly nourishment – the kinds of things a mother typically provides (80). But once the immediate need has been met and these hopes for infinite satisfaction of need have been assuredly dashed, the feeling left over after the subtraction of the object from Demand is felt by the subject as love. Lacan terms this love “the relic of an obliteration”: the force of desire blinds the subject to the inadequacies of what he has (81). This sentimental feeling helps the subject to connect this Demand to the object of his desire: love is, in a sense, the consolation prize for having been castrated by language, because jouissance, true possession of the desired object, is always impossible.

The creation of meaning itself, of course, occurs according to the movements of the phallus, which embodies a kind of sadistic imperative in its complete “possession” of those things it signifies. Lacan prudently takes up the Kleinian challenge as to whether the phallic stage signals a repression of some kind, and if so, whether or not the phallus is a symptom (77). By positing the phallus as the source of all intelligibility and as the goal of the subject's desire, Lacan's answer is enthusiastically in the affirmative. In a way, Lacan's dogmatic valorization of the phallus puts the question out the Kleinians' reach. The phallus is the supreme signifier, able to create meaning at will, and directs the subject in all his diverse lusts. The trace of signification, the presence of the phallus, and therefore the law of the Father, is everywhere in language, selecting what can be included and disavowed in “meaningful discourse.” The phallus creates meaning by attaching
signifiers to signifieds. but once this occurs, one finds that phallus has “always” been hidden in the object it touches:

All these propositions merely veil over the fact that the phallus can only play its role when veiled. that it. as in itself the sign of latency with which everything signifiable is struck (frappé) as soon as it is raised to the function (aufgehoben) of signifier. (82)

“Frappe” implies a whole range of more or less violent meanings. from knock to stamp to stun. Brought out into the light of intelligibility, the phallus, having always been there, “reveals” the truth of the signified. Once the phallus raises the object to signification, the phallus “brands it the bastard offspring of its signifying concatenation” (82), needing apparently. no feminine counterpart to reproduce meaning.

Thus the proliferation of signifiers proceeds by a kind of violation of the signified. One cannot extend signification to an object without changing one’s perception of it, and this necessary difference results in the prohibition of jouissance. Language deludes one into thinking that the object of desire is identical to its corresponding representation in language. However, by positing women as objects of sexual desire, embodying the veiled phallus. Lacan encounters the expected difficulty of linking the phallus to an Other that typifies extreme lack. Again. Lacan demonstrates the inability of his linguistic metaphors to represent woman accurately because of sexual difference:

Paradoxical as this formulation might seem, I would say that it is in order to be the phallus, that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the Other, that the woman will reject an essential part of her femininity. notably all its attributes through masquerade. It is for what she is not that she expects to be desired as well as loved. (84)

The tension in Lacan’s work between the poetics and technique of Lacan’s psychoanalytic discourse receives a bracing formulation in this passage. The definition of femininity as deception and pretension precludes any analytic investigation of the female subject itself.
The last line of this excerpt can be read in at least two different ways. Either woman is naturally deceptive and cannot fulfill masculine desire, or a woman expects to be desired because she is not a man, that she expects to be valued because she has an attractive facade. In other words, men participate in an imagined possession of women by assuming that they are shallow and easily read. and we are again back in the territory of “undeveloped” genital organization. If the phallus is discovered in woman, psychoanalysis dispels the vision men have of women as the earthly representatives of the mystic Other, capable of infinite mother-love. Imagining them as a entry points to the Other, the male subject cannot accept woman as a creature with a physical body, or worse yet, a similar subjectivity. if this overpowering “love” is the end result.

Lacan’s discourse on female sexuality can never get past the female body, which is also Freud’s principal complication. In “Guiding Remarks for a Congress on Female Sexuality.” Lacan explores his frustration with the inability of psychoanalysis to apply its theories to women. The masculine libido, its imperative and purpose so clear-cut in its relation to the penis, becomes irrelevant when trying to talk about the vagina (87). Lacan’s remark that the symbols used to represent woman and the symbols or woman remain inseparable, reveals a psychoanalytic model in which women, by responding to the mark of the phallus, are made into non-“feminine” creatures (90). Lacan even creates a kind of homogenous feminine desire out of the Freudian conception of penis envy. But because she is aware of her sex primarily through her estrangement from the phallus, the desires of all women are bound together in their sexuality by their uniform envy of the desire for the penis (94). The problem of connecting women to a phallic economy of desire has, for
the moment, been solved by making her a sexual object, lacking in all libidinal motiva-
tion.

The lecture “Intervention on Transference.” provides a glimpse into the only method
Lacan finds to investigate female sexuality in any detail, although Lacan himself does not
acknowledge it. Through the failure of Freud’s analysis of Dora, Lacan’s reading of
psychoanalytic transference makes it possible to see the narrative of Dora as one that
outlines Freud’s possession of Dora’s body through the seduction of psychoanalysis. The
levels of symptomatic interpretation, deepened by the addition of Freud’s insight into
Dora’s condition, dramatize on the discursive plane the psychoanalytic “encoding” of
Dora’s body in Freud’s discourse. At the source of Dora’s hysteria is her anxiety about
being used as a pawn in the game being played out by her father, his mistress, Frau K, and
her husband, Herr K, to whom Dora fears she has been promised as payment for his wife’s
favors. As Lacan tracks the relationship and transference between Dora and Freud, he
notices that the master uncovers, but fails to discuss, a possible homosexual attraction of
Dora to Frau K, first detected in Dora’s refusal to speak about her rival for the affections
of her father.” In the attempt to uncover the motive behind Dora’s refusal to speak, Freud
posits that her fascination with Frau K stems from repetition compulsion (67). In this
case, the “compulsion” is turned away from Dora herself and onto Frau K, suggesting to
Lacan that the real subject at hand in the “mystery of Dora’s bodily femininity” is a
subject closed to Freud as well (69). Because Dora cannot fathom woman, Lacan
observes, she undergoes a process of bodily fragmentation and fulfillment of infantilistic
desires, such as thumb sucking, to deal with her confusion (67).
This last observation alone can support a reading of “Dora” as a masochistic text. All Dora wishes to do is to avoid the destructive, family-ruining implications of sexuality, which leads her to Frau K, a mother figure who torments and fascinates her at the same time. Unfortunately, Dora cannot express this desire of hers to get closer to Frau K, but, as Lacan cannily observes, she could not get a proper vision of the virile object (the phallus) in order to assume a normal sexual development (69). And because Freud was also guided by the phallus (his own, in this case, perhaps), he never saw this possibility either, because he was too bound up in playing the transferential “role” of Herr K (69). In the end, this transference is a poor substitute for jouissance, but remains a worthy consolation prize for the analyst: “In other words, transference is nothing real in the subject other than the appearance, in a moment of stagnation, of the analytic dialectic, of the permanent modes according to which it constitutes its objects (71).” Lacan calls transference the “ruse” because it fills the emptiness of the deadlocks reached in the dialectic, but it provides a record of the movements of the symbolic order (71-72). But most importantly, it compensates for the incompleteness of the cure, after Dora’s termination of therapy. Transference resembles Lacan’s view of love in “The Meaning of the Phallus,” as that which bridges the chasm between object and Other, crushing the subject’s conception of the latter. The narrative of “Dora” is the record of Dora’s symptoms, and a full account of her place in the symbolic order. Through subtle observations and the transferential narrative, it draws a picture of an example of female sexuality through suggestion, but cannot produce her body itself. Even if Freud had succeeded in a “cure,” the body of Dora, like that of the Queen’s purloined letter, could have still been read and possessed by numerous analysts, each knowing more than the
last. This is precisely what Lacan does in critiquing Freud's inability to see Dora's homosexual tendencies. As a counter-transferential statement about Freud's desire for Dora in the personage of Herr K. Dora tells the story of Dora's ravishing on the page, just as Lacan possesses and defies Freud by pointing out his transferential mistakes.

Freud's analysis fragments Dora by parsing out her meaning bit by bit in the uncovering of the diagnosis, symptom after symptom. The story of Dora, subtitled "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria," assuredly cannot produce a complete, or even satisfactory, map of female sexuality. But the work is indicative of a superior reader of the analysand, and therefore Freud must position himself as Dora's seducer. He cannot remain disinterested. Still, woman cannot be "produced" or possessed without the mark of the foreign phallus. In the "Seminar of 21 January 1975," Lacan attempts to explain the structure of female sexuality by returning to the "disturbances" produced by the castration complex, but cannot come to a definite conclusion about it. Lacan returns to an insistence on the symbolic order as that which expresses the continuity of the real:

"Nothing supposes it [demonstration in the real] other than the consistency for which the cord is acting here as support. The cord is the foundation of accord. And, if I make a leap, I could say that the cord thus becomes the symptom of what the symbolic consists of."

The relation of the body to the symbolic order, however, is more difficult for him to discern. Of course, Lacan admits, one assumes that the body follows on the same lines as the symbolic, but this is an inadequate explanation for the feminine phenomenon he tries to explain (164). Speaking about the body and the representation of the body in analysis cannot solve the problem. The object is the cause for the subject, and as a result of writing, the subject informs everything it reaches with its own discourse (165). Therefore,
the existence of writing itself validates the repetition of the symptom, and one can write
the symptom endlessly (166). Lacan implies that because the "woman" cannot stand for
all "women," this "symptom" known as woman can never be written conclusively. The
only way to account for the persistence of the woman, therefore, is through belief (168-
169). Lacan claims that the existence of woman relies upon belief in "love," the
supplement left over from an unsatisfactory attempt to contextualize feminine sexuality in
psychoanalytic terms (170).

The inadequacy of either Freud or Lacan to deal properly with female sexuality could
be reduced to the fact that because they are male analysts, they cannot fathom living in
the female body. But the implications of Lacan's concept of role-playing in the transferen-
tial relation suggest the capabilities of psychoanalysis and interpretation of the symbolic.
The intrusion of psychoanalyst's masculine ego onto the interpretation of the symbolic
order may play a part in male categorization. If the ego plays the imaginary to the super-
egeo's symbolic order, then the ego of the analyst, in this case Lacan and Freud, is not
neutral. As Lacan observes in "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in
Psychoanalysis." Freud's counter-transference fails him because he does not adopt the
objective stance the analyst should exhibit. If one's own ego could be suppressed, then it
could conceivably be possible to think oneself into another interpretation.

The female subject's shifting role in the beating fantasy suggests that her unconscious
need not be structured like that of the super-ego oriented male, whose role remains
consistent throughout the fantasy itself. The most important part of the female beating
fantasy is that there is no counterpart in her version to repress her "true" desire —to be
loved by the father. Instead of the mother beating the son, which masks the incestuous
attachment to the father, the female subject’s fantasy can represent a sexual development “successfully” negotiated. The female subject can be said to play all of the “subordinate” Oedipal roles in the beating fantasy. Once she has finished played the role of the child being beaten, she appears as a mother looking on with the father as he beats his son or sons. Freud’s conclusion that masochism represents a “regression” seems to be too hasty, especially when one considers that the female subject’s fantasy complements that of the male subject. Clearly, she participates in the sadistic gratification of the father. The beating fantasy does, however, provide Freud with a kind of foothold in the problem.

The problem of determining the meaning of this fantasy revolves around the lack of evidence and phallic analytic paradigms. In “Masochnism and Male Subjectivity,” Kaja Silverman agrees with Freud that the true impetus behind the beating fantasy is not incestuous desires, but more specifically that of entering into a homosexual relation with the father. If the beating by the father, present in the psychoanalytically reconstructed second phase, then the beating by the mother serves a spur to masturbatory pleasure.

Silverman follows out the female fantasy according to the male fantasy, and finds, not surprisingly, that masochism is an untenable position for women because it manifests “imaginary relations outside the psychoanalytic paradigm” (203). The masochistic fantasy of the girl implies an identification with the pleasure of the boys being whipped in the final stage. So, the fantasy allows the subject to identify with a form of feminized masculinity (204). However, Silverman sees this as a possible entry into a sexual relation, as the “I” of the female subject becomes “heteroidentified” (205). The limitation of Silverman’s observation is that the female beating fantasy must again be connected with the convenient sexual difference provided by a heterosexual paradigm. The role of fantasy
in the life of the child, whether to indicate a hidden fear or unconscious desire, has in
both Freud's reading and Silverman's reading a purpose — to initiate the child in a sexual
relation and make it to occupy a sharply defined role.

Yet for all gendered subjects masochism throws the typical reading of fantasy, as a
symptom of repressed material, into doubt. In addition, it completely overturns all
expected forms of the sexual relation under the symbolic order. As behavior, masochism
seems obviously pathological, if simply for the reason that pain is the opposite of
pleasure. As with Deleuze, one can read masochism as an act of self-expression and
liberation, in its mocking subversion of sexual roles. Unlike the libidinal sexual aim, the
masochistic fantasy shows the facility of the female psyche to occupy a multiplicity of
perspectives. This is a facility denied by Freud, and hinted at though unexplored by
Lacan. The figure of the woman in Freud's and Lacan's texts avoids the violence of the
phallus, and turns every beating into a satisfying sexual relation, even if they are vicarious
and fantastic ones. The status of the fantasy is so deeply buried that neither Lacan nor
Freud can reach the "true meaning" of the fantasy by simply using the Oedipus complex
as a guide.

Fantastic Narratives: Deleuze and Sacher-Masoch

The discrepancy between the two subjects of sadism and masochism can be described
by the distinction between the superego and ego. Freud's declaration of only one valid,
masculine libido in "Femininity" fails at explaining the thoroughgoing masochist, and the
incommensurability of the two impulses of sadism and masochism in relation to each
other (359). The rift between sadism and masochism is as easy to grasp as the distinction between the body’s needs and what the psyche demands of it. The former represents the proliferation of sexual discourse itself, and the latter calls attention to the body so ignored in the first place by psychoanalysis. As Foucault remarks in *The Order of Things*, Sade's works can be read as a parody of sexual desire in action, over-emphasizing the power of symbol and discourse in sexual behavior:

In Justine, desire and representation communicate only through the presence of another who represents the heroine to himself as an object of desire, while she herself knows nothing of desire other than its diaphanous, distant, exterior, and icy form as representation. Such is her misfortune: her innocence acts as a perpetual chaperone between desire and its representation.*

The Sadeian narrative annihilates desire by manifesting every whim on the spot, “endowed with life in the living body of desire” (209). The dispassionate demeanor with which each of Sade's darkly humorous grotesques pursue their various and complex pleasures in *Philosophy in the Bedroom* parallels Dolmance’s vituperative philosophical musings on morality. By contrast, the world of Sacher-Masoch presents sexual play marked by an ironic inversion of the law of the Father, and the rules of sexual economy, roles, and representation. As such, it presents a sexuality based on a more organic model focused on the wants of the body rather than the warrants of the libido, or its Freudian laws. More importantly, its couching of *sexuality as fantastic narrative* frees it up for looser interplay than the stern commands of the libidinal superego. The emphasis on the ego stresses the imaginary’s reconfiguration of the symbolic order for its own amusement and momentary suspension of the masculine libido’s authority.

The struggle to define masochism in terms of biological drives is indicative of the wholly fantastic nature of sexual masochism. The operation of masochism, divorced such
as it is from "normal" sexual behavior, presupposes a radical division between the body and any appraisal of its teleology: masochism disproves the theory of the drive and is, as Deleuze puts it, a "defusion" of the instincts (116). In opposition to the symbolic representation that characterizes sadism, masochism hands control over to the body in a blatant attempt to avoid psychoanalytic interpretation. In "Coldness and Cruelty," an extended study of Venus in Furs, Gilles Deleuze tackles the question of masochism in its original literary form. Of course, the question of masochism cannot be reduced to the exploration of a text, but the work, like the writings of Sade, provides clues for guiding psychoanalytic theory. Deleuze wryly assesses Sade as an author who exploits the demonstrative possibilities of language and fills up the page with voluble characters who attempt to indoctrinate the reader into Sade's particular way of viewing the world.11" In marked contrast, Sacher-Masoch's text seems remarkably accepting and seductive, as its first-person narrative allows for the readers to project themselves into the story more easily. The distinguishing characteristic of the masochistic fantasy is its vagueness of details, including the subject's awareness of his own body (26). The masochistic body, as Deleuze puts it, does not come into being until the masochistic torturer hurts it. Wherever the whip strikes, the expression of pain focuses the reader's attention onto that part receiving the blow. Thus one can say that the body arrives already fragmented rather than as a whole entity torn apart by violence, as in Sade. The masochistic narrative proceeds in an atmosphere of suggestion, as opposed to action and desire: masochism postpones the brief episodes of sexual pleasure and they only come after exaggerated periods of waiting (32.70). The subject willingly puts himself into the hands of the torturer in than non-sadistic way, as the focus must remain on the pleasure felt by the subject. As such, the
violence of masochism throws the ambiguity of the subject’s desires into sharp relief.\textsuperscript{11} The authority figure in the fantasy, always a woman, is a “nurturing” stand-in for the mother, with whom the male subject has an imaginary relationship (46). In the “masochistic situation,” there are no traces of the father’s authority “borrowed” by the mother. Deleuze calls the masochistic fantasy an “ironic” inversion of the sexual relation. The male subject represents the superego’s humiliation at the service of the ego, enacted by the figure of the “maternal torturer,” bound to the subject not by blood, but by pain (130).

Throughout the essay, Deleuze cultivates a therapeutic reading of the masochistic fantasy that allows for the subject’s capability to rehabilitate himself to the pleasures of the body. It is worth noting that Masoch’s fantasies promulgate a sexual relation that eventually passes away. In \textit{Venus in Furs}, Wanda’s domination of Severin proves to be curative of his romantic, “supersensual” feelings, those sentiments that invited this treatment. Under the atmosphere of the masochistic imaginary, the male subject inserts himself into the feminine position and woman brings about his re-birth, without the mark of the father. This re-birth reasserts in fantastic narrative the real blood links of the mother to offspring: its violation creates and frees up the body for all forms of pleasure rather than binding it for possession, as does the phallus. The impermanent constitution of this sexuality couches it as a “complement” to typical forms of psychoanalytically validated behavior, which insist on oppressing bodily pleasure of all stripes by legislating its perversity.

As a narrative, it is essentially a \textit{Künstlerroman}: Severin’s path through his sexual education through Wanda’s intervention. The arc of the story, moving as it does through his encounter with Wanda, subsequent discovery of his appetite for humiliation, and
"cure" – once Wanda leaves him for good, he discovers that he no longer desires humiliation, and graduates to a healthy sexual outlook in which his rightfully dominant masculine role is assumed. In its original literary formulation, "masochism" reflects a classically fetishistic phase that must be abandoned on the path to sexual maturity, and is itself a story told in flashback by a well-adjusted, mature Severin. Perhaps in a odd re-imagining of the Sadeian corpus, the text of *Venus in Furs* is shot through with intense, abstract discussions concerning philosophy, political ideology, primitive concepts of ethnography, and so on, between the flamboyant set-pieces featuring Severin's dominance. The destructive presence of this brief novel, the villain, is Severin himself, the stand-in for Sacher-Masoch, astutely realizing the profound depth of his aberration, perhaps too late. The ultimate point of *Venus in Furs* is the sacrificing of Christian love in the name of pleasure, and with that, perversion. One of the initial encounters with Wanda yields this high-minded, though essentially comic, exchange:

"I am beginning to believe the incredible and understand the incomprehensible, namely the philosophy of the German people and the qualities of their womenfolk. It no longer surprises me in the least that you northerners are unable to love, for you have not an inkling what love is about."...

"Yes, madam, as far as love is concerned our feelings are honorable and virtuous and our relations are durable."

"And yet," interrupted the lady. "you nurse a secret craving for a life of sheer paganism. You modern men, you children of reason, cannot begin to appreciate love as pure bliss and divine serenity: indeed this kind of love is disastrous for men like you, for as soon as you try to be natural you become vulgar."12

Severin's dream vision, that of the Venus in Furs, warmed with pelts representing philosophy and Christianity so that she might survive in a northern climate (149), reflects his dream of the transplantation of the Hellenic ideal into a new pagan era: the survival of the enlightened goddess-ideal in the age of reason. The tension between Severin's
paganism and his desire to be noble drives the action of the story: the compulsion to abase himself influences Wanda in turn to humiliate him through various beatings and other more dramatic scenarios. The problem with the arrangement is, as Wanda points out time and again, that it will lead her into infidelity with another man, as this should be the ultimate humiliation (and therefore, delight) for Severin. The boundless love that Severin desires to experience necessitates the breaking off of the relationship in very real times, and sets up the tragic consequences of the plot. The secret of masochism, in its original incarnation in the novel, is that Severin himself is an artist, rather than a philosopher, as are Sade's protagonists. The tableau of the Venus in Furs is that which is exciting to him, but is wholly alienated from human behavior, and therefore exists as his abstract ideal.

The roots of the masochistic situation are in the character of Severin himself. The alienation that he feels no doubt stems from his lack of ambition and status as a lazy student trapped in his studies, a mood not helped by his leisurely surroundings: "The days drift aimlessly by in the little Carpathian health resort. I see nobody and nobody sees me." (152). It cannot be denied that Severin's feelings of inadequacy are in some ways expressions of class difference that give his fetish some traction. The roots of Severin's perversion are, in this case, Sacher-Masoch's -- the classic masochistic fantasy stems from the traumatic episode of his being beaten by his fur-wearing aunt for his having been rude to the chambermaid and cook. Severin lets on that the episode occurred in his youth, elsewhere in the narrative (predating his initial encounters with Wanda), he mentions his "Cato-like austerity," yet claiming that his "room looked like that of Doctor Faustus." and
that "I studied indiscriminately" (174-175): Severin is the very picture of the modernist flâneur, the dilettante waiting for a muse.

Wanda protests all of this (an attempt for Sacher-Masoch to see the other side of the issue) by bridling at the idea of her assuming the dominant and destructive position in her relations with Severin: "If all you say is true, then you are giving vice a halo; your ideal is a brazen and inspired courtesan. Ah, you are the sort of man who will utterly corrupt a woman" (177). The implication is that Severin's inducement for her to beat him represents, in a certain sense, the unprecedented overturning of the symbolic order, as Deleuze points out. Yet the paradox of masochism gives some kind of shape to the fantasy: the breaks in between his encounters with Wanda give a texture to Severin's obsession. It is perhaps well worth noting that the first domination scene in Venus in Furs is cast entirely in the present tense (184-185). Despite his being whipped and beaten, it is Wanda who cries out in seemingly psychic disturbance:

"Severin!"
"Tread on me!" I cry, throwing myself before her.
"I dislike playacting," says Wanda impatiently.
"Then hurt me in earnest."
A disturbing silence.
"Severin, I am warning you one last time."
"If you love me, be cruel to me." I implore. (186)

Wanda's principal critique of Severin is his insistence on the artifice involved in bringing out his desires, and this indeed is the soul of masochism. Severin's imprecation to "hurt me in earnest" appears as a strange invitation to break the frame of their interaction as artifice. She does not desire to beat Severin as such, but only does it for the intriguing nature of the enterprise:

She stops. "I am beginning to enjoy it," she says. "That is enough for today. But a
diabolical curiosity has taken hold of me: I want to see how far your strength will
go: I have a dreadful desire to see you tremble under my whip, to see you suffer, to
hear at last your moans and screams, your cries for mercy, while I go on whipping
you without pity, until you lose consciousness. Yes, you have awakened dangerous
tendencies in me…Now get up.” (186-187)

Severin, true to his current hazy state of being, is unsure that his fantasy has come true: “I
wake after a feverish night troubled by nightmares. The dawn is just breaking. Which of
my confused memories are real? What have I experienced, what have I merely dreamed?
I have been whipped, that much is certain: I can still feel each blow; I can count the
burning weals on my body. And it was she who whipped me. Yes, now I know it all”
(187). Wanda’s reaction is typical for her role as the voice of reason: “‘Try to forget
yesterday’s horrible scene,’ she says, in a trembling voice. ‘For your sake I satisfied those
mad wishes. now let us be reasonable’” (187). Severin counters with the assertion that
his aberrant wishes are merely an acting out of his desire to be rid of them:

“I really believe,” said Wanda thoughtfully, “that your madness is nothing but an
unsatisfied, diabolical sensuality. Such afflictions are a product of our monstrous
side – if you were less virtuous you would be perfectly sane.”

“Then make me sane.” I murmured. (188)

Severin promises that one day he shall relent in his desire to be beaten. The problem here
is that Severin romanticizes the relationship to Wanda to such an extent that the desire to
be beaten, the inconstant struggle of the flesh with its desire to be loved substitutes
structurally, informally, with the quality of being of perpetually in a new love
relationship with its twists and turns, reconciliations, blowups, discoveries. The prime
quality of maso-chism, the not-knowing in one’s love is received or appreciated by the
other party, is agreed upon, more or less, in the theatrical interaction guaranteed by the
masochistic situation:
How exquisite is this agonizing doubt!
It is not our judgment that leads us, it is not the qualities or faults that we discover
in the loved one that inflame our passion or cause us to draw back in horror. We
are driven by a gentle and mysterious power that deprives us of all will and reason,
and we are swept along with no thought for the morrow. (198)

Yet Severin feels compelled to put this down in a contract, which Wanda then signs
(196). The contract speaks of committing dominating acts while at the same time
allowing that they occur only after his correspondence and social obligations for the day
are completed, and that it is time now for him to submit.13 The real question is whether
or not such particulars can possibly account for a "real" masochistic relationship.

Wanda’s odd panegyric to Severin’s resolve captures the implacable asceticism of
Severin’s character. Willing to abnegate his role as the father, that his demeanor takes on
a steely determination to rid himself of all temptation, forthwith:

"I must admit that I am impressed by your behavior; it takes a certain strength, and
one can only admire strength. I actually believe that in unusual circumstances and
in a more exalted age than this, what appears to be your weakness would reveal
itself as impressive power. Under the first emperors, you would have been a
martyr. At the time of the Reformation an Anabaptist; during the French Revolution
you would have been one of those inspired Girondins who walked to the guillotine
with the Marseillaise on their lips. But today, you are my slave, my..." (212)

In the main, it is Severin’s single-minded pursuit of dissolution that causes him to remove
all strictures from his stage-managed relationship with Wanda. Severin’s stubbornness
that has landed him in this untenable situation. and although his womanly ideal of the
Venus in Furs appears to him on an ice floe, symbolic of the survival of the pagan ideal in
the trappings of Christian culture, the same impression finds him paralyzed, unable to
control the effects of what he has brought about: "I awoke during the night with a cry of
terror: I had been dreaming that I was stranded on a field of ice. An Eskimo appeared on a
sled drawn by reindeer: he had the face of the servant who had shown me to my unheated
room” (214). Severin spots Wanda skating nearby, and upon her approach to him, she suddenly transforms into a polar bear and starts to devour his flesh, a clear harbinger of the calamity that Severin brings upon himself. Although he induces Wanda to sign a contract placing limits on the hours and scheduling of their sessions together (222), he then invalidates the agreement when he can no longer stand the limits he has placed on it: he must play the subservient role completely. Despite her warm feelings for him, she gives into his demands, which then unravel the budding courtship. The high point of the drama occurs when Wanda takes on a new lover, a Greek prince who appears to Severin as a beatific androgynous (246). Severin muses: “I cannot remain indifferent to his erotic power and my heart is filled with admiration for Socrates, who had the strength to resist the seductive Alcibiades” (247). The novel reaches its climax when Severin is ordered by Wanda to be whipped by the Greek fits in with the plan of humiliation, as if it were the plan all along (266), and although: “I imagine my theatrical attitude must have seemed the height of comedy.” (255) which puts the lie to any pretension of his being “serious” in sexual play.

At the end of the novel, Severin, now happily married and secure in his role as the patriarch, explains to his interlocutor, “The treatment was cruel but radical, and the main thing is that I am cured.” In ending the lesson, Severin makes this summary judgment of his experience:

The moral is that woman, as Nature created her and as man up to now and found her attractive, is man’s enemy: she can be his slave or his mistress but never his companion. This she can only be when she has the same rights as he and is his equal in education and work. For the time being there is only one alternative: to be the hammer or the anvil. I was fool enough to let a woman make a slave of me, do you understand? Hence the moral of the tale: whoever allows himself to be whipped deserves to be whipped. But as you see, I have taken the blows as well:
the rosy mist of supersensuality has lifted, and no one will ever make me believe that the sacred wenches of Benares or Plato’s rooster are the images of God. (271)

The unequal relationship, as Severin puts it, is something that is afforded by the comedy of the masochistic stage-performance: rather, it is something that from the masochistic viewpoint of the emasculated man, that he can easily accomplish. What the masochistic fantasy offers is the dissolution of the Apollonian mind into Dionysian carnality, the masochistic fantasy is merely a stage offering the momentary regression into sensuality. Ultimately, masochism is a stop on the path to adulthood, purging one of the feminizing impulses that lie hidden, but entirely done through the play of signifiers: isolated in his protracted post-adolescent collegiate funk, Severin constructs an abstract libidinal narrative for himself, in order to create a kind of imaginary trauma. Once the cure is delivered, Severin lets himself access a “normal” sexuality by assuming a traditionally prescribed role – what is at issue for Severin in his fantasy was exorcising the ghost of the Oedipus complex.

Proust: Memory, Fantasy, and Nostalgia

Although Proust’s A la Recherche du temps perdu has, over the course of a near-century of criticism, been seen as a exceptionally rich source for insight on love, loss, and desire, it has been little treated as a masochistic text. Aside from a lurid scene in The Guermantes Way, where the infamous Baron de Charlus is glimpsed in the act of being whipped, masochism is not a concept often linked to the musing of Proust’s narrator, Marcel. But through his nostalgia and projection of his fantasies concerning Swann,
rife with ambiguity and aesthetization. hallmarks of the masochistic text. Marcel proves to work through his pain over his memories of Gilberte. Throughout the novel, Marcel’s relationship with Gilberte (complicated, to say the least) is prefigured by the narrative of Swann’s courtship of Odette, related in “Swann in Love.” Marcel’s personality would seem to fit with that of paranoiac: the meaning of the famous maternal kiss would shift depending on the context, and as such it would appear withheld when Swann would arrive for an evening – in this instance, Swann’s presence ignites a potential Oedipal rivalry. In fact, the foregrounding of Swann in the “Combray” portion establishes him a vehicle for Marcel’s projections regarding his doomed suit of Gilberte, such that as a whole his impressions of Swann’s love affair constitute a masochistic fantasy, ambiguous to the point that Swann and Marcel are indistinguishable from one another.\textsuperscript{15}

From the very beginning, Swann is made to feel as though Odette is a strange imposition on his desires: “[Odette was] endowed with a kind of beauty which left him indifferent, which aroused in him no desire, which gave him, indeed, a sort of physical repulsion, as one of those women of whom all of us can cite examples, different for each of us, who are the converse of the type which our senses demand.”\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, Odette seems to be not so much a person but rather a burdensome thing: “[she had] the appearance of being composed of different sections badly fitted together.” All the same, Swann feels that pride at Odette’s wanting him to visit: “But, after Odette had left him, Swann would think with a smile of her telling how the time would drag until he allowed her to come again” (215). As such, Odette’s body becomes a fetish object, upon which Swann depends for satisfaction:

The image of Odette de Crécy came to absorb the whole of these daydreams, if the
memory of her could no longer be eliminated from them, then her bodily imperfections would no longer be of the least importance. nor would the conformity of her body, more or less than any other, to the requirements of Swann’s taste. since, having become the body of the woman he loved, it must henceforth be the only one capable of causing him joy or anguish. (217)

Odette, as we shall see in the course of the narrative, is the delusion under which Swann shall labor for the much of his time in the novel’s spotlight.

True to Masoch’s novel, Swann too plays the part of the flâneur, waiting for a kind of purpose in his life, and perhaps finding it in the impossible prospect of loving Odette. It is also interesting that Marcel, in remembering Swann, should do so after “Combray,” where he confines his remarks to his childhood, as if this period of Swann’s life were Marcel’s own adolescence, in which he attempts to overcome his juvenile laziness and conscious lack of an identity:

He had long ceased to direct his life towards and ideal goal, confining himself to the pursuit of ephemeral satisfaction, that he had come to believe, without ever admitting it to himself in so many words, that he would remain in that condition for the rest of his days...in his conversation he took care never to express with any warmth a personal opinion about anything, but instead would supply facts and details which were valid enough in themselves and excused him from showing his real capacities. (229)

Swann’s desire for Odette becomes a kind of quest, enough for Marcel to paint it in bluntly mythical terms: “From time to time the shadowy figure of a woman gliding up to Swann, murmuring a few words in his ear, asking him to take her home, would make him start. Anxiously he brushed past all these dim forms, as though among the phantoms of the dead, in the realms of darkness, he had been searching for a lost Eurydice” (252). As with those models of courtly love, Swann is more than willing to abase himself in front of his potential mistress, as when he chases down Odette’s carriage, clutching a bouquet intended for her. The ensuing dialogue is nearly at a screwball-comic pitch, as Swann
abruptly loses what composure he may have in initially meeting Odette. babbling on in embarrassing fashion:

"No, no. you mustn't speak. You'll get out of breath again. You can easily answer in signs; I shall understand. Really and truly now, you don't mind my doing this?...[Swann rambles further]...Tell the truth, now."

Still smiling, she shrugged her shoulders ever so slightly, as one who should say, "You're quite mad: you know very well that I like it." (254)

Regardless of its appropriateness for him, Swann realizes that he has no choice in the matter about loving Odette, and that such a love has a creative, aesthetic attraction that he cannot deny himself: "For Swann was once more finding in things, since he had fallen in love, the charm that he had found when, in his adolescence, he had fancied himself an artist; with this difference, that the charm that lay in them now was conferred by Odette alone "(261). Swann is now firmly in Odette’s power, even if the nature of their relationship has not been codified, causing him feel reasonless jealousy, the effects of which consume him later in the novel."

Very quickly Swann understands that his obsession punishes in the same way that it brings him aesthetic joy. Swann’s jealousy attached to Odette instantiates itself in discrete moments and images that wound, and are inflicted upon him by the character of his intent:

His jealousy, like an octopus which throws out a first, then a second, and finally a third tentacle, fastened itself firmly to that particular moment, five o’clock in the afternoon, then to another, then to another again. But Swann was incapable of inventing his sufferings. They were only the memory, the perpetuation of a suffering that had come to him from without. And thus his jealousy did even more than this happy, sensual feeling he had originally experienced for Odette had done to alter Swann’s character, completely changing, in the eyes of the world, even the outward signs by which that character had been intelligible. (309)
The striking feature of this, Swann’s obsession with Odette, is that it is primarily masochistic, in that his affections are governed by a series of discrete, traumatic moments which might, perhaps, add up to love. Proust’s method of casting back the mind of the narrator in order to recover these scenes is more than something of aesthetic gambit – it is also a question of Marcel remembering Swann, recast in his own image. For all of this, the question is not so crucial when dealing with Swann himself, but rather the memory of Marcel, and the parallel pursuit of Gilberte, Marcel’s eventual deceiver. Marcel’s identification with Swann represents a fantastical leap in order to conceive of the birth and origins of Gilberte, and as such, what wounds Marcel also wounds the imaginary Swann. His identification with Swann, viewed through the idealizing gauze of imagination, is purely mythological.

Other set-pieces in the novel foreground further the masochistic qualities of the text, in the prolongation of Swann’s deliciously tormented fantasy. Swann’s love for Odette, such as it is, is structured around absence and losses:

As a matter of fact, she had not even given him a thought. And such moments as these, in which she forgot Swann’s very existence, were more useful to Odette, did more to bind him to her, than all her coquetry. For in this way Swann was kept in that state of painful agitation which had already been powerful enough to cause his love to blossom, on the night when he had failed to find Odette at the Verdurins’ and had hunted for her all evening. (322)

Although Odette herself turns out to be elusive, her presence and speech do more to wound him than her absences: Swann cannot bear to hear from her about her various engagements, as he suspects that everyone she mentions is a secret paramour (323). As it is, Odette ruthlessly manages her time spent with Swann, relegating him to the most
marginal of roles by forcing him to stand idly by as she prepares for an evening on the town:

Rare though they became, those moments did not occur in vain. By the process of memory, Swann joined the fragments together, abolished the intervals between them. Case, as in molten gold, the image of an Odette compact of kindness and tranquility, for whom he was later to make sacrifices which the other Odette would never have won from him. But how rare those moments were, and how seldom he now saw her! (323-324)

In light this treatment, Swann feels that his suit of Odette is not only in serious jeopardy, but rather that he is indeed fated to be with her, and that this treatment shall continue without abatement. Time itself, and the life he once imagined or the both of them, seems impossible for him to fathom. His pain triggered, again, by the merest signal from Odette:

But that inner future, that colourless, free-flowing stream, was suddenly convulsed by a single remark from Odette which, penetrating Swann’s defences, immobilized it like a block of ice, concealed its fluidity, froze it altogether; and Swann felt himself suddenly filled with an enormous and infrangible mass which pressed on the inner walls of his being until it almost burst asunder... (386-387)

Or in this passage. Swann ruminates on the possibility that Odette is having an affair with Madame Verdurin, where Proust brings out the character of Swann’s attachment to Odette as a corrosive one that, without which, he would knowingly take leave of his identity:

Swann had prepared himself for every possibility. Reality must therefore be something that bears no relation to possibilities. Any more than the stab of a knife in one’s body bears to the gradual movement of the clouds overhead since those words, “two or three times,” carved as it were a cross upon the living tissues of his heart. Strange indeed that those words, “two or three times,” nothing more than words, words uttered in the air, at a distance, could so lacerate a man’s heart, as if they had actually pierced it, could make a man ill, like a poison he has drunk... And yet this Odette from whom all this evil sprang was no less dear to him, was, on the contrary, more precious, as if, in proportion as his sufferings increased at the same time. He wanted to devote more care to her, as one tends a disease which one has suddenly discovered to be more serious. (395)
Like a disease, the symptoms personify the illness. At times, Swann seems to regard Odette as a mere figment of his devising that could be willed away, as when he wishes for her a “painless” death, brought about by being run over by a carriage, crossing the busy Parisian streets (386). In looking back on his early infatuation, Swann realizes that his humiliation did not emerge over the course of his acquaintance with Odette but had been there from the beginning: “And Swann could distinguish, standing motionless before that scene of remembered happiness, a wretched figure who filled him with such pity, because he did not at first recognize who it was, that he had to lower his eyes lest anyone should observe that they were filled with tears. It was himself” (377).

The end of “Swann in Love” completes the circuit initiated in “Combray”: in remembering Gilberte, Marcel reflects that these moments are nevertheless structured by the experience of loving her. Moreover, he sees that he had judged Swann wrongly as a young child, being unable to understand his torment; this understanding has arrived in through the self-justifying empathy of his reconstructed memories.18 He understands that there was nothing of her in these discrete instances, and that her love had been nothing but a ruse of his own mind and memory (446-447). The end of “Swann in Love,” in looking forward “Within A Budding Grove,” features Marcel’s mediation on the transitoriness of female companionship:

But, forced for so many years now, by a sort of grafting process, to share in the life of feminine humanity, they called to my mind the figure of the dryad, the fair worldling, swiftly walking, brightly coloured, whom they shelter with their branches as she passes beneath them, obliging her to acknowledge, as they themselves acknowledge, the power of the season: they recalled to me the happy days of my questioning youth, when I would hasten eagerly to the spots where masterpieces of female elegance would be incarnate for a few moments beneath the unconscious, accommodating boughs. (459)
Perpetually out of Marcel's grasp, women appear in his life and then fade, with his obsessional tendencies transforming them into objects of longing, deliverers of curses and blessings. For Marcel, he is all too willing to submit himself to feminine domination, and in doing so invites trauma into his life. Later in the second division of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Marcel muses on his propensity for viewing women as destinations in his life: "We construct our lives for one person, and when at length it is ready to receive her that person does not come; presently she is dead to us, and we live on, prisoners within the walls which were intended only for her" (682). For Proust's work, the suffering that is undergone in the name of memory is resolved only through interrogating those memories from the start, and understanding the shape of one's imagined destiny through the signifiers chosen to represent it.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of this investigation, I take masochism as being something of widely understood and accepted phenomenon. Masochism itself has very pedestrian implications, namely, the enjoyment of suffering in lieu of normally accepted pleasurable behavior. I take here as my theme looking at masochism in the analytic sense as a fetish, rather than an attitude. It is one thing to understand masochism as being a quality attached to one's personality (namely, a person who enjoys studying non-linear equations must be masochistic), and quite another to encounter the phenomenon in the analytic sense, and in this way, we see that masochism is entirely an aspect of male sexuality in the analytic "technical" sense.
Freud's critique of masochism condemns it, like other "perversions," as a barrier to normal sexual development. But the concept that masochistic fantasy embodies—the victory of the body's pleasure over the stern proclamations of the superego—presents more of a challenge to Lacan's concept that the unconscious is always structured and accessible like a language. The conception of fantasy as "symptom" cannot apply to masochism as such, because it represents an entirely different sexual order than that which the Freudian strain of analysis supports. As Jacqueline Rose notes, depending upon the kind of emphasis put on the symptom, the visual aspect of fantasy can reach any form of the vision within the subject's unconscious, ranging from simple visual impression to full-symbolic constitution. In other words, the imaginary's interpretation of the symbolic rules in fantasy, not the status of the symbol in discourse. Because masochism does not respond to the typical libidinal "aim" the ironic and illogical beating fantasy completely divests its figures of their full symbolic weight. Fantasy is present not as a symptom signaling repression, but as end in itself, a realm of unrestricted symbolic play where desire desires whatever object it chooses.

The young girl, by watching the father flail the children, may perhaps feel guilt at being a voyeur, a "non-sexual" being, as Freud intimates. But one could look at this guilt as a projection of Freud's embarrassment at being found out by the girl, who sees him reifying the sexual body according to an ancient fable. She sees the violations he perpetrates on behalf of his own desires. Lacan's analogous study of the same reading relation, "Seminar on the Purloined Letter," shows Freud's formidable structuralist interpreter exploring the nature of reading and violation. The multiple levels of perspective on the meaning of the forever-closed letter constitute a widening circle of
readers, each able to see the errors their predecessors have made. Lacan’s considerable advantage over Freud is that of reducing Freud’s figures to symbols in everyday discourse, and in the psychoanalytic dialectic: Lacan’s open-ended style enables a certain latitude in reading his work as well as Freud’s. As there shall always be other readers, there shall be extensions and refinements of psychoanalytic theory, each with its detractors and side benefits of voyeuristic satisfaction, as with Lacan’s reading of “Dora.” In this case, the structural oppositions of Lacan and apparitions of desire that haunt them point to those difficulties Lacan’s allusive style may not cover as sources for exploring new readings.


8 Silverman, Kaja. Male Subjectivity at the Margins (New York: Routledge, 1992). All further references to this edition shall be noted parenthetically.


13 This is a reflection of the real Sacher-Masoch’s life with his paramours, whom he had sign similar documents outlining such a relationship. One of these is worth quoting in extenso:

Contract between Mrs. Fanny von Pistor and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch

On his word of honor, Mr. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch undertakes to be the slave of Mrs. Von Pistor, and to carry out all her wishes for a period of six months.

On her behalf, Mrs. von Pistor shall not demand anything of him that would dishonor him in any way (as a man or a citizen). Moreover, she shall allow him six hours a day for his personal work, and shall never look at his letters or writings. On the occurrence of any misdemeanor or negligence or act of less-majesty, the mistress (Fanny von Pistor) may punish her slave (Leopold von Sacher-Masoch) in whatever manner she pleases. In short, the subject shall obey his sovereign with complete servility and shall greet any benevolence on her part as a precious gift: he shall not lay claim to her love nor to any right to be her lover. On her behalf, Fanny von Pistor undertakes to wear furs as often as possible, especially when she is behaving cruelly.

[Later deleted] At the end of the six months, this period of enslavement shall be considered by both parties as not having occurred, and they shall make no serious allusion
to it. Everything that happened is to be forgotten, and the previous loving relations restored.

These six months need not run consecutively: they may be subject to interruptions beginning and ending according to the whims of the sovereign lady.

We, the undersigned, hereby confirm this contract.

Fanny Pistor Baganz
Leopold. Knight of Sacher-Masoch

Came into operation 8th December 1869.

Masoecism. 277-278.

14 A typical example of this is found in Nick Mansfield's Masochism: the Art of Power. (London: Praeger, 1997), 34-36, in which only the whipping of the Baron is discussed for a couple of pages.

15 Bal, Mieke. The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually. Trans. Anna-Louise Milne. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997), 87. It is worth noting here that Bal claims that the "paternal image" provided by Swann is "generationally" ambiguous in relation to Marcel.


Chapter 5


Coming on the heels of the fin-de-siècle, the modernist generation of the British Isles felt the reverberations of that decade’s literary personae, in which the Paterian artist was charged with bringing forth the beautiful – most paradigmatically, Oscar Wilde engaged himself in this artistic pursuit. Although capable of bracing moral judgments in his work, the perceived shallowness of Wilde’s persona projects what may be termed, for lack of a better word, narcissism. Indeed, the primitive diagnosis of homosexuality, which persists even today, is that it constitutes a case of arrested narcissistic development. As Freud remarked in “Libido Theory and Narcissism:"

When it is a question, therefore, of repelling an undesirably strong homosexual impulse, the path back to narcissism is made particularly easy .... This much, however, I can emphasize to you. Object-choice, the step forward in the development of the libido which is made after the narcissistic stage, can take place according to two different types: either according to the narcissistic type, where the subject’s own ego is replaced by another one that is as similar as possible, or according to the attachment type, where people who have become precious through satisfying other vital needs are chosen as objects by the libido as well. A strong libidinal fixation to the narcissistic type of object-choice is to be included in the predisposition to manifest homosexuality.¹

However blind and simple this analysis may seem, it nevertheless reflects a deeply rooted anxiety about homosexuality and its “perversion” of the heterosexual relation, which forms families, produces children, and perpetuates the nexus of social bonds. At the same time, Wilde distinguishes himself as the most anti-social of creatures. the writer working from within his imagination, needing solitude in order to write. In this sense, Wilde is
doubly perverse for affecting a flamboyant social persona and also assuming the mantle of the proto-modernist artist.

One might also consider the case of James Joyce's relationship to Wilde. Although they are poles apart in literary output, they share the Irish modernist traits of exile, British oppression, censorship, and charges of vulgarity, literary and otherwise. Fortunately for Joyce's own development, Wilde predated him by a mere twenty years, and Joyce could therefore benefit from his inspirational presence and figurative martyrdom. In the opening chapter of *Ulysses*, Joyce rather explicitly lays claim to Wilde as an idol for his fictional alter ego, Stephen Dedalus. The opening chapter of the novel, with its implied homoerotic triad of Mulligan, Haines, and Stephen, who engage in flippant Wildean banter, contrasts sharply with the comfortable middle class respectability of Leopold Bloom, who shall emerge as the central figure of the novel. As the self-obsessed Stephen Dedalus was the focus of his preceding work, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Bloom's psyche, aided with interior monologue, is the major staging area for the themes of *Ulysses*.

Despite Bloom's mundane surroundings, there remains some intrigue about the kind of ambitions Joyce has for his famous Everymannish protagonist. To be Bloom is not only to bear the weight of an estranged wife and unsettled home, but also to measure up to Joyce's textual Odyssean and modern conceits. Indeed, Joyce made no secret of the symbolic keys to his work, even to the point of laying out the diagram of the work, as it were, in the Gilbert-Gorman schema, where the "colors," bodily organs, academic disciplines, and narrative "technics" of each chapter are revealed. The plan itself, aside from being a great help to the first readings of *Ulysses*, endorses Joyce's own structuralist
view of the novel as a encyclopedic commentary on every aspect of intellectual, artistic life, history, past works, and the like. Even after its publication, Joyce's presence still attends the text, offering a ready-made interpreting apparatus for his formidable work. Bloom himself, however, is far from being the kind of aesthetically astute protagonist Joyce makes of Stephen. Nevertheless, he is enjoined by Joyce to be the central figure in the "narcissistic" (at least according to Gilbert's schema) chapter of Ulysses, the "Lotus Eaters."

But is Bloom up to the task of being Joyce's narcissistic exemplar? Although introspective, Bloom identifies himself sexually with Molly (in specific, her derrière), is deferential to other people in social interaction, and in general lacks the ability to sustain a narcissistic fantasy. This chapter seeks to locate an instance in which Bloom, Joyce's most visible literary character, attempts to fulfill his creator's desire that he should indulge in the kind of narcissism the premodern artistic type himself favors. In doing so, Joyce complicates the sexuality of the artist in his work, and raises implicit problems of constructing the narcissist as sexual or gendered in any fashion. By removing the burden of narcissism in Ulysses from Stephen, one gains insight into a reading of Bloom as a specimen of the truly Joycean artist, the one who engages in fabricating allusive, symbolic fantasy, only to have it fail him in the end. The question of gender and sexuality is deeper than he suggested in the presentation of Bloom, in the novel, as a "new womanly man." The purpose of the present essay is to outline the interaction of the discourses of psychoanalysis, structuralism, and Joycean rhetoric in order to redefine the sexual valences of Joycean narcissism, not only in Ulysses, but within Joyce's style as well. Ultimately, Joyce's discourse skirts around heterosexual discourse, and covers it up
by positing an incomplete heterosexual fantasy for Bloom, all while deliberately
tweaking psychoanalytic reading along the way.

To begin, I shall discuss Freud’s mid-period work "On Narcissism: An Introduction"
in order to get a sense for a turn-of-the-century narcissism as that which persists only as
an ideal. Unlike the foppish forbears of the late Victorian and Edwardian ages, modernist
narcissism exists as introspection without image to project, foregoing the presence of a
governing superego. In Lacan’s appraisal of Joyce, “Joyce le Symptôme” we find a way
of reading Joyce that allows the text to escape psychoanalysis and avoid the whole
Lacanian complex of the real, symbolic, and unconscious. Finally, we shall find that
_Ulysses_ proper is text that refuses parentage, denying both father and mother, and that the
“Lotus-Eaters” leaves the question of Bloom’s heterosexual masculinity more compi-
lcated than it appears on the surface. I propose a reading of Bloom’s narcissism as a
rejection of sexuality to the extent that he threatens to break out the symbolism of _Ulysses_
and his role of father lover parent, most of all in light of the final moment of the “Lotus-
Eaters,” a view of Bloom’s limp member floating in the bath. Unable to construct a good
fantasy, Bloom fails as even a narcissist, gives up on desire, and wishes a return to the
womb. In doing this, Bloom sidesteps the law of the father, the Oedipus complex, and the
entire Freudian conceptual scheme in favor of the pleasure of “meaningless,” fragmentary
fantasy, which itself never produces an actual autoerotic payoff. Precluding even sexual
pleasure, Bloom’s “narcissistic” chapter frustrates all conventional psychoanalytic
readings of desire. As a coda to this chapter (and, by extension, the whole dissertation), I
offer a discussion of Joyce’s relationship with his daughter Lucia, her analysis with Carl
Jung, and _Finnegans Wake_.

Despite its promising title, Freud's essay "On Narcissism: An Introduction" fails to provide a detailed psychoanalytic explanation of narcissism's sexual dynamic. Freud's emphasis lies more on the ego's object choices rather than on an account grounded in self-regarding and self-image, after the originary Greek myth. The problem that Freud faces in "On Narcissism" is twofold. First, he needs to answer the question of narcissism in relation to the male ego, and second, to address the difference between the libidinal ego and the object considered the ego. Throughout this essay, Freud subtly makes the distinction between simple autoeroticism and the question of narcissism. That he cannot make this difference satisfyingly clear alerts the modern Freudian to the absence of the id-ego-superego triad, which would make its appearance later in the 1923 watershed text *The Ego and the Id*. In the middle stage of Freud's thought, there is only the ego, the vague shape (and agency) of the unconscious, and what Freud calls "conscience," an impoverished, nebulous stand-in for the ultra-rational superego. Yet Freud continues on the same lines as found in the third chapter of *The Ego and the Id*, claiming that the "ego ideal" - the "energetic reaction-formation" against object choice - had already been stated in the earlier essay. This is a disingenuous statement on Freud's part, as the moral consequences of the superego are absent in this particular formulation of the psyche.

"On Narcissism" designates two categorical possibilities for the ego, either external (focusing on a person or object) or ideal (focusing on oneself). The latter choice poses a serious problem for Freud, as narcissism in the 1919 essay has no sexual dynamic. It is instead a manifestation of neurosis, with no sexual investment at all. The subject has profound sense of narcissism in that he has no need of the external world of objects, preferring introspection in all matters. The problem of curing the narcissist is relatively
straightforward: the therapist must lead the subject back into interaction with the social world. Although this behavior has little erotic import, it does fall into Freud's biographically grounded developmental scheme. The phenomenon of narcissism has its origin in the experience of childhood introspection. Freud asserts. As he is showing the infantile roots of a pathological tendency, narcissism has some necessary relation to the Oedipus complex, and the idiosyncrasies of parentage:

At the weakest point of all in the narcissistic position, the immortality of the ego, which is so relentlessly assailed by reality, security is achieved by feeling to the child. Parental love, which is so touching and at bottom so childish, is nothing but parental narcissism born again and transformed though it be into object-love. It reveals its former character infallibly. (31)

Parents go through a “second childhood” along with their offspring, and this shows that the split between object and ego has somehow been rectified. This is reflected in the relationship of the subject's ego to the “ego ideal” rhetoricallly converted by Freud, into the superego, which bears the stamp of the father. The difference between simple inwardness and narcissism manifests itself in this kind of neurosis to which Freud refers. It remains for Freud in this essay to define the difference between introspection and full-blown narcissism. For narcissism to exist, there had to have occurred, foreign to sexual development, something between childhood and adulthood. This indefinable trauma resulting in narcissism remains a mystery for Freud. In all matters on this topic, Freud claims that he tries to draw the inquiry back to “empiricism” (49). However, the same irreconcilable split, between ego and world as well as ego and object, must nevertheless persist in order to define what Freud calls “neurosis.” The specter of this neurosis informs the idea of narcissism to the extent that he speaks of it in terms of schizophrenia, alienated from the sexual exchange:
an "anchorite" (Jung’s term) who 'tries to erase every trace of sexual interest' (but only in the popular sense of the word "sexual") does not even necessarily display any pathogenic disposition of the libido. He may have turned away his interest from human beings entirely, and yet may have sublimated it to a heightened interest in the divine, in nature, or in the animal kingdom, without his libido have undergone introversion to fantasies or retrogression to his ego. (38)

The principal problem described here is that of managing sublimation without reverting to eroticism. In other words, the engine of Freudian psychoanalytic development, the Oedipus complex, must be dropped in order to counter the problem of narcissism, which sidesteps the libido entirely: this results in a complete overturning of the developmental Freudian universe. Narcissism ratifies the possibility that not every psychological condition is grounded in gender, sexual economy, or the withholding of the mother’s affections. The idea that art can persist as a necessary impulse separated from the id threatens the dominance of the sexual drive in Freud's theories. One may wish to see this Freudian avoidance of the issue in another way, other than as a failure to connect the Oedipal sexual economy with the life of the subject. This early treatment of narcissism may be understood as a purely symbolic, anti-empirical, figurative take on that sexual development of the creative, "fertile" mind – the artisan, the writer, the sculptor, perhaps even the psychoanalyst – who constructs a linguistic phallus to compensate for the absence of the superego’s stern, conformist authority.

The option open to the Freudian artist, then, is to construct a kind of artificial ego without the danger of sexual sublimation. By this logic, the artist then must give a kind of incomplete self, minus the id, and to plug the hole voided by the absence of the id, he fills it with art. Freud remarks on the egocentric nature of art in describing the artist's response to bodily anguish: "Concentrated in his soul/In his jaw-tooth's aching hole." This literary example has an interesting meta-Freudian reading. The "jaw-tooth's aching hole"
resembles castration, taking the famous tooth-for-phallus example from *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Whether it refers to a cavity or tooth extraction, the artist must attempt to fill the hole in the place of the phallus, of the presence of sexual desire. Freud's text implies that the artist does not sublimate in order to reify sexual desire, but rather to cover the lack of the phallus by turning his self-image, his ego ideal, into his own personal, private, psychic phallus.

The question of narcissism's possible resolution, and its place within the reductive Freudian view, has a contradictory set of possible answers. Freud himself even says that the castration complex does not figure into the question of narcissism, because there is no object to focus on, no "loss," simply a mysterious libidoinal energy and ego-focus with no discernible outlet for aggression or libidoinal cathexion. This "energy" cannot be thought of as filling a gap where there was none before. Rather than being castrated through the Oedipus complex, the only thing for the narcissist to do is to cathect his own ego, thus confusing the process of sublimation (51). The ego itself is subjected to idealization, an action Freud characterizes in Platonic terms. But the reason that narcissism is unsatisfactory as a sexual orientation is that the ego feels the need to be loved by others, and the presence of others disturbs the simple self-to-self relation narcissism promotes. By pursuing affection, the narcissist's paranoia about being unloved is soothed. However, because there is no sexual exchange, there can be no transfer of erotic energy and the narcissist feels no "conscience" (Freud's own term) telling him what to do: "The realization of impotence, of one's own ability to love in consequence of mental or physical disorder, has an exceedingly lowering effect upon the self-regard. Here, as I judge, we shall find one of the sources of the feelings of inferiority of which patients
suffering transference neuroses so readily complain to us” (56). The implementation of self-love and the choice, perhaps, to become a narcissist, staves off the stigma of impotence from being branded onto the subject. Impotence is the byword for Freud's narcissistic analysis, as it implies a lack of phallic power without the nostalgia for the phallus that accompanies castration. The cure for narcissism, if one is warranted, is the damaging of the ego by paranoia, the fear that one is not being adored (59). By the same token, Freud realizes that the sexual relation can be taken in exchange for the narcissistic relation.

Freud hints in this essay that the artistic impulse assists the subject in resisting the Oedipus complex. The principal way of healing the breach between them is to consider sublimation apart from the sexual economy. The impulse to create art no longer stems from sexual neurosis, but from an interposition over against the figure of the father, because the subject recognizes the wound inflicted on him is that of the father, and refuses to see himself through the father's eyes. In other words, the subject rejects the Oedipus complex. Narcissism on this level naturally must be idealized and therefore symbolic. In feeling the wound to the self-image, the nascent narcissist is able to project desire outward, but with the sense that everything must serve his own wants, not those of the father. Yet in the split between mere pleasure and ego-cathection, the Freudian narcissist favors the former and thus has no internal self-image with which to fall in love. Rather than being obsessed with one's appearance, Freud's narcissist has no sexual impetus whatsoever, and prevented from entering the Oedipal economy of desire.

As an early foothold in the problem of diagnosing narcissism, Freud's essay makes headway in only defining the structure of the unconscious, which he more fully develops
in his work of the 1920s. That narcissism is relegated to being merely neurosis, and possibly leading to schizophrenia, points to Freud's denial to make sense of it sexually. In a sense, Freud banishes the question to abstract realms, never to be explained fully inside the Oedipal economy. The parallel I wish to draw here with Joyce constitutes an anti-Oedipal reading of Joyce's symbology, which on the whole in *Ulysses* leads to a definite heterosexual economy, but ends up being subverted by the "artistic" mindset that made its composition possible. Joyce's own allusive imagination lays the groundwork for an unprincipled reading of his work. As such, Joyce's style, by putting Bloom on the spot, show that play and momentary satisfaction overrule concerns of plot or narrative. The events and thoughts presented in the narrative of *Ulysses* are traditionally read as being loaded with import, as if the reader is always on the edge of something mysterious and profound: in other words, one is tempted to read Joyce in an expected, particular way given its status as a "Joycean" text. In psychoanalytic terms, one could even call it transferential. The problem of engaging a presentation of "narcissism" then, is understanding how something incommunicable is represented in the Joycean text, and what that means to the sexual landscape of the novel.

Confronted with Stephen Dedalus's introspection, self-obsession, and artistic temperament, one expects the issue of narcissism in *Ulysses* to begin and end with Stephen. Initial scenes such as the Martello tower sequence appear like a Wildean burlesque:

- Look at yourself, he said, you dreadful bard!
  Stephen bent forward and peered at the mirror held out to him, cleft by a crooked crack. Hair on end. As he and others see me. Who chose this face for me? This dogsbody to rid of vermin. It asks me too.
- I pinched it out of the skivvy's room. Buck Mulligan said. It does her all right. The aunt always keeps plainlooking servants for Malachi. Lead him not into
temptation. And her name is Ursula.

Laughing again, he brought the mirror away from away Stephen's peering eyes.
- The rage of Caliban at not seeing his face in a mirror. he said. If Wilde were only alive to see you!

Drawing back and pointing, Stephen said with bitterness:
- It is a symbol of Irish art. The cracked lookingglass of a servant.

Buck Mulligan suddenly linked his arm in Stephen's and walked with him round the tower, his razor and mirror clacking in the pocket where he had thrust them.

- It's not fair to tease you like that, Kinch. is it? he said kindly. God knows you have more spirit than any of them.

Parried again. He fears the lancet of my art as I fear that of his. The cold steel pen.

The buried Joyceian joke concerning the action of the lancet is that Stephen fears being “pricked.” and what's more, he suspects Mulligan “fears the lancet of his heart.” implying that he wishes for their friendship be something more, yet is mindful of Mulligan's affection for the Englishman Haines. Despite Stephen's trepidation, there is a palpable gay (in all senses) nationalism, felt by young Irish intellectuals who made inroads on the hegemony of English literary dominance, as Ellmann relates in his life of Joyce (98). It should be noted that in this excerpt, reference may be made to Stephen as a writer, but he is an artist in the future tense only. With the line “God knows you have more spirit than any them.” Mulligan unwittingly betrays Stephen's relative inexperience: he might have just as easily said “talent” or “vision.” Here, Stephen is most like Joyce, the clever over-lionized and prized schoolboy for whom artistic maturation is the most daunting possibility of all, and a prospect for which he has no preparation or guidance. The pose of the artist defines Stephen's identity, and Stephen cannot imagine himself into reality (most significantly, he cannot see himself in the mirror, as he merely “peer[s] at” it) by writing. As a result, his inferiority takes on the shape of petulant narcissism. He loses Mulligan's affection to Haines, rejects the affection of his mother, and denies
knowledge of his father. But when Joyce's focus pulls away from Stephen's littoral introspection in "Proteus," an alternative reading of male narcissism takes over with the presentation of Bloom as the central figure of the novel. In performing a reading of narcissism in Ulysses we do so at Joyce's invitation, and take the subject matter on faith with the words of the artist himself.

Despite the congruencies that may be inferred between Freud's essay "On Narcissism" and this chapter of Ulysses, the point of the present essay is to show how Joyce's purported depiction of narcissism fails to fulfill the reader's expectations. It is, rather, the intentional constructs of the artist versus the "natural," sensual self-absorption focusing on the body that sets the boundaries for Joyce's consideration of narcissism. In other words, the symbolic narcissist, which one may believe rules Joyce's artistic world, is void of any desire other intellectual ones. Joyce muddies this issue in his masculinist discourse with his refusal to depict any of his principal male characters in any erotic situation other than an imaginary sexual embrace. As all male desire is fantasy in Joyce, so there are no narcissists, and therefore, no realized art save the art that is the text of Ulysses. As such, masculine desire remains inchoate, vague, and unfulfilled.

This largely overlooked fifth chapter, "Lotus-Eaters," provides the reader with a glimpse of how Joyce expands on the sexual turbulence and ambiguity at the core of Ulysses. The real difficulty of dealing with this text is rejecting the received notion that Joyce would like the reader to have of this novel: many of the vital critical reactions to Ulysses were guided by published "table talk" books such as Frank Budgen's. guides to his work such as Gilbert's. and in Ellmann's biography. The Gilbert-Gorman schema declares there is a "narcissistic" technique at work in the text, but it is a somewhat
misleading assertion. No image corresponding to traditional narcissism is presented. Instead, there is mere satiety, rather than the thrill of desire promised by true sexual relation, present in ideational narcissism, namely sexual attachment to the image of one's self. The direction Freud provides in his analysis gives a kind of shape to the ways in which we may think of Bloom, and allows the reader to explain Joyce's subversive meta-textual red herrings. Freud's work on narcissism sows the seeds of destruction for the superego, and allows Bloom (as it does Stephen) to circumvent the question of masculinity entirely by projecting a fantastic womb, to which Bloom shall return without once passing through the Oedipus complex.

We can see several correspondences with Freud's discussion of narcissism in the Lotus-Eaters episode in *Ulysses*, in which Bloom buys soap, chit-chats with an acquaintance, goes to Mass, and imagines himself taking a bath. They are principally literal (the setting of the bath, the instant gratification of the senses, the diminishment of mental activity) and also interpretational (considering the question of Bloom's impotence, further proof that he cannot sustain a sexual relation). One can see Bloom as a kind of inward, impotent Freudian narcissist, who, although he "sees himself as others see him" (the well-traveled mantra describing his character in *Ulysses*), he has no image of himself no reflexivity about his own ego. He can see himself only as others see him. In a Lacanian sense, Bloom is an unwitting and therefore perfect example of Oedipal confusion. The symbolism is too easy: the father in search of a son, the mother who seeks the dead son, the son who hates the father. On a symbolic level, Bloom is condemned to repeat the familial triangle over and over. Yet, in the consideration of Bloom as narcissist. Bloom is clearly unsexual, much after Freud's original description. Here, I
claim, is the primary manner in which one views Bloom in light of Joyce's fiction.

Reading against the plot and symbology of *Ulysses*, one finds instead Bloom as a
color character alone, not multiple but one, eerily authorized and validated by Joyce.

The whole of the “Lotus-Eaters” chapter centers on the problem of negotiating sexual
fantasy, while keeping Bloom rather impotent, at least in a genital sense. In everything
Bloom does, he cannot even find a satisfying fantasy without having his reverie
interrupted or postponed. This inability to sustain an estimable sexual fantasy precludes
Bloom from being a classic narcissist, as he cannot even cathect on any mental image.
From his chaste, adulterous correspondence with Martha, to his inability to view a
leather-wearing woman across the street, to his anticipation of the hot bath that awaits
him. Bloom is unable to overcome his own lethargy and participate in a good fantasy. As
the chapter opens, Bloom looks in the window of the Belfast and Oriental Tea company,
as he sweats and fiddles with the card in his hat, and reads the package labels. It seems
that as he fidgets, he works off a kind of sexual nervousness in anticipation – the
same holds for this scene here before the window: Bloom wastes the energy that he
would spend masturbating (as he wishes to do for the entire chapter) in fidgety
contemplation. This physical activity launches Bloom into a kind of reverie about the
origin of the tea, the immediate object of his desire, and it leads into a fantasy about
Ceylon's exotic climate:

The far east. Lovely spot it must be: the garden of the world. big lazy leaves to
float about on, cactuses, flowery meads. snaky lianas they call them. Wonder is it
like that. Those Congolese lobbing about in the sun in *dolce far niente*. not doing a
hand's turn all say. Sleep six months out of twelve. Too hot to quarrel. Influence
of the climate. Lethargy. Flowers of idleness. The air feeds most. Azores. Hothouse
in botanic gardens. Sensitive plants. Waterlilies. Petals too tired to. Sleeping
sickness in the air. (U 5: 29-36)
The rest of the chapter expands on this sluggishness, as Bloom must fritter away his time before attending Dingam’s funeral: in a certain sense, this entire episode is simply masturbation in various magnitudes. The excerpt above is notable also for its subtle sexual imagery coupling the sluggishness of the bath with implied yet postponed masturbation: “Those Cingalese lobbing about in the sun in dolce far niente, not doing a hand’s turn all day.” Sensual satiation is enough without going through the exercise of a sexual fantasy. Bloom appears to repeat this scenario for himself, after a fashion, at the end of the chapter. As he walks to the bath, Bloom muses: “Turkish. Massage. Dirt gets rolled up in the navel. Nicer if a nice girl did it. Also I think I. Yes. Do it in the bath. Curious longing I. Water to water” (U5: 502-504). Bloom could be thinking about urination, but the reading of this “curious” urge (curious, and therefore somehow suspect), combined with a semi-sexual touching fantasy, is strengthened by his thinking of Molly applying a homeopathic skin treatment of “oatmeal steeped in buttermilk” - semen. The flowery motif continues with Bloom’s reading of the message, and carries over into his thoughts about Martha. He remarks to himself that women loved the discreet “romantic” language: “Angry tulips with you darling mayflower punish your cactus if you don’t please poor forgetmenot how I long violets...” (U5: 264-265) The phrase “punish your cactus” at once conflates the image of the phallic plant with his earlier mediation on the “Cingalese” “cacti.” and therefore also the mental picture of the men “floating” in summer languor. The exotic image stands in for a kind of florid, mildly exotic sexuality that is mere fantasy for Bloom, and this theme shall return later in a slightly different form at the chapter’s end.
Other elements in the "Lotus-Eaters" describe insubstantial fantasy where mere "play" must suffice, rather than providing real cathartic or correspondence with sexual desire. A compelling instance of literary fantasy in *Ulysses*, in which one of the characters reveals the operations of authorized "desire," is Martha's letter to Bloom, responding to his flirtatious overtures. The anonymous missive propagates a kind of fantasy relation that threatens to turn into a real one during the course of the novel, this storyline is forgotten, thereby maintaining the relationship as a fantastic one. Bloom is apprehensive about meeting her face to face (perhaps after "the rosary" on Sunday, he thinks (U5: 270), and this gives Joyce another flower pun: Bloom even hopes a little that he has scared her off with his latest epistolary demands. He reflects that he will endanger himself when he refuses her sexual attention on this imagined meeting: "Thank you: not having any. Usual love scrimmage. Then running around comers. Bad as a row with Molly. Cigar has a cooling effect." (U5: 271-272) That adultery presents very real practical problems for him is instead conflated with the withholding of sex entirely: this deepens the picture of Bloom as one paralyzed by the demands of performing heterosexually. The enigmatic mental note "Cigar has a cooling effect" can refer to many things. If Bloom smokes one on his first meeting with Martha, he may turn her off with its noxious fumes: a cigar leads to the quelling of sexual desire through the mastery of a symbolic phallus: a precoital cigar may make him lose his erection, therefore allowing him to get out of his duty-bound sex" encounters with Molly. Here, one could also see it as Joyce's slightly anachronistic reference to Freud's famous habit - in this instance, Freud's omnipresent phallus pokes out, revealing the "true" intentions of the characters and their desires.
Suzette Henke notes in her reading of Martha's letter that the rejection implicit in Bloom's missive intensifies the aura of masochism surrounding their correspondence. However, the impact of this letter has more to do with her engagement in the rules of this correspondence, and the language of flower symbolism than "real" sexual desire and sex-play. The real problem in analyzing this letter is in her rejection of Bloom's fantasy in the language of flowers, accompanied there by a "yellow flower with flattened petals." This symbolic blossom plays on Bloom's assumed name, Henry Flower, and therefore his cowardice and his impotent state. This poses, as would be expected, difficulties for Bloom's view of his own sexuality:

... I am awfully angry with you. I do wish I could punish you for that. I called you a naughty boy because I do not like that other world. Please tell me what is the real meaning of that word? Are you not happy in your home you poor naughty boy? (U5: 243-247)

The "other world" appears inexplicably in the text, referring ostensibly to the world of Bloom, but also possibly their furtively shared world of S&M vocabulary, to which they seem to be paying lip service. This fantasy has no real mistress, master or slave: by engaging in this type of banter, both parties believe they are effecting transgression, but their words have an empty intention. This sadomasochistic exchange will be horrifically amplified later in a different fashion in the "Circe" episode. There, the textual play becomes serious and meant explicitly without recourse to the vagaries of reality. It has often been said that "Circe" appears as an eruption of the "unconscious" of Ulysses. This is true only to the extent that fantasies are recombined and mutilated in that chapter in the manner of a dream. The presence of "Circe" suggests that there is some connection between fantasy and the "interior life" of the characters in Ulysses, chiefly Bloom. But in emphasizing that chapter, in which both Bloom and Stephen suffer at the
hands of women (Bloom with his cuckoldng and victimization by Bello. Stephen's haunting by his mother), assumes a kind of sexual interest on the part of both men, an interest unfulfilled by sexual contact anywhere in the novel. Again, this male fantasy has no psychoanalytic weight, and one sees the perverse emasculation of Bloom.

In addition to the insubstantial fantasy relation Bloom seems to have constructed, he also seems incapable of sustaining a voyeuristic fantasy that he initiates after tearing up the letter. The interrupted fantasy that occurs in the street, in which a leather-and-stockings-clad woman waits for a cab, seems made-to-order for Bloom, and yet he seems powerless to continue it. An old acquaintance, Charlie M'Coy, approaches him to discuss recent developments, including Dingam's funeral and the singing careers of both of their wives. This could not have come at a more inopportune time for Bloom, as he strains to see a woman leave the hotel across the way:

M'Coy. Get rid of him quickly. Take me out of my way. Hate company when you.
- Hello, Bloom. Where are you off to?
- How's the body?
- Fine. How are you?
- Just keeping alive. M'Coy said. (U5: 82-88)

The ensuing scene clues the reader into the way Joyce's technique of "interior monologue" hampers Bloom's thought processes, and prevents him from blocking out the outside noise intruding on his thoughts. At the same time, Joyce's filtering of the phenomena of Bloom's day that cannot be put on the psychoanalytic couch, and as such, refuses any Freudian assessments because Kenner seeks a naturalistic grounding for the novel's action, simultaneously through his consciousness (communicated in fragments) and the terse style of the early chapters conspire against Bloom in his voyeurism. He cannot see the complete picture of the woman; she appears as a collection of separate
images, each with their own fetishistic value. Once the fantasy is initiated by M'Coy's
query about the body (in itself tongue in cheek), the trolley sails into view in front of the
already fragmented body of the anonymous woman adjusting her boot, seemingly for
Bloom's eyes only. Already, there can be no narrative here. On top of this, the figure of
M'Coy (apparently secure in his marriage) imposes itself on the narration of this fantasy,
disrupting it: the fragment "[h]ate company when you" may point to a homosocial fear of
another man possibly watching him masturbate, and indicates also that this invitation to
voyeurism may be a regular occurrence for him. It is noteworthy that his idea of the
baths contains no other figures save himself, alone in the water. Bloom is not necessarily
trumped by the sexualized presence of another man, but without the isolation he needs, he
is unable to sustain his interest:

He moved a little to the side of M'Coy's talking head. Getting up in a minute
Watch! Watch! Silk flash rich stockings white. Watch!
A heavy tramcar honking its gong slewed between.
Lost it. Curse your noisy pugnose. Feels locked out of it. Paradise and the peri.
Always happening like that. The very moment. Girl in Eustace street hallway
Monday was it settling her garter. Her friend covering the display of Esprit de
corps. Well, what are you gaping at? (U5:124-135)

This moment of concealment, counteracted in the masturbation fantasy of "Nausicaa," is
foregrounded here in an uncanny way. The consciousness of fantasy as merely fantasy
colors one of Bloom's thoughts here: the fragment "Paradise and the peri" signifies his
spectator status, as he desires after that which he cannot have. As mentioned earlier,
Bloom also comments here on what he is adding to the text of the novel as a kind of
supplement to the narrative. The interpretation of the scene, the picture of Bloom's
reaction to it, is also the technique of reading Joyce apart from his presence in the text
itself. The supplement that is desire is brought to bear on the picture, which is presented
to the desiring viewer and turned into fantasy. But departing from Derrida, however, the supplement seeks to create no coherent core of meaning underneath or even with the text. Instead, it wants to create a brilliant flash of momentary desire, available in the instant of the text, meant to be enjoyed as read. The strategic deployment of impoverished male fantasy with Stephen and Bloom in Ulysses undermines a symbolic, Freudian reading of this novel: as with the readings of Proust, Masoch, and James in previous chapters, the signifiers of desire are unhitched from the "masculine" libido.

One characteristic of the uniquely male fantasy is the image of masturbation as somehow enasculating and wasteful. As Bloom imagines himself into the fantastic narrative, we find that his anxiety about Boylan is amplified here, as elsewhere, with demoralizing consequences. This occurs near the end of the chapter in the encounter with Bantam Lyons, who shall later in the day make a killing on Bloom's inadvertent suggestion of "Throwaway" as a winning pick for the Royal Ascot. As Lyons snatches away the rolled-up newspaper, Bloom's textual erection becomes only so much garbage at Lyon's insistence to see the racing form, as the paper is thrown back at Bloom, unfurled (U5: 539-540). A major thread of the novel's symbology hangs on the victory of "Throwaway," the rank outsider who carries the day. It is a central theme in Joyce's Bloomean boosterism: the long unnoticed dark horse, while not having heroic qualities, symbolizes all that is good and human. On a symbolic level this also equates Bloom with the unsung horse, masturbation, the shameful supplement: all that is anti-masculine, anti-hetero, opposed to a kind of over-determined symbolic, priapic, dominant masculinity. In addition, the feminine metaphors that draw the reader's attention the passive and gentle gestures in the book (Bloom's kindness to old women, Stephen's affection for his younger
sister) are easily reversible into positive virtues. and in Joyce's hands, these elements take on highly allusive meanings. These ironic Bloomean associations with the weak and downtrodden play against the kind of symbolic expectation that one naturally brings to the truly Joycean text, one in which the all-powerful signifier assigns meaning through violation, as after Lacan, rather than revealing it or unpacking it. Joyce, in his play, continually reverses the expectations allusion brings, and abolishes the phallic mode of signification. Therefore, Joyce's depiction of masculine fantasy appears as a parody of male signification. Instead, Bloom is a victim of language rather than a master of it, and the same goes for Stephen, the supposed artist.

The final sequence of "Lotus-Eaters" conveys a varied series of images in order to cap off the chapter and bring together the elements of narcissism brought out at various points in this narrative. The chapter ends with the remarkable conflation of Molly's image at the soap shop, previous to Bloom's going to the baths. The bath itself, it must be noted, does not occur within the context of the chapter, but rather outside it, as we are again in the realm of fantasy:

He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs rippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward. Lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating. Floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands. A languid floating flower. (U 5: 567-572)

There are two striking features about this foreseen and therefore slightly postponed pleasure. First, there is matter of the womb-like bath in which Bloom finds himself, and second, the limpness of his imaginary penis. Even in fantasy, potency is impossible in light of his self- and outwardly-imposed narcissism. There is no sexual relation with Bloom, and the correspondence affair, or ogling a potential dominatrix, cannot energize
Bloom or draw him out of his flaccid introspection, potentially in the company of other men in the public bath. In addition, the concept of the womb links to Freud's implied infantilism in his account of originary narcissism. In this case, the celebration of the male body, sexual pleasure without climax—and a gentle familiarity with the body itself frustrate the Freudian progressive heterosexual narrative. Perhaps regressive and certainly ambiguous, the image at the end of this chapter serves as Joyce's impression of sensual "narcissism," serving notice of Bloom's variable sexual position in *Ulysses.*

To the extent that "Lotus-Eaters" rejects the Law of the Father, it may be read as a queer text. This goes doubly so for the historical situation of the novel with the later thought of Freud. One can see, in the symbolic contortions of Joycean play, the conscious manipulation of psychoanalytic tropes. Given Joyce's ambivalence towards Freudian "interpretation," it may be seen as a natural sort of parody if only to rob psychoanalysis of its analytic powers: to stack the deck so much so that the sexual imagery itself means nothing. In this sense, Joyce's work can be characterized as highly anal involved with the collection and sometimes random presentation of images without regard to their meaning. By concentrating on the text itself as a fetish object, however fragmentary its pleasures, the "heterosexual" production of meaning is eschewed in favor of the textual moment.

With Jacques Lacan's later work, one may find an aid to explain Joyce's momentary resistance to the Law of the Father, in order to experience the pleasure of the text. In "Joyce le Symptôme I," Lacan comes to an appraisal of Joyce as a nascent Lacanian analyst. Joyce foregoes the role of "artist" in favor of being a game player, symbolic magician, and proliferator of text, and presents his artistic persona naively in the manner
of Bloom, amateur sensualist, rather than Stephen, the forward-looking and pretentious
patriarchal artist, with the deep investment in the Oedipus complex. To read allusion in
Joyce is to join in with the discourse of the Father – to subjugate the text to interpretation.

and therefore sanctification in the church of meaning, which in the bathtime moment
Joyce burlesques, in his parody of the Eucharist. For the most part, in “Joyce le
Symptôme I” Lacan confines himself to talking about Finnegans Wake although it
applies. Lacan admonishes, to the textual manipulations of Ulysses. Beginning with the
seminars of the 1970s, Lacan’s work takes a definitive turn for the baffling, with his
diagrams, disavowals of feminist psychology, and the stressing of the "symptom" as the
cornerstone of Lacanian analysis. In Lacan’s “late” phase, he muscles the notion of the
unconscious aside and supplants it with linguistic play and his seemingly oracular
pronouncements. The one constant to Lacan remains the question of desire, and Lacan
combines a discussion of Joyce’s style, themes and characters with his own obsessions
about literary language, desire, and the “unconscious.”

Lacan declares in this lecture that a literary work can revise a standard Freudian
reading with respect to the questions of the unconscious, and the symbols that reveal its
associations. Lacan develops the notion that to deny the “conscious” ego the satisfaction
of interpreting the unconscious is to reduce the text to a mere object and medium of
pleasure. To take things “seriously” is the worst mistake to make with Joyce. To illustrate
this, Lacan describes the conflict between the producer of discourse and the artificer who
builds meaning into it because he feels the needle of “conscience”:

Stephen Dedalus says “Agenbite of inwit”, of the bite - how one translates that into
French. I don't know - of the in-itself, then that also means the wit, the interior wit,
the bite of the spirited word, the bite of the unconscious. With Jones, Freud was at
ease- he knew that his biography would become hagiography.
Evidently, the Shiaist Joyce, if I can say that, the Jones in question, it is that he
gives us, the important idea, like the other, of being Ernest. More than Joyce, Jones
- I tell you this from memory - makes the act of calling yourself Ernest. But there is
no doubt that the source of the title, if surprising, is Wilde, of whom Joyce makes a
great deal.\textsuperscript{11}

To refuse the name of the Father is to reject the unconscious at the same time. To treat
Joyce as the “symptom” rescues him from the position of being objectified by the father.
and, therefore, from being victimized by the symbol that links the unconscious to
discourse. The reason that critics adduce meaning to Joyce is because of the presence of
Joyce, the author, in the text. that one takes it in “Ernest,” in other words, takes what is a
mere name for intention, as, of course, in Wilde's play, \textit{The Importance of Being Earnest}.
With Joyce himself overseeing the reading experience, the deep “meaning” one finds in
Joyce is guaranteed.

Further on, Lacan makes pains to distinguish between "symptom" and "symbol," and
claims that both ways of reading Joyce cannot be reconciled. One cannot at the same time
read Joyce allusively and "for pleasure":

Joyce the symptom or Joyce the symbol. I call Joyce the symptom - it is that,
namely the symbol, that the symptom abolishes, if I continue in this vein. It's not
only Joyce the symptom, it's Joyce in toto that, if I may say so, cancels the
subscription to the unconscious [désabonné à l'inconscient]. (24)

In the end, one confronts the lack of "meaning" in Joyce which denies a unified
psychoanalytic reading: "The symptom of Joyce is a symptom which concerns us with
nothing. It is the symptom in full in which there is in limited possibility of connecting to
something in the unconscious" (27). This is the textual politics of pleasure. The text is
not only all that there is, but the preclusion of reading the symptom makes jouissance the
easiest thing possible, and is the only true mode of reading in the spirit of Joyce. The
main advantage is avoiding the question of "expectation": what occurs in the text appears
to foreshadow what comes after it, but not necessarily. If the subject matter of *Ulysses* leads us into a blind alley, it is that of the Oedipal narrative. The trinity of Stephen as imaginary son, Molly the imaginary mother, Bloom as father leads us to that “natural” structuralist-derived reading of the novel. It is also an imposition on the text to accept Joyce’s judgment that the “Lotus-Eaters” chapter is “narcissistic,” when Bloom never once exhibits traits classically symbolic of narcissism: looking at oneself in a mirror, feelings of vanity, or willful ignorance of the outside world. In a characteristically Joycean fit of disingenuousness, Bloom defies expectations.

As a question of defying “expectation,” the alternate form of narcissism means nothing if we are to call it by its “proper” name, fixed to the chapter by Joyce, with willing assistance from Gilbert. Indeed, there is a kind of collaboration that produces pleasure in “symptoms” for their own sake. Lacan outrageously claims that he prides himself, as did the Joyce who wrote *Finnegans Wake*, on the impossibility of reading his work:

> The unintelligible point is precisely the point on which one shows mastery. I am enough of a master of language, that is to say French, to be myself, a novice who’s fascinated with consigning jouissance properly as symptom. Jouissance opaque enough to exclude sense. (36)

Lacan disavows his mastery of making language *mean* by reveling in the childish joy of sticking words together for their own sake. In a sense, the real obsessive relation is not typified by the artist’s interest in his own work, but in the disavowal of meaning-creation. Leaving one’s speech, one’s text for the reader to enjoy and create for himself or herself, allows the development of a transferential relation – creating, in essence, a text that has no parentage, but that is purely, innocently (in a sense) pleasurable.
There is an unexpected internal non sequitur as Bloom snatches his letter, walks out of
the post office and thinks "Talk: as if that would mend matters." (U5: 76-77) This can be
read as Joyce's sly disavowal of the psychoanalytic relation, given Freud's early descrip-
tion of psychoanalysis as the "talking cure." Certainly, there is a strong sense with
Bloom that things need mending. If they do, it is an odd way to introduce narcissism as
the wound that needs healing from the outset. Although his impotent fantasy leaves
things unfulfilled for Bloom, the reader's experience is infinitely more satisfying. This is
also the source for perpetually conflicted readings of Joyce's work, whether to put his
writing under the rubric of "realist" fiction, or as metafictional explorations of language,
almost psychological expositions in themselves.

Considering the postmodern work done on Joyce via Lacan and Derrida, the latter
option may be favored in today's academic environment. In his book on Lacan and Joyce,
Sheldon Brivic remarks that the jouissance of Joyce's linguistic play is markedly
feminine, and Lacan equates feminine mystery with the satisfaction provided by Joyce's
text.\(^{12}\) However, this does not take into account the multivalent forms and genres of
discourse depicted in Joyce, much less the subtle shadings relating to depictions of
fantasy, anxiety and other psychoanalytic phenomena. Calling Joyce's language and
writing feminine in jouissance is not enough to explain the masculinity of his men, as
their seemingly impotent desires and fantasies have to be critically reconstructed from the
bottom up. The conflict between the classically tormented artist and the *bricoleur*
amateur novelist, already castrated by language, sets the stage for the crisis of masculin-
ity, and also by extension heterosexuality. In *Ulysses*, Lacan draws out the conflict in
reading Joyce as an "artist" or sensualist, with both positions sexually suspect. To pose as
"masculine" for Freud, one plays the heterosexual Oedipal game to conclusion: to overthrow it, what Joyce and Bloom do is merely contrary and calls their sexual roles forever into question.

Coda: Joyce, Psychoanalysis, Fatherhood, and the *Wake*

The paradox about doing any sort of reading of Joyce with reference to theory is that, because Joyce’s work is so distinctive and aware of any reading that one may take to it, results of such reading wind up, almost always, as tautological. Psychoanalytic theory is no exception. On top of the relative toothlessness of garden-variety psychoanalysis when set upon devouring the Joycean text, it may seem to be the height of presumption to hunt for meaning within Joyce’s work by looking at his life with reference to his writing. At bottom, Joyce’s life itself was not all that eventful; as much as any writer, he spent much of his life in his room, writing away, with the occasional domestic trouble or familial crisis, most of it having to do with a lack of money. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that much of Joyce’s identity is there in his work, as he used up all the knowledge he could absorb from his circle of friends, collaborators, and interlocutors. One of the most striking qualities of Joyce’s work is its encyclopedic imperative to say as much as it can, as beautifully as it can, wisely. most of Joyce’s best readers and critics shy away from the attempt to encompass it all, instead leaving the experience of the sheer totality of Joyce’s work as a pleasure of reading him, rather than writing about the books. Despite Joyce’s famous dictum of the artist standing off to the side of the work, “paring his fingernails.” Joyce’s writing is impossible to conceive apart from his identity, which he ruthlessly
mined to exhaustion over the course of his career. What I propose to do in the following pages is to read Joyce's personal experience with psychoanalysis and its reflection in *Finnegans Wake*, and in so doing to shed light on Joyce's role as creator, artist, and father.

It has been well noted that Joyce, although his work lends itself fairly readily to psychoanalytic reading, himself actively despised and distrusted psychoanalysis. As with so many things about Joyce's personality, his reasons were more or less inscrutable. Part of his prejudice lay in his view of the irrelevance of its concepts (as Joyce once remarked to his table-talk Boswell, Frank Budgen, "Why all this fuss and bother about the mystery of the unconscious? What about the mystery of the conscious? What do they know about that?") or its resemblance to a new religion (going to a psychoanalytic session, for him, he once said, would feel like confession, and he'd had enough of that in his life), but perhaps most of all, Joyce felt, as did Lawrence, that the investigation of the psyche, the principal subject of his fiction, was better left to artists and historians.

At the same time, Joyce seemed to think that while the sauce wasn't good for the gander, it was perfectly fine for the goose. Interested in Budgen's dream diary, Joyce, rather than starting his own nocturnal journal, began keeping a record of his wife Nora's dreams, with potted Freudian analysis following each description. Weirdly enough, most of the dreams seem to involve the work he was doing on *Ulysses*, but this was unsurprising in the light of his obsessive impromptu discussions with anyone and everyone, including Nora, about the content of the book during the later stages of his composition. Never having subjected himself to analysis, he obviously saw fit to use analysis to illuminate the uncharted continent of female psychology, in order to read their mental
quirks. Joyce’s most extended engagement with any form of psychoanalysis occurred during the last half of the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, when he was coordinating treatment for his daughter Lucia’s mental illness.

In the early thirties as the material of *Finnegans Wake* was taking shape, Lucia’s behavior reached a desperate low, manifesting itself in pyromania, fugues of rage and destructiveness, and other erratic behavior, including an unhealthy erotic attachment to Samuel Beckett, then Joyce’s secretary. The crisis over the composition of *Finnegans Wake* seems to, in Ellmann’s biography of Joyce, parallel the crisis he feels over his daughter Lucia’s mental condition; Ellmann depicts Joyce as believing that if he solves the problem of writing a book that already nobody really wanted to read, he could somehow magically solve the problem of Lucia’s sanity, and she would be able to lead a somewhat normal life. Unfortunately, Joyce doesn’t seem to have been willing to take steps to normalize Lucia, as he believed her to be some kind of creative genius, and also a clairvoyant. In letters to various benefactors and correspondents, Joyce entertained the idea that Lucia simply had an exaggerated personality. He indulged her behavior in many ways, from encouraging her drawings by anonymously subsidizing her art for limited editions of his work, to buying her a 4,000 franc fur coat, asserting in correspondence that “I think that will do her inferiority complex more good than a visit to a psycho-analyst.”

Nevertheless, Joyce eventually decided to seek a form of analytic treatment for Lucia. Once the Joyces moved to Zurich, they placed her in the sanitarium of Burghölzli, which had none other than Carl Jung on the staff. Jung had already published comments about *Ulysses*, and seemed eager to take on the task of curing Lucia. Regardless of his
antipathy towards psychoanalysis. Joyce appeared interested in the prospect of Jung treating Lucia. As he wrote to Harriet Shaw Weaver: “The poor child is not a raving lunatic, just a poor child who tried to do too much, to understand too much. Her dependence on me is now absolute and all the affection she repressed for years pours itself out on both of us. Minerva direct me.” Although innately mistrustful of psychoanalysis, Joyce nevertheless was game to see the outcome of this experiment, as long as it didn’t involve him directly. In a letter to the Gideons: “My daughter is not myself. I wouldn’t go to him, but maybe he can help her” (676).

From the beginning, Jung’s approach was perhaps too perfect, as it fell into line with Joyce’s preliminary unofficial diagnosis. In addition, the looser Jungian approach, with its affinity for identity and personae rather than genital structure and Oedipal conflict, probably made the medicine go down more easily, for both Joyce and Lucia. The Jungian interpretation of this situation, straight from the mouth of Jung himself, is that Joyce’s animus manifested itself in Lucia’s personality, thus validating what Joyce had suspected all along. Privately, Jung confided to colleagues and fans that the case of Lucia and Joyce was a paradigmatic case of an artist and his muse: “If you know anything of my Anima theory, Joyce and his daughter are a classical example of it. She was definitely his ‘femme inspiratrice,’ which explains his obstinace to have her certified” (679). At bottom, Jung was perhaps reluctant to diagnose Lucia fully, as Jung felt that her psychosis, already reflecting badly on Joyce, was a manifestation of Joyce himself’s latent psychosis. Also, Joyce was growing more and more uncomfortable with the closeness of the analyst-analysand relationship, becoming outright jealous of Jung’s access to Lucia.
Here the context for Jungian analysis is testing her creativity and fecundity (admittedly mental) against the measure of the father’s virility, namely, his proficiency as an artist. At bottom, the Oedipus situation is seen more or less in reverse — the father wishes to keep Lucia close to him and protect her, rather than fearing a son, a opposite number, who eventually would take his place. Lucia’s drawing and scribbling, such as they are, are scrutinized by Joyce in a vain effort to uncover the creative thrust Joyce is sure exists within her. Jung’s initial diagnosis of schizophrenia becomes transformed (in Joyce’s estimation) into a validation of Lucia’s worth as a masculine artistic extension of himself. The torture of fevered “genius” is somehow made benign by the countersign of the fecund father, doubly so when the father is question is James Joyce, capable of pouring a divine stream of signification, like so much chiasm, over the whole of his physical, psychical, historical, and familial world. Joyce’s perception of Lucia as a kind of sybil (his family called her a Cassandra instead) is not in itself unusual in the world of artists and muses, but Ellmann relays a few choice utterances that, in Joyce’s opinion, clinched the case for her clairvoyance: in all ways, the reflect his desire for closure and return his origins. Addressing him, Lucia speaks in the voice of a native Irishman, a country wholly alien to her: “I want to reconcile you. It is time some great person of your country to come forward and hold out a hand to you and to us” (678). Joyce assumed that since his literary success, it was time for him to make some symbolic gesture of return. Around the same time, Lucia’s non sequitur declaration, “You are Bray head” echoes the Wakean synonymity of male figures as real-life landscape.

Ultimately, Lucia’s treatment could well be considered a failure given the persistence of her unbalanced behavior throughout the rest of her adult life. Joyce understood
Lucia’s problems being about the problem he himself was having cutting through the
tangle of composing the *Wake*: in short, seeing her way around a blockage that was
preventing her from seeing things aright. In the middle of the *Wake*’s first section, Joyce
presents in the middle of a protracted psychoanalytic rift that throws ambiguous sexual
confusion, religious ecstasy, and analytic hubris into the narrative mix. It is hard to resist
seeing an encapsulation of Lucia’s narrow brush with analysis in the following famous
passage:

...plus dinky pinks deliberatively summersaulting off her bisexycle, at the main
entrance of the curate’s perpetual soutane suit with her one to see and awoh! Who
picks her up as gingerly as any balmbearer would to feel the whereupon the virgin
was most hurt and nicely asking: why have you been so grace a mauling and
where were you chaste me child? Be who, farther potential? and so wider but we
grisly old Sykos who done our unsmiling bit on ‘alices, when they were yung and
easily freudened, in the penumbra of the procering room and what oracular
compression we have had apply to them! could (did we care to see our feeboought
silence *in camera*) tell our very moistnostrilled one that father in such virgated
contexts is not always that underdemonstrative relative (often held up to our contu-
macy) who settles our hashbill for us and what an innocent all-abroad’s adverb
such as Michaelly looks like can be suggestive of under the pudendoscope and,
finally, what a neurasthene nympholept, endocrine-pineal typus, of inverted
parentage with a prepossessing drauma present in her past and a priapic urge for
congress with agnates before cognates fundamentally is feeling for under her
lubricitous meiosis when she refers with liking to some feeler she fancie’s face.
And Mm. We could. Yet what need to say? ‘Tis as human a little story as paper
could well carry...”14

The sexual anxiety in this passage erupts in the phrase “neurasthene nympholept...of
inverse parentage,” to be sure who has a “priapic urge for congress with agnates before
cognates” – here the idea that Lucia is parenting Joyce emerges. that she is a prime
source for the *Wake* itself, the model of profusion of tongues and signifiers. Implying
that there was a trauma and “drauma” in the past at implies the initiation of the some
psychoanalytic narrative, and also the infliction of phantom analytic wounds: particularly
true of the feminine subject. for whom the analyst must create problems that are not
there. Joyce’s is a self-consciously artistic reinterpretation of psychoanalysis: self-conscious in that it protests against the gross reality of sex, the focus of Freudian analysis, which brings the reproductive body so vividly to the fore. This brusque insistence on the reality of the body, is an analytic sense, necessarily horrific to Joyce: as it was in *Finnegans Wake*, so it is throughout *Ulysses*. Despite the famous tagline describing *Ulysses* as an epic of the body, throughout Joyce’s work there is a deep antipathy for one body particular: that of the father. In the passage quoted above, the father termed “undemonstrative relative” is a pun on the singularity of a father, of anyone’s father: the father exists in the mere abstract.

In the explication of Stephen’s theory about the fatherhood of Shakespeare, we get a bite-sized summary of the problem of paternal parentage and generation in Joyce’s work:

> A father. Stephen said, battling against hopelessness, is a necessary evil. He wrote the play in the months that followed his father’s death. If you hold that he, a graying man with two marriageable daughters, with thirty-five years of life, nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita, with fifty of experience, is the beardless undergraduate from Wittenberg then you must hold that his seventy-year old mother is the lustful queen. No. The corpse of John Shakespeare does not walk the night. From hour to hour it rots and rots. He rests, disarmed of fatherhood, having devised that mystical estate upon his son. Boccaccio’s Calandrino was the first and last man who felt himself with child. Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the Madonna which cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded, like the world, macro and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. Amor matris, subjective and objective genetive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction. Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son? (U 9: 829-845)

As if that were not enough. Stephen reiterates the impossibility of being a son and father at the same time, underlining the necessary role-play of the artist as sole progenitor of himself and world, divorced from the body: “The son unborn mars beauty: born he
brings pain, divides affection, increases care. He is a new male: his growth is his father’s decline. his youth his father’s envy, his friend his father’s enemy.” (U9: 854-857).

It goes without saying that this is quite the formulation for Oedipal conflict. But the zero-sum game of real-world parenting and dutiful allegiance to one’s father is solved rather neatly in Ulysses. Stephen disavows contact with or resemblances to his irresponsible father, as his father steadily drinks away Stephen’s library with money got from selling his schoolbooks, erasing all traces of him from his house, and eliminating the evidence through a presumably limp organ. The affective bond formed by Bloom and Stephen at the end of the novel outstrips the reach of possible Oedipal conflict; perhaps forgotten by morning. Bloom chooses to be a father. Stephen accepts the role of son to one with a distinctively un-Irish face. For Joyce, the paternal relation is necessarily fantastic. Understood as the subsumption of all familial roles, the only conflict arises when the phenomenal issues of sex intrude. It’s the prerogative of the Joycean artist to be all roles at all times, ready to drop or adopt as fits aesthetic intention. Certainly this is true of the Wake, whose central organizing principle, the dream-landscape of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, is oddly foregrounded by Stephen, again in the ninth chapter of Ulysses.

When Rutlandbaconsouthhamptonshakespeare or another poet of the same name in the comedy of errors wrote Hamlet he was not the father of his own son merely but, being more than a son, he was and felt himself the father of all his race, the father of his own grandfather, the father of his unborn grandson who, by the same token, never was born. for nature, as Mr Magee understands her, abhors perfection. (U9: 865-871)

As nature abhors perfection, the artist clings to its ever-present possibility for perfection:

Catherine Froula notes that because reading Finnegans Wake has as much to do with myth as it does reading Joyce, it is necessarily and primarily a narcissistic document.15
Yet Joyce’s penchant for retreating into his own aesthetic world isn’t merely he remaking for
the world in the artist’s image – the sexual anxiety and multivalence of sexual imagery at
the core of Joyce’s later work benefit from his recoiling at the generative aspects of the
feminine and masculine body, and indeed at times reflect infantile desires to return to the
womb (as in the Lotus-Eaters episode) or to be absorbed into the identity of the father,
which one may see glimpses of at the end of *Finnegans Wake*, where HCE, in the stages
of awakening, declaring his return and reabsorption into Ireland itself:

O bitter ending! I’ll slip away before they’re up. They’ll never see. Nor know.
Nor miss me. And it’s old and old and it’s sad and old it’s sad and weary and I go
back to you. my cold father. my cold mad feary father. till the near sight of the
mere size of him. the moyles and moyles of it. moananoaning. makes me seasilt
saltsick and I rush. my only. into your arms. (628)

The sight of the size of the father country, the phenomenal horror of the display of the
father-body, causes trauma to the speaker, which only falling back into sleep can fully
cure, so that the Wake can begin again. An analytic interpretation of this complex of
tropes in Joyce would yield a perverse stagnation at the oral stage, classically a feature of
childhood: the desire to consume and fear of or desire to consumed predominates in the
encounter with the father. It is tempting to read this as Joyce’s implicit condemnation of
psychoanalysis as a playpen for small-minded, but in the main it speaks to Joyce’s
insistence on overcoming the Freudian claim to read the life of the mind in terms of
autobiography. For the most part, Joyce’s disengagement with psychoanalysis reveals a
resistance to let the figure of the analyst, and analytic discourse, disrupt the ever-
important primacy of the artist. in Joyce’s view, the undemonstrative relative and, in his
mind, uncontested father of all.

2 Joyce's interest in Wilde was at once intellectual and nationalistic. While living in Treiste, he once considered translating Wilde's "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" into Italian, and approved of a friend's lead production in a season of Irish drama, The Importance of Being Earnest. See Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (New York, Vintage: 1982).

3 This chart can be found in, among other places, Richard Ellmann's Ulysses on the Liffey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). 191.


8 This is by now a cliche, and it is best outlined in Hugh Kenner's "Circe" (in Clive Hart and David Hayman, James Joyce's Ulysses: Critical Essays. Berkeley: University of California Press, 341-362), where he undertakes a fairly orthodox structuralist reading of this chapter. The analysis is somewhat self-limiting in its consideration of Ulysses as a text with multivalent readings. of all things.

9 In her idiosyncratic and fascinating study James Joyce and the Burden of Disease. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995). Kathleen Ferris conjectures that perhaps that Joyce himself, like Bloom, had suffered from impotence (97-99). Biographical evidence supports Joyce's attempts, around the time of the composition of Ulysses, to induce Nora to "meet" other men, and possibly sleep with them. Ferris also acknowledges that this gambit was more likely part of Joyce's schemes to stage-manage certain aspects of his life and friendships in order to provide more material for the novel: in his James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1937). Frank Budgen outlines these picaediloes in detail.


14 Joyce, James. *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 115. All further references to this work shall be noted parenthetically.

The Stele

Laban replied to Jacob. "These daughters are my daughters and these children are my children. This livestock is my livestock: everything you see belongs to me. But what can I do today about my daughters here or about the children they have borne? So come, let us make a pact, you and me... and let that serve as a witness between us."

Jacob then took a stone and set it up as a stele. Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Collect some stones," and gathering some stones they made a cairn. They had a meal there, on the cairn, and Laban called it Jegar-Sahadutha while Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said, "May this cairn be a witness between us today." That is why he named it Galeed, and also Mizpah, because he said, "Let Yahweh act as watchman between us when we are no longer in sight of each other. If you ill-treat my daughters or marry other women besides my daughters, even though no one be with us, remember: God is witness between us." Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this cairn I have thrown up between us, and here the pillar. This cairn is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I am not to cross to your side of this cairn and pillar, and you are not to cross to my side of this cairn and pillar, with hostile intent. May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor judge between us. Then Jacob swore by the Kinsman of his father Isaac. He offered a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his kinsmen to the meal. They ate the meal, and passed the night on the mountain.

Genesis 31: 43-64

A persistent theme of this dissertation has been that of masculine anxiety about filling dominant roles in the absence of the father: this anxiety often manifests itself in a nostalgia for a return to an imagined past, mediated through various images, totems, and tropes. Although Lacan has appeared as a psychoanalytic guide in this work, Lacan is no more immune to this penchant for the return as anyone else. Rather, through his call for the Freudian return, Lacan is a paradigmatic case of modernist canon-making in his fideistic, yet somewhat impersonal attachment to the Freudian corpus. Just as T.S. Eliot believed he was an exponent of the Dantesque poetic tradition, so too is Lacan the inheritor of the Freudian legacy, which he helped to transpose into another intellectual culture, with its own traditions. This very suggestion of the ghostly filial relationship,
expressed by the quote from Dolto that bookends the present work, is made possible by
the fact that paternity is easily expressible as a fiction in a way that maternity is not. As
Stephen reflects in “Wandering Rocks,” as he ducks out of sight from his drunkard father
on the streets of Dublin, fatherhood is a case of mere resemblances and guarantees that
can be simply be denied, in his case, by the son.

But by the same token, links to father figures, in the Modernist imagination, are just as
easily asserted out of a need to ground one’s own biographical narrative. As with
_Ulysses_, the narrative seesaws between Bloom and Stephen on the problematics of the
paternal links: Bloom with his dead father (a suicide) and dead infant son, Rudy, and
Stephen with his absent father Simon, who served as a warning to Stephen not to
succumb to the temptations of drink. For Marcel, Swann is a stand-in for the key to his
fantasies about Gilberte: the template, the signifier for Marcel’s destiny to be unlucky in
love. Both Proust and Joyce express the desperate modern need to recoup one’s losses
through memory: the transference of whimsical, individualized memory being necessary
to one’s personal narrative.

This is no less true in the case of Jacques Lacan, who engaged in as much self-
fashioning as any 20th century intellectual figure. Because Lacan saw himself as a
legitimate heir and equal to Freud (and Sartre, as well). Lacan had a significant invest-
ment in following the same sort of intellectual career path: innovation, iconoclasm.
fostering a strong contingent of disciples, a long struggle for legitimacy, and then a kind
of popularity, if not outright acceptance by the establishment. Lacan, sometimes feeling
that his trajectory was not significantly tragic enough, liked to cast himself as the rank
outsider. Unlike Freud with his Kraepelin, Freud had no foe in the French analytic
community to vividly embody opposition to his ideas, and as a result, he had to pick fights both real and imaginary with figures more prominent than he. In a certain sense, it is no wonder that Lacan clung so fiercely to the precepts of Freudian exegesis, as his totemistic relationship with the Freudian corpus no doubt, he must have felt, shielded him from charges of analytic illegitimacy.

However, analytic reading itself, in much the same way that Lacan proposes to read Freud, can lend itself to a form of dramatic historicizing that can ossify into a symbolic reading of one’s life experience, and turn it into an epitaph. The Freudian tendency towards biographical reduction of the analysand, if pursued to its logical end, implies that the analysand’s history of symptoms can be fleshed out into a text, which in turn sums up not only their condition, but also the trajectory and content of life. It is in this sense that the analytic patient, their story and symptoms offered up to the analyst for dissection, resembles an autopsy. The subject of psychoanalysis itself is not one’s lived experience, as it is in psychology or phenomenology: instead, the subject of analysis is the analytic pathologies and “knots” spliced into that lived experience. Schreber’s anxiety that his every thought is somehow anticipated by the souls is, in a sense, an acknowledgement that the totality of the human soul, or his soul, can be represented by words, texts, or speech. As in Derrida’s *Speech and Phenomena*, the analytic text is a tacit representative of subject’s death. It is in this sense of that Lacan’s imaginative reviving of Freud through exegesis is important, as he sees it, to the survival of psychoanalysis.
The placing of Lacanian thought in the 20th century

The story of 20th century thought is, in a sense, one of territory-marking rather than a progression of a line of inquiry. It is a period that saw the rise of the various social sciences of psychology, sociology and anthropology out of other disciplines like philosophy, history, economics, and the various forms psychotherapy splinter off from scientific, "mathematical" psychology in turn. As Lacan participated in a number of different discourses (of psychoanalysis, of phenomenology, of structuralism, of neurology) it is fitting that Serge Tisseron, in Clérambault, Maître de Lacan, takes time to reflect on the power of Clérambault’s image on Lacan’s persona. Lacan’s evocation of Clérambault, in the beginning pages of Écrits (following the “Seminar on the Purloined Letter”), lays claim to Clérambault not as the hidden progenitor of Lacan’s work, but as another frontier on the Lacanian landscape, another area of confrontation and also transposition into the elements that make up the Lacanian corpus. The image of Clérambault represents, in an important sense, the inestimable value of clinical experience in advancing analysis: in another sense, the folly of viewing the desire of the analysand’s ego as an indulgent aberration that should be encouraged. Still, in another sense, Clérambault’s contribution could best be memorialized by Lacan in way that Évolution Psychiatrique. Sartre, and Heidegger could not, as Clérambault and Freud were the most important influences on Lacan who were no longer living at the time Écrits was assembled.3

In the case of Lacan’s psychoanalysis as well as Freud’s, the intellectual legacy and traditions of analysis principally operate on the creative assimilation of material from various disciplines: medicine, art, history, literature and are combined in such a way as
constitute a no-holds-barred interpretive arsenal for parsing out the mental life of the analysand, as such, an ego firmly situated in the culture. This is why, in this sense, that psychoanalysis is not a science: as each analysand is different, each analysis is different and unique, regardless of similarities in cultural baggage. Analysis, less than any other societal relation, can never be "anonymous," in the way that a science would demand. So too the development of analytic strategies can never be, as such, anonymous: the personality of the analyst, like that of the analysand, must itself contain information about the detritus of the culture to provide a guide in how to begin the process. The image of Clérambault, both pedagogical and personal, provides a kind of landmark for contextualizing, if not understanding. Lacan’s thought, placing it alongside others in an intellectual landscape.

Photography and Modernist Nostalgia

Home is where one starts from. As we grow older, The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated Of dead and living. Not the intense moment Isolated, with no before and after. But a lifetime burning in every moment And not the lifetime of one man only But of old stones that cannot be deciphered. There is a time for the evening under starlight, A time for the evening under lamplight (The evening with the photograph album.) Love is most nearly itself When here and now cease to matter.

—"East Coker," ll. 189-201.

The ascendancy of photography and especially film as a modernist medium was greeted with overwhelming condescension in many artistic quarters, most famously by Ezra Pound, who saw the encroaching influence of the
cinema as ruthlessly homogenizing taste. art. and opinion. But for most modernists. the opposite holds true: for Walter Benjamin. in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” the photograph. along with other elements of mass communication. is essentially alienating. as there is no aura of the artisan about an “original” object. As in the above excerpt from “East Coker.” the quartet devoted to familial history⁴. the “photograph album” becomes a communal activity for remembering the past. in the same manner that verse commemorates it: it is the gathering together of distant impressions and actively molding the experience of them into an impression of a whole through memory. collective or individual. In this is constituted the psychic life of the subject. and the illusions in which it engages.⁵ The modernist imagination. organized as it is around the presence of the image. can make use of them in the same way that one would a banner. or insignia: at times to invoke collective memory. or put in the service of individual mythologizing. The modernist image embodies the claim on the past. and nostalgia. rather than being a regressive indulgence. is a necessary stratagem for survival.

In W.G. Sebald’s recent Austerlitz. the eponymous character of the novel attempts to piece together his own identity (as an orphan of the Shoah). and the evolving identity of Europe. through his archaeological camera lens. Photography is employed in a necessarily elegiac fashion. to record the incidental artifacts of the past. Here. Austerlitz recalls compulsively photographing a mass grave of unearthed in the expansion of a railway station in North London. Compelled by the spectacle. Austerlitz muses on the perpetual. unavoidable task of uncovering. encountering. and making sense of the past out of a present in which the living are adrift:

…I imagined the bleached fields stretching westwards from Bedlam. saw the white lengths of linen spread out on the green grass and the diminutive figures of
weavers and washerwomen, and on the far side of the bleachfields the places where the dead were buried once the churchyards of London could hold no more. When space becomes too cramped, the dead, like the living, move out into less densely populated districts where they can rest a decent distance from each other. But more and more keep coming, a never-ending succession of them, and, in the end, when the space is entirely occupied, graves are dug through existing graves to accommodate them, until all the bones of the cemetery lie jumbled up together."

This is, essentially, the anxiety and challenge of the modernist period: to sort through the ever-crowded, fragmentary past in the rootless present, in the attempt to construct identities.

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1 This concluding section is inspired by a brief bit at the end of *La passion des étoffes chez un neuro-psychiatre* entitled “La Stèle,” (107) where Tisseron explores Clérambault’s fondness for collecting Arabic tombstones and other markers, known as “steles,” a word which itself is Greek in origin. This excerpt from Genesis is drawn from The New Jerusalem Bible. Gen. Ed. Henry Wansborough (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1985) 55-56.

2 Rudinesco recounts the story of Lacan’s rejection from the IPA in *Bataille de cent ans.* Lacan was a member of the IPA-sanctioned body *Société Psychanalyste de Paris* until he resigned from it in 1953 to join the newly-formed *Société de français de philosophie,* along with Lagache, Pontalis, and Laplanche, and later Dolto. During the time he was affiliated with the SPP, he popped up at various IPA congresses, delivering at some meetings what would become cornerstones of his work and thought, to nonplussed audiences. He had got off on the wrong foot with the SPP and Marie Bonaparte, primarily over the question of his increasingly inescrutable writing, and also the apparent lack of proper supervision of his training analysis, conducted with Rudolph Loewenstein. He never saw fit to mention to anyone that he had undergone a control analysis during that period, but that was more all-too typical Lacanian perversity. When membership in the IPA was extended to the members of the SFP in 1963, both Lacan and Dolto were personally excluded from joining, and this caused to dig in his heels further against the analytic establishment. See Elisabeth Rudinesco’s biography of Lacan, particularly pages 244-259.

3 The non-acknowledgement of one’s intellectual forerunners appears to be a consistent feature of postwar French intellectual life, particularly in the case of Sartre. François Dosse’s *History of Structuralism* 2 vols., Trans. Deborah Glassman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), for example, dramatizes the rise of structuralism at the expense of Sartre’s thought, when every major figure (Derrida, Foucault, Lacan,“
Barthes, etc.) owes a debt not only to Sartre's ideas, but also his vocabulary: I am indebted to James Faubion for a engrossing and enlightening discussion on this point.

Most specifically, Eliot's own family, as the first section of the poem features a description of a country wedding, penned by Thomas Elyot. T.S.'s 16th century ancestor:

...see them dancing around the bonfire
The association of man and woman
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie—
A dignified and commodious sacrament.
Two and two, necessarie coniunction.
Holding eche other by the hand or the arm
Whiche betokeneth concorde. (ll. 28-34)

That the more recent Eliot retains authentic spelling is itself not insignificant, as it presents an undigested (and therefore authentic) remnant of the past. T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982)

See Brassai's *Marcel Proust sous l'emprise de la photographie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997) for an imaginative consideration of Proust's work and technique, parallel to the practice of photography.

Of our antecedents [Écrits (Seuil 1966). 65-72]

We shall write now: about the return of that which has past, those works of our entry into psychoanalysis, we recall where the entry itself made its entrance.

We had been introduced to medicine and psychiatry under the heading of paranoid consciousness, which resulted in a method of clinical exhaustion, on which I did my thèse de médecine.

Rather than evoke the group (Évolution psychiatrique) who had wished to make that opening exposé (one sees their echo in the surrealist milieu, where it renewed its old lien in a new relay: Dali, Crevel, the critique of paranoia and the Clavecin of Diderot – the outpourings one finds in the first numbers of Minotaure) – we point to the origin of this interest.

It fits into the trace of Clérambault, our sole master in psychiatry.

His automatisme mental, with his mechanistic ideology of metaphor, very critiqueable assuredly, appears to us, in the grips of subjective text, closer to that which constitutes structural analysis, than in any other clinical effort in French psychiatry.

There we inhale it, sensitive to the touch of a promise, and perceive the contrast in which it made a mark, this which itself marks a decline in semiology, always more engaged in reasonable presuppositions.
Clérambault realized that he was regarded, with his idiosyncrasies of thought, as a recurrence of that which was described recently in an old figure from *The Birth of the Clinic*.

Clérambault knew the French tradition well, but it's Kraepelin who had emerged from that, where the genesis of the clinic was done quicker.

Singularly, but necessarily, we believe, it was done by Freud.

Out of fidelity to the formal envelope of the symptom, which is the true clinical trace which we tasted, we hew to this limit, which turns back the effects of creation. In the case of our thesis, (the case of Aimée), literary things — and of enough merit to have been recalled, under the rubric of unwitting poetry, by Eluard.

Here the function of the ideal presents itself to us in a series of reduplications from which we infer the notion of structure, more instructive than the clinicians of Toulouse who reduce the affair of reduction to the register of passion.

On the surface, like a thing puffing up, which with regard to this topic, had slept on the screen which one calls delusion, as soon as the hand had touched it with aggression and not without a wound: a theatrical image, doubly fictive for it to be a star in reality, redoubling the conjugation of its poetic space with seansion of the gulf.

Thus, we approach nearer to the mechanism of the passage of the act, and we would have not been satisfied with the portmanteau of self-punishment which we stretched from Berlinesque criminology to the mouth of Alexander and of Staub, our openings onto Freud.

The mode in which this knowledge specifies itself in its stereotypes, and also indeed its charge, and emerges as another function, could have lent its enrichments to each
academic discipline, it could've been a thing of the avant-garde, and it was not refused that kindness.

Maybe it will be grasped that to get through the doors of psychoanalysis, we would immediately recognize that in practice, the ready-made judgments of theory are very interesting, it being we who are to diminish them in the fundamental listening.

We've not waited for the moment to meditate on the phantasms from which we apprehend the idea of the moi, and so the "mirror stage," written in 1936, which we again enter through the titularization of the usage, the first International Congress where, having had the experience of the association which gave us exposure to others, it was shown to be not without merit. Because this invention took us to the heart of the theoretical and technical resistance which, for constituting a problem afterward more patent, was, it has to be said, quite far-sighted to be perceived in the milieu where we eventually went.

We find it well to offer to the reader first a little article, contemporary with this production.

It so happens that our students are lured into our writing to find "already there" that turn which our teaching had taken then. Isn't it enough that we weren't blocking the road? Who sees in this influence here which appears from a reference to language, the fruit of the only imprudence which has never fooled us: it wasn't for pride of nothing that it is this experience of the subject which is the unique material of the analytic work.
The title “Beyond etc.” does not go back to the paraphrase of the other “Beyond” which Freud assigned in 1920 to his pleasure principle. How does one question it: Freud here breaks the yoke thanks to that which sustains this principle, that is, the twin principle of reality?

Freud, in his “beyond,” gives way to the pleasure principle, which gave (in short) a new sense to the installation of the circuit of reality, like a primary process, the signifying articulation of repetition, coming to renew again and again, to aid in the breaking of this traditional barrier via the path of jouissance – the existence of which is the linch-pin of masochism, seeing the work with view to the death drive.

Does what emerges in these conditions make an intersection by which the identity of thoughts coming the unconscious offer the weft of the secondary process, permitting the reality which establishes the satisfaction of the pleasure principle?

Here is where the question can announce itself in a revival on the wrong side of the Freudian project, where we have lately characterized ourselves.

If there was a clue here, it’s not far off the mark. We say only that it doesn’t exaggerate the opening of the psychoanalytic act, this supposing that it transcends the secondary process to attain a reality which isn’t found there, and it would not dispel the lure of reducing the identity of thoughts to the thought of its identity.

If everyone admits in effect that very foolishness for not remembering, that the primary process sees no more of the real than the impossible, which in the Freudian perspective remains the best definition which one can give, it may be a question of knowing more about that which meets the Other, which we are pushing to occupy.
So, we in effect cede to the perspective that, seeing here the first time the delineation of the imaginary, of the letters, associated to those of the symbolic and real, which will come to adorn the theory much too late, just before the discourse of Rome, the draughts, never-ending, all also symbolic, from which we shall make our theory for resolving the embarrassment of analytic cogitation.

There's nothing there which doesn't justify itself in trying to prevent the misunderstandings which would take on the idea that would have the subject be responsive to a theoretical apparatus, to see, like one says, the proper function – the real. Well, it's toward the mirage that attended this era that a theory of the ego gained support, an entry that Freud assured in *Ego Analysis and Mass Psychology* only to err, since there's nothing of the other in the theory of identification.

Lacking too much to refer to the other takes a necessary antecedent, without doubt produced in a year where the attention of the psychoanalytic community was a little relaxed (1914) in the article *Introduction to Narcissism* which gives this idea its base.

Nothing can permit one to regard as univocal the reality where one invokes the combination of two terms: *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* which Freud distinguishes there, the second being specially reserved for psychic reality.

From then on, take his value, the *wirklich*, operating in the corner that we introduce by putting back in its place the deceptive evidence that the identity of the self who supposes itself in the common sentiment of the ego may have that which would make a so-called claim to be an instance of the real.

If Freud evokes the link of the ego to the system of perception-consciousness, it's only to indicate in that our reflexive tradition, that one would be wrong to believe, wouldn't
have had the social incidents which would have given support to the political forms of
personal status, and had tested in this system its standards of truth.

But it's for putting in question that Freud binds the ego with a double reference, the
one to a proper body, that's narcissism, the other the complexity of the three orders of
identification.

The mirror stage gives the rule for the departure to entering the imaginary and the
symbolic at the moment of capture by the historical inertia of all those who authorize
themselves to be psychologists carrying the charge, and would by these paths to pretend
to free ourselves.

It's for that, that we don't have to give to our article on the Reality Principle to the
suite of works collected here, as it had to address itself to the Gestaltism and
phenomenology.

Better to be ceaselessly returning to recall in practice a moment which is not of
history but configured in insight† to which we appoint a stage, emergent in a phase.

Is this to be reduced to a biological crisis? The dynamic that we explain here, takes
support from the effects of diachrony: latent in nervous coordination is tied up the
prematureness of its birth, formal anticipation of its resolution.

But it's yet to provide us with a shift that supposes a harmony, and contradicts well
the facts of animal ethology.

And to conceal the keenness of the function of the lack with a question of the place
where one can take hold in the causal chain. Now far from thinking of eliminating it.
such a function we seem to us at the same origins of the causalist noesis, and as far as the confounding this with the passage to the real.

But to give to it the efficacy of the imaginary discordance, it is again to allow more to that place the presumption of the birth.

This function is of a lack more critical, to this which its cover would be the secret jubilation of the subject.

It is in that which lets itself see all the backwardness under the genus of the ego participates again in the vanity of that which judges. This which seems to fly to the self, to reflect there: only not in the imaginary can it cross its limits, doesn’t it proceed to another order?

It’s good then, for that which promises psychoanalysis, and which shall rest there mythically, if it would retreat to the simple footing of this order.

To locate the mirror stage, we take first the reading of the paradigm of the proper definition of the imaginary which gives itself to metonymy: the part for the whole. Because we don’t omit this, that our concept envelops the analytic experience of the phantasm, these images say partially, only to merit the reference of the premier archaism, that we reunite under the title of the images of the fragmented body, and which confirms itself in the assertion, in the phenomenology of the Kleinian experience, of the phantasms of the phase termed paranoid.

That which manipulate itself in the triumph of the assumption of the image of the body in the mirror, it’s this object that vanishes all the more to not appear there. than the
margin: the exchange of looks. manifested in this. where the child returns itself to that
which assists in some fashion. could be only of that which assists it in its game.

We intend this as a pictorial moment. taking that all into account to work out our
intention. showing. that little girl who confronts herself. naked. in the mirror: her flashing
hand crossing. on the left. the phallic lack.

What’s covering the image then. doesn’t center on the ability to deceive. to derive the
alienation which is already situated in the desire in the field of the Other. towards the
rivalry which prevails. in a totalitarian way. of this which seems to impose on him a dual
fascination: this one or the other. it’s the depressive return to the second phase in Melanie
Klein: it is the figure of the Hegelian death.

We aim here at the usage towards the end of an apology for resuming the mis-
recognition deeply-rooted here originally. of the inversion produced in the symmetry in
relation to the scheme. It would not take courage to posit a reference more developed to
the orientation in space. where it strikes one that philosophy shall not be more interesting
than Kant holding his glove at the bottom of the hand where an ethics is suspended. then
it’s also simple to return to this glove itself.

It is already situated then. the experience at one point which doesn’t permit us to
delude ourselves in its liaison with the quality of seeing. The most blind one there is the
subject. of the knowing object of the look. But the problem is elsewhere. and its
articulation also theoretical. and that is Molyneux’s problem. One should know this
would become the ego in a world where no-one would know anything of the symmetry in
relation to the plan.
The markers of specular familiarity in the end are recalled by us in a semiology which runs from more subtle depersonalization to the hallucination of the double. One would know that they aren’t themselves each a diagnostic value at the structure of the subject (the psychotic between others). Existence depends more importantly on noting that they don’t constitute a more solid marker of the phantasm in psychoanalytic treatment.

We find ourselves then to replace these texts in an anterior future: they will have arrived ahead of our insertion of the unconscious in language. Isn’t it so, the seeing of it equaling itself on these years, less full, we explain the reproach of having give ourselves up to backwardness?

Besides, it would be us who make our schools out of our practices, and we plead that we don’t have the ability to do better during these times than to prepare our audience.

With regard to psychiatry, the present generations shall have trouble imagining that we have been, from our age of clinical duty, impelled by something in us to engage in psychoanalysis, and without being lumped in with the group Évolution psychiatrique. we say then to this that it would be because of these talents that psychoanalysis that is working today: it’s not so much for that than it is to receive a stake in radical question. The attachment to this end is a mundane interference not augmented by neither their solidarity nor their information.

To say truly that only teaching other than an acceleration of routine, not that it would have come to the day before that, in 1951, when we had opened a private bond.

If, however, the quantity of recruits, to which an effect of quality engenders itself, changes after the free-for-all, perhaps it could be surcharged to our understanding of
didactic psychoanalysis (a comma between), and we should remember to recall that we
didn’t burn there for nothing.

Up until then, the major place for us to offer some public conference would be the
College Philosophique, where their fanaticism would cross itself at Jean Wahl’s
invitation.

We hope that this note implies nothing biographical that, to our liking, enlightens the
reader.

1966

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1 In English in original.